

WOODBIDGE TRAFFIC AUTHORITY

REGULAR MEETING

MINUTES

March 10, 2020

The Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Police Commissioners/Woodbridge Traffic Authority took place Tuesday, March 10, 2020 at 6:15 p.m., in the Woodbridge Police Department Training Room.

COMMISSIONERS and LIAISONS PRESENT:

Chairman Robert Berke, Commissioner Deborah Desir, Commissioner Deborah Fried, Commissioner Andrew Esposito, Jr., Joseph Crisco – Board of Selectmen Liaison, Paul Kuriakose – Board of Finance Liaison

POLICE DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATION PRESENT:

Chief Frank P. Cappiello, Deputy Chief Raymond S. Stuart, Administrative Assistant Janice Innocenzi

ABSENT:

Commissioner Stephen Falcigno

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS/CORRESPONDENCE:

- There were no Public Comments or Correspondence.

TRAFFIC MATTERS:

- Grouse Lane/Fraser Drive – C. Dickerson: Chief Cappiello said, at the end of last year, we discussed a request from a resident in the area of Grouse Lane and Fraser Drive, regarding additional traffic control signage in the area. We conducted a traffic study and during our January meeting, the Local Traffic Authority decided against the installation of speed limit signs or additional stop signs at the Grouse Lane/Fraser Drive intersection. Following that meeting, Deputy Chief Stuart met with the Traffic Committee regarding this issue. Chris Dickerson is here on behalf of the Traffic Committee this evening to address the Board.

Chris Dickerson addressed the Board saying that they reviewed the traffic study, which concluded that it was not necessary to put stop signs at this intersection, but looking at it more closely, we thought it might be a good idea to recommend putting the stop signs there. There are many children in the neighborhood and the neighbors are complaining about people speeding. The reality is, the people who are speeding are their neighbors. In this situation we felt it was reasonable to put the two additional stop signs there because it does not actually affect anybody else in town, it only affects the neighborhood and the neighbors. It is under the purview of the Traffic Authority to do that; you do not have to get state approval for this. We felt that based on the concerns of the parents, and the amount of children in the neighborhood, it would make sense to put the two stop signs up there, and hopefully it will get people to be a little more aware of the speed and concern for the children.

The Board voted unanimously (Fried/Esposito) to install the two stop signs at the Grouse Lane/Fraser Drive intersection.

- Milford Prevention Council – 9th Annual “Ride for Hope” Benefit Ride: Chief Cappiello requested the Board’s consideration to allow the annual benefit ride to travel through Woodbridge on Sunday, June 7, 2020.

The Board voted unanimously (Fried/Esposito) to approve the annual Ride for Hope charity ride to travel through town, as requested.

- Baldwin Road – Update: Chief Cappiello reported that subsequent to the findings of the traffic study conducted at the end of last year, the state approved lowering the speed limit for the entire length of Baldwin Road from 35 to 30 mph. The final step in that process was done on January 16, 2020 and all signage was posted to make it effective. Town Hall posted a notice on the website and advertised it so the public is aware of that. There were some letters of thanks from the resident who was the impetus for that; she called and wrote to thank everyone for their efforts.
- WFBL – Request to Close Road: Chief Cappiello received a request from the Beth-Wood Baseball League to close the road for their Opening Day events, which will be held on Saturday, April 25, 2020. Customarily, they close off Meetinghouse Lane for pedestrian safety from the area near the Library, right through the intersection of Center Road. They filed the application with the town for special event use of the town green and they are looking for the Traffic Authority’s approval of the temporary road closure.

The Board voted unanimously (Fried/Desir) to approve the closing of the road for baseball opening day.

- Driveway Entrance to Fitzgerald Property: At their February 12th meeting, the Board of Selectmen approved construction of 24 additional parking spaces in the parking lot. It was the consensus of the Board of Selectmen that these additional parking spaces warranted a reconfiguration or widening of the entrance to the lot itself or perhaps even a second driveway, so the Board of Selectmen asked for this matter to be considered by the Traffic Authority for possible safety issues. They were looking for a recommendation from the Traffic Authority as soon as possible. Based on that, Chief Cappiello did a 3-year look back into the traffic accident history and it showed that we have had no accidents in proximity of the current driveway. The Chief then discussed the matter with the Public Works Director and he suggested that the most practical solution would be to leave the driveway where it was and to widen the existing driveway so it could accommodate two cars more readily than it does now. The other possibility would be to make a second driveway, but because of the property boundaries, it would have to be on Beecher, but closer to Center Road and that would somewhat encroach on the upward grade on Beecher Road, so he was not in favor of that and neither was the Chief. The scope of the Traffic Authority is to recommend control signals, signage and markings on highways and to make sure those markings are in compliance with regulations. In this case, there will not be any signage or markings; it is strictly the widening/modifying of the driveway itself. Usually, the placement of driveways on town-owned or commercial property is usually done through a permit process with zoning; there is no inland wetlands, conservation or property line boundary disputes. They are looking for a recommendation from us. Chairman Berke said that he does not think we can do that, as it is not within the scope of our authority.
- Woodbridge Rec Dept. – 39th Annual Woodbridge Road Race: The 39th Annual Woodbridge Road Race will be held October 3, 2020 from 8:00 am until 12:00 pm. They will be using their standard route, Newton, Burnt Swamp, Amity, North Pease and back down. As always, the event is well staffed, marked with signs and cones, and we will dedicate whatever personnel we can to assist with safety. The Chief asked the Board’s consideration to allow the race to conduct the race.

The Board voted unanimously (Esposito/Fried) to approve the 39th Annual Woodbridge Road Race.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Board voted unanimously (Fried/Esposito) to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Traffic Authority at 6:39 p.m. and move directly into the regular meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Police Commissioners.

Respectfully submitted:

Janice Innocenzi

Janice Innocenzi
Administrative Assistant

WOODBRIIDGE BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS

REGULAR MEETING

MINUTES

March 10, 2020

The Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Police Commissioners/Woodbridge Traffic Authority took place Tuesday, March 10, 2020 at 6:15 p.m., in the Woodbridge Police Department Training Room.

COMMISSIONERS and LIAISONS PRESENT:

Chairman Robert Berke, Commissioner Deborah Desir, Commissioner Deborah Fried, Commissioner Andrew Esposito, Jr., Joseph Crisco – Board of Selectmen Liaison, Paul Kuriakose – Board of Finance Liaison

POLICE DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATION PRESENT:

Chief Frank P. Cappiello, Deputy Chief Raymond S. Stuart, Administrative Assistant Janice Innocenzi

ABSENT:

Commissioner Stephen Falcigno

- *Chairman Berke called the meeting to order at 6:39 p.m.*

SWEARING IN CEREMONY:

- **Officer Stephen Praleikas:** Chief Cappiello said Officer Praleikas was hired in January, and officially started on February 13. He is progressing very well and is participating in the Certified Officer Training and familiarization period. Upon his successful completion in the next few weeks, he will be released as part of minimum manpower and staffing. We have received all good reports and reviews from his peers; we are happy for him and wish him a long, safe and successful career at the Police Department. Chief Cappiello and Chairman Berke conducted the swearing-in ceremony.

APPROVAL of MINUTES:

- **B.O.P.C. Regular Meeting – January 14, 2020:** Tabled until the next meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS/CORRESPONDENCE:

- There were no Public Comments or Correspondence.

REVIEW of REPORTS:

- **Financial Report:** Chief Cappiello reported that we are eight months through the fiscal year, we are at a little over 63%, and are on target and a fraction below where we should be at this point.

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

- **Criminal Activity Report (January & February):**
 - **Burglaries:** 2
 - **Larcenies:** Included items missing from Assisted Living Facilities; stolen mail, stolen laptops (warrant pending)
 - **Larcenies from Motor Vehicles:** 10
 - **Stolen Vehicles:** 2 (One recovered)
 - **Bank Robbery:** 1 (Suspect identified and arrested)
 - **Untimely Death:** 1 (Fentanyl overdose)

- Motor Vehicle Activity:
 - Motor Vehicle Stops: 145 (January) – Stops resulted in 2 Felony Arrests & 13 Misdemeanor Arrests.
 - 368 Radar Enforcements & 1,275 Deterrent-Runs were completed.

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

REPORT of the CHIEF of POLICE

- Penguin Plunge: On February 29, two members of the Police Department participated in the CT Special Olympics Penguin Plunge fundraiser. Chief Cappiello recognized Officer Brian Pedalino and Officer Karl Rodriguez-Perez who represented our Department at the event. They took the plunge into the ice-cold waters of Crystal Lake in Middletown and raised donations totaling approximately \$500 for a great cause.
- IT Update: At the end of this fiscal year, the Town will no longer be using Amity High School to service our IT needs; TBNG Consulting will be taking over. TBNG already assists Amity with some of their work in the school district and are already affiliated with the Town, as they have been involved in a three phase town-wide IT infrastructure upgrade. Phase One – The Town Hall portion has already been completed. Phase Two of the project is a network upgrade at the Police Department, scheduled to start after the beginning of the new fiscal year.
- UI Storm-Related Coverage: The First Selectman recently received a letter from UI, which clarifies some of the concern about UI storm coverage and overtime to pay for that. Chief Cappiello read an excerpt from that letter: “*During emergency restoration events, municipalities frequently call upon their police force or emergency personnel to protect the public health and safety as downed power lines and storm conditions pose a threat to their residents. Emergency response services are a traditional government function funded by taxpayers and UI is not legally required to reimburse a municipality for public safety or emergency response services during a declared State of Emergency or emergency restoration event.*” The Chief said that they will fund roadwork and maintenance work, but storm-wise and weather-related, they do not.
- RING Neighborhood Portal: We are in the process of partnering with the RING doorbell camera system that will allow us to engage with the community. RING has been affiliated with the CT Police Chiefs Association for the last few years. The main goal of their collaboration with us will give us another platform to communicate with residents. They developed a law enforcement only platform, through which we could have access to information from residents willing to share it. We could put out a request to residents in the area and if they want to submit any kind of video they could, but they do not have to if they do not want to. They can remain anonymous. Police Departments in Ansonia, Orange, Derby, North Haven, East Haven and New Haven are some of the towns in our area who are utilizing it. There is no cost to the Police Department. It is free to law enforcement and is strictly anonymous and voluntary.

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

NEW BUSINESS:

- Discussion – Location of Meetings: Chairman Berke tabled this discussion until the next meeting.

PERSONNEL MATTERS:

- New Dispatcher Update: Chief Cappiello reported that our newest Dispatcher Leslie Rivera is currently in training and progressing well.
- Chief’s Letters of Recognition and Commendation: Officer Matthew Lima received a Letter of Commendation for a burglary arrest at the Country Club of Woodbridge. A Letter of Commendation for Officer Scott Prentice and Letters of Recognition for Sgt. R.J. Scott, Officer Matthew Iannucci and Officer John Lalli in recognition of multiple arrests made on a stolen vehicle incident. A Letter of Commendation for ISU Sgt. A.J. Cappiello, Det. Richard Monaco, Det. Michael Luzzi, FBI Special Agent Lisa MacNamara and CSP-CDMCS Det. Lindsey Valcourt for a drug related robbery arrest associated with the homicide on Rimmon Road.

- Patrol Vacancies: Chief Cappiello said that at the January meeting, it was discussed that we still have two patrol vacancies and the hiring process was subsequently tabled. Chairman Berke was going to discuss funding for that with the Finance Director. Since then, the Town's budget review process for FY21 budget has commenced and the Board of Selectmen has recommended to the Board of Finance that both of these vacant patrol officer positions be eliminated. Chief Cappiello said he discussed his concerns with Chairman Berke, the First Selectman, and the Chairman of the Board of Finance.

The Chief stated that in 2018, we restructured and reduced our Administrative Staff by one, with the intention of getting more boots on the ground by replacing that Administrative position with a switch over to the patrol side. Now we are a year and a half into that, we lost the Lieutenant's position, and we still have two patrol vacancies that we never filled. In reality, if we eliminate two more positions, we will be going down from a Department of 26 which we have been budgeted for many years, down to 23, and that is way below where I feel we need to be and what a professional management study recommended.

Chief Cappiello said he wanted to clarify his position on some of the comments that were made at a recent Board of Selectmen meeting. One thing that was said was that the Police Department did not take a look at the managerial staff and structure. He went on to explain at length that this has been addressed. In fact, the Town entered into an agreement to realign those assignments.

Chief Cappiello said our staffing is well below where it has ever been before and he does not want to get to the point that we start to question our operations, public safety, and officer safety. We need to be able to continue to provide the same services the residents expect and deserve, and fulfill all our obligations of what we are tasked with doing.

He went on to address IT Services explaining that reassigning people out of IT has not been an option. He reviewed the Department's history of utilizing a Dispatcher to oversee IT before it became such an overwhelmingly complex task. He agreed it would be best if we could have a trained IT person to offset some of the demands and tasks that are assigned to a Sergeant and free him up, but the funds are not available for that. We are doing our best to work with Amity IT, but that has not worked out, and in the meantime, we are doing the best we can with the staff we have to keep the Department running efficiently. The Chief addressed his concerns about safety and operations, especially in light of recent homicides, bank robberies and requests from places of worship and other organizations in Town for protection, and keeping a School Resource Officer in each of our schools. He said, we put the School Resource Officers over there, but we never increased our staff. We are just getting the job done, we never complain about it, but I am concerned about cutting staff and wanted to bring it to the Board's attention.

Chief Cappiello said that our call volume is up, we are on track to hit 28,000 calls; cutting staff is something we really have to be aware of, and I am looking for the Board's support in helping to maintain adequate staffing levels.

Chairman Berke asked the Chief to look into having a staffing study done.

Commissioner Esposito commented that the rules of engagement have changed and other departments have also lost personnel and in this economic climate, it will not get easier. He explained that two-thirds of the Operating Budget is education and we keep trying to squeeze the third that encompasses Public Safety, Fire and Public Works. He also supports a staffing study, but explained it appears the Town will be faced with making difficult decisions due to the lack of grand list growth.

Additional discussion continued concerning possible reallocation options of current resources, to work with what we have until we can get the study done, and see what it recommends.

Chief Cappiello expressed his concern about any additional staff reductions and the importance of keeping the operation running as efficiently as possible as we work through these challenges.

EXECUTIVE SESSION and ACTION TAKEN, AS APPROPRIATE:

- Safety and Security – Houses of Worship

The Board voted unanimously (Fried/Esposito) to move into Executive Session at 7:41 p.m. to discuss safety and security concerns at houses of worship. (Chief, Deputy Chief and Administrative Assistant were invited to stay, all others were excused.)

- Liaisons and Government TV staff left the meeting at 7:41 p.m.
- The Board moved out of Executive Session at 7:57 p.m.
- There were no motions made, no votes taken.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Board voted unanimously (Esposito/Fried) to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Police Commissioners at 7:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Janice Innocenzi

Janice Innocenzi
Administrative Assistant

WOODBIDGE TRAFFIC AUTHORITY

REGULAR MEETING

MOTIONS

March 10, 2020

PUBLIC COMMENTS/CORRESPONDENCE:

- There were no Public Comments or Correspondence.

TRAFFIC MATTERS:

- Grouse Lane/Fraser Drive – C. Dickerson:

The Board voted unanimously (Fried/Esposito) to install the two stop signs at the Grouse Lane/Fraser Drive intersection.

- Milford Prevention Council – 9th Annual “Ride for Hope” Benefit Ride:

The Board voted unanimously (Fried/Esposito) to approve the annual Ride for Hope charity ride to travel through town, as requested.

- WFBL – Request to Close Road:

The Board voted unanimously (Fried/Desir) to approve the closing of the road for baseball opening day.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Board voted unanimously (Fried/Esposito) to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Traffic Authority at 6:39 p.m. and move directly into the regular meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Police Commissioners.

Respectfully submitted:

Janice Innocenzi

Janice Innocenzi
Administrative Assistant

WOODBIDGE BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS

REGULAR MEETING

MOTIONS

March 10, 2020

SWEARING-IN CEREMONY

- No motions made, no votes taken.

APPROVAL of MINUTES:

- B.O.P.C. Regular Meeting – January 14, 2020: Tabled until the next meeting.
There were no motions made, no votes taken.

PUBLIC COMMENTS/CORRESPONDENCE:

- There were no Public Comments or Correspondence.

REVIEW of REPORTS:

- Financial Report:

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

- Activity Report:

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

REPORT of the CHIEF of POLICE

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

PERSONNEL MATTERS

- There were no motions made, no votes taken.

EXECUTIVE SESSION and ACTION TAKEN, AS APPROPRIATE:

- Safety and Security – Houses of Worship

The Board voted unanimously (Fried/Esposito) to move into Executive Session at 7:41 p.m. to discuss safety and security concerns at houses of worship. (Chief, Deputy Chief and Administrative Assistant were invited to stay, all others were excused.)

- The Board moved out of Executive Session at 7:57 p.m.
- There were no motions made, no votes taken.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Board voted unanimously (Esposito/Fried) to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Police Commissioners at 7:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Janice Innocenzi

Janice Innocenzi

Administrative Assistant