

Norwalk Board of Police Commissioners

Mayor Harry W. Rilling

Commissioner Fran Collier-Clemmons

Commissioner Tony Lopez

Commissioner Nathan Sumpter

Commissioner Ron Paladino

CITY OF NORWALK BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS Regular Meeting

July 21, 2025

ATTENDANCE: Mayor Rilling, Commissioner Collier-Clemmons, Commissioner Tony Lopez, Commissioner Ronald Paladino, Commissioner Nate Sumpter

STAFF: Chief James Walsh; Deputy Chief Blake; Deputy Chief Melissa Lepore; Deputy Chief Joseph Dinho; Detective James Barron; Officer Matthew Mitchell

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Rilling called the meeting to order at 4:29 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JUNE 16, 2025

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Levin stated that he had sent a message to the commission last week requesting that certain items be included on the meeting agenda and inquired if they had received it. If so, he asked if they could indicate this by raising their hand. Mayor Rilling stated that he has spoken with the commission members. If Mr. Levin wishes to meet with any of the commissioners at any time to discuss his concerns, he should feel free to do so. Still, the commission will not be grilled at this meeting, so the comments will need to be stopped at this time unless there is an item on the agenda he would like to discuss. Mr. Levin asked why the items he had requested could not be included on the agenda. Mayor Rilling stated that the agendas are compiled by the department based on the issues at hand.

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RECOGNITION

JUNE- OFFICER OF THE MONTH- DETECTIVE JAMES BARRON & OFFICER MATTHEW MITCHELL

Chief Walsh read the following letter into the record:

I am honored to inform you that you have been selected as Officer(s) of the Month for June 2025. were chosen for your investigation into multiple motor vehicle burglaries that occurred at 230 East Ave, the Brim and Crown apartments, which resulted in five felony arrests of juvenile offenders.

On June 5, 2025, at approximately 8:04 hours, Norwalk Combined Dispatch received several calls reporting that several vehicles had been burglarized during the overnight hours. Officer James initially responded, and Detective Barron was assigned and assumed the investigation.

While processing the scene, Detective Barron located and examined the crime scene for evidence. This included locating several muddy footprints as well as video surveillance footage. When Detective Barron completed his on-scene investigation, he returned to headquarters and viewed the footage from Brim and Crown. Detective Barron quickly located the five suspects on the surveillance footage. He immediately created a police information flyer. The flyer included a brief synopsis of the incident as well as still photos of the suspects.

When Detective Barron disseminated the flyer to NPD, he was contacted by Officer Mitchell, who informed him that he had come into contact with the five individuals during the 3-11 shift. An MTA employee had seen several juveniles running out of the Brim and Crown Parking garage wearing all black and face masks. Officers were dispatched to the area, but did not locate the suspects. Then, about 30 minutes later, the same complainant, Richard Adams called to report that five males, all wearing black, and one with gray sweatpants and a mask, were in the parking garage off Marshall and N. Water St., trying to open car doors. A few minutes later, Officer Mitchell stopped the five juveniles who matched the description provided by the complainant in front of 25 Marshall Street. A pat down of the suspects yielded a screwdriver, a hammer, a box cutter, and a pair of purple latex gloves on one of the juveniles.

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Officer Mitchell took a photo of all five juveniles and their attire while they waited for their parents to pick them up. Officer Mitchell later sent this photo to Detective Barron, who was able to compare the individuals in the photo and body-worn camera to those in the video footage. They were all wearing the same clothing.

Detective Barron quickly obtained the video footage from the Brim and Crown of the offenders. In conjunction with Officer Mitchell, thinking outside the box when he interacted with the five individuals several hours prior, taking the photograph. Detective Barron was able to arrest all five juveniles and charge them with third-degree burglary and second-degree criminal mischief. This was excellent police and investigative work by all involved.

Detective Barron noted that this really was solved by Officer Mitchell's foresight. He had sent him the photos first thing in the morning before the complaint even came in, and he deserves most of the credit for why this was solved so efficiently.

(The commissioners congratulated Detective Barron and Officer Mitchell)

CHIEF'S EXECUTIVE REPORT- MAY EXECUTIVE REPORT

Sworn Personnel Updates

Chief Walsh reported on the patrol staffing as of June 30, 2025, and said there are 182 sworn personnel. One officer is on administrative leave pending an Internal Affairs Investigation, and one officer is on extended workmen's compensation leave.

Chief Walsh said 157.5 sick days and 28.25 workmen's compensation days were used. Chief Walsh stated that background investigations were completed on Blair Kim and Clayton Corkins, who were interviewed by the police commission and sworn in on July 3, 2025. They started the police academy on July 11th.

Civilian Personnel Updates

Chief Walsh provided an update on the civilian personnel, stating that 20 telecommunicators/supervisors are assigned to combined dispatch. There is currently one open position, and one conditional job offer has been given, pending a background investigation. There are 14 civilian employees assigned to support staff positions, and they are fully staffed. There were no further civilian personnel changes.

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Departmental Initiatives

Chief Walsh reported on departmental initiatives and current issues for June, noting a significant drop in the major crime indices over the last three months of 2024. Summer slowdown days have begun, with a total of 1,268 traffic stops, 1,187 citations issued, and 13 arrests made. There was also preparation and planning for the July 4th events, specifically the fireworks, as well as other summer special events and activities.

Finance and Current Fiscal Year Budgeting

Chief Walsh stated that Mr. Docimo from Administrative Services oversees all budgets. Chief Walsh provided an overview of the June 2025 budget status and noted that in June, officers used excessive vacation time to comply with the collective bargaining agreement, which was in effect at the end of the fiscal year. The overtime and salary accounts for the fiscal year both ended with a surplus, and \$1.8 million was returned to finance for unused salary and overtime.

Mayor Rilling said he is impressed with the decrease in crime, which has been observed for several years in a row, and attributes much of it to the police department's community outreach efforts through the programs they run. He also attributed the decrease in salary and overtime to the effectiveness of police work and sound administrative budgeting, and congratulated the department's chiefs and officers. Chief Walsh noted that it is a team approach.

Commissioner Lopez thanked Chief Walsh for the new month-in-review dashboard that was made available. He also thanked Lieutenant Gulino and the IT team. It is a phenomenal way of communicating with our citizens. Chief Walsh said that was a priority of this team over the past few years.

OPERATIONS REPORT

PATROL STAFFING (JUNE)

Deputy Chief Blake reported on the Detective Bureau activity and said that 11 cases were opened in June, and noted that a suspect was extradited from New York for an arrest warrant charging robbery in the first degree and larceny in the sixth degree. A suspect was arrested for two warrants, charging him with larceny in the second degree, identity theft in the first degree, and offering home improvements without a proper certificate.

Deputy Chief Blake reported on the Special Services activity and said they opened 33 cases in June and noted that a search warrant was executed at Wally's Smoke Ship and Mr. Vape, and seized marijuana, and arrested those who were responsible. They also returned an individual from Georgia who was wanted on several narcotics warrants and arrested another individual by warrant for the sale of narcotics. During that time, they seized two illegal firearms and additional narcotics.

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Deputy Chief Blake reported on the Special Victims activity and stated that they handled 26 cases, which was a slower month in terms of making arrests, but a very busy month for investigations. In June, 53 family violence cases were opened, and it was noted that the SROs were assigned to summer school and city camps.

Deputy Chief Blake said 1641 citations were issued in June, for a total of 7,580 for the year.

Deputy Chief Blake reported on the Marine Unit's activity for May. There were 52 calls for service. Two kayakers were distressed and rescued, and a boat accident occurred, resulting in the boat sinking, with one person being rescued.

Deputy Chief Blake reported on the Patrol Division's highlights, stating that there were 78 calls for service, resulting in 12 vehicles being towed. They perform a variety of tasks in addition to their regular patrol duties, and they do a great job of following up on and removing abandoned vehicles from the streets or arranging for their removal by the owners.

Deputy Chief Lepore said there were 6,912 calls for service and 200 total arrests in June.

Commissioner Collier-Clemmons inquired whether the block, box, and stop sign violations reported in the 2025 operations report had increased due to the grants received for additional manpower in certain areas. Deputy Chief Blake noted that some of the most aggressive driving occurs in specific intersections, which is why the violations for blocking the box are most likely related to that. Still, there were grants in June separate from the one the traffic unit had, so it was probably a combination of both of those things that led to the stop sign enforcement.

COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

TRAINING REPORT (JUNE)

Deputy Chief Dinho reported on the Community Police Services Division, stating that they handled 1,803 calls for service in June. He said eight events were attended and provided an overview of the major events they had attended/assisted with during June.

Deputy Chief Dinho reported on the Traffic Unit and stated that for June, they had conducted 1,360 motor vehicle stops, installed seven child car seats, issued 62 parking violations, located three abandoned vehicles, made four DUI arrests, and cited 121 cell phone violations.

Deputy Chief Dinho stated that there were 133 selective enforcement locations and identified some of them.

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Deputy Chief Dinho provided an overview of the Behavioral Health Unit, which opened 41 cases in June, addressed 41 cases, closed 30 cases, hospitalized 22 cases, partnered with the state's attorney on two cases, referred 10 cases for services, and worked with families on 21 cases.

Deputy Chief Dinho provided an overview of the June training, stating that there were eight total subject areas and 52 officers in attendance.

Deputy Chief Dinho reported on Animal Control that 71 incidents were addressed, three animal bite incidents were reported, three enforcement/infractions/summonses were issued, and three dogs were adopted.

Commissioner Collier-Clemmons said that everything is about relationships, and these community events improve the relationships between the community and the police department, giving the community a sense of being able to relate and believe that when they call, the police will respond.

Commissioner Lopez inquired about the high number of participants in one training class compared to others. Deputy Chief Dinho said that class was one of the most important areas of training, specifically focusing on de-escalation of force, so that it would be used as little as possible.

Chief Walsh said that a new training initiative, called Box Training, was started in June. This initiative is an effective training method that exposes officers to various situations, requiring them to evaluate and respond quickly. This class was the first phase, and a second class will be held in the fall for those who were not able to participate.

Commissioner Collier-Clemmons asked what an unregistered instructor is. Deputy Chief Dinho said he would inquire and report back.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT (JUNE)

Deputy Chief Lepore reported on the grants and inspections, stating that there were no DUI grant hires for June. The speed and aggressive driving grant runs from July 1 to September 5. They received a preliminary award for the Project Safe Neighborhoods grant and are awaiting formal confirmation. The quarterly reporting requirements for grants were completed and submitted by June 30th, and we continue to monitor funding through new state and federal grants.

Deputy Chief Lepore reported on the staff inspections, stating that no new staff inspections were conducted in June.

Deputy Chief Lepore reported on the Crime Scene Unit that 75 people were fingerprinted (23 were for pistol permits). She said 16 DVDs / photographs were created for case requests, 12 cases were processed for evidence, 86 patrol cases required camera/photograph downloads of scenes, 14 cases were delivered to the State Forensic Lab for processing, 20 were returned to the police department, and 15 vehicles were stored for court cases. No background checks were conducted. Eight solicitor permits were issued for Comcast, and there were no requests for pawnbroker/precious metal permits. The CSI unit vehicle was not deployed during June.

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Deputy Chief Lepore said they assisted the Corporation Counsel with two ongoing civil cases. Directive changes/updates were distributed to all personnel in June. There are two intern students for the summer, and one is assigned to the Behavioral Health Unit, while the other is assigned to the Special Victims Unit.

Deputy Chief Lepore reported on the body and dashboard cameras, stating that there were no returns or replacements in June.

Deputy Chief Lepore stated that there were 35 new requests for case videos. Additionally, 17 cases were either transferred to 15 discs or nine USB drives, 17 electronic shares were sent to Stamford Court, and one internal request was received. Performance audits are conducted monthly on officers' equipment usage and video tagging. The activation rate for the month was 85.5%, which is consistent with the rate in May. Communication occurs regularly to address any issues, concerns, and troubleshooting needs.

Deputy Chief Lepore reported on the accreditation, stating that they continually collect evidence and review CALEA standards for compliance, as well as conduct annual audits. This year will include the fourth-year electronic file review in September and the physical on-site audit in October.

PERSONNEL MATTERS

TUITION REIMBURSEMENT-OFFICER MARK VOZZELLA

****COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE TUITION REIMBURSEMENT FOR OFFICER MARK VOZZELLA IN THE AMOUNT OF \$ 2,239.00.
THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chief Rilling noted the number of officers with advanced degrees and those pursuing them and said it is rather impressive. Based on their grades, they are performing exceptionally well, demonstrating a dedication to advancing themselves in the field of law enforcement and their chosen profession.

COMPLEMENTARY LETTERS

Deputy Chief Lepore stated that Chief Walsh received a complimentary letter from Peter Lawson after being pulled over by Officer Seitz for running a stop sign, in recognition of his exemplary courtesy.

(The commissioners congratulated Officer Seitz)

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ADJOURNMENT

****COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd