

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

**NOVEMBER 17, 2025**

**BY VIDEO CONFERENCE AND TELECONFERENCE**

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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](mailto:jwalsh@norwalkct.gov) to provide written comments prior to the meeting.

ATTENDANCE: Mayor Rilling, 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 Rilling called the meeting to order at 4:51 PM.

**I. ROLL CALL**

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

**II. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES OF OCTOBER 20, 2025**

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

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

**IV. RECOGNITION**

**A. OCTOBER OFFICER OF THE MONTH- OFFICER PAUL WARGO**

Chief Walsh read the following letter into the record:

I am honored to inform you that you have been selected as Officer of the Month for October 2025. Officer Paul Wargo, a member of our Traffic unit, was chosen for the arrest of a narcotics suspect arrested with a large quantity of narcotics who had fled on foot during a traffic stop on October 9, 2025.

During the evening hours of October 9, 2025, Officer Paul Wargo made a narcotics arrest following a traffic enforcement stop in East Norwalk. Officer Wargo was conducting enforcement operations focused on speeding and aggressive driving during the evening commute. At 6:32 PM, Officer Wargo, operating a marked police motorcycle, observed the operator of a motorcycle traveling westbound on Sunset Hill Avenue without a registration plate. Officer Wargo attempted to initiate a traffic stop as the operator, later identified as Vladimir Ruales-Espinoza, was stopped at a red light. Officer Wargo instructed Ruales-Espinoza to turn off the motorcycle, but he refused to comply and attempted to maneuver around Officer Wargo. Officer Wargo prevented him from leaving, at which point Ruales-Espinoza dropped his motorcycle and fled on foot.

After a foot pursuit across East Avenue, Officer Wargo deployed his department-issued taser and successfully took Ruales-Espinoza into custody. Additional officers responded to the scene and, during the investigation, located narcotics both on Ruales-Espinoza and in the area where he fled. Officers recovered the following two bags of cocaine weighing 102.57 grams, 10 smaller bags of cocaine weighing 11.12 grams, 15 Xanax bars, and 17 Oxycodone pills, which tested positive for fentanyl. Ruales-Espinoza was arrested and charged with possession with intent to sell narcotics, interfering with an officer, operating a motor vehicle under suspension, operating a motor vehicle without insurance, and operating an unregistered motor vehicle.

I want to name Officer Wargo Officer of the Month for October 2025 in recognition of his outstanding commitment to traffic safety within the City of Norwalk. His proactive enforcement efforts led to the arrest of an individual who was operating an unregistered and uninsured motorcycle while concealing a significant quantity of narcotics. Officer Wargo's attentiveness and dedication to roadway safety directly contributed to removing both an unsafe driver and illegal drugs from our community.

(The commissioners congratulated Officer Paul Wargo)

## **V. CHIEF'S EXECUTIVE REPORT**

### **A. OCTOBER EXECUTIVE REPORT**

#### **Sworn Personnel Updates**

Chief Walsh reported on patrol staffing as of October 31, 2025, stating that there are 183 sworn personnel. Officer Shannan Sherry and Officer Steven Luciano are on administrative leave, and Officer Lillian Martinez is on administrative restricted duty. Lieutenant Michael Sellas, Sergeant Lindsay Taylor, Sergeant Akeem Bryce, Detective Richard Seitz, and Detective Keven Versace were all promoted on October 16, 2025. Probationary Officers Lowe and VanSlyke were sworn in on October 16, 2025.

Chief Walsh said 168.25 sick days, and 26.38 workmen's compensation days were used, and two officers are on light duty due to injuries.

Chief Walsh said that Officers Kim, Corkins, Lowe, and Vanslyke are attending the POST Academy, and that Officers Kim and Corkins will graduate on December 17, 2025. Officer McDowell has completed field training. There are three background investigations underway for future openings.

#### **Civilian Personnel Updates**

Chief Walsh provided an update on civilian personnel, stating that 20 telecommunicators/supervisors are assigned to combined dispatch, one conditional offer has been made, and the background investigation is underway. 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 and said that on October 27, 2025, the department began its CALEA on-site assessment. The assessment consisted of interviews with the Chiefs and Division commanders, as well as in-depth evaluations of four critical areas: Peer support, Behavioral Health Unit, School Resource Officers, and Written Directive systems. No areas of non-compliance were identified, and no critical feedback was received. Full Gold Standard compliance is expected at the annual CALEA conference in March 2026. There was an assessor in the building for four days, reviewing these critical areas and inspecting the entire police department for CALEA compliance; it was a full inspection. Chief Walsh said the department's initiative on enforcement of illegal vape shops in relation to the new city code on registration and enforcement. There are currently 48 smoke and vape shops in the city. They have been taking enforcement action against the shops that have not registered.

## **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 October 2025 budget status and noted Mr. Docimo and division commanders are preparing the capital and operating budget proposal for the 2026/27 fiscal year. The overtime in five accounts is being monitored and is up 12% from October 2024 and up 17% from September 2025. Overtime usage at 26% of the budgeted amount in relation to 33% through the fiscal year. In October, 1,053 extra work jobs were scheduled, and 923 were filled, for a staffing rate of 85%. They worked a total of 10,587 hours for 67 clients who requested extra work in the city. Officers were called off 128 jobs that the client cancelled.

Chief Walsh said they met with representatives of Axon last week and are venturing to onboard a translation program through the body cameras. He provided an overview of the program and said that when an officer is speaking to a person who speaks a different language, the camera detects 36 languages and automatically translates it for the officer, and when the officer speaks back into the body camera, it will translate it back to the person in their language. It also gives them the ability to download the body camera and transcribe a conversation from the language to English. He said they will be working with Axon on a trial period for the entire police department, and he would like to onboard this as an operational cost in the new fiscal year, as it will be a tool well worth the additional cost.

Chief Walsh said that Deputy Chief Dinho worked on onboarding the Viper 911 program, which is a text-to-911 service, so when people call 911 in a foreign language, it translates it into text so the dispatcher.

## **VI. OPERATIONS REPORT**

### **A. OCTOBER PATROL AND INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES REPORT**

Deputy Chief Blake reported on the Detective Bureau's activity and said that 29 cases were opened in October, noting that a suspect was arrested and charged with burglary in the third degree, larceny in the first degree, theft of a firearm, and conspiracy charges related to a burglary. A suspect was arrested at Riker's Island and charged with two counts of larceny in the third degree, identity theft in the third degree, and forgery in the third degree.

Deputy Chief Blake reported on the Special Services activity and said they opened 16 cases, noting that a search warrant was executed at A-Z and King Vape Shops, seizing over 16 pounds of marijuana, resulting in two arrests. A suspect who was wanted in Florida was arrested for seven counts of promoting sexual acts of a child.

Deputy Chief Blake reported on Special Victims activity and said they opened 53 cases in October, noting that several ongoing criminal investigations are underway. The public safety cadets held an award and promotional ceremony. 43 family violence cases were opened.

Deputy Chief Bake reported on the Marine Unit's activity for October. There were nine calls for service, and 231 year-to-date, with 22 people rescued.

Deputy Chief Blake reported on the Patrol Division's highlights, noting that the Abandoned Vehicle Unit had 84 calls for service, resulting in 19 vehicles being towed. Deputy Chief Blake said 672 citations were issued in October, bringing the year's total to 11,946, and he provided an overview of the highlights.

Deputy Chief Blake said there were 6,241 calls for service, 168 total arrests in October. He provided an overview of the calls for service by platoon.

## **VII. COMMUNITY AFFAIRS**

### **A. OCTOBER COMMUNITY POLICING AND TRAINING REPORT**

Deputy Chief Dinho reported on the Community Police Services Division, stating that they handled 830 calls for service in October. He said 31 events were attended and provided an overview of the major events they had attended/assisted with during October.

Deputy Chief Dinho reported on the Traffic Unit and stated that in October, they conducted 306 motor vehicle stops, and he provided a breakdown of the activity.

Deputy Chief Dinho said the accident reconstruction team had no new accident investigations this month. He noted that Marc Owens was arrested on October 28, 2025, for a July fatality, for misconduct with a motor vehicle, distracted driving, and failure to yield to a pedestrian

Deputy Chief Dinho stated that there were 64 selective enforcement locations and identified some of them.

Deputy Chief Dinho provided an overview of the Behavioral Health Unit, which opened 51 cases in October, addressed 51, closed 32, hospitalized 27, referred 14 for services, and worked with families on nine.

Deputy Chief Dinho provided an overview of the October training, stating that there were 10 subject areas and 37 were in attendance.

Deputy Chief Dinho reported that Animal Control addressed 54 incidents. There was one animal bite, 4 infractions, and three dogs were adopted.

Commissioner Paladino said the Traffic Unit is doing a fantastic job and is making a difference.

Commissioner Lopez asked if there is data on the number of tickets issued to people from out of town. Deputy Chief Dinho said he does not have that available, but their system does.

## **VIII. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT**

### **A. OCTOBER ADMINISTRATION REPORT**

Deputy Chief Lepore reported on the grants and inspections, stating that the DUI grant was submitted and awarded in October for \$99,000, and is an increase of approximately \$8,000 from last year. The enforcement dates run from October to September 2026. The Click It or Ticket grant was submitted and awarded in October for \$5,000. There are two waves of enforcement dates associated with this grant. One will be in November and the other in May 2026. Verbal award notification was received for the Project Safe Neighborhood Grant and is awaiting confirmation.

Deputy Chief Lepore reported on the staff inspections, stating that none were conducted during October. The annual property room inspection is scheduled for November.

Deputy Chief Lepore reported that the Crime Scene Unit fingerprinted 108 people (37 for pistol permits). She said 26 DVDs / photographs were created for case requests, 19 cases were processed for evidence, 79 patrol cases required camera/photograph downloads of scenes, 13 cases were delivered to the State Forensic Lab for processing, 18 were returned to the police department, and 16 vehicles were stored for court cases. Three background checks were conducted for a massage therapist: two at the Golden Hand Spa and one at Bliss Nail Spa, which was denied. Three solicitor permits were processed for Smart Roofs Solar, and one pawnbroker/precious metal permit was requested for Hat City Pawn LLC. Six vape shop applications were processed. The CSI unit vehicle was not deployed in October, and monthly maintenance was performed with no issues.

Deputy Chief Lepore reported on the professional standards and accreditation, stating that they worked with the Corporation Council on various legal cases. There was one student inquiry about an internship, and they are awaiting a response. Directive changes are currently being

drafted to reflect legal and CALEA updates. Various sworn officer job descriptions were updated to reflect the current table of organization and minor corrections.

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

Deputy Chief Lepore stated that 59 new requests for case videos had been received. Additionally, three cases were downloaded onto four discs and three external shares, 22 electronic shares were sent to Stamford Court, and two internal requests were received. Monthly performance audits are conducted on officers' equipment usage and video tagging. The activation rate for the month was 84.6%, an increase from September's rate. Communication occurs regularly to address any issues, concerns, and troubleshooting.

Deputy Chief Lepore reported on the accreditation and said the CALEA onsite was conducted on October 26<sup>th</sup> through October 30<sup>th</sup>. The assessor found no deficiencies and favorable results, and they are awaiting the final report. The property officer/custodian conducted an audit in October. The mandatory audit must be conducted when the primary officer in charge of the property room changes. There were no discrepancies found.

Mayor Rilling said he had met with the assessor, who was on site for CALEA, and that he had glowing comments about the Police Department's inspection. The Police Department has been accredited for over 30 years, has passed every inspection, and is among the longest-accredited agencies in the country.

(The commissioners congratulated the Chief's)

## IX. PERSONNEL MATTERS

### **A. DROP PLAN- SERGEANT DREW SEDLOCK**

**\*\* COMMISSIONER SUMPTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE DROP PLAN FOR SERGEANT DREW SEDLOCK BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2026, AND ENDING DECEMBER 1, 2030.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

### **MASTER'S DEGREE STIPEND- OFFICER NICHOLAS VANSYLKE**

**\*\* COMMISSIONER PALADINO MOVED TO APPROVE THE MASTER'S DEGREE STIPEND FOR OFFICER NICHOLAS VANSYLKE.**

Mayor Rilling said the level of education the members of the Police Department are acquiring is very impressive.

## X. INFORMATIONAL LETTERS

### A. COMPLIMENTARY LETTERS

Chief Walsh received a complimentary letter from the DVCC expressing appreciation to Deputy Chief Blake for the support this month and during Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October.

Chief Walsh said that Deputy Chief Blake received a complimentary email from Diana Paladino, Registrar of Voters, thanking the officers for an awesome job at the polls.

Chief Walsh received a complimentary email from Mateo Lopez, a resident currently taking part in the Norwalk Citizens Police Academy, who had the opportunity to complete a ride-along with Officer Macari and praised him for his professionalism, support, and respect throughout the experience.

Chief Walsh received a complimentary email from Dennis McChesney praising the Marine Unit for responding to his disabled vessel on Long Island Sound.

(The commissioners congratulated the Officers)

## ADJOURNMENT

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

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:41 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd