

WOODBIDGE BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS WOODBIDGE TRAFFIC AUTHORITY

REGULAR MEETING – POLICE COMMISSION

MINUTES

July 18, 2022

The Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Police Commissioners/Woodbridge Traffic Authority took place Monday, July 18, 2022 at 6:15 p.m., in the Police Department Training Room.

- *Chairman Berke called the meeting to order at 6:15 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

Liaisons Present-

Joseph Crisco – Board of Selectmen Liaison

Absent-

Ellen Scalettar – Board of Finance Liaison

APPROVAL of MINUTES:

- B.O.P.C. Special Meeting – May 26, 2022:

The Board voted (Esposito/Cardozo) to approve the minutes from the Special Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Police Commissioners/Woodbridge Traffic Authority held May 26, 2022.

Those in favor: Esposito/Desir/Cardozo/Berke

Abstained: Kopel

Motion carries.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- There were no Public Comments.

EXECUTIVE SESSION / ACTION AS APPROPRIATE

- Discuss Personnel Matters:
 - Conduct Certified Officer & Dispatch Candidate Interviews
 - Hiring

The Board voted unanimously (Desir/Esposito) to move into Executive Session at 6:16 p.m. (Commissioners, Chief, Deputy Chief and Administrative Assistant invited to stay; all others were excused.)

- Mr. Crisco left the meeting at 7:01 p.m.
- The Board moved out of Executive Session at 7:31 p.m.
- Chairman Berke said there were no votes taken during Executive Session; we conducted interviews of Dispatch candidates and a Certified Officer.

ACTION TAKEN ON MATTERS DISCUSSED DURING EXECUTIVE SESSION

- **Hiring:**
 - **Certified Police Officer - Hiring:**
The Board voted unanimously (Cardozo/Esposito) to give a Conditional Offer of Employment to Patrick Meehan. He will be hired at Grade B salary, with five (5) vacation days, and at the completion of one year's service, his pay will move up to Grade A, and at the completion of one year's service, he will receive ten (10) vacation days; this offer is conditional upon his passing a polygraph test and pre-employment physical.
 - **Dispatch – Hiring:**
The Board voted (Cardozo/Desir) to hire Jesenia Newton-Lewis for the position of Dispatcher.

Those in favor: Esposito/Desir/Cardozo/Berke
Abstained: Kopel
Motion carries.

REVIEW of REPORTS:

- **FINANCIAL REPORT:** Chief Cappiello reported that the Finance Department is currently closing out last fiscal year's final billings and reimbursements. As of July 11, we are still at 96.7% and we expect to finish out the last fiscal year remaining within budget. We are only a few weeks into the new Fiscal Year 22/23, but at this point, most of our expenditures thus far are contractually related stipends, mandatory operational requirements such as annual dues, contract renewals, encumbrances and running purchase orders.

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

- **ACTIVITY REPORT:** Chief Cappiello reported the following -
Criminal Activity Report (May & June)-
 - **Burglaries:** 1 – Attempted burglary on Robin Road.
 - **Bomb Threat:** 1 – Threat came in to the JCC. ISU is working on the investigation with the FBI.
 - **Fraud Cases:** 18 – Included online incidents, check washing, fraudulent bank account activity, identity theft, fraudulent accounts being opened. Comparing the first six months of this year to the first six months of last year, fraud cases have increased by 79% (2021: 29 cases / 2022: 56 cases).
 - **Gunshot Calls:** 3 – As previously reported, on May 11 we had a report of multiple gunshots on Rimmon Road. We brought in a Police K9 from Milford to check, but was unable to locate anyone. Responding officers found a crime scene and recovered casings which were sent to the lab and they were linked to another incident in a surrounding community. The case is still under investigation. There were additional reports of gunshots in the area of Pease Road and in the Rimmon Road/Fountain Street area; nothing was found.
 - **Larcenies:** 11 – Included catalytic converter theft, shoplifting incidents; theft of a key fob to attempt to steal a vehicle at a local coffee shop; theft of a high-end bicycle from a local bike shop, which was later recovered on Pond Lily Avenue, check altering and larceny of building materials from a residential construction site - the materials were recovered and an arrest was made. Larcenies are up 79% over the same six-month period from last year (2021: 19 cases / 2022: 34 cases).
 - **Larcenies from Motor Vehicles:** 6 – Predominantly from unlocked cars during the overnight hours; one during the day in a business parking lot. The number of larcenies from motor vehicles is actually down approximately 76% from the same six-month period last year (2021: 30 cases / 2022: 17 cases).
 - **Stolen Motor Vehicles:** 3 – One stolen from a Beecher Road residence overnight, keys left inside, vehicle recovered a week later in New Haven; one stolen overnight with keys inside from Deer Run Road, abandoned vehicle recovered the next day in Hamden; and a customer pumping gas went inside, left car running with keys inside, vehicle stolen and recovered in New Haven the next day.
 - **Suicide:** 1 – Suicide at a private residence involving a firearm. ISU is investigating.
 - **Car Fire:** 1 – A suspicious car fire occurred on Rte. 69 at Dillon Road. A car used in a shooting in Norwalk was set ablaze and left abandoned. ISU is working with Norwalk Police and the Woodbridge Fire Marshal. ISU did a search warrant for forensic analysis of evidence.

- Trespassing at Sperry Park: We have had several trespassing incidents at Sperry Park/Sperry Falls involving large groups trespassing, illegal swimming, drinking and littering, debris and beer cans left behind. That prompted complaints to us and to the Regional Water Authority (RWA) by the public. The RWA reached out to Town Hall last week and shared their concerns. As we did during COVID, the RWA recommended closing the dirt portion of Sperry Road for the summer to curtail that activity. Chief Cappiello, Public Works, the Recreation Department, and the Chair of the Sperry Park Commission all concurred with the RWA recommendation. Last Friday the gate was relocked.
- ISU:
 - Assumed 13 new cases.
 - Performed Certified Officer and Dispatch candidate background checks.
 - They attended training for accident and crime scene mapping.
 - They are working with the State's Attorney's Office on Trial Preparation for the June 2021 Pease Road homicide.
 - Bomb scare investigation at the JCC and the suicide.
 - They attended counter terrorism training.
 - SROs – Both of our SROs successfully completed their regular academic school responsibilities in June. Officer Sapione, who was at the high school, has been reassigned to Patrol for the summer and during July-August he will be further reassigned to conduct departmental firearms qualifications and active shooter training. Officer Lynch is funded by the Woodbridge Board of Education and he remains at Beecher Road School for the summer to cover the activities that go on there, including summer enrichment and other ongoing programs. The SROs also try to use up their vacation time, which they are not able to use during the school year.
 - I.T. – Our Detective from ISU remains busy with our IT infrastructure upgrade.

Motor Vehicle Activity Report-

- Patrol Division: Deputy Chief Ronald Smith reported the following -
 - Motor Vehicle Accidents: 25 (May) / 27 (June)
 - Motor Vehicle Stops: 112 (May) / 101 (June)
 - Over the six-month period from January 1 to June 30, 2021, we responded to 115 motor vehicle accidents compared to the same time period this year, we responded to 158 motor vehicle accidents, which is an increase of 47%.
 - Traffic Stops: We made 105 traffic stops between January 1 to June 30, 2021, compared to 736 during the same period this year, which is an increase of 600%.
 - Speed Trailer: The speed trailer has been placed on Baldwin Road, Center Road and Ansonia Road throughout the month.

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

REPORT of the CHIEF of POLICE

- S2 Door Entry System Project: Capital budget funds to be used for the installation of an administratively controlled and monitored door access system was approved for this fiscal year. We received a waiver of the bid process allowing us to utilize the same company, JKS Systems, who installed the same type systems throughout many of the other town owned municipal buildings. The vendor is in the process of ordering the components and we hope to start the project as soon as possible, but it is all contingent upon parts availability and delivery dates.
- Intercom Replacement/Repair Project: NORCOM recently completed the repair and replacement of our building's failing intercom system. The old master system base in Dispatch along with several inoperable intercom access ports throughout the building were all replaced with new equipment and the system is now up and running.

- Shoreline Technical Crimes Investigation Group Participation: Through the South Central Chiefs of Police Association, and in conjunction with the US Secret Service, a multi-agency, multi-interdisciplinary initiative was launched comprised of agencies within the Judicial Districts of New Haven, Middlesex and Ansonia-Derby, which I plan to have our Department participate in. The mission of the Investigative Group is to employ the latest techniques and investigative tools to examine technological based evidence during the investigation of criminal offenses. It is called the Shoreline Technical Crimes Investigative Group and at this point includes personnel from Police Departments in Branford, Clinton, East Haven, Guilford, Madison, North Branford, Wallingford, Milford and our agency. The partnership will provide us with prompt, readily accessible technological/forensic analysis investigative assets as it enables each agency to benefit from the group's collective resources, joint investigations and collaborations. For us and other smaller agencies who are tasked daily with the ongoing rise of internet crimes, larcenies and fraud investigations, it could not come at a more opportune time. All training, certification and equipment is coordinated and provided to the members by the Secret Service, free of charge, so we will have the most up to date information to accomplish the group's mission and ability to provide public education on issues regarding internet and cyber security. Our only obligation is a membership fee of \$2,500 to pay for licensing fees. The Secret Service will pay for all training and travel.
- Center Building Renovation Committee (Update): Chief Cappiello and Commissioner Esposito participated in the first two meetings of the recently appointed Center Building Renovation Committee. Those meetings were held on June 1 and June 30. We have reviewed the Committee's charge from the Board of Selectmen, discussed the procedure to secure an A/E firm, reviewed and discussed space needs assessments for both the Police Department and Human Services and the Committee toured our current facility. Commissioner Esposito and Chief Cappiello expressed that the Police Department is in need of an efficient and functional public safety facility. Design studies that were previously prepared in 2009 and 2012, we feel those needs have not significantly changed from what they have already recommended other than removing the mechanic's garage, since that has already been relocated to the newly renovated Town's Public Works facility; and possibly increasing locker room space and increasing the Roll Call Room.
- Dispatch Training Class – Hosted by Woodbridge Police Department: Chief Cappiello reported that we hosted two Dispatcher training classes here at the Police Department. The classes ran for two, full 8-hour days. This training was done in conjunction with the Public Safety Group and the Town's Dispatch Consultant. Critical Incident Stress Training Class took place on May 26 and Customer Service Training Class took place on May 27, 2022. The classes were very well attended, not only by our Dispatch Staff, but also by Dispatchers from throughout the area. We will consider possibly hosting additional training here in the future.
- Citizen Letter of Recognition: Chief Cappiello formally recognized Seymour resident, Mrs. Claudia Churchill, who was instrumental in assisting our personnel on June 8th in locating an elderly resident with dementia, who was reported missing and had not been seen for several hours. Chief Cappiello read the letter:

“On June 8, 2022, at approximately 7:00 a.m., Woodbridge Police personnel responded to a Peck Hill Road residence on the report of a missing person involving an elderly male with dementia. Upon their arrival, Officers learned that he was last seen at his residence several hours earlier, at approximately 4:30 a.m., and they immediately coordinated and commenced a search of the area.

At 8:41 a.m., Woodbridge Police Department Dispatch received a telephone call from Claudia Churchill. She reported that she was watching a disoriented older male, dressed in a suit, walking on Baldwin Road. She further reported that “he seemed out of place” and was “possibly in distress”. Churchill subsequently kept in visual contact with the elderly male, until the arrival of Woodbridge Police. It was quickly determined that the male was the missing individual from Peck Hill Road.

Claudia Churchill's keen observations led to the successful reuniting of the elderly man with his family, and quite possibly prevented an incident involving serious injury and/or death.

On behalf of the Woodbridge Police Department, I hereby officially recognize Claudia Chapman for her demonstration of prompt action, compassion and social responsibility.”

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

PERSONNEL MATTERS:

- **Extended Absences:** Since our last meeting, we had two Sergeants out of work for several days due to Covid, which left us short-staffed for a while. Most recently, we had a Dispatcher and an Officer out for two weeks due to Covid. Currently, we have one Officer out of work since April 26 on a Workers' Compensation Injury. The most recent update received this morning indicated he will remain out of work at least through August 1st, which is the date of his next scheduled physician's appointment.
- **New Dispatcher – Status Update:** Our newest Dispatcher Anthony Berardesca is on board and started working on June 13th. He currently is in training and is progressing very well. From his Fire Department experience, he has a good handle on radio demeanor and protocol, along with a working knowledge of the Town. He has already been working during some challenging calls and incidents. On the personal side, he fits in well with his fellow Dispatchers and the Officers. He has completed all of his online prerequisite training mandates. He is being scheduled for various training certification courses during the upcoming weeks including COLLECT training and Emergency Medical Dispatch training certification at Stratford EMS during the first week of August.
- **Letter of Commendation:** Chief Cappiello formally recognized Officer Matthew Lima for his actions locating and moving the occupant of a vehicle that was involved in a crash and then burst into flames. The Commendation reads as follows:

“On June 9, 2022, at approximately 1:40 a.m., Officer Matthew Lima was on routine patrol in the lower Amity Road area, when he heard a vehicle skidding, followed by a loud crash. Upon further investigation, Ofc. Lima located a motor vehicle accident on Amity Road near Fowler Street in New Haven and was promptly able to remove the seriously injured driver from the car, just prior to the vehicle becoming fully engulfed in flames. The driver, a 26-year-old male from Bridgeport, was transported by ambulance to Yale-New Haven Hospital for treatment of life-threatening injuries from which he later succumbed to, unfortunately.

The New Haven Fire Department responded to extinguish the vehicle fire, and the accident investigation is being conducted by the New Haven Police Department's Crash Team.

On behalf of the Woodbridge Police Department, I hereby commend Ofc. Matthew Lima for a job well done, as it was only because of his alertness, professionalism, and swift actions that the initial injuries sustained by the driver during this accident were not far worse.”

ADJOURNMENT:

The Board voted unanimously (Esposito/Kopel) to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Police Commissioners and move directly into the Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Traffic Authority at 8:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:
Janice Innocenzi, Administrative Assistant

WOODBRIIDGE BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS WOODBRIIDGE TRAFFIC AUTHORITY

REGULAR MEETING – TRAFFIC AUTHORITY

MINUTES

July 18, 2022

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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

Absent-

Ellen Scalettar – Board of Finance Liaison

Joseph Crisco – Board of Selectmen Liaison

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- There were no Public Comments.

TRAFFIC MATTERS:

- Dept. of Transportation Project: Signing & Pavement Marking: This project relates to the DOT's plan for the systematic application of proven safety countermeasures at various single lane, high crash risk, stop controlled intersections that they have identified throughout the state. Their countermeasures include enhanced signing and pavement markings to increase driver awareness at these locations. The locations being addressed in this project include:
 - Rte. 63 / Bradley Road
 - Rte. 63 / Clark Road
 - Rte. 63 / Landin Street
 - Rte. 69 / Landin Street
 - Rte. 243 / Rte. 114
 - Rte. 313 / Johnson Road
- Dept. of Transportation Project: Pedestrian Control Feature Upgrades: This project relates to Pedestrian Control Feature upgrades. To meet current DOT required standards, this includes upgrades to countdown pedestrian indications, and accessible pedestrian pushbuttons. In Woodbridge, this will be done at two locations:
 - Rte. 69 / Lucy Street
 - Rte. 69 / Merritt Avenue

ADJOURNMENT:

The Board voted unanimously (Esposito/Kopel) to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Traffic Authority at 8:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Janice Innocenzi, Administrative Assistant

WOODBIDGE BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS

MOTIONS

July 18, 2022

APPROVAL of MINUTES:

- B.O.P.C. Special Meeting – May 26, 2022:

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Those in favor: Esposito/Desir/Cardozo/Berke

Abstained: Kopel

Motion carries.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

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 - Conduct Certified Officer & Dispatch Candidate Interviews
 - Hiring

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ACTION TAKEN ON MATTERS DISCUSSED DURING EXECUTIVE SESSION

- Hiring:
 - Certified Police Officer - Hiring:

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 - Dispatch – Hiring:

The Board voted (Cardozo/Desir) to hire Jesenia Newton-Lewis for the position of Dispatcher.

Those in favor: Esposito/Desir/Cardozo/Berke

Abstained: Kopel

Motion carries.

REVIEW of REPORTS:

- FINANCIAL REPORT:

The Board voted unanimously (Esposito/Desir) to accept the Financial Report.
- Activity Report:

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

REPORT of the CHIEF of POLICE

The Board voted unanimously (Esposito/Desir) 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.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Board voted unanimously (Esposito/Kopel) to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Police Commissioners and move directly into the Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Traffic Authority at 8:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Janice Innocenzi, Administrative Assistant

WOODBIDGE TRAFFIC AUTHORITY

MOTIONS

July 18, 2022

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- There were no Public Comments.

TRAFFIC MATTERS:

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

ADJOURNMENT:

The Board voted unanimously (Esposito/Kopel) to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Traffic Authority at 8:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Janice Innocenzi, Administrative Assistant