

**CITY OF NORWALK
BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING**

MARCH 16, 2026

BY VIDEO CONFERENCE AND TELECONFERENCE

Members of the public can call in and listen to a meeting. They will not be able to speak or see any of the meeting participants. Each meeting will use a unique Meeting/Webinar ID. Please find the information using the link above.

Members of the public who wish to provide “live comments” will need to register in advance and use the Zoom meeting platform. All participants will be muted upon entering the meeting. To speak, click the “raise your hand indicator” and you will be called on by the host of the meeting during the public comment section. Please find the information using the link above.

Members of the public who wish to view the meeting, but are not participating, can view a live stream on the City of Norwalk YouTube channel. This stream is delayed by approximately 20 seconds. Please find the information using the link above. The meeting recording and minutes will be posted on the City of Norwalk website within seven (7) days after the meeting.

Members of the public who wish to provide public comment are encouraged to submit those via e-mail in advance of the meeting. For these comments to be read into the record, they should be submitted at least three hours in advance of the meeting start time. Please email Chief James Walsh at jwalsh@norwalkct.gov to provide written comments prior to the meeting.

ATTENDANCE: Mayor Barbara Smyth, Commissioner Tony Lopez, Commissioner Ronald Paladino, Commissioner Nate Sumpter, Commissioner Fran Collier-Clemmons

STAFF: Chief James Walsh; Deputy Chief Terry Blake; Deputy Chief Melissa Lepore; Deputy Chief Joseph Dinho

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Smyth called the meeting to order at 5:08 PM.

I. ROLL CALL

Mayor Smyth called the roll and stated that all those listed in the attendance were present.

II. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 26, 2026

**** COMMISSIONER PALADINO MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH FOUR (4) IN FAVOR AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION- COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS**

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation this evening.

IV. RECOGNITION

A. JANUARY OFFICER OF THE MONTH- OFFICER JONATHAN BRANCIFORTE & OFFICER MARK VOZZELLA . FEBRUARY OFFICER OF THE MONTH: OFFICER JAMES KASSIMIS

Chief Walsh read the following letter into the record:

On January 6, 2026, Officer Mark Vozzella investigated a violent domestic violence incident that began in Stamford. The suspect transported the victim to Norwalk, where additional crimes were committed. Officer Vozzella's thorough investigation resulted in the issuance of an arrest warrant for the suspect.

On January 7, 2026, officers received information indicating that the suspect was on West Avenue. An extensive search of the area was conducted, and Officer Jonathan Branciforte ultimately located and apprehended the suspect.

The successful resolution of this incident was the result of Officer Vozzella's diligent investigation and persistence, along with Officer Branciforte's efforts to locate and arrest the suspect.

On behalf of the Police Commissioners, I would like to thank you for your dedication and for a job well done. The Board of Police Commissioners will recognize your award via Zoom on Monday, February 23, 2026, at 4:15 p.m. A copy of this memo will be included in your departmental personnel file.

Chief Walsh read the following letter into the record:

On February 28, 2026, at about 12:20, Norwalk Combined Dispatch Center received a call from 81 Winfield St, reporting a robbery. According to the initial details given out by headquarters, the suspect tried to purchase items from the victim using fake money, and then displayed a firearm, stealing money and goods from the victim.

The assigned officer arrived on scene and obtained a more detailed description of the suspect, along with a picture from the victim's GoPro camera. Officers began checking the area and were led to Bridge Street, where they found shoeprints in the snow. Officer James Kassimis identified the suspect from previous encounters and knew he lived in the area of Bridge Street. Officer Kassimis drove to the suspect's house, spoke to his mother, and was able to locate the suspect quickly and arrest him without incident.

Upon further discussions with the mother, officers were able to locate the handgun used in the robbery, a 9mm semiautomatic pistol, the stolen goods, and the clothes worn by the suspect during the robbery.

Due to Officer James Kassimis' s swift response, along with his keen knowledge of someone who matched the description of the robbery suspect who lived in that area, an armed robbery suspect was taken into custody swiftly without incident, and no use of force.

On behalf of the Police Commissioners, I would like to thank you for your dedication and for a job well done. The Board of Police Commissioners will recognize your award via Zoom on Monday, March 16, 2026, at 4:15 p.m. A copy of this memo will be included in your departmental personnel file.

V. CHIEF'S EXECUTIVE REPORT

A. JANUARY & FEBRUARY EXECUTIVE REPORT

Sworn Personnel Updates

Chief Walsh reported on patrol staffing as of January 31, 2026, stating that there are 178 sworn personnel. Sergeant Shannan Sherry and Officer Steven Luciano remain on administrative leave, and Officer Lillian Martinez remains on administrative restricted duty. Officer Steven Greene and Officer Daniel Vazquez have resigned. Detective Luis Serrano retired on a disability. One officer is out on total disability. Two officers are out on FMLA. There was a total of 178.81 sick days used, which was done 18.75% from December 2025, and 24 workmen's compensation days were used, which was down 46% from December 2025.

Chief Walsh said that Officers Lowe and Vanslyke are attending the Milford Academy. Eight current backgrounds were underway in January and came to fruition today, with six officers being sworn in.

Civilian Personnel Updates

Chief Walsh provided an update on civilian personnel, stating that 21 telecommunicators/supervisors are assigned to combined dispatch. There are 14 civilian employees assigned to support staff positions, and they are fully staffed. There were no further changes to civilian personnel.

Departmental Initiatives

Chief Walsh reported on departmental initiatives and current issues, noting that the National Incident-Based Reporting System crime reporting for 2025 was released. There were 513 fewer incidents in 2025 compared to 2024. Property Crime was down 24.3%; Crimes Against Persons were down 8.9%. Total decrease of 17.8% in crimes. Drug testing was performed in compliance with Connecticut State law on a third of the department. Ensuring all sworn personnel are tested within three years. They took delivery of a 23 Foot Safe boat, which was procured in a capital expenditure in 2024. The Recruitment Campaign is ongoing to fill future vacancies by the end of 2026 and into early 2027. The second behavioral health unit position has been filled, and we will be onboarding a third Opioid Recovery Coach, which is available through the Opioid State Reward. The sworn personnel evaluations were underway in January for the calendar year 2025.

Finance and Current Fiscal Year Budgeting

Chief Walsh provided an overview of the December 2025 budget status and noted that patrol overtime was up 31% from January 2025 and that 53% of the overall overtime budget was expended at the 58% of the fiscal year mark, and 57% of the salaries budget was expended at the 58% of the fiscal year mark. As of January, the expenditures for school security were \$195,797.41.

Chief Walsh advised the commission regarding Clean Slate Compliance, which is a legislation that was passed two years ago, where the state ordered the expungement of criminal records from local police departments, and by the end of January were at 100% compliance and expunged close to 11,000 criminal records, which is a high compliance in a city of this size.

Chief Walsh said in February 2026, staffing remained the same at 178. Sergeant Sherry remains on administrative leave, and Officers Lillian Martiez and Mark Suda are on restricted duty. Officer Matt Shizume is on a leave of absence. Officer Steven Luciano was terminated in early March. One officer is out on Total disability.

Chief Walsh said 219 sick days were used in February, which drove the overtime up, and 28.13 workmen's compensation days were used. Officers Lowe and VanSlyke are attending Milford Academy and will graduate in April. There were six candidates who completed the background investigation, were interviewed by the commission on March 3, 2026, and were sworn in today. Two officers were transferred from community services to patrol to start absorbing some of the overtime.

Chief Walsh provided an update on civilian personnel, stating that it remained the same at 21 telecommunicators/supervisors assigned to combined dispatch. There are 14 civilian employees assigned to support staff positions, and they are fully staffed.

Chief Walsh reported on departmental initiatives and current issues, noting that the recruitment campaign/testing is underway to create a list of eligible candidates for anticipated openings in the fall of 2026. The 2026/27 operating budget proposal is complete and is in the beginning stages of review with the BET and Finance. The patrol division remained busy with motor vehicle accidents and general calls for service due to the blizzard and significant snowstorms. The Axon body camera translation program was successfully implemented throughout the department and is a great addition for personnel.

Chief Walsh provided an overview of the February 2026 budget status and noted that school security expenditures totaled \$229,905.38, 66% of the salary account was expended through 66% of the fiscal year, and 61% of the overtime account was expended through 66% of the fiscal year. The overtime is still under budget, and he will continue to track it through the end of the fiscal year. There was 100% compliance in processing Clean Slate adjudications.

VI. OPERATIONS REPORT

A. JANUARY AND FEBRUARY PATROL AND INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES REPORT

Deputy Chief Blake reported on the Detective Bureau's activity, noting that 41 cases were opened in January and that a suspect was arrested for negligent discharge of a weapon violations. A suspicious occurrence at 370 Westport Avenue was investigated after a manager found a suspicious package with wires hanging, but it was found to be batteries.

Deputy Chief Blake reported on the Special Services activity and said they opened 21 cases, noting that they assisted the DEA with a Percocet pill trafficking case, and 16,500 pills were seized in Norwalk, and an arrest was made by the DEA. A suspect was extradited from Georgia on charges of sexual assault in the fourth degree, risk of injury to a minor, and unlawful restraint.

Deputy Chief Blake reported on Special Victims activity and said they opened 42 cases in January, noting that a suspect was extradited back from New York and arrested by warrant and charged with several counts of sexual assault, sexual contact with a minor, and risk of injury to a minor for soliciting minors online, and Detective English did a great job bringing this fugitive to justice. There were several other arrests during the month, and 61 family violence cases, which is a high number for January.

Deputy Chief Blake reported on the Patrol Division's highlights, noting that the Abandoned Vehicle Unit had 58 calls for service, resulting in 6 vehicles being towed. Deputy Chief Blake said 977 citations were issued in January. Chief Walsh said there were 6,206 calls for service and 197 total arrests in January. He provided an overview of the calls for service by platoon.

Deputy Chief Blake reported on the Detective Bureau's activity, noting that 26 cases were opened in February, and several arrests were related to fraud or larceny charges.

Deputy Chief Blake reported on the Special Services activity, noting that they opened 11 cases and arrested several individuals on a variety of charges, including a fugitive from justice in Florida. This individual had warrants in Florida for cyberstalking and threatening to kill children, among others.

Deputy Chief Blake reported on Special Victims activity and said they opened 30 cases in February and arrested an individual on two counts of sexual assault and risk of injury. There were 39 family violence issues, which is a significant drop. The SROs attended a DVCC teen movie night at the SONO Collection.

Deputy Chief Blake reported on the Patrol Division's highlights, noting that the Abandoned Vehicle Unit had 126 calls for service, resulting in 24 vehicles being towed. Deputy Chief Blake said 832 citations were issued in February. Chief Walsh said there were 5,373 calls for service and 120 total arrests in February. He provided an overview of the calls for service by platoon.

VII. COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

A. JANUARY AND FEBRUARY COMMUNITY POLICING AND TRAINING REPORT

Deputy Chief Dinho reported on the Community Police Services Division, stating that they handled 1,013 calls for service in January. He said 11 events were attended and provided an overview of the major events they had attended/assisted with during January.

Deputy Chief Dinho reported on the Traffic Unit and stated that in January, they conducted 578 motor vehicle stops, and he provided a breakdown of the activity. He said that 448 were Norwalk residents and 52 were from out of state.

Deputy Chief Dinho said the accident reconstruction team had no new accident investigations this month.

Deputy Chief Dinho stated that there were 120 selective enforcement locations and identified some of them.

Deputy Chief Dinho provided an overview of the Behavioral Health Unit, which opened 41 cases in January, addressed all 41, closed 23, hospitalized 16, referred 13 for services, and worked with the family on two.

Deputy Chief Dinho provided an overview of the January training, noting that there were three subject areas and 175 attendees. Training was conducted with the drone unit, and all officers received special training on the body camera feature for the translation that Chief Walsh mentioned earlier.

Deputy Chief Dinho reported that Animal Control addressed 44 incidents. There was one animal bite, 5 infractions, and 2 dogs were adopted.

Deputy Chief Dinho said in February, the Community Police Services Division handled 954 calls for service. He said 18 events were attended and provided an overview of the major events they had attended/assisted.

Deputy Chief Dinho reported on the Traffic Unit and stated that in February, they conducted 477 motor vehicle stops, and he provided a breakdown of the activity. He said that 339 were Norwalk residents and 61 were out-of-state residents.

Deputy Chief Dinho said the accident reconstruction team had no new accident investigations this month.

Deputy Chief Dinho stated that there were 102 selective enforcement locations and identified some of them.

Deputy Chief Dinho provided an overview of the Behavioral Health Unit, which opened 25 cases in February, addressed all 25, closed 12, hospitalized 10, referred 8 for services, and worked with the family on four.

Deputy Chief Dinho provided an overview of the February training, noting 51 subject areas and 122 attendees.

Deputy Chief Dinho reported that Animal Control addressed 42 incidents. There were 2 animal bites, 2 infractions, 1 dog adopted, and 5 dogs redeemed.

VIII. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

A. JANUARY AND FEBRUARY ADMINISTRATION REPORT

Deputy Chief Lepore reported on the grants and inspections for January, stating that the DUI grant covered 23 eight-hour shifts, resulting in 167 motor vehicle stops, 205 infractions, 26 field sobriety tests, and 18 DUI arrests. There were no other grant hires in January. She said they are still awaiting confirmation on the Project Safe Neighborhood Grant and have applied for the annual Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant, which is also pending confirmation.

Deputy Chief Lepore said there were no staff inspections scheduled in January.

Deputy Chief Lepore reported that the Crime Scene Unit fingerprinted 109 people (24 for pistol permits). She said 24 DVDs/photographs were created for case requests; 11 cases were processed for evidence; 116 patrol cases required camera/photograph downloads of scenes; seven cases were delivered to the State Forensic Lab for processing; and 17 were returned to the police department. There were 124 investigative case items submitted into property, and approximately 200 pounds of drugs were burned that were dropped in the drop box, and from court cases, and 17 vehicles remain stored for court cases. Three background checks were conducted for Lily Spa, and one solicitor permit was processed for Renewal by Anderson. 15 vape shop applications were processed, and one retail firearms permit background check was processed by Adam's Auction. The CSI unit vehicle was deployed once in January for a death investigation.

Deputy Chief Lepore reported on professional standards and accreditation, stating that they worked with the Corporation Council on various legal and FOI cases and multiple contractual agreements, and that they are collecting and organizing all the paperwork and statistics for the NPD annual report, and she expects it to be released in April. 35 officers were recertified for drug testing in accordance with the Police Accountability Act.

Deputy Chief Lepore reported on the body- and dashboard cameras, stating that no replacements or malfunctions had been reported.

Deputy Chief Lepore stated that 49 new requests for case videos had been received. Additionally, 24 cases were downloaded onto four discs, 19 electronic shares were sent to Stamford Court, and 10 internal requests were received. Monthly performance audits are conducted on officers' equipment usage and video tagging. The activation rate for the month was 83.5%, and the overall department average remains around 85%. All sworn personnel received and were trained on the new Axon body cameras. These cameras are part of the construction hardware upgrade agreement. Also included was the annual training in accordance with departmental policy. The old cameras and docking stations will be shipped back to Axon.

Deputy Chief Lepore reported on the accreditation and said they are collecting the year-end annual reporting requirements, setting up files, policies, and documentation for the 2029 four-year audit, and creating the quarterly files for 2026.

Deputy Chief Lepore reported on the grants and inspections for February, stating that the DUI grant covered 18 eight-hour shifts, resulting in 89 motor vehicle stops, 94 infractions, 19 field sobriety tests, and 17 DUI arrests. There were no other grant hires in February. She said they are still awaiting confirmation on the Project Safe Neighborhood Grant and the annual Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant. The lieutenant attended a webinar on application potential for the Community Fundraising Project Grant.

Deputy Chief Lepore said there were no staff inspections scheduled in February.

Deputy Chief Lepore reported that the Crime Scene Unit fingerprinted 116 people (39 for pistol permits), and two permit denials were upheld at the Board of Firearms hearings. She said 19 DVDs/photographs were created for case requests; 10 cases were processed for evidence; 78 patrol cases required camera/photograph downloads of scenes; seven cases were delivered to the State Forensic Lab for processing; and 17 were returned to the police department. There were 124 investigative case items submitted into property, and approximately 200 pounds of drugs were burned again that were dropped in the drop box, and from court cases, and 17 vehicles remain stored for court cases. There were 13 background checks conducted for Massage Envy and Westport Massage. One permit was denied. There were no solicitor permits, pawnbroker/metal permits, or vape shop applicant background processes in February. The CSI unit vehicle was not deployed in February.

Deputy Chief Lepore reported on professional standards and accreditation, stating that they worked with the Corporation Council on various legal and FOI cases and multiple contractual agreements, and that they are still collecting and organizing all the paperwork and statistics for the NPD annual report.

Deputy Chief Lepore reported on the body- and dashboard cameras, stating that one dashboard camera was replaced.

Deputy Chief Lepore stated that 49 new requests for case videos had been received. Additionally, 15 cases were downloaded onto four discs, 21 electronic shares were sent to Stamford Court, and five internal requests were received. The activation rate for the month was 84.4%, and the overall department average remains around 85%. Communication occurs regularly for issues, concerns, or troubleshooting. The BWC translation software was rolled out in January, and utilization continues to increase as officers become more knowledgeable and comfortable with the system.

Deputy Chief Lepore reported on the accreditation and said they are collecting the year-end annual reporting requirements, setting up files, policies, and documentation for the 2029 four-year audit, and creating the quarterly files for 2026. They attended the CALEA Accreditation conference on March 14th for the National Award Ceremony.

Chief Walsh said they attended the spring CALEA conference last week, went through the national review panel, and were unanimously passed for their 10th merit accreditation over the past four years, and will now enter year one of the next four years. He applauded Deputy Chief Lepore, and the accreditation manager, Sergeant Mosher, and Lieutenant Kalmanides for their work.

(The commissioners congratulated the Chief's)

IX. PERSONNEL MATTERS

A. COURSE APPROVAL- DETECTIVE CHRISTOPHER IMPARATO

**** COMMISSIONER PALADINO MOVED TO APPROVE THE COURSE APPROVAL FOR DETECTIVE CHRISTOPHER IMPARATO.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

B. TUITION REIMBURSEMENT- DETECTIVE CHRISTOPHER IMPARATO

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER CLEMMONS MOVED TO TABLE THE ITEM PENDING SUBMISSION OF RECEIPTS.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

X. INFORMATIONAL LETTERS

A. COMPLIMENTARY LETTERS

Chief Walsh said he received a complimentary note from Robin Madan thanking Officer Branciforte for helping her to find her cell phone.

Chief Walsh said that Deputy Chief Dinho received a complimentary card for Officer Alvarez and Dispatch Supervisor Lariccia from Elizabeth McDermot, who expressed her sincere gratitude for service in connection with a 911 call she had placed.

Chief Walsh said he received a complimentary email from Lieutenant Sereniti Dobson of the Westport Police Department for allowing Officer Voeltz to assist them in conducting compliance checks with their local authorized wrecking companies.

ADJOURNMENT

****COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO ADJOURN.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd