



City of New Haven Civilian Review Board

Minutes for Monthly Meeting of the Board

July 24, 2023

6:00 PM

1. Roll Call 6:05

Present: Avshalom-Smith, Carter, Counsel, Comins, Fawcett, Jenkins, Kimbro, Pescatore, Rivera-Berrios

Absent: Richardson (refused to speak or vote, as attendee only).

Special Guests: Chief Jacobson, Assistant Chief Etienne, Lt. Dana Smith, Al Lucas (Board of Alders), Alyson Heimer (Administrator).

Members of the Public: Mary O'Leary (NHR), Natasha Ayala-Martin

2. Approval of Minutes 6:05

a. Rivera Berrios motioned to approve the monthly meeting minutes for June 2023. Fawcett Seconded. Voice Vote 8-0-1. Comins Abstained.

b. Rivera Berrios motioned to approve the monthly meeting minutes for September 2022. Jenkins Seconded. Voice Vote 8-0-1. Comins Abstained.

Member Richardson joined at this time as an attendee.

c. Rivera Berrios motioned to approve the monthly meeting minutes for May 2022. Jenkins Seconded. Voice Vote 7-0-2. Comins and Kimbro Abstained.

d. Rivera Berrios motioned to approve the monthly meeting minutes for March 2022. Jenkins Seconded. Voice Vote 7-0-2. Comins and Kimbro Abstained.

3. Vote on the RFP 6:10

a. Rivera Berrios voted to approve the legal counsel RFP for candidate Beth Merkin. Jenkins Seconded.

Avshalom-Smith: Yes

Carter: Yes

Counsel: Abstain

Comins: Abstain



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Fawcett: Yes
Jenkins: Yes
Kimbrow: Abstain
Pescatore: Yes
Richardson: Did not vote.
Rivera-Berrios: Yes

Motion approved - 6-0-4. This RFP will now proceed to Corp Counsel for contract processing.

4. Chief Presentation - 6:15 - 6:29

Chief Jacobson: Present at the meeting to address the concerns brought up by the Board. Item 1: for the lobby, we have looked into grants to redo the lobby and we plan to visit other police HQ in the region to see how other departments are set up.

Member Carter: For a person who would like to file a complaint and does not feel comfortable, how would they do so when they are worried about intimidation.

Chief Jacobson: If someone completes a form online and does not put their name, they can file at the library or drop off an anonymous complaint.

Pescatore: Can you elaborate on why you say the Police Department is in a bad location?

Chief Jacobson: Ideally we should relocate the department to a different location.

Jenkins: It took years to relocate the West Haven police department. How realistic is relocation?

Chief Jacobson: I plan to be here a while so it is something we'd like to move towards.

Item 2: Coverage

Chief Jacobson: there are vacancies that are not funded, and so there are shortages. We are doing the best we can to cover shifts. We have 330 officers in the department at this time. A more reasonable number to serve the city is around 400. 60 positions short at different levels. Need 8 detectives, 2 Lts, but front line patrol officer is the most needed.

Pescatore: what's the reason for the loss of personnel?



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Chief Jacobson: The city does not have a current contract. Other departments in the region offer more competitive salaries and may have other differences that make the departments look more appealing. We didn't keep up with hiring during COVID when people were leaving the force.

Asst Chief Etienne: Policing is not a glamorous job, and its become out of fashion to serve. We used to have 1000 applicants when we posted for entry level officer training, and now we only get 100 applicants. It's hard to build a class of 40 or 60 new officers with that few applicants.

Carter: In my neighborhood (Fair Haven) we are concerned with quality of life issues - dirt bikers, noise complaints, illegal dumping, etc. The low number of police is making responding to these issues more difficult.

Chief Jacobson: Yes, we would need more patrol to address all of the complaints we get to the 911 number because they aren't getting the response they want on the non-emergency line. Citizens can also file anonymous tips through the phone.

Pescatore: The CMTs and the Board should better publicize the anonymous tip line.

Chief Jacobson: There is a private place for people to file complaints or open cases outside the lobby. The front desk staff has been directed to take any sensitive conversations into the sidebar room. We have also added signage in the HQ and at city hall to file a complaint using a QR code and we made that signage in Spanish as well.

Fawcett: people work harder when there are rewards, and not just punishments. This system is set up to only offer the stick and we need a way to give carrots.

Chief Jacobson: Last item is about brainstorming ideas for a survey or submitting a compliment. We are having an awards ceremony coming up in the Fall, for officers who have outstanding performance or have been stars in the community. There could be a form online Submit a Compliment in addition to Submit a Complaint.

Administrator Heimer: Can high school students do ride-alongs? What outreach to students thinking about future careers does the department offer?

Chief Jacobson: we are restarting the Cadet program for people under 18. They might be able to join PSTAT and then become officers at 21 or 22.

Carter: The cadet to PSTAT to officer is a good pipeline.



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Anonymous Attendee: why is there so much procrastination when it comes to a domestic violence call? Also why is the mayor telling NHPD to fall back on certain calls including domestic violence calls?

Chief Jacobson: The NHPD does not take orders from the Mayor's office. If there are any delays when it comes to domestic violence, usually that is because it takes a while to get warrants.

Chief Jacobson left the meeting at this time.

5. IA - 6:30 - 6:45

(Submitted and sent by email for review before meeting.)

- a. General questions or comments about statistics, Statistics Graph
4 officers were terminated related to the Randy Cox case. We also have 2 officers who received verbal reprimands - they were first time offenders.
- b. Use of Force - Taser use is significantly down from last year only 3 uses in 2023 compared to 19 by this time last year.

Jenkins: What are you doing about the Kia Boys and all the cars being stolen?

Asst Chief Etienne: I understand the uptick in car theft and a lot of these kids are underage. I urge you not to confront the kids who are taking these cars.

Jenkins: Why aren't we able to hold the parents accountable?

Asst Chief: I wish we could. Many times the parents are at work and have no idea what the kids are doing. They are under age so they are released back to their parents and not held.

Carter: Can the police offer support for kids in the community to do some kind of programming as an alternative to criminal action as a way to get a thrill?

Asst Chief: we would support any entity trying to do something positive in the community to better this situation.

Member Kimbro logged off at 7:18pm.

c. Case Updates and Questions

i. 22C-049

Date: July 20, 2022

Mr. Rodriguez claimed that officers arrested him and harassed him. He was arrested on a warrant. The body-worn camera showed that the officers were acting within the general orders.

Disposition: unfounded.

Discussion: none.

ii. 22C-066



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Berrios Sanchez reported his car was towed illegally and the police ignored his complaint. The complainant did not own the car and could not show proof of ownership. The columbus auto body was interviewed

Disposition: Exonerated.

Discussion: none.

iii. 22C-006

Date: July 20, 2022

Summary: Moises Rodriguez filed a complaint that there was a noise violation but the officers did not file a report. The BWC footage showed that officers handled the situation appropriately.

Disposition: unfounded.

Discussion: Pescatore: Can officers not file a noise complaint unless they hear it?

Lt. Smith: Correct - the officer needs to hear the issue and know how loud it is, otherwise they won't know if there has been a violation.

Asst Chief Etienne: If there has been a pattern of noise complaints, for example if an officer responds to calls multiple times to the same address, they talk to neighbors who corroborate the issue, then they can pursue fines or charges.

iv. 23C-014

Date: February 27, 2023

The complainant wanted to know why there was a three month delay between an alleged assault and the issuing of an arrest warrant for a crime which occurred on December 17, 2022.

Disposition: unfounded.

Discussion: none.

v. Updates on any complaints currently in IA

6. General Public Comment (Questions in chat and public comment) - 6:46-6:50

Natasha Ayala-Martin: kids in my neighborhood hit my car with their ATVs and dirt bikes and I have to pay out of pocket for repairs. This isn't fair and these kids need to be arrested.

Asst Chief Etienne: It's frustrating for us also to arrest these kids but then they never go to trial and there's no ramification for their actions.

7. Unfinished business and General Policy Items - 6:50-7:00

Rivera-Berrios will follow up with Lt Smith about complaints since June and missing cases.



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8. Discussion of complaints and reports and vote on new cases to review -7:00-7:25
 - a. Discussion on any current cases
None.

9. Motion to adjourn by Rivera-Berrios, Jenkins seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:55pm.

Per Order: Hon. Anne Marie Rivera-Berrios, Chair; Attest: Hon. Michael Smart,
City/Town Clerk.

Agenda Prepared by Administrator Alyson C. Heimer.