

REGULAR SESSION MINUTES
JUNE 9, 2020
BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS
NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT
VIRTUAL AND TELEPHONIC VIA ZOOM

PRESENT: Commissioners Anthony Dawson; Isaias Miranda; Evelise Ribeiro;
and Donald Walker

Chief Otoniel Reyes: Department of Police Service
Assistant Chief Renee Dominguez: Department of Police Service
Assistant Chief Herbert Sharp: Department of Police Service
Lieutenant David Zannelli: Department of Police Service
Sergeant Yelena Borisova: Department of Police Service
Sergeant Dana Smith: Department of Police Service
Officer Raul Pereira: Department of Police Service
Ramon Davis: Administrative Assistant II

Bruce Fischer: Traffic and Parking
Doug Hausladen: Traffic and Parking
Scott Jackson: Chief Administrative Officer
Michael Wolak, Esquire: Senior Deputy Corporation Counsel

Joshua Bennett
Allen Blanco
Tom Breen: New Haven Independent
Robert Christiani
Michael Davia
Steve Herbette
Steve Hamm
Dominick Mastro
Peter Monaco
Max Padro
Miguel Pittman, Sr.: Community and Police Relations

OPEN SESSION

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m., Anthony Dawson, Chair, presiding.
Commissioner Dawson read an excerpt of the Notice for today's meeting.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA

** Commissioner Ribeiro moved to Approve the Agenda
** Commissioner Walker seconded
** Motion passed

REGULAR MEETING OF THE TRAFFIC AUTHORITY

Following the regular meeting of the Traffic Authority, Mr. Fischer and Mr. Hausladen excused themselves at 6:10 p.m.

- The commissioners introduced themselves.

DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- ** Commissioner Ribeiro moved to Approve the May 12, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes
- ** Commissioner Walker seconded
- ** Motion passed

- ** Commissioner Walker moved to Approve the May 26, 2020 Special Meeting Minutes
- ** Commissioner Ribeiro seconded
- ** Motion passed

INTERNAL AFFAIRS REPORT

Lieutenant David Zannelli

CLOSED CASES:

IA CASE NO. 20I-008: Chief Reyes ordered an investigation to determine whether Officer Gogliettino violated any of the Department's General Orders by posting blog memes while in uniform on a social media. The Internal Affairs investigation confirmed that Officer Gogliettino did violate the Social Media General Order by displaying a meme while clad in New Haven police uniform and seated in a marked New Haven police cruiser. He was off duty at the time he made his posts. This Internal Affairs complaint was sustained against the officer and he received a one-day suspension from Chief Reyes.

IA CASE NO. 20I-02I: Chief Reyes ordered an internal investigation to determine if excessive force was used by the officers during the arrest of an intoxicated person. After analyzing and reviewing body-worn camera footages and some reports and other footage with the Department's certified use-of-force instructor, the Internal Affairs investigation concluded that a portion of the force used by Officer Jason Santiago during the incident involving an arrest was unreasonable. The investigation also revealed in officers' interviews and body-worn camera-footage analysis that Officer Hinton violated Body Camera and Patrol Operations and Rules of Conduct General Orders. However, Officer Hinton's use of force during this incident was deemed appropriate by the Department's certified use-of-force instructor. This was sustained. Both officers have been referred to Chief Reyes for discipline.

- Lieutenant Zannelli added that there are 38 complaints. All of the information are on the city's Internal Affairs' tab and have been updated.

- Commissioner Ribeiro asked what portion was on the website. Lieutenant Zannelli responded by saying that the breakdown of the complaints has been posted including definitions of each category of disposition.
- Commissioner Dawson said Lieutenant Zannelli had done a great job. The breakdowns are clear.
- Commissioner Walker commented that there are still two open cases from 2018. Lieutenant Zannelli responded that one of the cases is an officer-involved shooting which is under review involving Detective Fran Sanchez. While the officer was in the process of apprehending an individual a firearm was pointed at him and the officer what shot at. This is under review. It will be closed soon.
- The second open case was the background fiasco in 2018 when a number of files had to be audited. That is also coming to a closure.
- Commissioner Dawson asked if those cases had been before the Board previously to which Lieutenant Zannelli responded in the affirmative.

CHIEF'S REPORT

Chief Otoniel Reyes

- Chief Reyes began by thanking everyone for being present including Chief Administrative Officer Scott Jackson.
- Currently, there are five homicides and 32 shootings compared to four homicides and 29 shooting at the same time last year. Shots fired are at 70 currently compared to 58 at the same time last year. Combined robberies are slight up as well at 106 compared to 95 at the same time last year.
- Chief Reyes added that he wanted to update the Board on the Department's staffing levels. There are currently 338 sworn officers. One of the officers on military leave has opted to resign. A resignation letter is expected shortly. That will bring the number to 337. By the end of June, based on the pending retirement, the Department will be down to 333 sworn personnel of the current budgeted strength of 434.
- It is anticipated that with the pending retirements in December, 2020 the Department will be down to 322 of the then budgeted strength of 406.
- Staffing, obviously, continues to be an issue as the Department continues to attempt to provide the citizens with the best possible services it can.
- The Department is definitely feeling the challenges of its diminished resources.
- Chief Reyes added that irrespective of these challenges, the Department continues to fulfill its obligations to the community.
- The Department's recruitments efforts continue. It is anticipated that on the 29th of June, 2020 there will be 20 recruits in the academy. Suffice it to say that 20 does not satisfy the Departments needs, but it gets the Department in the right direction.
- There have been some delays due to COVID-19. The Department is back on track moving forward to replenish its resources and fill the ranks. It is anticipated that in early fall, the Department will be able to conduct another test after some recruitment efforts over the summer. The hope is to possibly fill the ranks with the new class.
- The Department is continuing its modified responses to address its concern over COVID-19.

The Department has, however, begun to open up some of the services that the Department traditionally provides like fingerprinting. There have been conversations about a return-to-work force of some of the non-sworn personnel.

■ The Department was recently met with the challenges that were presented as a result of the incident that occurred in Minnesota. The Department's stance has been well documented. Chief Reyes stated for the record that as the Chief of the Department and as a representative of this community he stands with his officers to denounce the actions that were taken by Officer Chauvin against George Floyd. The Department really condemns those actions. The Department condemns the police brutality. The Department is united in taking a stance against police brutality. The Department recognizes its position presently and its obligation as members of law enforcement and members of this community and also as human beings to speak up, to take a stand and to be part of the change that needs to happen to ensure that this sort of incident does not happen again.

■ Chief Reyes added that the Department has the full support of this commission. He appreciated the calls that he received from many of the commissioners. The commission should be rest assured that this Department will work with this community to continue bridging gaps and communication to meet the demands that this community has of the Department.

■ Chief Reyes stated that the Department is working on strengthening its policies as it looks to meet the demands of the community. The Department fairs very well in the changes that it has made over the past several years. The Department is not looking to rest on its laurels; the Department is looking to build on those changes by strengthening its polices and relationships. This is the time for the Department do double down on its efforts to make sure that the community is committed to being part of a better police department and better law enforcement.

■ This is also an opportunity for the Department to be a beacon for other law enforcement agencies around the country. The Department is looking to lead through example. It is also looking to hold itself accountable because the Department knows it is far from perfect. However, the Department is looking to work with the commission and its partners every single day to achieve and get closer to meeting the expectations of its community.

■ Commissioner Ribeiro thanked Chief Reyes for his leadership particularly during this time. She and Chief Reyes had had a couple of discussions over the last couple of weeks and in particular over the last couple days. She has also been watching a lot of the media coverage. She thanked Chief Reyes for his leadership for standing up for what is right and letting the world know that this police department does not condone police brutality in any shape, form or fashion and that the Department stands with the community in terms of doing what is right.

■ Commissioner Ribeiro commended Chief Reyes and his staff for taking that leadership position and for allowing the commission to be a part of that.

■ Commissioner Dawson concurred with Commissioner Ribeiro's comments. The community has been working diligently to make sure those tactics do not happen in the City of New Haven. He thinks that the officers, the union, the Board of Police Commissioners and the general public have done a fine job of trying to get ahead of the curve. The Department has been an example of how policing should be.

■ Chief Reyes responded by saying that he would be remiss if he did not highlight the outstanding leadership of his assistant chiefs and also the command staff of the Department and even more importantly the character of the officers during this very, very difficult time.

■ It's very difficult to be a police officer and to see what happened. Even more importantly,

it's very difficult to wear this uniform during a time when we know it represents a lot of pain for so many people.

■ We don't want to ignore the great work that officers do every single day not just around our city or state but around the country. It is a time for law enforcement to listen right now. It is a time to acknowledge that some of the actions that have happened particularly recently have really caused communities to distrust the police. Law enforcement has to own that even though we may not be specifically responsible as officers. Law enforcement has to be a part of the change.

■ Chief Reyes commended the officers and all members of this Department because they have stood up. They have been professional. Their characters have really shone through this very difficult time. He is very proud to be part of the leadership along with the assistant chiefs who are just remarkable. Kudos to them. Kudos to this Department. We should be very proud of our men and women.

■ Commissioner Walker said one of the things that has come out of this is that many people realize that, yes, there are some officers who have made serious judgment errors when it comes to how they interact with the community. Most people recognize that most of the officers are good police officers. More kudos to the New Haven Police Department because as Commissioners Dawson and Ribeiro alluded to the Department is ahead of the curve. It has been a leader in training and with community policing. As long as the Department keeps moving in the right direction, the Department will be okay. Like Chief Reyes stated, it cannot rest on its laurels. It has to keep moving forward.

■ Commissioner Walker added that people are beginning to see a difference between this Department and many of the other departments across the country.

RETIREMENTS (For Board information only)

Officer Elias Mendez - eff., May 2, 2020

Officer Waleska Bermudez - eff., June 26, 2020

Lieutenant Wayne Bullock - eff. June 30, 2020

RESIGNATIONS (For Board information only)

There were none.

RECRUITMENT/SELECTION COMMITTEE REPORT

■ Commissioner Ribeiro stated that the committee is currently working on revising two General Orders. Based on some conversation in the last regular meeting, the committee went back to take a look at the Selection General Order particularly to do with language involving Civil Service. The committee was able to revise that.

■ It is her understanding that that revision is now being reviewed by Corporation Counsel. Once that copy is received, the committee will be able to bring it to the Board for review and vote.

■ The committee also took a look at the General Order regarding the hiring of lateral police officers from other law enforcement agencies. So that has also been revised and some of the language is also under review. Once that's been reviewed and approved, it be before the board for review and vote.

■ Attorney Wolak stated that he had only received one General Order to review and it included both the selection and laterals.

■ Commissioner Ribeiro said that there are actually two and the committee revisited the two General Orders to add some additional language. Attorney Wolak stated these had not made it to his office desk yet.

EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE REPORT

There was none.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

There was none.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were none.

OTHER BUSINESS

There were none.

PERSONNEL MATTERS

Discussion and action on the recommendation to remove the following candidates from the Eligibility List #19-37:

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| Joshua Bennett | Steve Herbette |
| Dominick Mastro | Frank Romanelli |
| Allen Blanco | Aaron Cash |
| Max Padro | Robert Christiani |
| Michael Davis | Peter Monaco |

■ Assistant Chief Sharp stated that out of the ten candidates on the list today, one, Mr. Romanelli, did not complete his application, two candidates (Mr. Cash and Mr. Padro) had requested to be heard in open session and the remaining have opted to be heard in a closed session.

■ Sergeant Dana Smith informed the commission that Candidate Aaron Cash had not joined the virtual meeting.

■ Commissioner Dawson thanked Mr. Max Padro for appearing before the commission. Mr. Max Padro was given an opportunity to address the commission in open session as to why he should not be taken off the removal list. He was asked questions.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- ** **Commissioner Ribeiro moved to Enter Executive Session for Preliminary Drafts and Notes, Internal Affairs and Personnel Matters Regarding the Removal of Candidates**
- ** **Commissioner Miranda seconded**
- ** **Unanimously passed**

The Board entered Executive Session at 6:45 p.m.

- ** **Commissioner Walker moved to Exit Executive Session**
- ** **Commissioner Ribeiro seconded**
- ** **Unanimously passed**

The Board exited Executive Session at 7:49 p.m.

- ** Commissioner Walker moved to Approve the Removal of Joshua Bennitt from the Eligibility List #19-37
- ** Commissioner Ribeiro seconded
- ** Motion passed

- ** Commissioner Ribeiro moved to the Approve the Removal of Dominick Mastro from the Eligibility List #19-37
- ** Commissioner Walker seconded
- ** Motion passed

- ** Commissioner Ribeiro moved to Approve the Removal of Allen Blanco from the Eligibility List #19-37
- ** Commissioner Walker seconded
- ** Motion passed

- ** Commissioner Walker moved to Approve the Removal of Max Padro from the Eligibility List #19-37
- ** Commissioner Miranda seconded
- ** Motion passed

- ** Commissioner Ribeiro moved to Approve the Removal of Michael Davis from the Eligibility List #19-37
- ** Commissioner Walker seconded
- ** Motion passed

- ** Commissioner Ribeiro moved to Approve the Removal of Steve Herbette from the Eligibility List #19-37
- ** Commissioner Walker seconded
- ** Motion passed

- ** Commissioner Walker moved to Approve the Removal of Frank Romanelli from the Eligibility List #19-37
- ** Commissioner Miranda seconded
- ** Motion passed

- ** Commissioner Walker moved to Approve the Removal of Aaron Cash from the Eligibility List #19-37
- ** Commissioner Miranda seconded

- ** Motion passed

- ** Commissioner Ribeiro moved to Approve the Removal of Robert Christiani from the Eligibility List #19-37
- ** Commissioner Walker seconded
- ** Motion passed

- ** Commissioner Walker moved to Approve the Removal of Peter Monaco from the Eligibility List #19-37
- ** Commissioner Ribeiro seconded
- ** Motion passed

- ** **Commissioner Ribeiro moved to Adjourn the Regular Meeting**
- ** **Commissioner Walker seconded**
- ** **Unanimously passed**

The next special meeting was scheduled for June 16, 2020 for promotions
The regular meeting will be on July 14, 2020.
The Board adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sotonye Otunba-Payne