

**TOWN OF WEST HARTFORD
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE VIRTUAL MEETING
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2020, 6:30 P.M.
MINUTES**

1. Call to Order

A. Meeting was called to order at 6:32 by Councilor and Chair Carol Blanks.

B. Introductions: Councilor and Chair Carol Blanks introduced Chief Greg Priest, Councilor Ben Wenograd, Town Manager Matthew Hart, Chief Vernon Riddick, Assistant Chief Lawrence Terra, Councilor Chris Williams, Assistant Corporation Counsel Cynthia Lauture, Corporation Counsel Dallas Dodge, Assistant Chief Dan Coppinger, Councilman Lee Gold, Deputy Mayor Leon Davidoff, Mayor Shari Cantor, Councilor Beth Kerrigan, Town Clerk Essie Labrot, Assistant Chief Hugh O'Callahan, and Firefighter Mike Sinsigalli.

C. Opening Remarks: Councilor Blanks proposed switching around the agenda to prioritize Matter 4A before staff reports due to time constraints. There was no objection.

2. Business

A. Communications for September 2, 2020 Minutes: Town Manager Hart stated that the provided minutes are informational only and will be approved by the full Council.

B. Proposed Ordinance Establishing a Civilian Police Review Board: Town Manager Hart's introductory comments summarized the proposal as a conversion of the existing Citizen Complaints Review Board established pursuant to Police Department policy to an ordinance adopted by the Council.

Corporation Counsel Dodge summarized and explained the legislation that permits and establishes the parameters for the formation of Civilian Police Review Boards by townships.

Councilor Blanks opened the floor for questions at 6:55 p.m.

Mayor Cantor brought attention to some language in the ordinance that she felt needed to be clarified regarding the types and volume of cases that might come before the CRB, which was addressed by Corporation Counsel Dodge and expanded upon by Chief Riddick.

Deputy Mayor Davidoff attempted to speak next but had connection issues. Corporation Counsel Dodge addressed Deputy Mayor Davidoff's question as he heard it, which enquired as to whether any consideration had been given to whether retired police officers would be able to serve in the CRB.

Councilor Gold requested clarification on the ordinance's language regarding the conditions for the appointment of retired officers and board members being subjected to background checks, both of which were addressed by Corporation Counsel Dodge.

The audio and video cut out for a brief time, during which time Councilor Blanks enquired about how meetings would be planned and video resumed as Corporation Counsel Dodge was midway through his response. Councilor Blanks then posed a question to Chief Riddick regarding conditions in which an outside investigator might be brought in, which was addressed by Chief Riddick.

Town Manager Hart addressed and clarified a typo in the ordinance.

3. Staff Reports

Fire Department: Chief Priest reported on how the Fire Department has been coping with the COVID-19 pandemic by citing current statistics and explaining the ways in which the Fire Department has been collaborating with Public Safety and the Police Department. The Fire Department is also starting a 7-month partnership with Toys for Tots and will be holding a drive on Friday. Mayor Cantor asked a question regarding the administration of vaccines by paramedics and Chief Priest explained that the Fire Department is working diligently with the State of Connecticut and Health District to determine the viability and legality of that approach.

Police Department: Chief Riddick outlined several criminal incidents that have occurred in the area recently. He also explained the progress being made Department's Community Trust Action Plan; specifically, the process of choosing and testing body cams.

Councilor Blanks enquired if there has been an uptick in vehicle theft or burglary of cars now that the weather is getting colder. Chief Riddick responded that the uptick was not as stark as the Department had anticipated and related it to the pattern of crimes over the past year in general.

Town Manager Hart referenced the work they have been doing with Interval House and a grant that they will likely receive that will enable them to provide more assistance to victims of domestic violence, and Chief Riddick expanded upon the nature of the organization and the assistance that they provide to victims of domestic violence.

3. Future Agenda Items

No future agenda items were addressed.

4. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Essie S. Labrot
Town/Council Clerk