

WEST HARTFORD SENIOR CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMISSION

MINUTES

November 17, 2020

Members Present: Noreen Bachteler, Rosemary Cleary, Ray Guenter, Robert Kennedy, Ellen Phillips, Philip Walker
Absent: Linda Hanson, Mary Reilly, Donna Sterling
Town: Vernon Riddick, Jr., Chief of Police
Staff Present: Gina Marino, Keren Paquette, Andrea Ruggiero
Guests: Kevin Farmer, Jennifer Evans

Chairman Philip Walker called the meeting to order at 10:06 am.

The minutes of the September 15th meeting were approved unanimously.

Chief of Police, Vernon Reddick

Chief Reddick has been in law enforcement 28 years having come to West Hartford in 2018. He spoke about the department's goals:

- To provide prompt and professional response to medical emergencies, vehicular accidents or crimes reported in West Hartford.
- To work in cooperation with residents, business owners, interest groups and other town agencies to maintain the high standards for which this community is known.
- To further the professionalism of law enforcement as a whole.
- To deliver a high level of service in the most cost-efficient manner possible.
- To maintain the perception of safety among residents and visitors to the Town.

Policies include:

- [Town of West Hartford & West Hartford Police Department - Action Plan for Improving Community Engagement & Trust, September 2, 2020](#)
- [PRD 7.0 Use of Force - General](#)
- [PRD 7.1 Investigation of the Use of Force](#)
- [PRD 7.2 Use of Deadly Force](#)
- [PRD 8.18 Fair and Impartial Policing](#)
- [PRD 15.3 Citizen Complaint Procedure](#)

He spoke also about camera registration for homes and business to review not monitor, the use of body cams, training, community policing (for example, park and walk or bicycles to be used 1/3 of the time). One of the goals is to be data driven in order to direct resources for more effective policing which includes a partnership with parole and probation. He indicated that the most committed crimes are larcenies and burglaries, and although there has been an overall decrease over the years in homicides, sexual assault and vehicle theft, there has been an uptick in some areas in 2020.

Chief Reddick spoke about education for seniors especially in regard to counterfeit drugs, internet fraud, investment scams, phishing, and grandparent fraud. People may register with the police department and the fire department for the Cares program for seniors and persons with disabilities

He noted that Public safety measures are vital but not at the expense of civil liberties. The Mayor and Town Manager have reassured the PD that they are not in agreement with the national call to "defund."

All non-emergency concerns may be handled by calling 860-523-5203.

Chairman's Report

Phil Walker noted that his term on the commission ends December 31. He asked Ray Guenter and Rosemary Cleary to service as the Nominating Committee to report next month on a successor as Chair. Donna Sterling's term will be ending also.

West Hartford Social Services

Keren Paquette reported that staff is working partially remote and is back on a staggered schedule. They never stopped taking referrals. The Food Pantry is extremely active. The Holiday Card distribution be will curbside. Dial-A-Ride is operating under CDC guidelines. Energy Assistance is up and running. There was an extension to the end of December for the Rental Rebate program. Open Enrollment for Medicare is going on now and the Choices program is working remotely with clients. Cloth masks are available.

Senior Centers

Gina Marino, who now directs both centers, reported that calls to Elmwood are forwarded to the West Hartford Senior Center. There is one part-time person working from home and two part-timers in the office. Outreach occurs with 2 emails per week to all members and some phone calls. Programs continue virtually. An Eagle Scout has been conducting technology drives for equipment and money. The new bulletin will be out shortly.

Transportation

Kevin Farmer reported that a grant from the Fisher Foundation has enabled the hiring of a part-time employee, Ms. Lowenstein. The annual appeal has begun with a need to raise increased funds because 1/2 of the revenue is missing. Unfortunately, 2/3 of the drivers have not been participating.

The next meeting of the Commission is scheduled for Tuesday, December 15th at 10:00am on WebEx.

The meeting adjourned at 11:20am.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Lynn Silverman, Recording Secretary