

**CITY OF NORWALK
PUBLIC SAFETY AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE OF THE COMMON
COUNCIL
FEBRUARY 24, 2022**

Attendance: Jenn Mc Murrer, Chair; Dominique Johnson; Thomas Keegan; Diana Revolus; Nicol Ayers; Josh Goldstein

Staff: Michele DeLuca, Deputy Director Emergency Management; Gino Gatto; Fire Chief; Edward Mc Cabe, Asst. Fire Chief; Thomas Kulhawik, Police Chief; Susan Zecca, Deputy Police Chief, Stuart Wells, Register of Voters; Darin Callahan, Corporation Counsel; James Travers, Director, TMP; Michael Yeosock, Principal Engineer, TMP

I. WELCOME AND ROLL CALL

Ms. Mc Murrer called the meeting to order at 7:01PM

II. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES- 1/27/22

On page 3, Item 2, change “Mr. Diana Revolus” to “Ms. Diana Revolus”

**** MS. JOHNSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS AMENDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Ms. Mc Murrer said there will be a discussion tonight regarding the Registrar of Voters polling precincts, but they will not be taking any action as that will be tabled until the next meeting.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no public comments this evening.

IV. NEW BUSINESS- NO ITEMS

There were no new business items discussed this evening.

V. OLD BUSINESS

Police Department

1. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL AGREEMENTS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS NECESSARY TO APPLY FOR, ACCEPT AND/OR RECEIVE FEDERAL OR STATE GRANT FUNDS FOR ANY GRANT PROGRAM WHICH WILL BE UTILIZED BY THE NORWALK POLICE DEPARTMENT FOR PUBLIC, HEALTH AND SAFETY PURPOSES ANNUALLY UNTIL HEREAFTER REVOKED BY THE COMMON COUNCIL, TO THE EXTENT THAT THE PROGRAM DOES NOT REQUIRE A MUNICIPAL FUNDING MATCH.

Mr. Goldstein said he wants to be sure that this item includes the updated language. Mr. Callahan said this ultimately provides a greater level of flexibility and efficiency for city staff concerning federal and state grants which are accepted and applied for anyway to avoid lag time and potentially missing out on grant funding. He said this will basically provide blanket authorization to move forward with federal and state grant applications as normal course provided there is no city appropriation required to support the grant program. Mr. Goldstein said when the police department made this application last month it was proposed to deal with a structured specific circumstance around certain types of grants with a specific time frame in which the grant was both announced and must be completed and wasn't going to happen in the amount of time it would take for the Common Council to approve it. Ms. Revolus added that this is a question of precedence and the abilities for only the police department to do this and may be something we should pay attention to because the language they approve may put too much ability in the police departments hands. Ms. Mc Murrer asked as discussed last month if this is just for the police department but that it could set a precedence for other committees and departments moving forward. Mr. Callahan said it would be appropriate for each of those committees of those departments request for a universal authorization for purposes of accepting federal and state grants, and the police department and other departments are trying to figure out a way to expedite the process because the city is jeopardizing losing funds.

Ms. Revolus suggested either holding a special meeting to be able to meet the deadlines or go through the chair to expedite whatever is needed because she thinks it's a slippery slope not to have that in place. Ms. Mc Murrer said one of the things that was discussed at the last meeting was to update the language to either have the grants posted on the website and have communications go out to her or the full committee when grants are being applied for. Mr. Callahan said "yes" there is flexibility as far as how to get a comfort level. Mr. Keegan suggested the process be streamlined so that all city departments are included.

Ms. Johnson suggested making this amenable to revision every year or years and once the grant application is completed add it to the Common Council agenda for public visibility. Ms. Revolus asked if this should be tabled until the committee is comfortable with the language. Mr. Goldstein said if conditions are going to be set that it be done at this meeting and present them at the next Common Council meeting because the longer they wait to approve this they risk missing grant opportunities. Ms. Mc Murrer said that she will work with Mr. Callahan to be sure the language reflects what was discussed and will share it with the committee prior to the next Common Council meeting.

**** MS. REVOLUS MOVED TO APPROVE THE ITEM.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH FIVE (5) IN FAVOR AND ONE (1) OPPOSED- MS. AYERS**

Registrars of Voters:

1. REQUEST TO APPROVE THE NEW VOTING PRECINCTS

Mr. Wells said that every 10 years there is a census, and they redistrict the state to have voting districts for the state legislature and presented the new boundaries of the five legislative districts wholly or partially within Norwalk. He said the Registrar's proposal adds one precinct to the previous number, bringing the number of voting precincts from 12 to 13, and is the same number of precincts as in municipal elections. He said the addition is in district 143, which is much larger than previously.

Mr. Wells said the goal of the proposal is to keep as many voters as possible voting at the same polling place in municipal election years as state election years, while maintaining polling places with similar sizes all while not significantly increasing the number of polling places which would require a significant budget increase for voting equipment, infrastructure, poll workers and equipment storage.

Mr. Goldstein said that trying to keep as many voters as possible voting to try and keep the same polling locations for both the state, federal and municipal elections is a crucial effect.

Ms. Mc Murrer thanked Mr. Wells and his team for all of his work on this.

VI. DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. TRAFFIC PATTERNS, PLANS AND STUDIES AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Travers said the city is undertaking a Transportation Master Plan and Mr. Yeosock is leading the effort and have engaged a firm FHI Studio to assist in putting the master plan together. He said the master plan is done once every ten years and is used as a guiding document for the work for the next ten years and as they apply for grants these types of documents are critical to be able to secure the grants. He said to help with public participation Mr. Yeosock will forward the committee members a flyer to assist with soliciting their constituents and they have already received a good amount of public participation and one of the biggest requests is for more sidewalks and will use this to identify where the opportunities are and will also analyze the data. He said there is a survey that we are asking people to list the challenges in the transportation network, and this plan will be a public document that will be presented to the committee when it is completed. He said they have also met with multiple firms as well as with Mr. Daniels and the heads of all of the non-profit agencies and have had many conversations with the Norwalk Transit District and they have been fabulous about getting the word out in multiple languages. He said he would love to schedule some time to meet with the committee members to discuss issues within their neighborhoods as well.

Mr. Travers provided an overview of the functions of Transportation, Mobility and Parking and said they work on all transportation related issues and ways to improve mobility.

Ms. Mc Murrer suggested that the members of the committee schedule a meeting with Mr. Travers and his team because they have valuable information and she commended him and his team on outreach.

Ms. Johnson echoed Ms. Mc Murrer and asked if the people that are seeing a lot of speeding in their neighborhood should contact customer service. Mr. Travers suggested they contact customer service and put a ticket in, and his department works closely with the police department on opportunities for enforcement but the calls that come in through customer service are measured.

Ms. Johnson said the work that TMP is also doing will further promote the vision zero initiative that they have been trying to work on for some time in the city and asked Mr. Travers to comment on that. Mr. Travers said typically when a community looks to adopt a vision zero principal they also prior to that would adopt complete streets legislation and a complete streets design manual to understand and build a safe network, so they using some of the ARPA funding to engage a consultant to work with the community to educate them on what complete streets is and work with staff to adopt a complete streets legislation and finalize that with a complete streets design manual and from that adopt a vision zero policy.

Ms. Revolus asked Mr. Travers how the traffic lights are structured as far as timing and how the state roads are managed. Mr. Travers said that Mr. Yeosock and Mr. Eshraghi have done a great job to try and begin a process of modernizing the city's traffic signals and last week TMP had announced they were awarded a \$3.4 million dollar grant to increase two additional traffic signals and are leading the state in adaptive signal technology. He said the new technology allows them to adapt to the changes for the timing of the lights based on movement of traffic and will be increasing that by installing 55 new signals as well as working with the Transit District to implement technology that will allow the buses to take priority so more people can be moved and prioritize public transportation. He said this will advance over the next couple of years and until that time will still work on the old method and work on the timing. Mr. Travers said regardless of if a road is a city or a state road, they try to see what can be done to work on the issue.

Mr. Goldstein asked Mr. Travers where he sees Norwalk in the future as far as walkability. Mr. Travers said walkability is important for a number of reasons and they have been very committed to increasing walkability and have engaged a firm to do a sidewalk inventory and will have a complete inventory and the condition of the sidewalk by the end of March, and this summer will be installing sidewalks on Highland Avenue that will connect all three schools. Ms. Revolus said the sidewalks in South Norwalk need to be maintained and asked if creating walk paths that would remove pedestrians from traffic have been looked into. Mr. Travers said yes" they are committed to advancing more of the NRVt trail and completing the trail and off-road opportunities, but the first and foremost the street network needs to be there.

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:40PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd