

REGULAR SESSION MINUTES
JULY 11, 2023
BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS
NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT
VIDEOCONFERENCE AND CONFERENCE CALL VIA ZOOM
AND IN PERSON

PRESENT: Commissioners Darrell Brooks (joined - 6:08 p.m.); Michael Lawlor; Tracey Meares; Isaias Miranda; Evelise Ribeiro; and Donald Walker (joined - 6:07 p.m.)

Chief Karl Jacobson: Department of Police Service
Assistant Chief Manmeet Bhagtana: Department of Police Service
Captain Dell Rose: Department of Police Service
Lieutenant Dana Smith: Department of Police Service
Sergeant Yelena Borisova: Department of Police Service
Sergeant Paul Finch: Department of Police Service
Sergeant Rose Melendez: Department of Police Service
Officer D. Cohen: Department of Police Service
Officer Reginald McGlotten: Department of Police Service
Asia Johnson-Clark: Administrative Assistant

Michelle Duprey, Esquire: Deputy Corporation Counsel
Regina Rush-Kittle: Chief Administrative Officer

Shane Bruno
Mia Cortes
Jill Flanigan
Daniel Hunt
Nancy Jackson-Jordan
Yaogue Liu
Eric Lopez
Luis Sandoval
Nancy Surace
Derek's iPhone
Motorola One 5g VW

OPEN SESSION

The Regular Session meeting of the Board of Police Commissioners was called to order at 6:06 p.m. by Evelise Ribeiro, Chair.

* Commissioner Ribeiro indicated that they would add to the Agenda 35 Conditional Offers of Employments from the Eligibility List #22-68CR.

AGENDA

- ** Commissioner Miranda moved the motion to Amend the Agenda to include 35 Conditional Offers of Employment from the Eligibility List #22-68CR.
- ** Commissioner Lawlor seconded
- ** Motion passed unanimously

DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Discussion and Approval of the Special Meeting Minutes of June 7, 2023
 Discussion and Approval of the Regular Meeting Minutes of June 13, 2023
 Discussion and Approval of the Special Meeting Minutes of June 28, 2023

- ** Commissioner Walker moved the motion to Approve the Special Meeting Minutes of June 7, 2023
- ** Commissioner Miranda seconded
- ** Motion passed unanimously

- ** Commissioner Walker moved the motion to Approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of June 13, 2023
- ** Commissioner Meares seconded
- ** Motion passed unanimously

- ** Commissioner Walker moved the motion to Approve the Special Meeting Minutes of June 28, 2023
- ** Commissioner Meares seconded
- ** Motion passed unanimously

CHIEF’S REPORT

Chief Karl Jacobson

- Chief Jacobson greeted the Commission.
- He indicated that he had been Chief of the New Haven Police Department for a year on July 6, 2023. He thanked the commissioners for all they have done and for their support, and in the way all have worked together to deal with problems, personnel issues and also with recruitment. Recruitment will be ongoing until the Department’s vacancies are filled.
- Chief Jacobson indicated that in retrospect the Randy Cox incident does not define the Department. There are a lot of good police officers that believe in the mission and what is discussed in these Commission’s meetings. They will move forward as a Department.
- Unfortunately, there have been 13 homicides this year but nine of them have been solved. They were solved due to the Department’s community support. Even with an incident such as the Randy Cox incident, in a short period of time, the Department has been able to regain the community’s support, he believed, through officers exhibiting procedural justice and building that police legitimacy. Nine out of the 13 homicides to date have led to arrests. The Department hasn’t had this type of clearance numbers in a very long time.
- The Department’s use-of-force numbers are significantly down this year. In the first six months of last year, there were 481 uses of force. In the first six months of this year there have

been 133 uses of force. They also looked at Internal Affairs complaints which are down by 24 percent.

■ They also looked at the productivity of officers. The Department's motor vehicle stops are up 76 percent. The Department's gun arrests and Patrol, which is proactive activity, are up 83 percent. So the Department's officers are still working and pushing forward for a safer community.

■ His administration has brought a number of new equipment to the Department with things such as LPRs and cameras, Stop Stick StarChase. The Department is embarking presently on a new records management system that will streamline the tracking payroll, records management, and provide a better dispatching system. All of these initiatives will help the Department move forward.

■ Chief Jacobson indicated that he had recently attended an award ceremony in Washington D.C. during which the New Haven Police Department was one of two police departments presented with an award by the Director of the ATF for the Department's Gun Crime Intel Center and the Department's gun seizures numbers, and its ability to get guns off the street. So it was the New Haven Police Department and Miami Police Department that received awards. They were really proud to attend that event and accept the award on behalf of the men and women of this Department.

■ In looking at the overall crime numbers, yes, the homicides are up. However, overall, this year, there have been 48 people shot. Homicides and non-fatal shootings combined number 48. Last year at this exact time, there were 68 people shot. So the Department is trending downward. Unfortunately, more people have passed due to their injuries. We see 20 less people shot in this city which is significant.

■ Chief Jacobson stated that he felt there was a good working relation between the Board of Police Commissioners and himself. He wants to continue that in the coming years. He intimated that he did not plan on going anywhere. He had been recently voted in as the Vice President of South Central Police Chiefs Association and as an Executive Board member of the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association. He intends to work hard with these organizations to make policing better, to be a model for the state which he believes New Haven could be, was once and would be again.

■ When they were looking at data and statistics, over a period of four years say, they've averaged about 37,000 calls for service from the January to June period of time. They found that now have had 49,000 calls for service which is a substantial increase. He felt the increase is because the community is trusting the Department more, and trusting that the Department will get the job done. He and his professor counterparts on this call know that there's data that shows that. If the police are being called more, it doesn't necessary mean there's more crime. It means that your community trusts you.

■ Chief Jacobson indicated that he felt the Department was moving forward. He, again, thanked the Commission and everybody attending the meeting. He looks forward to the coming years.

■ Commissioner Meares thanked Chief Jacobson for that great report. The shooting numbers and homicides numbers are interesting. She thought it was important to point out that the shooting numbers are going now. One wouldn't expect the homicides to be going up like that. She was sure they had done this analysis. She indicated that there was a weird thing that happened in Baltimore like about 20 years ago where they were able to address some of their homicide numbers just by making sure that either there is a faster EMT response or that people

got to the hospital more quickly. Often, homicides are just shooting where there isn't first aid that arrives quickly enough, you know, things like homeostatic bandages and the like. She wondered if this Department had done such an analysis.

■ Chief Jacobson indicated that the Department had not. He noted that it was interesting. Last year they had six homicides at this time and four of them were group related. This year with the 13, only two were group related. So they've seen a decrease in that group related exchange of gun fire back and forth which is clearly the reason there have been less people shot.

■ Commissioner Meares said it was worth thinking about. She indicated that it wasn't necessarily something the Department was in control of as an agency. This is definitely what happened in Baltimore. Kurt Schmoke did this analysis and made sure that people got to the hospital more quickly and homicide rates went down. Chief Jacobson thanked Commissioner Meares, and indicated that Department would look into it.

■ Commissioner Lawlor indicated that he was glad Commissioner Meares followed-up in the way she did. He noticed the same thing when Chief Jacobson mentioned fewer people being shot, and, unfortunately more died. There was more homicides. He asked if the Department had a breakdown of how many of the homicides involved a firearm versus a stabbing or some other cause of death. He was curious about that.

■ Chief Jacobson responded by saying that all 13 homicides involved firearms. Commissioner Lawlor thanked Chief Jacobson.

■ Commissioner Ribeiro congratulated Chief Jacobson for making it to a year. It is, indeed, a milestone. It's been a good and tumultuous year, but Chief Jacobson had survived as had his team, and the Commission. She further indicated that the Chief has had a lot of accomplishments for the year.

■ Commissioner Ribeiro indicated that Chief Jacobson had mentioned hiring. She asked about the numbers of people that had been hired since Chief Jacobson became chief.

■ Chief Jacobson indicated that he did not have that exact number. He knew that last year at this time there were 328 officers. Presently, there are 330 officers. The Department had lost 12 to retirement and 10 or 11 officers to other police departments. So, they have at least hired that many, but Sergeant Finch may have it. He thought the number of new hires was about 30 or 40 over the last year and a half.

■ Commissioner Ribeiro indicated that Sergeant Finch stated that it the number was 43. That's excellent. However, she knew a number of them had gone to other academies. She congratulated Chief Jacobson and his staff.

■ Commissioner Brooks indicated he wanted to congratulate Chief Jacobson on his recent appointment and election to the number of stated boards as it relates to law enforcement which he believes is a testament to his leadership and his ability to lead this Department. He congratulated Chief Jacobson.

■ Chief Jacobson thanked him.

PERSONNEL MATTERS

1. Discussion and action on the recommendation of Chief Karl Jacobson to make 35 Conditional Offers of Employment from the Eligibility List #22-68CR.

■ Assistant Chief Bhagtana stated that the Department would be asking that 35 Conditional Offers of employment be approved and sent out by Human Resources in the next few days.

She indicated that Chief Jacobson should state that for the record, if he agreed.

■ Chief Jacobson replied by saying, yes, of course.

** Commissioner Lawlor motioned to Approve the 35 Conditional Offers of Employment from the Eligibility List #22-68CR

** Commissioner Walker seconded

■ Commissioner Ribeiro indicated that she wanted to thank Madam CAO, Regina Rush-Kittle and her staff, Assistant Chief Bhagtana, Sergeant Finch and also the Civil Service for holding a special meeting today because they know the importance of continuing to hire officers. The goal was the get this approved this evening so the background workers could then continue to their work. She thanked everyone involved in expediting this process.

** Motion passed unanimously

INTERNAL AFFAIRS REPORT

Lieutenant Smith

■ Lieutenant Smith indicated he would be speaking about five closed cases for the month.

IA CASE NO. 22I-071: On September 17th of '21 Interim Chief Dominguez was notified by the Las Vegas Police Metropolitan Department that several New Haven officers were involved in a severe Motor Vehicle accident in Las Vegas on the morning of September 17, 2021. This resulted in both fatal and non-fatal injuries. Preliminary information was received that Officer Ferraro was arrested for Driving Under the Influence, resulting in death, as well Reckless Driving resulting in death of substantial bodily harm. The disposition was, sustained.

IA CASE NO. 22C-049: On July 20th, '22, the Department received a civilian complaint form from Mr. Steven Valentin-Rodriguez that the officers harassed him because he was arrested under warrant stemming from a domestic dispute. After review of the body-worn camera footage and the incident reports, it was determined that probable cause existed to effect the arrest of Mr. Rodriguez for the incidents. The body-worn camera footage was consistent with the information and the case incident reports and supplemental reports. Mr. Rodriguez allegations that officers harassed him was dispelled by the evidence contained in this investigation. These officers acted in accordance with the New Haven General Orders, policies and procedures. This was unfounded.

IA CASE NO. 22C-066: On October 5th of '22, they received a civil complaint from Mr. Sanchez. He stated that on the 29th of March of '22 there was an execution of a search warrant. During this search warrant his vehicle was seized but was not listed on the search warrant. Mr. Berrios-Sanchez did not have the legal right to dispute the vehicle's tow, and did not have any documentations such as a bill of sale or a title from the Department of Motor Vehicle to prove ownership, to prove the vehicle belonged to him. This was also confirmed through the Vice President of Columbus Auto Body Works. This was exonerated.

IA CASE NO. 22C-006: On January 23rd of this year, the Department received a complaint from Mr. Moises Bermudez. He alleged in this complaint that the officers did not take his complaint serious or take action to address his noise complaint. After review of the body-worn camara footage and the CAD report for the incident, it appeared that there was no excessive noise emanating from the apartment at the time that of the officers' arrival. Officers were polite and respectful while interacting with all parties. These officers also spent time mediating and explaining to both parties that they could contact their property manage if the issue was a continuing problem. This was unfounded..

IA CASE NO. 23C-014: On February 27th of '23 the Department received a complaint from a Ms. Patricia Reynoso. Ms. Reynoso stated that the officers were investigating her incident that happened on December 17th of '22. In her complainant, on that date, she stated that the officer had not applied for an arrest warrant for the offender. She wanted to know why the officer had not submitted the arrest warrant application. It was verified on March 10th of '23 through Sergeant Roberts who is the Department's Court Liaison for GA23. He confirmed that the warrant was submitted properly on December 17th, '22 which is the same date of that incident. This was also unfounded.

■ Lieutenant Smith asked if he should go over the numbers. Commissioner Ribeiro replied by saying that they all received the statistics. She asked all the commissioners if they had any questions, hearing no response, she indicated to Lieutenant Smith that the Commission was good.

PERSONNEL MATTERS

1. Discussion and action on the recommendation from Chief Karl Jacobson to remove the following candidates from Eligibility List #22-68

- A. #8 Dayro Feliz
- B. #70 Shane Bruno
- C. #83 Eric Lopez
- D. #84 Nancy Surace
- E. #85 Luis Sandoval

■ Sergeant Finch indicated all the candidates were in attendance with the exception of Candidate #8, Dayro Feliz.

■ Commissioner Ribeiro asked all the candidates if they wanted to be heard in an open or a closed session and explained what each session meant. All opted for a closed session.

**** Commissioner Lawlor motioned to go into Executive Session to discuss the Chief's Recommendations to remove these candidates from Eligibility List #22-68**

**** Commissioner Walker seconded**

**** Motion passed unanimously**

■ Commissioner Ribeiro invited the commissioners, Chief Jacobson, Lieutenant Smith, Attorney Duprey, CAO Regina Rush-Kittle, Jill Flanigan, Yaogue Liu; background Officers Cohen and Reginald McGlotten. In the room with her are the following: Assistant Chief Bhagtana, Officer Borisova, Captain Dell. She indicated the candidates would be brought in one at a time.

■ Commissioner Brooks asked if Commissioner Ribeiro had mentioned Sergeant Finch. Commissioner Ribeiro replied by saying that he was in the room with her.

The Board entered Executive Session at 6:30 p.m.

- ** **Commissioner Meares motioned to Exit Executive Session**
- ** **Commissioner Walker seconded**
- ** **Motion passed unanimously**

The Board exited Executive Session at 8:12 p.m.

- ** Commissioner Walker motioned to follow the Recommendation of Chief Karl Jacobson to Remove Dayro Feliz from the Eligibility List #22-68
- ** Commissioner Walker seconded
- ** Motion passed unanimously

- ** Commissioner Walker motioned to follow Chief Jacobson's recommendation to Remove Shane Bruno, Candidate No. 70 from the Eligibility List #22-68
- ** Commissioner Meares seconded
- ** Motion passed unanimously

- ** Commissioner Walker motioned to follow Chief Jacobson's Recommendation to Remove Candidate Eric Lopez from the Eligibility List #22-68
- ** Commissioner Brooks seconded
- ** For: None
- ** Against: Commissioners Brooks., Lawlor, Meares, Miranda, Ribeiro and Walker
- ** Motion failed unanimously.

■ Commissioner Ribeiro indicated that the motion to removed failed. The candidate would move forward in the process.

- ** Commissioner Walker motioned to adhere to Chief Jacobson's Recommendation to Remove Candidate Nancy Surace from the Eligibility List #22-68
- ** Commissioner Brooks seconded
- ** Motion passed unanimously

- ** Commissioner Walker motioned to follow the Chief Jacobson's Recommendation to Remove Candidate Luis Sandoval from the Eligibility List #22-68
- ** Commissioner Meares seconded
- ** Motion passed unanimously

RETIREMENTS (For Board information only)

Records Clerk Susan Frumento, eff., June 30, 2023
Officer Duane Biro, eff., June 30, 2023

RESIGNATION (For Board information only)

None.

RECRUITMENT/SELECTION COMMITTEE REPORT

Sergeant Finch

■ Sergeant Finch indicated that July and August is the time when Department actually rolls out its new recruitment campaign. It is coming soon. They have looked through educating through video as far as letting the general public know what the police academy is like, what the Patrol Division is like and also what the Detective Bureau is like so they can get inside scoop on how the Department operates. They continue to push advertisements in high-traffic areas such as the Metro North Railroad. They will be doing some more advertisements on billboards. They are involved in all that the summertime has to offer within New Haven on the Green and various towns and different events.

■ Commissioner Ribeiro thanked Sergeant Finch.

EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE REPORT

Consideration and Vote on proposed General Order 9.02 Radio Communications

■ Commissioner Meares indicated Captain Dell would be presenting this General Order.

■ Captain Dell indicated that the Department has a whole chapter dedicated to communications in the Tier I accreditation standards. Most of these standards are already in place but they just need to be codified in policy. In particular, the following has been added to the General Order: The Department’s Radio Communications will be conducted in accordance with FCC procedures and requirements. And every officer will have their radio with them whenever they are on duty.

■ Captain Dell further indicated that in addition, they added language that specifies that missing person broadcast take place within two hours. This is a requirement of COLLECT. And lastly, they added language to limit the transmission of sensitive information over the police radio. They are also working with PSAP to ensure that the Department has proper alternative power sources and generators in place in case of outages.

■ Commissioner Ribeiro asked for any comments or questions.

■ Commissioner Meares commented that both the Efficiency Committee and the entire Commission had a chance to review that policy and offer comments.

** Commissioner Meares recommended that the Commission vote and adopt this policy on Radio Communications, General Order 9.02

** Commissioner Lawlor seconded

** Motion passed unanimously

■ Commissioner Ribeiro thanked Commissioner Meares, Captain Dell and staff for working on this. They look forward to the many more General Orders that will come before the Commission.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

There was none.

OTHER BUSINESS

Discussion and action on the reimbursement request from Detective Paul Vakos

Discussion and action on the reimbursement request from Officer Evan Kelly

■ Commissioner Ribeiro indicated that this was for broken eyeglasses. She asked if there was any additional information. She indicated that the Commission should have received the background information.

** Commissioner Walker recommended that the Commission act on the reimbursement request from Officer Evan Kelly for eyeglasses

** Commissioner Brooks seconded

■ Commissioner Ribeiro indicated that the background regarding this request was not sent to the Commission. She knew these were sent to the Commission in the past. She asked that moving forward, these be sent to the commissioners to ensure they have it. Per union contract, the maximum amount that could be reimbursed is \$250. Officer Kelly request is for \$270. The Commission may want to amend that motion so it clear regarding the amount being reimbursed.

■ Chief Jacobson indicated that the reimbursement amount has been in the Collective Bargaining Agreement for multiple years. They are working on CBA where they do increase that given the cost of eyeglasses is \$270. For this evening, it can only be \$250 until it is changed.

■ Commissioner Brooks withdrew his second so Commissioner Walker could amend his motion. Commissioner Walker thanked Commissioner Brooks.

** Commissioner Walker amended his motion that the Commission act on the request by Officer Evan Kelly to replace his eyeglasses for the maximum amount that is allowed of \$250

** Commissioner Brooks seconded

** Motion passed unanimously

Discussion and action on the reimbursement request from Detective Paul Vakos

■ Commissioner Ribeiro indicated this request was for eyeglasses as well.

■ Commissioner Walker indicated that Detective Vakos's request was for two pairs of eyeglasses for two separate incidents. He asked if the request should be redone so that there are two separate requests.

■ Commissioner Ribeiro replied by saying that she did not think so. It is per incident and not per item. For example, if it's one incident and they lost multiple items, they can only get up to \$250.

■ Chief Jacobson commented by saying that if there are two different incidents, Detective Vakos could get \$250 twice.

** Commissioner Walker motion to act on the request for Detective Paul Vakos to reimburse him for eyeglasses for the maximum amount allowed to do at this point per incident of \$250

** Commissioner Brooks seconded

■ Commissioner Brook indicated it appeared there were two different incidents. There were two cases numbers during which these eyeglasses were broken.

■ Commissioner Walker indicated that the first incident was on July 26, 2022, and the second incident was on February 24th, '23.

■ Chief Jacobson indicated that Detective Vakos could get \$250 twice. He apologized.

■ Commissioner Brooks withdrew his second so Commissioner Walker could amend his motion.

** Commissioner Walker amended his motion to state that the reimbursement for Detective Paul Vakos for eyeglasses on two separate incidents would be for the maximum amount of \$500, at \$250 per incident

** Commissioner Brooks seconded

** Motion passed unanimously

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were none.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

ADJOURNMENT

** Commissioner Brooks moved to Adjourn the Regular Meeting

** Commissioner Miranda seconded

** Motion passed unanimously

The next regular meeting will be on August 8, 2023.

The Board adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Sofonye Otunba-Payne