

WOODBIDGE BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS

SPECIAL MEETING

MINUTES

January 11, 2021

Via ZOOM Platform (Governor Ned Lamont's Executive Order 7B)

Live Streamed – WGATV, Channel 79

YouTube link: <https://youtu.be/Rf3bjOAVs0o>

A Special Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Police Commissioners/Woodbridge Traffic Authority took place Monday, January 11, 2021 at 6:15 p.m., via ZOOM platform.

- *Chairman Berke called the meeting to order at 6:17 p.m.*

Commissioners and Liaisons Present-

Commissioner Deborah Fried

Commissioner Deborah Desir

Commissioner Andrew Esposito, Jr.

Commissioner Stephen Falcigno

Chairman Robert Berke

Joseph Crisco, Board of Selectmen Liaison

Police Administration Present-

Chief Frank Cappiello

Administrative Assistant Janice Innocenzi

Absent:

Deputy Chief Raymond Stuart

Paul Kuriakose, Board of Finance Liaison

APPROVAL of MINUTES:

- B.O.P.C. Regular Meeting – November 10, 2020:

Votes in Favor: Fried/Desir/Berke

Abstained: Esposito

Motion approved.

The Board voted (Fried/Desir) to approve the minutes from the Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Police Commissioners/Woodbridge Traffic Authority held on November 10, 2020.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- There were no Public Comments.
- Commissioner Falcigno and Mr. Crisco joined the meeting.

REVIEW of REPORTS:

- **Financial Report:** Chief Cappiello reported that we are through the first portion of FY21, we are halfway through this budget year, and we continue on track at 53%. Police Overtime is at 66.7% and a significant portion of that is attributed to the tropical storm and should be reimbursed through FEMA, and when that happens it will put us back to where we should be and on target. Chief Cappiello said 100% reimbursement is expected.

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

- **Criminal Activity Report (November/December):**
 - **Burglaries:** 2 (November) - A residential garage was entered and power equipment was stolen; there was a commercial burglary at a restaurant where a lock was broken and cash stolen.
 - **Drug Complaints:** 3 - Two involved use and possession of marijuana and vaping; and on Christmas Day involved an unresponsive person in a vehicle, the person was taken to the hospital and was found to be in possession of heroin.
 - **Fraud Cases:** 9 – (5 in November/4 in December) – Complaints involved phone and internet scams, and check washing at a local bank.
 - **Larcenies:** 9 - Mostly in November, attributed to thefts of political lawn signs, flags and banners. We had some package thefts around the holidays, theft of tires and rims from a vehicle parked overnight at a local business, and shoplifting at a store in Selden Plaza.
 - **Larcenies from Motor Vehicles:** 5 (4 in November/1 in December)
 - **Robbery:** An 82-year-old female exited her car, was entering an office complex on Bradley Road, and was approached by a suspect who grabbed her purse and fled in a stolen car that was parked and waiting nearby. That same vehicle and suspects were involved in similar type incidents and robberies before this in Hamden and New Haven, followed by one in Orange. In some instances, those suspects were armed with a firearm, which was not displayed in our incident. ISU is working with other Departments on this and they have since recovered the vehicle and identified a juvenile suspect; an arrest warrant is forthcoming.
 - **Stolen Motor Vehicles:** 8 (1 in November/7 in December) – This has been a trend in the area and statewide. One of the vehicles stolen was involved in a shooting incident in Hamden/New Haven. Many of the suspects are juveniles and are involved in a lot worse crimes. We sent out a press release news flash reminding residents to make sure they lock their cars, secure their keys, and take ignition fobs to reduce the opportunity of these crimes.
- **ISU:**
 - November - 6 new cases.
 - On a prior case from 2015, involving the theft of a firearm from a vehicle that showed up in Hartford, Hartford made an arrest on that, and we made prior arrests between 2015 and now of other missing firearms that were recovered from that case.
 - 2 Sexual Assault warrants are awaiting prosecutorial review.
 - A guilty plea on a kidnapping/robbery case being handled in federal court that was contested, and recently a judge ruled that guilty verdict would stand. Sentencing will be forthcoming.
 - November: 8 Fingerprints Processed / 4 Pistol Permit Investigations.
 - December: 9 new cases, including the stolen cars and the robbery (warrant pending).
 - 21 Fingerprints Processed / 3 Pistol Permit Investigations.
- **Motor Vehicle Activity (November/December):** Traffic enforcement remains consistent with what we have seen in the last few months. Our public interaction continues to be limited to diminish the potential of exposure to the coronavirus for both our officers and the public. We continue to address the concern for highway safety through increased deterrent traffic radar and high visibility traffic enforcement posts. Overall, for the calendar year 2020 vs. 2019, we have seen an overall decrease in motor vehicle accidents during that time.

The Board voted unanimously (Esposito/Fried) to accept the Activity Report.

REPORT of the CHIEF of POLICE

- **Amended 13-Month Meeting Schedule Approval:** Chief Cappiello requested the Board’s consideration to approve the amended 13-Month meeting schedule.

The Board voted unanimously (Desir/Fried) to approve the amended 13-month meeting schedule.

- **ARHS – SRO/Armed School Security:** We currently have the SRO in place at the high school with the Amity budget reimbursing the Town for approximately the ten months he is there, which is equivalent to 77.5% of his salary. In addition to the SRO, Amity has unarmed security personnel at all three of their schools. Over the past several months, the Amity Board of Ed has adopted a policy and regulations involving the future use of armed security in their school buildings and they plan on implementing that in the middle schools in Orange and Bethany. The plan is somewhat complex because Amity is a regional school and its three campuses are spread out in three separate towns and each town has its own Police Department. Chief Cappiello, Chief Gagne from Orange, and Administrative Lieutenant Dave Merriam from Bethany, met with Supt. Byars to discuss the school’s new plans, and the importance of all of us working together to ensure that these new positions support and protect the schools, while still relying on the expertise of the local Police Departments and SROs from all three jurisdictions. Amity’s plan is to first start implementing the new positions at their middle schools in Orange and Bethany in the upcoming months. Dr. Byars realizes the need and importance of having an SRO at the high school, not only for security related issues, but also for his actual involvement with the students, and teaching classes and presentations among students, staff and administration. At this time, it is their intention to continue funding the SRO at the high school, as is. We look forward to collaborating with Amity to enhance the safety of the school community.
- **COVID Updates:** As of this morning, the total number of COVID-19 positive cases and associated deaths in Town, as reported by QVHD, stand at 249 positive cases and unfortunately, 34 deaths. None of the deaths occurred in the past seven months. With the surge after the holidays from December 1 through January 7, we had about 50 new cases. Only two or three cases were from the extended care and nursing facilities in Town. The rest were all from residents, involving people of all ages. At the Police Department, we have experienced some COVID positive cases, exposures, and some potential exposures amongst our staff, but despite the staggered absences, we have made do. It has been challenging at times, but we have been able to continue with fluent operations and we intend to keep that going as long as we can. Our Department’s First Responders have begun receiving their first doses of the COVID vaccine, with no adverse reactions reported. Our Dispatchers and essential workforce have begun to receive their invitations this week. The Town has hosted two COVID testing sites so far. There was an outdoor drive-thru testing site in November at the high school and a walk-in testing site at the Center Gym in December. Two more are scheduled for Sunday, January 17 and Sunday, February 14, 2021, both at the Center Gym from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. The Town is also working on hosting a vaccination clinic at a date to be determined, for residents over the age of 75 in accordance with the rollout of “Phase 1b” of the vaccination process.
- **Stuff-a-Cruiser:** On December 5, we held our 3rd annual “Stuff-a-Cruiser” holiday toy donation drive to benefit the Yale-New Children’s Hospital and the U.S. Marine “Toys for Tots” program. The event was coordinated by Officer Brian Pedalino, who spearheaded that event for the last three years, with the assistance of Officer Karl Rodriguez-Perez, and in conjunction with Katz’s Deli, the UPS Store, Starbuck’s, the Police Union, and the U.S. Marines, who had a representative in dress uniform on site with us that day. This year certainly presented challenges with the COVID pandemic, wearing facemasks and social distancing, and was compounded further by high winds, heavy rain and snow that day. Despite all of that, this was the most successful event so far, yielding more than 500 toys and several bicycles. Chief Cappiello expressed his thanks to all those who donated, participated, and showed up to help.

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

PERSONNEL MATTERS:

- **Retirement:** Deputy Chief Stuart has submitted his retirement papers, effective January 23, 2021. Ray was hired and started as a patrol officer in 1989, was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant in 1990, and in 2002, he was promoted to Deputy Chief, a position he has held for the past 18 years. On behalf of all our Officers, Dispatchers and staff, I would like to thank Ray for his loyal and dedicated service to the Department and to the Town for past three decades, and for the friendships he has forged with all of us. We wish him well and a long, healthy, safe and well-deserved retirement.
- **Workers' Comp Update:** We had two employees out on comp related injuries. One was out for most of the month of November and has since returned to full duty. Another officer was out since Oct. 27 and was cleared by his physician this morning to return to full duty effective tomorrow.
- **Dispatch Update:** Our newest Dispatcher recently successfully completed her orientation and training requirements. Effective January 3, she became part of minimum staff rotation. We are finally back to a full complement of Dispatchers after quite a while.

BUDGET:

- **Operating Budget Approval:** Chief Cappiello said the FY22 Operating Budget has been prepared in a fiscally responsible manner, trying to control costs, maintain public safety and the delivery of quality services. We continue to provide these same services with staffing levels that have been cut the last two years. Most of our budget remains associated with personnel and salary costs in correlation with Dispatch and Officer Collective Bargaining Unit labor agreements. The actual operating portion of the budget this year, in addition to the standard increases, includes costs associated with keeping us in compliance with an array of new training, testing, technology, screenings and other legislated mandates enacted with the new Public Act 20-1, An Act Concerning Police Accountability. There is a lot we will have to deal with operationally, practically and financially.

Chief Cappiello reviewed the proposed budget with Budget Subcommittee members Commissioner Falcigno and Commissioner Esposito on December 31, and presented it for discussion, and a vote to accept it and move it forward for the Boards of Finance and Selectmen.

Both Commissioner Esposito and Commissioner Falcigno expressed concerns about Police overtime being too high.

The Board voted unanimously (Esposito/Fried) to approve the proposed Operating Budget.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Board voted unanimously (Fried/Falcigno) to adjourn the Special Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Police Commissioners at 6:56 p.m. and move directly into the Special Meeting of the Woodbridge Traffic Authority.

Respectfully submitted:
Janice Innocenzi, Administrative Assistant

WOODBIDGE TRAFFIC AUTHORITY

SPECIAL MEETING

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The Special Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Police Commissioners/Woodbridge Traffic Authority took place Monday, January 11, 2021 at 6:15 p.m., via ZOOM platform.

- *Chairman Berke called the Traffic Authority portion of the meeting to order at 6:56 p.m.*

Commissioners and Liaisons Present-

Commissioner Deborah Fried

Commissioner Deborah Desir

Commissioner Andrew Esposito, Jr.

Commissioner Stephen Falcigno

Chairman Robert Berke

Joseph Crisco, Board of Selectmen Liaison

Police Administration Present-

Chief Frank Cappiello

Administrative Assistant Janice Innocenzi

Absent-

Deputy Chief Raymond Stuart

Paul Kuriakose, Board of Finance Liaison

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- There were no Public Comments.

TRAFFIC MATTERS:

- **Johnson Road – Curve Update:** We received a request from a Johnson Road resident regarding improvements in the area of a curve near his home, which is located on Johnson, between Woodfield and Brookwood Roads. In addition to meeting with the Traffic Committee on the issue, we assigned extra patrols, radar details and deployed the speed trailer there to promote awareness. We discussed the concern with Warren Connors from Public Works. He surveyed the area to determine what improvements might be possible. The area already has centerline rumble strips installed, but after his review of the area, he agreed we could make some enhancements. At the end of December, Public Works removed the old signs and replaced them with new upgraded, reflective signs in the area that should assist with improving visibility day and night on the approach to the curve. Chris Dickerson of the Traffic Committee contacted the resident and the resident was pleased with the enhancements and with the promptness of the work by everyone involved to address his concerns.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Board voted unanimously (Esposito/Falcigno) to adjourn the Special Meeting of the Woodbridge Traffic Authority at 7:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Janice Innocenzi, Administrative Assistant

WOODBIDGE BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS

SPECIAL MEETING

MOTIONS

January 11, 2021

APPROVAL of MINUTES:

- B.O.P.C. Regular Meeting – November 10, 2020:

Votes in Favor: Fried/Desir/Berke

Abstained: Esposito

Motion approved.

The Board voted (Fried/Desir) to approve the minutes from the Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Police Commissioners/Woodbridge Traffic Authority held on November 10, 2020.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- There were no Public Comments.

REVIEW of REPORTS

- Financial Report:

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

- Activity Report:

The Board voted unanimously (Esposito/Fried) to accept the Activity Report.

REPORT of the CHIEF of POLICE

- Amended 13-Month Meeting Schedule Approval:

The Board voted unanimously (Desir/Fried) to approve the amended 13-month meeting schedule.

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.

BUDGET

- Operating Budget Approval:

The Board voted unanimously (Esposito/Fried) to approve the proposed Operating Budget.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Board voted unanimously (Fried/Falcigno) to adjourn the Special Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Police Commissioners at 6:56 p.m. and move directly into the Special Meeting of the Woodbridge Traffic Authority.

Respectfully submitted:
Janice Innocenzi, Administrative Assistant

WOODBRIIDGE TRAFFIC AUTHORITY

SPECIAL MEETING

MOTIONS

January 11, 2021

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/Falcigno) to adjourn the Special Meeting of the Woodbridge Traffic Authority at 7:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:
Janice Innocenzi, Administrative Assistant