

WOODBRIIDGE BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS WOODBRIIDGE TRAFFIC AUTHORITY

POLICE COMMISSION

MINUTES

September 18, 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, September 18, 2023, at 6:15 p.m.

- Chairman Berke called the regular meeting to order at 6:19 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

APPROVAL of MINUTES:

- B.O.P.C. Regular Meeting – July 17, 2023

The Board voted unanimously (Kopel/Desir) to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Police Commissioners/Woodbridge Traffic Authority held July 17, 2023.

EXECUTIVE SESSION / ACTION, AS APPROPRIATE:

- Discuss Personnel Matters regarding:
 - I.A. Update
 - Conduct Certified Officer Candidate Interviews
 - Hiring

The Board voted unanimously (Desir/Kopel) to move into Executive Session at 6:20 p.m. to discuss Personnel Matters regarding an I.A. Update, to conduct interviews of Certified Officer Candidates and discuss hiring. (Commission members, Chief, Deputy Chief, and Administrative Assistant were invited to stay, all others excused.)

- The Board moved out of Executive Session at 7:46 p.m.
- *Chairman Berke: There were no votes taken during Executive Session. There was one Internal Affairs issue that was addressed. The officer that was the subject of that I.A. was extended an invitation to appear and he declined the invitation. During Executive Session we interviewed two candidates who are Certified Officers.*
- There were no motions made, no votes taken during Executive Session.

ACTION TAKEN ON MATTERS DISCUSSED IN EXECUTIVE SESSION:

The Board voted unanimously (Kopel/Desir) to extend a conditional offer of employment to Thomas J. Testa. The offer to Mr. Testa includes a Grade B salary, including five vacation days; after completion of one year of service, his pay will move up to Grade A and after completion of one year of service, he will receive ten vacation days. The conditional offer of employment is subject to him passing both a physical and a psychological exam.

The Board voted unanimously (Kopel/Desir) to extend a conditional offer of employment to Nicholas Samartino. The offer to Mr. Samartino includes a Grade B salary, including five vacation days, after completion of one year of service, his pay will move up to Grade A and after completion of one year of service, he will receive ten vacation days. The conditional offer of employment is subject to him passing a physical exam.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- There were no Public Comments.

REVIEW of REPORTS:

- **Financial Report:** Chief Cappiello reported that currently we are just over two months into the new fiscal year and our reflected expenditures at this point are mainly contractual related stipends and mandatory operational requirements. One line that is significantly impacted is the Police Overtime line, which was at 29.3% used, but that directly correlates with our diminished staffing levels. Over the past few months we have been dealing with a lot of scheduling challenges and mandatory “holdovers” and “order-ins” associated with having 2 retirement vacancies, 1 officer out on Administrative Leave, 1 officer out on an unanticipated medical related absence, and 3 officers out on Workers’ Comp related injuries. Along with that, I would like to recognize and praise our personnel for the great job done by our dedicated Sergeants and Officers, not only on a daily basis, but especially over the past several months and throughout the summer when everyone stepped up.

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

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

Criminal Activity Report (July & August):

- Assault: 1 (Involving a shooting incident. An arrest was made; charges pending.)
- Burglaries: 1 (At the Transfer Station)
- Family Disputes: 5
- Fraud Cases: 28 (Check frauds, identity thefts, online scams)
- Fights in Progress: 4 (3 resulted in arrests)
- Threatening Calls: 3
- Unwanted Person Complaints: 5
- Larceny Cases: 6
- Larcenies from Motor Vehicles: 2
- Mental Health Issues: 6
- Missing Person Cases: 2 (Both were located, one in Milford and one in New Haven)
- Noise Complaints: 8
- Stolen Vehicles: 2

ISU – (Investigative Services Unit):

- New Case Investigations: 10
- Pistol Permit Applications Processed & Background Checks Completed: 7
- Public Fingerprinting Requests: 37
- Conducted Background Investigations on 3 Certified Officer Applicants.
- ISU was able to identify and secure an arrest warrant for the person responsible for the robbery of the Citizens Bank in March of this year, served that warrant, and arrested the subject on August 24.
- As mentioned during our June meeting, in May they prepared and testified in the trial of their case against the first of two suspects arrested for the 2021 Pease Road Park homicide. The suspect was found to be guilty on all charges (murder, felony murder, robbery, conspiracy, and criminal possession of a firearm.) On August 4, he was sentenced to 80 years in prison. The start date of the trial for the second suspect is still pending.
- In an unrelated case, working with other agencies, they were able to identify and arrest a suspect responsible for a 2021 nighttime armed carjacking that occurred on Warren Road. That suspect was subsequently linked to numerous other carjackings and robbery incidents that occurred throughout the area, and on August 30 he was sentenced in Federal Court to 28 years in prison.
- They also secured search warrants and processed the crime scene of the Raymond Road shooting incident.
- They were involved in the seizure of numerous firearms associated with a road rage incident that occurred on Northrop Road.

Motor Vehicle Activity Report (Patrol Division):

Deputy Chief Ronald Smith reported the following –

- July: 25 – Accidents

- August: 64 - Motor Vehicle Stops
 25 - Accidents
 322 – Speed Enforcement Assignments
 316 – Deterrent Traffic Posts

The Speed Trailer was located on Amity Road and Bradley Road for some time, and it was also placed on Johnson Road between Ansonia Road and Rimmon Road. We are planning to put the speed trailer, once again, on North Pease Road where we have received multiple complaints, and we are also going to put it back on Johnson Road in between Ansonia and Rimmon to extract data from our trailer. We wanted to do that while school is now in session to see if our numbers changed.

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

REPORT of the CHIEF of POLICE

- ATV Joint Regional Task Force: On September 1, at the First Selectman’s request, I represented the Town at a meeting called by Mayor Elicker of New Haven, for the Police Chiefs and CEOs from the area to acknowledge the pressing issue of the illegal operation of ATV’s and dirt bikes within our region, the risks they pose, and to discuss the importance of multi-agency collaboration and a coordinated effort to address this growing problem. To combat the issue, it was agreed that a joint task force with a unified commitment from neighboring communities is crucial and would be implemented. The task force involves the commitment of at least one officer on a part-time basis to serve as a member and liaison to the group. The goal of the task force is to have weekly intelligence sharing and strategy meetings, develop best practices in preventing and responding to illegal dirt bike and ATV activity, to participate in joint operations to curb the illegal use of these vehicles, and most importantly, willingness to dedicate additional resources, when feasible, to support larger coordinated law enforcement efforts when they learn of a planned mass gathering of these illegal motorized vehicles. The participation of all communities involved is non-binding, but is extremely helpful, as we are all facing staffing shortage challenges and are all subject to having an event pass through or take place in our communities. Beth has acknowledged the Town’s support and planned participation in this plan, as have many of the CEOs from our neighboring communities, who we look forward to working alongside to address this issue.

- S2 Door Security Project (Update): Over the summer, personnel from JKS Systems were on site and completed the installation of our building’s electronic door access monitoring system’s S2 Control Panel and the associated cabling and strike plates for 14 positions that were funded throughout FY22/23. Everything has been installed and is working well. I look forward to proposing funding next year in 2025 to complete the two (2) remaining access points so that we maximize the entire system by utilizing all 16 of its available ports.

- “No Shave November” Fundraiser Event: Coming up in November, as we have for the past several years now, I will be allowing our Officers and Dispatchers to participate in the “No Shave November” annual fundraiser to support cancer prevention, research, and education. Again this year, it will be in partnership with the Connecticut Cancer Foundation to benefit Connecticut cancer patients. All participants will be reminded that, as always, they will need to maintain a professional and neat appearance during the event. I wish them the best for another successful year with their fund raising efforts for this important cause.

- Prescription Drug Take Back Event: On Saturday, October 28th, as we have successfully done for the past several years, we will be teaming up with the Drug Enforcement Agency for their 25th nationwide, one-day prescription drug take-back initiative. This event will once again give our residents the opportunity to turn in unwanted, expired, or unused controlled substances. All of the medications collected that day will be

transported to a predetermined site and turned over to the DEA. From there, the drugs will be incinerated at various facilities throughout New England, where it will also be converted into clean, renewable energy for use by local communities.

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

PERSONNEL MATTERS:

- **Extended Absence (Updates):** Over the summer, we had four of our personnel out on extended absences for various lengths of time. Three of the absences were Workers' Comp related injuries and one was for an unanticipated medical matter. I am pleased to report that three of those four have since returned to work at full-duty status without restrictions. Currently, we have only one employee still out on an extended Workers' Comp related injury, whose return to work date is yet to be determined.
- **Dispatcher Recognition:** Chief Cappiello recognized Dispatcher Stephanie Sullivan with a Letter of Recognition: *"On August 3, 2023 at approximately 7:52 pm, Dispatcher Stephanie Sullivan was the sole on-duty dispatcher at which time she fielded calls reporting a shooting on Raymond Road and immediately alerted police and emergency medical personnel. Upon arrival, officers located a female and her infant child outside of the home. The woman, who was suffering from a gunshot wound to the head, and the infant who was uninjured, were removed from the property and it was determined that the suspect responsible was still inside the home and refusing to exit. During this incident, Dispatcher Sullivan remained calm and composed while simultaneously communicating with the caller on the phone, providing updates to the emergency responders, and contacting other agencies for a mutual aid response. As a result, and due to the collective efforts of all, the suspect exited the home and was taken into custody without further incident. The public safety communications professionalism displayed by Dispatcher Sullivan during this incident warrants my gratitude and is hereby officially recognized for a job well done."*
- **Officer Retirements:** As I previously reported at our July meeting, Officer John Calabrese officially notified me in June of his official intent to retire, which will become effective October 2, 2023, after having completed 15 years of service with our Department. Additionally, and most recently, Officer Vincent Lynch notified me on August 14 of his intent to retire from our Department with 25 years of collective law enforcement and military service, which became effective on August 25. As I shared with you via e-mail, Officer Lynch has accepted a position with the Woodbridge Board of Education as an Armed School Security Officer at the Beecher Road School. I would like to officially thank both Officers for their dedication to duty and their exemplary service to the Police Department and to our community. I wish them both many years of health and happiness in their retirements and new endeavors as they move forward.
- **Hiring Status:** As I reported earlier, with one resignation and one retirement, we will have two more vacancies upcoming on October 1 and October 2. We recently participated in the South Central Criminal Justice regional testing process. We have six new recruit applicants who we are vetting and will be conducting background checks on them, as well as one more Certified Officer applicant. Hopefully, we will address moving ahead with that at our October meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

- There were no new business matters to discuss.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Board voted unanimously (Kopel/Desir) to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Police Commissioners at 8:10 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

September 18, 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, September 18, 2023, at 6:15 p.m.

- Chairman Berke called the regular meeting to order at 6:19 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

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- There were no Public Comments.

TRAFFIC MATTERS:

- Fire Department Road Closure & Traffic Control Request – “Truck or Treat” Event: The Woodbridge Fire Department will be holding their 12th annual Halloween “Truck or Treat” event on Tuesday evening October 31, 2023. As the event traditionally draws a large attendance, they are seeking the Traffic Authority’s approval for the closure of Rte. 114 between Newton Road and Meetinghouse Lane, from approximately 4:30 pm to 9:30 pm, which would enable them to solicit a “Special Highway Use” permit from the Connecticut Department of Transportation. After the Fire Department closes the road, police will be assigned traffic posts appropriately throughout the detour and traffic will be rerouted from Newton Road, through the Town Center and around Meetinghouse Lane. We have done it this way numerous times over the years and by leaving the crosswalk area in front of the firehouse free and accessible for pedestrian traffic, it works well to ensure the safety of those in attendance.

The Board voted unanimously (Kopel/Desir) to approve the Fire Department’s request to close the road for their “Truck or Treat” event.

- Request for “No Right Turn on Red” Sign – Rte. 63 @ Rte. 114: We received a request from Mr. & Mrs. Wartel of Shady Lane, requesting that the intersection of Rte. 63 and Rte. 114 be posted “No Turn on Red” for vehicles traveling southbound on Amity Road. In their request, they state that southbound traffic is not aware of the northbound turn signal being activated, and that vehicles making a right turn on red often roll through the intersection without completely stopping. At that intersection, the highway is clearly delineated with two southbound lanes, one of which is dedicated and marked only for use when making a right turn onto Rte. 114. Traffic traveling northbound has a left turn arrow on the overhead control signal light to facilitate a left turn onto Rte. 114. The residents feel that southbound traffic is not aware of the northbound turn signal being activated, and that vehicles making a right turn on red often roll through the intersection without completely stopping. A review of accident history at that intersection for the past two years from 08/01/21 through 08/29/23 revealed that although there have been nine collisions, none of them were attributed to the factors associated with turns onto Rte. 114. Based on that data, at this time, there does not appear to be any action for the Traffic Authority to take on the matter. I feel their concerns could best be addressed with the forwarding of their request to the DOT. That is something I can facilitate and assist putting the residents in contact with them for further explanation as to the traffic engineering and signalization at that location.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Board voted unanimously (Kopel/Desir) to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Traffic Authority at 8:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Janice Innocenzi, Administrative Assistant

WOODBIDGE BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS

MOTIONS

September 18, 2023

APPROVAL of MINUTES:

- B.O.P.C. Regular Meeting – July 17, 2023

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PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- There were no Public Comments.

REVIEW of REPORTS:

- FINANCIAL REPORT:

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

- Activity Report:

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

REPORT of the CHIEF of POLICE

The Board voted unanimously (Desir/Kopel) 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.

NEW BUSINESS:

- There were no new business matters to discuss.

ADJOURNMENT:

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Respectfully submitted:

Janice Innocenzi, Administrative Assistant

WOODBIDGE TRAFFIC AUTHORITY

MOTIONS

September 18, 2023

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TRAFFIC MATTERS:

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The Board voted unanimously (Kopel/Desir) to approve the Fire Department’s request to close the road for their “Truck or Treat” event.

ADJOURNMENT:

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Respectfully submitted:
Janice Innocenzi, Administrative Assistant