

**CITY OF NORWALK
HEALTH AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
OF THE COMMON COUNCIL
MAY 27, 2021
VIA TELECONFERENCE**

To allow public access, anyone may access a meeting by telephone Zoom and /or the City of Norwalk YouTube channel. Specific instructions and links can be found at www.Norwalkct.org/meetings.

ATTENDANCE: Nicholas Sacchinelli, Chair; Dominique Johnson; Thomas Keegan; Manny Langella; Diana Revolus; Lisa Shanahan; George Tsiranides (7:10 p.m.)

STAFF: Al Bassett, Assistant Fire Chief; Lamond Daniels, Chief of Community Services; Deanna D'Amore, Director of Health; Michele DeLuca, Deputy Director of Emergency Management; Gino Gatto, Fire Chief; Thomas Kulhawik, Chief of Police; Brian Weeks, Epidemiologist; Susan Zecca, Deputy Chief of Police

WELCOME AND ROLL CALL

Mr. Sacchinelli called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. and called the Roll as indicated above.

APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 22, 2021 MEETING MINUTES

**** MS. REVOLUS MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS PRESENTED
** MOTION PASSED WITH ONE (1) ABSTENTION (MR. LANGELLA)**

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public wished to participate.

NEW BUSINESS

Action Items

FIRE DEPARTMENT

**** MS. REVOLUS MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE PURCHASING AGENT, SHARON CONNORS TO ISSUE A PURCHASE ORDER TO GAC, DBA NEW ENGLAND TRAFFIC SOLUTIONS, FOR THE PURCHASE AND**

**INSTALLATION OF SECURITY CAMERAS AND VOICE CALL BOX
AT FIVE FIRE STATIONS (BID#1082) FOR THE AMOUNT NOT TO
EXCEED \$41,000 FROM ACCOUNT # C0641**

Chief Gatto reviewed the request. He said this will be distributed over two fiscal years.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**** MR. SACCHINELLI MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO ADD THE
FOLLOWING POLICE DEPARTMENT ITEM TO THE AGENDA**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Police Department

**** MR. KEEGAN MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W.
RILLING TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT WITH BADGEQUEST, INC.
TO CONDUCT THE POLICE PROMOTIONAL TESTING FOR THE
RANKS OF DETECTIVE, SERGEANT AND LIEUTENANT, FOR A SUM
NOT TO EXCEED \$39,000, FROM ACCOUNT #013049-5258**

**AND TO AUTHORIZE THE POLICE CHIEF, THOMAS E. KULHAWIK TO
EXECUTE ANY AND ALL AGREEMENTS, DOCUMENTS,
INSTRUMENTS AND AMENDMENTS THERETO AS MAY BE
NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT THE POLICE WRITTEN PROMOTION
TESTING AND ASSESSMENT CENTERS FOR THE RANKS OF
DETECTIVE, SERGEANT AND LIEUTENANT**

Chief Kulhawik explained the items and said the promotion list are valid for two years. He said Ms. Connors and a selection committee reviewed the bids and they chose BadgeQuest who was the lowest bidder. He noted that they've used BadgeQuest before.

Chief Kulhawik noted that he does consulting for BadgeQuest, therefore, he was not on the selection committee.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Mr. Tsiranides joined the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

OLD BUSINESS

Discussion Items

5. Fireworks Enforcement

Mr. Sacchinelli explained that the Ordinance Committee wants the Fire Inspector to be able to go into retail establishments to ensure they are only selling legal sparklers.

Chief Kulhawik described the current protocols around fireworks enforcement. He said most of the complaints are because of loud explosions. He noted the Police Department gets a lot of complaints about fireworks and it is challenging.

Mr. Keegan asked if there was anything the Police could do pro-actively. He said this has become a quality-of-life issue in many areas in Norwalk. He asked if there were any thoughts about creating a tip line where someone can call a dedicated tip line. Chief Kulhawik explained that the Police have a tip line, but they don't get a lot of activity on it. He said they get a lot of anonymous reports on their text a tip. He added that they can do social media outreach. He said that text a tip or 411 is something they can try. Mr. Sacchinelli suggested working with Mr. Morgan to distribute the information.

Mr. Sacchinelli asked Chief Kulhawik if the Police expect more fireworks this year since all of the fireworks are being cancelled. Chief Basso said that every town had problems last year.

Ms. Revolus asked Chief Kulhawik if they are proactively talking to main stream venues, such as Walmart about fireworks. Chief Kulhawik said he not aware of Walmart selling illegal fireworks. He said that ground based fireworks are not illegal; aerial and exploding fireworks are illegal.

1. Emergency Management Update & Discussion

Ms. DeLuca reported that they finished the USDA farm to family program. She said she is looking forward to what the USDA comes up with future programs.

The Connecticut Food Share program continues at Veteran's Park each week. They are planning to hold the Open House (Touch a Truck) in late September.

Hurricane season starts on June 1st. Ms. DeLuca said they are planning on conducting a table top disaster exercise on June 9th. The hurricane information will be on the Emergency Management page.

2. Fire Update & Discussion

Chief Gatto reported that the Fire Department responded to 547 calls during the month of April. This came to 18.2 calls a day. Those calls included, 16 fires, 43 rescues, 316 emergency medical calls 21 hazardous conditions, 19 public assistance and 90 fire alarms.

Chief Gatto reviewed the Fire Marshall's report, which included 184 inspections, 49 plan reviews, 5 liquor licenses and 334 incidents. The Fire Marshall brought in \$3,125 in revenue.

Chief Gatto reported that 70% of the Department are vaccinated; through the pandemic, 18 people came down with the virus.

Ms. Johnson asked if the numbers include EMTs. Chief Gatto said these numbers are for Firefighters. He noted that they can't make it mandatory to get the vaccine.

Chief Gatto gave an update on the recruitment process. He said approximately 1,000 people applied; however, 10 – 15% were no shows. The results should be back in about two weeks.

3. Health Department Update & Discussion

Ms. D'Amore reported that the vaccine efforts continue in June every Wednesday at The Maritime Aquarium. They have been offering J&J and Modera, but plan to offer Pfizer as well.

Mr. D'Amore said hired two contract tracers by utilizing grant funding. She added that they submitted multiple grant requests that would be used to hire community health workers.

Brian Weeks shared his screen and gave presentation detailing the latest Covid statistics. He noted that this is the second week in a row where all of the categories are low.

Mr. Weeks reported that Norwalk is about 60.6% vaccinated. He added that they have to keep monitoring the different variances. He said that new variances are being developed every day. A lot of authorities are taking this very seriously. In terms of severity, there seems to be some increased risk of hospitalization.

Ms. Shanahan asked about break through cases. Mr. Weeks said he believes it is a very small percentage. Ms. D'Amore added that it is very rare in someone who is fully vaccinated. Ms. Johnson asked Mr. Weeks if there are fewer people getting tested now that the vaccine rate has picked up. Mr. Weeks said they are seeing a drop off of individuals seeking testing.

4. Police Update & Discussion

Chief Kulhawik reported that the Traffic Control Unit is working on road closures for the two Memorial Day parades this weekend.

With the re-opening of the City, there has been an increase in service calls and traffic calls. There have not been a lot of calls about mask wearing.

Chief Kulhawik reported that about 65% of the Department is vaccinated. The numbers have increased as people see others getting the vaccine. In speaking with other Chiefs, Chief Kulhawik said Norwalk is in line with other departments.

Ms. Johnson asked if the Officers wear masks. Chief Kulhawik said they are asked to follow the CDC guidelines. He said they do not know who is vaccinated. He added that there have been no new cases of Covid in a long time.

Ms. Johnson said she heard from her Constituents who asked about training on the Blue Envelope program for Neurodiverse people. Chief Kulhawik explained that Attorney Spahr has been very much on the forefront in this initiative. He said they kicked off the Blue Envelope campaign about two years ago and it has been incorporated into their training for several years.

Ms. Johnson asked Chief Kulhawik about speeding vehicles. He explained that cars are drag racing on RT 7, which is under the State of Connecticut's jurisdiction; however. They are working with the State. He said that car clubs bring in high end cars at 2 – 3 a.m. He said they have not been back in a few weeks. He added that speeding is their number one complaint. Speeding enforcement has increased over the last couple of years due to the creation of the Traffic Enforcement Unit.

Ms. Johnson asked about illegal dumping. Chief Kulhawik explained they do not have portable cameras and do not have a budget to purchase cameras. Mr. Sacchinelli said he believes that was done through blight enforcement.

Ms. Revolus said that trucks are an issue in her area. She asked if there was a way to connect schools and/or medical offices to learn how many people have mental illness. If there is an interaction, their name can be run in a system. Chief Kulhawik said they can't get that data from agencies. In said they have some residents that notify them and that goes into their system as an alert. He said they work with the department of mental health services and found it is difficult because of restrictions. He said they can look into it. Ms. Shanahan noted there may be come privacy concerns.

Ms. Shanahan asked if there has been an uptake in crime. Chief Kulhawik said that overall there has not been an uptake. The recent shooting was related to specific individuals.

Ms. Sacchinelli told Ms. Johnson they can discuss blight enforcement.

Ms. Revolus wished all a Happy Haitian Mother's Day this Sunday.

**** MS. REVOLUS MOVED TO ADJOURN
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business, and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services