

# WOODBRIIDGE BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS WOODBRIIDGE TRAFFIC AUTHORITY

## POLICE COMMISSION

### MINUTES

**July 17, 2023**

The Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Police Commissioners/Traffic Authority took place in the Training Room at the Police Department on Monday, July 17, 2023, at 6:15 p.m.

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

#### Commissioners Present-

Chairman Robert Berke  
Commissioner Andrew Esposito, Jr.  
Commissioner Deborah Desir  
Commissioner Mica Cardozo  
Commissioner Henry Kopel

#### Police Administration Present-

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

#### APPROVAL of MINUTES:

- B.O.P.C. Special Meeting – May 16, 2023  
*The Board voted unanimously (Kopel/Esposito) to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Police Commissioners/Woodbridge Traffic Authority held May 16, 2023.*
- B.O.P.C. Special Meeting – May 25, 2023  
*The Board voted unanimously (Kopel/Cardozo) to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Police Commissioners/Woodbridge Traffic Authority held May 25, 2023.*

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- There were no Public Comments.

#### REVIEW of REPORTS:

- **Financial Report:** Chief Cappiello reported that throughout the past month, we worked with the Finance Department on closing out final billings and reimbursements for FY22/23. As of June 22, we were at approximately 97% and expect to finish out the past fiscal year within budget. As we go into the new fiscal year that started July 1<sup>st</sup>, at this point most of the expenditures thus far are contractual related stipends, and mandatory operational requirements such as annual dues, contract renewals, encumbrances, and running purchase orders.

*The Board voted unanimously (Kopel/Esposito) to accept the Financial Report.*

- **Activity Report:** Chief Cappiello reported the following -

#### Criminal Activity Report (May-June):

- Burglaries: 2 (2 commercial)
- Family Disputes: 7 (arrests made)
- Fights in Progress: 4 (3 resulted in arrests)
- Fire: Fire in an outbuilding at the Country Club of Woodbridge is being investigated jointly between I.S.U. and the Fire Marshal's Office.
- Fraud Cases: 18 (identity thefts, online credit card incidents, altered checks, claims of computer being compromised)
- Larceny Cases: 3
- Robbery: 1 (attempted purse snatching)
- Stolen Vehicles: 4 (3 vehicles have since been recovered)

ISU – (Investigative Services Unit):

- New Case Investigations: 8
- Pistol Permit Applications Processed & Background Checks Completed: 10
- Public Fingerprinting Requests: 19
- In May, they prepared and testified in the trial of their case against the first of two suspects arrested for the Pease Road homicide that occurred in the soccer field parking lot in July 2021. I am pleased to report that their thorough investigative work resulted in the suspect being found guilty on all charges of murder, felony murder, robbery in the 1<sup>st</sup> degree, conspiracy, and criminal possession of a firearm. Sentencing for that suspect is set for August 2<sup>nd</sup>. The start date for the trial for the second suspect is still pending.
- Based on forensic analysis of DNA evidence our detectives collected at the scene of a Forest Glen Drive residential burglary, they were able to secure and serve an arrest warrant on the person responsible, charging him with burglary and larceny related charges.

Motor Vehicle Activity Report (Patrol Division):

Deputy Chief Ronald Smith reported the following –

- May: 106 - Motor Vehicle Stops  
22 - Accidents (5 with injuries)
- June: 66 - Motor Vehicle Stops  
23 - Accidents (6 with injuries)

In May, they made 12 criminal arrests, and 6 were made in June.

The Speed Trailer was located in various locations during May and June, including Pease Road, Rimmon Road, Beecher Road, Seymour Road, North Pease Road, Baldwin Road, Johnson Road, Racebrook Road. We just completed a comprehensive traffic study on North Pease Road. We will get a better feel for traffic there once the high school is back in session in the fall.

*The Board voted unanimously (Kopel/Cardozo) to accept the Activity Report.*

**REPORT of the CHIEF of POLICE**

- Dispatch Center Renovation – Update: Since our last meeting, the official Town process pertaining to the construction aspect of the renovation of our Dispatch Center took place, with the release of the RFP on May 31<sup>st</sup>. We held a pre-bid meeting on June 9<sup>th</sup>, and a walk-through with several prospective bidders. The deadline for proposals to be submitted was July 5<sup>th</sup>. Currently, our representative from Silver Petrucelli & Associates architectural firm is in the process of reviewing the scope of work on behalf of the Town with the company that was the low bidder on the project. We are optimistic that the project is coming to fruition, and I will keep you advised as to our progress.
- Special Olympics Torch Run: On June 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Woodbridge portion of the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics Connecticut passed through our community. The Woodbridge leg went from Rte. 243, at the Ansonia town line to Rte. 63, at the New Haven line where they handed off the torch to members of the New Haven Police Department, who along with Sgt. Pedalino, continued with the run to the campus of Southern Connecticut State University. It was a hot and rainy day, and I thank all of our personnel who participated and represented our Department in this important community event.
- Amity Regional High School Internship: Amity High School offers an internship program at the end of the school year for graduating seniors. It is called the Senior Service Learning Program, during which the students spend their final weeks of school at various career sites. Upon completion of the internship, the student returns to school and attends a Presentation Forum where they share various aspects of the job they experienced. This year, we participated and had an intern with us for 72 hours over a 2 ½ week period, during which he spent time with our personnel in the Patrol Division, Investigative Services Unit, Records, Dispatch and the School Resource Officer at the Beecher Road School. Participation in the program for us had been suspended throughout the pandemic and we were happy to be able to reinstate it this year, as once again it turned out to be a successful endeavor.

- **“Stop the Bleed” Training Event:** On the evening of June 22<sup>nd</sup>, a “Stop the Bleed” training event was held at the Congregation B’nai Jacob. Sgt. Pedalino participated in the event, along with other presenters and instructors, with the goal of enabling the public to be trained, equipped, and empowered to assist in a bleeding emergency situation prior to the arrival of professional help. We are looking forward to promoting future similar events.

*The Board voted unanimously (Desir/Cardozo) to accept the Report of the Chief of Police.*

### **PERSONNEL MATTERS:**

- **Extended Absence (Updates):** We currently have 3 employees out on extended absences. The first is a Workers’ Comp related extended medical absence that I told you about at our last meeting, which started on March 27<sup>th</sup>, and at this point, the return to work date is still uncertain. The second absence is associated with an unanticipated medical issue, which occurred on April 21<sup>st</sup>, that I also previously reported to you, and the duration of the absence is uncertain at this point, pending doctor’s evaluation. The third is a new one associated with a Workers’ Comp related injury which occurred on June 17<sup>th</sup> during an arrest, and at this point we know the Officer will be out at least through August 10<sup>th</sup>. These absences, coupled with our current retirement vacancy, continue to impact us somewhat with overtime and staffing challenges.
- **Hiring Status:** Following our last meeting, and as we discussed, effective May 23<sup>rd</sup> our hiring process was opened up to include new recruit candidates, in addition to POSTC Certified Officer candidates. We currently have no POSTC Certified Officer applicants. Regarding the new recruit hiring process, the next round of regional testing is tentatively scheduled to be conducted by the South Central Criminal Justice Administration on August 23<sup>rd</sup>. We will be participating in that, along with several other towns from throughout the area. We have secured 2 seats at the Connecticut Police Academy, which commences on January 5, 2024. Moving forward in the selection process, if the Board agrees, our plan is to return to our past practice of providing a Conditional Offer of Employment to applicants being considered at the onset of their pre-employment background investigation process. Doing that allows us to be more efficient in the selection process and allows us to get the polygraph completed so we do not lose viable candidates to other agencies. It also enables us to present a comprehensive and complete background investigative report to the Board at the time we bring any potential candidates before you to be considered for hiring.
- **Notice of Intent to Retire:** We recently received notice of intent to retire from Officer John Calabrese. He is officially notifying us that he will be retiring October 2, 2023, which would conclude his lengthy and distinguished career with our Department. Although he has just over two months remaining, I just wanted to make you aware of the impending retirement, which will be another vacancy we will have, and I will wait for that date to draw closer to formally recognize him.
- **Recognition:** Officer Capozzo is here with us tonight. There was an incident on June 7<sup>th</sup>, at approximately 10:30 p.m., where police and EMS personnel responded to a residence on a report of an unresponsive person. Officer Capozzo was the first to arrive, was directed to an unconscious person, and recognized that the person was possibly suffering from an opiate overdose. Officer Capozzo then administered Narcan, implemented the use of an AED, and initiated chest compressions until the patient regained consciousness. Because of Officer Capozzo’s performance and prompt delivery of services, the patient survived this incident, and for those efforts I officially acknowledged his performance and dedication to duty with the issuance of a Letter of Commendation, a copy of which was included in your packets. Thank you to Officer Capozzo for that.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

- **SRO Assignments:** At our last meeting, we decided to address our current vacancy and the exigency of our staffing levels, it would be best to temporarily reassign the SRO from Beecher Road School back to Patrol at the end of the school year through August, rather than keeping him at Beecher Road School and Woodbridge Recreation summer programs. After that meeting, I discussed the decision further with Superintendent Tencza and ultimately the school hired an armed security officer for the month of July. Since then, questions and concerns have been raised by the Woodbridge Board of Education about security at the school going forward. With Police Department staffing having been significantly reduced by three positions over the past few years, coupled with one current vacant position and our recent notification of another officer who will be

retiring in October, we are faced with ongoing and considerable staffing challenges moving forward, as we strive to maintain safe and efficient departmental operations. It is getting challenging and a lot more difficult. Having an SRO at the school has always been our priority, but coupled with our reductions and vacancies, the only remaining option to possibly enable us to maintain the Beecher SRO would be to cover our vacant patrol shifts at strategic times, utilizing officers at an overtime rate and on a voluntary basis. There is funding available in the salary line that can be used for this due to vacancies, but the reality of it is that using this funding at an overtime rate may only be a temporary solution. Unfortunately, the applicant pool has been scarce, and the hiring and training of new recruits takes several months; six months in the academy and another four months in field training, before they could even be part of minimum manpower. So the problem is if we do try to supplement it for a while and if the funds are depleted before we are able to fill our vacancies, we may be put into the position of having to pull our SRO mid-year after having him there for only a few months, which would increase vulnerability at the school and is something I absolutely never want to be forced to do. The only options, as we continue to try to fill our vacancies, would be to offer overtime on a voluntary basis to cover vacant shifts temporarily until we are able to fill the vacancies, or until the funding runs out; the Town comes up with funding to offer voluntary overtime for the entire year; or the school prepares to get an armed school security officer to ensure they have it in place for the entire school year. We have to make a decision on that because in order for the school to do that, the armed security officer needs training and one type of training needed is only available once a year, during the month of August. They need to know what to do moving forward. I discussed the impact of this with the Finance Director. If the SRO is pulled from Beecher Road School, the ramification would be that our budget will increase by over \$100,000, and we will still only have 23 sworn officers. If the Amity SRO is pulled, the Town loses approximately \$120,000 annual income from the Amity Board of Education. General discussion took place. It was suggested that a joint meeting of the Police Commission and Woodbridge Board of Education be held. Chief Cappiello will contact Supt. Tencza tomorrow to discuss the SRO situation further.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

- There were no new business matters to discuss.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION / ACTION, AS APPROPRIATE:**

- Personnel Matters – I.A. Notification

*The Board voted unanimously (Esposito/Cardozo) to move into Executive Session at 7:11 p.m. to discuss Personnel Matters regarding an I.A. Notification. (Commission members, Chief, Deputy Chief, and Administrative Assistant were invited to stay, all others excused.)*

- The Board moved out of Executive Session at 7:23 p.m.
- *Chairman Berke: The only item discussed was a personnel matter regarding an officer, who was invited prior to the meeting to attend, and he declined the invitation.*
- There were no motions made, no votes taken.

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

*The Board voted unanimously (Kopel/Esposito) to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Police Commissioners at 7:24 p.m. and move directly into the Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Traffic Authority.*

Respectfully submitted:

Janice Innocenzi, Administrative Assistant

# WOODBRIIDGE BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS WOODBRIIDGE TRAFFIC AUTHORITY

## TRAFFIC AUTHORITY

### MINUTES

**July 17, 2023**

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

#### Commissioners Present-

Chairman Robert Berke  
Commissioner Andrew Esposito, Jr.  
Commissioner Deborah Desir  
Commissioner Mica Cardozo  
Commissioner Henry Kopel

#### Police Administration Present-

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

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- **Javier Aviles, 45 Ansonia Road**, addressed the Traffic Authority regarding concerns about traffic, specifically, the posted speed limit on Johnson Road (between Ansonia Road and Rimmon Road). He noted that it is a quarter mile stretch of road that many people use as a shortcut through Woodbridge. He read a short statement from a group of concerned residents requesting the speed limit on Johnson Road be reduced to 25 miles per hour. Deputy Chief Smith stated that we will be conducting another study in August.

#### TRAFFIC MATTERS:

- North Pease Road/Rice Road – Traffic Calming Concerns: Chief Cappiello reported that on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, he received a request from a resident on North Pease Road regarding the possible installation of speed humps on both North Pease Road and Rice Road as a traffic calming effort. On May 19<sup>th</sup>, we had a meeting of the Traffic Committee, which the resident was invited and attended. Recently, we deployed our new speed trailer in various directions throughout that area to compile traffic data. Our plan is to deploy it again in the fall, after the school year begins, to give us a representative sampling of traffic volume and speeds in the area, which will assist us in making an informed decision in moving forward as to how to best address the concern being expressed.
- CT / DOT – Crosswalk Projects – Rte. 69: The Connecticut DOT has notified us they will be making upgrades to the pedestrian crosswalk equipment on Rte. 69 at both the Lucy Street and Merritt Avenue intersections. The project will involve replacing all of the current signalization pedestals with new equipment that will meet new federal standards, with the overall objective of the project being to improve pedestrian compliance at traffic signals and to reduce pedestrian injury collisions.
- Pease Road – Pedestrian Bicycling Safety Sign Relocation: Last month, we received a request from a resident, who is a member of the Town Trails Group, about the possibility of relocating a Pease Road – Pedestrian/Bicyclist Safety Sign to make it more visible and effective. Several of these signs were placed at various locations, including Beecher and Pease Roads a few years ago when a few roads in town were designated as bikeways and were funded by a federal grant. On June 28<sup>th</sup>, Chief Cappiello met with the resident. There are two of these signs on Pease Road and they are currently working with Eversource to have both ends of the trail relocated. After we met, the decision was that it would be best not to move the signs until we know exactly where they are going to change the exit and entrance. Chief Cappiello already spoke with Warren Connors from Public Works and after we hear from the resident, we will relocate the signs.

- Urban Speed Sign Project (Update): As I stated at our May meeting, through an Urban Speed Feedback Sign Program, funded by the Connecticut DOT, I was able to acquire two free electronic speed feedback signs to be mounted in town. Both signs have been installed and are fully operational. One sign is located on Baldwin Road, between Laurel Road and Greenway Road, and the other is located on Johnson Road near the Rte. 15 overpass, clocking people as they approach the intersection at Woodfield.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

*The Board voted unanimously (Cardozo/Esposito) to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Traffic Authority at 7:36 pm.*

Respectfully submitted:

Janice Innocenzi, Administrative Assistant

# WOODBIDGE BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS

## MOTIONS

July 17, 2023

### APPROVAL of MINUTES:

- B.O.P.C. Special Meeting – May 16, 2023

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*The Board voted unanimously (Kopel/Cardozo) to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Police Commissioners/Woodbridge Traffic Authority held May 25, 2023.*

### PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- There were no Public Comments.

### REVIEW of REPORTS:

- FINANCIAL REPORT:

*The Board voted unanimously (Kopel/Esposito) to accept the Financial Report.*

- Activity Report:

*The Board voted unanimously (Kopel/Cardozo) to accept the Activity Report.*

### REPORT of the CHIEF of POLICE

*The Board voted unanimously (Desir/Cardozo) 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.

### OLD BUSINESS:

- There were no motions made, no votes taken, during the discussion of Old Business.

### NEW BUSINESS:

- There were no new business matters to discuss.

### EXECUTIVE SESSION / ACTION, AS APPROPRIATE:

- Personnel Matters – I.A. Notification

*The Board voted unanimously (Esposito/Cardozo) to move into Executive Session at 7:11 p.m. to discuss Personnel Matters regarding an I.A. Notification. (Commission members, Chief, Deputy Chief, and Administrative Assistant were invited to stay, all others excused.)*

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Respectfully submitted:

Janice Innocenzi, Administrative Assistant

# WOODBRIIDGE TRAFFIC AUTHORITY

## MOTIONS

July 17, 2023

### PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- There were no motions made, no votes taken, during Public Comments.

### TRAFFIC MATTERS:

- There were no motions made; no votes taken, during the discussion of traffic matters.

### ADJOURNMENT:

*The Board voted unanimously (Cardozo/Esposito) to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Traffic Authority at 7:36 pm.*

Respectfully submitted:

Janice Innocenzi, Administrative Assistant