

WOODBRIIDGE BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS WOODBRIIDGE TRAFFIC AUTHORITY

TRAFFIC AUTHORITY

MINUTES

March 20, 2023

Via ZOOM Platform (In accordance with SB 1202, this meeting was held via electronic transmission.)

The meeting may be viewed on YouTube link: <https://youtu.be/5ZIWwBHuTk>

The regular meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Police Commissioners/Woodbridge Traffic Authority took place via ZOOM on Monday, March 20, 2023, at 6:15 p.m.

- Chairman Berke called the meeting to order at 6:18 p.m.

Commissioners Present-

Chairman Robert Berke

Commissioner Deborah Desir

Commissioner Henry Kopel

Police Administration Present-

Chief Frank P. Cappiello

Deputy Chief Ronald E. Smith, Jr.

Administrative Assistant Janice Innocenzi

Others-

Sgt. B. Pedalino

Det. M. Luzzi, Union President

Ofc. L. Capozzo

Atty. C. Walsh

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- There were no Public Comments.

TRAFFIC MATTERS:

- TPZ – Merritt Ave/Miles Ave/Manila Traffic: As previously reported, we received a request from the Town Planning & Zoning Commission pertaining to traffic concerns expressed to them by residents of the Manila Ave/Miles Ave/Merritt Ave. area, and two recently approved subdivisions in that neighborhood. TPZ has asked for recommendations from the Board as to any possible traffic calming devices or parking restrictions that might be beneficial to residents in that area. I had a traffic study performed of that area. Deputy Chief Smith will share the findings of the traffic study and then we can discuss the formal response from the Traffic Authority to the TPZ and the neighborhood. Deputy Chief Smith outlined suggestions from the Police Department, including enforcing parking violations on a regular basis; have parking on just one side of the road and “no parking” on the other side; we would have to amp up traffic enforcement at the intersection of Litchfield Turnpike and Merritt, and Merritt and Miles; there should probably be a speed limit sign erected on Merritt, as it currently does not have one. Chief Cappiello said if the Board agrees with the suggestions, he will draft a letter on behalf of the Traffic Authority and present it. The Chief will also check with the Public Works Director to see if he has any input as far as which side of the road would be of benefit to install the “no parking” signs.

The Board voted unanimously (Desir/Kopel), by roll call, to adopt the recommendations of the Chief and Deputy Chief.

- 11th Annual “Ride for Hope” Charity Motorcycle Ride – Milford Prevention Council:
The Board voted unanimously (Kopel/Desir), by roll call, to approve a request for the 11th Annual “Ride for Hope” Charity Motorcycle Ride to travel through Woodbridge.

- Beth-Wood Baseball Opening Day – Request to Close Meetinghouse Lane:
The Board voted unanimously (Kopel/Desir), by roll call, to approve a request to close Meetinghouse Lane for the Beth-Wood Baseball Opening Day ceremonies.
- Woodbridge Road Race – Woodbridge Recreation Department:
The Board voted unanimously (Desir/Kopel), by roll call, to approve the Woodbridge Recreation Department request to hold the 41st Annual Woodbridge Road Race.
- 12th Annual “Murray Lender 5K Bagel Run” – JCC:
The Board voted unanimously (Kopel/Desir), by roll call, to approve the JCC’s request to hold the 12th Annual “Murray Lender 5K Bagel Run”.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Board voted unanimously (Desir/Kopel), by roll call, to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Traffic Authority and move directly into the regular meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Police Commissioners at 6:31 pm.

Respectfully submitted:
Janice Innocenzi, Administrative Assistant

WOODBIDGE BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS WOODBIDGE TRAFFIC AUTHORITY

POLICE COMMISSION

MINUTES

March 20, 2023

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Commissioners Present-

Chairman Robert Berke
Commissioner Deborah Desir
Commissioner Henry Kopel

Police Administration Present-

Chief Frank P. Cappiello
Deputy Chief Ronald E. Smith, Jr.
Administrative Assistant Janice Innocenzi

Others-

Sgt. B. Pedalino
Det. M. Luzzi, Union President
Ofc. L. Capozzo
Atty. C. Walsh

APPROVAL of MINUTES:

- B.O.P.C. Regular Meeting – February 7, 2023

The Board voted unanimously (Kopel/Desir), by roll call, to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Police Commissioners/Woodbridge Traffic Authority held February 7, 2023.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- There were no Public Comments.

REVIEW of REPORTS:

- **Financial Report:** Chief Cappiello reported that after completing the first 8½ months of the fiscal year, we remain on track at approximately 68.3%. Both our Police Officer overtime and Dispatcher overtime lines continue to be significantly affected and are in direct correlation with staffing reductions and various vacancies and extended absences. Police overtime line is at 107.3% and Dispatch overtime is at 137.7%. Data Processing line is at 98.2%, which reflects increases incurred and costs associated with the ongoing department and townwide IT network upgrades and cybersecurity upgrades. Repair Maintenance – Vehicles line is at 136% due to routine maintenance, high vehicle mileage, inflated parts pricing, and four (unanticipated) major repairs.

The Board voted unanimously (Desir/Kopel), by roll call, to accept the Financial Report.

- **Activity Report:** Chief Cappiello reported the following -
Criminal Activity Report (February)-
 - Fraud Investigations: 7 (identity thefts, telephone scams, online banking fraud, altered checks)
 - Larceny Investigations: 5 (missing funds, stolen catalytic converters, stolen construction job site materials)

- Missing Persons: 3 (all were located)
- Stolen Motor Vehicles: 1 (from a commercial establishment, later recovered in Stamford)
- ISU:
 - New Cases Assumed: 7 (includes 5 Police Officer candidate background investigations)
 - Public Fingerprinting Requests: 3
 - Pistol Permit Applications: 5
 - ISU arrested three individuals responsible for nine commercial burglaries, which occurred in the lower business district and upper New Haven (Westville) area in January. With those arrests, eight of the nine burglaries were cleared, with one still pending examination of forensic evidence. One arrest was made on-site within hours of the burglary and the remainder were done by warrant.
 - The November death of a homeless person, who was residing in the lower Rte. 69 area, was ruled as a fentanyl related overdose by the Medical Examiner.
 - Working with the State Lab and other local law enforcement agencies, ISU was able to identify a person recently found to be in possession of a firearm that was linked to the shell casings found at the scene of an October shooting incident on Ansonia Road near Johnson Road.
 - An arrest warrant was served for a subject responsible for an incident involving the theft of checks from the mail at a private residence.
- Motor Vehicle Activity Report (February)-
Deputy Chief Ronald Smith reported the following -
 - Motor Vehicle Accidents: 24 (20% increase over January)
 - Motor Vehicle Stops: 68
 - Speed Enforcement (Radar Assignments Conducted): 326
 - Deterrent Traffic Safety Patrols: 319
 - Speed Trailers: The speed trailers were deployed at several different spots including Amity Road and Walker Lane; Litchfield Turnpike and Clark Road; Johnson Road and Manville Road; and Baldwin Road and Greenway.

The Board voted unanimously (Desir/Kopel), by roll call, to accept the Activity Report.

REPORT of the CHIEF of POLICE

- Special Olympics Penguin Plunge: February 25th, Sgt. Pedalino and Officer Lynch represented our department in the Connecticut Special Olympics Penguin Plunge fundraising event, which helped provide funding support for the athletes and unified partners who participate in Connecticut Special Olympics year round training and competition in 26 different sports. Chief Cappiello thanked both Officers for their participation in that event and for their support of such a great organization.
- Police Uniform Modification: Chief Cappiello received a request from our Officers to utilize the Safariland Bothell External Load Bearing Vest Carrier as a third option to wear their equipment and body armor. They already have external vest carriers, but those accommodate their vests only, not any duty equipment. This new option involves a slight change in uniform appearance, but is something that many of our surrounding communities have allowed for some time, with both the Orange and Ansonia Police Department recently authorizing them. The benefit of the proposed load bearing vests is that they have a MOLLE system, which enables the Officers to shift some of their equipment from their duty belt to the vest, which allows them ambidextrous access. Currently, they are carrying approximately 20-30 pounds of equipment on their duty belts. Studies have shown that the load bearing type vests serve to enhance Officer wellness by spreading out the weight of the equipment from the gun belt to the vest, which reduces hip discomfort and lower back injuries. Sgt. Brian Pedalino gave a presentation on the new vests and fielded questions. Chief Cappiello said that if the Board has no objection, he feels it is a great idea to assist in promoting officer health, safety, and wellness; he would like to move forward with it as an option for those Officers who choose to do so. The purchase of the vest would fall on the Officer with no cost to the Town.

The Board voted unanimously (Desir/Kopel), by roll call, to accept the Report of the Chief of Police.

PERSONNEL MATTERS:

- **Extended Absence (Updates):** We received good news that our Officer who unexpectedly had to go out on an extended medical absence in December, has received medical clearance to return to duty without restrictions effective April 17th. We are happy to have him back and even happier he was able to get through that issue. As reported last month, we have another Officer who will be out on an extended medical absence, in association with a prior Workers' Comp injury related procedure. His absence is due to start at the end of March and is anticipated to last for approximately two months or so.
- **Hiring Status:** We have one retirement vacancy that we are trying to fill. As of the February 3rd closing date for the position of non-certified new recruit candidates, we had five applicants. Of those five, one never showed up, leaving us with only four potential candidates. Unfortunately, for various reasons, none of those four candidates were able to pass the background investigation process, not only for us, but for other agencies they were involved in as well. We are now back to square one, and because of that and the lack of candidates right now, Chief Cappiello recommended we move forward and hire a Certified Police Officer to fill our current vacancy.

BUDGET MATTERS:

- **Budget Updates:** Both the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance have completed their reviews of the proposed FY24 Capital and Operating Budget requests, they made adjustments, and a decision as to the recommended budget that will be presented at the Town's Preliminary Budget Hearing. Regarding our proposed budget requests, Chief Cappiello was advised that our request for two new vehicles for Patrol was reduced to only one, and our funding request for one additional Officer, to increase our staffing level from 23 to 24, was eliminated. The Preliminary Budget Hearing is set for the evening of April 24th.

EXECUTIVE SESSION/ACTION TAKEN, AS APPROPRIATE:

- To Discuss Personnel Matters and take appropriate action regarding:
-Internal Investigation

The Board voted unanimously (Desir/Kopel), by roll call, to move into Executive Session at 6:56 p.m. (In addition to Board members, Chief Cappiello, Deputy Chief Smith, Administrative Assistant, Attorney Walsh, the Officer, and his Union Rep were invited to stay; all others were excused.)

- The Board moved out of Executive Session at 7:15 p.m.
- There were no motions made; no votes taken.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Board voted unanimously (Kopel/Desir), by roll call, to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Police Commissioners at 7:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:
Janice Innocenzi, Administrative Assistant

WOODBIDGE TRAFFIC AUTHORITY

MOTIONS

March 20, 2023

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- There were no Public Comments.

TRAFFIC MATTERS:

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PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- There were no Public Comments.

REVIEW of REPORTS:

- FINANCIAL REPORT:

The Board voted unanimously (Desir/Kopel), by roll call, to accept the Financial Report.

- Activity Report:

The Board voted unanimously (Desir/Kopel), by roll call, to accept the Activity Report.

REPORT of the CHIEF of POLICE

The Board voted unanimously (Desir/Kopel), by roll call, to accept the Report of the Chief of Police.

PERSONNEL MATTERS:

- There were no motions made, no votes taken, during the discussion of Personnel Matters.

BUDGET MATTERS:

- There were no motions made, no votes taken, during the discussion of Budget Matters.

EXECUTIVE SESSION/ACTION TAKEN, AS APPROPRIATE:

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