

# TOWN OF WEST HARTFORD

## MINUTES

### SPECIAL MEETING

#### CIVILIAN POLICE REVIEW BOARD

June 1, 2021 5:30 PM

WEST HARTFORD TOWN HALL, LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER

#### I. Meeting Opening – 5:30 PM:

A. Mayor Shari Cantor welcomed everyone and started the meeting at 5:30pm. Conducted in hybrid format. All board members are in person. Public can be in either person or by watching on-line or calling in to the numbers provided. Mayor Cantor read the numbers for calling-in.

B. Swearing In of Board Members and Alternates: Town Clerk Essie Labrot came to the podium to swear people in:

Veronica Badiola, Robin Kallor, Adrienne Billings-Smith, Alberto Cortes, Bjorn Burke, Nabin Chettri and Olinda Morales were all sworn in as members and given their certificates.

Alternates were then called up-Matthew Horowitz, Kathleen Costello Hindman and Gabriella Downey were then sworn in as alternates. Board members took their seats and alternates sat at the table in front.

C. Statement by Mayor Shari Cantor: Mayor Cantor introduced Chief Riddick, ACT, Matt Hart, Corp council Cynthia Lature, and Essie Labrot.

She thanked the members of the Board for serving and highlighted that the creation of the Civilian Review Board is about preserving and protecting our citizens in a constructive way. Support for the Board by the Town Manager and the Chief of Police made it clear that the Town is for accountability and transparency and community. The Town received 80 applications for this Board. She stated that she has confidence that each member will treat this position respectfully and not bring prejudice and bias but truly analyze and base decisions on the situations presented. Thank you for your service to the Town of West Hartford and for making sure that the police and the citizens have trust and faith in each other.

- D. Statement by West Hartford Police Department Chief Vernon L. Riddick, Jr.:  
Good Evening. Thank you for your service and commitment. Time is precious, and as I get older, I recognize that time on this earth is short; and when someone takes their time to sit on a board like this it means something. So, thank you for taking the time to sit on this board and I am looking forward to working with you as part of this community.

## II. **New Business**

- A. Board Member Introductions - Veronica Badiola, Robin Kallor, Adrienne Billings-Smith, Alberto Cortes, Bjorn Burke, Nabin Chettri and Olinda Morales; Alternates: Gabriella Downey, Kathleen Costello Hindman, Matthew Horowitz.

1. Board Members:

Veronica Badiola: She has been a West Hartford Resident for 27 years, has cemented deep routes in West Hartford and raised two children. She is very thankful to serve on the Board. She looks forward to serve community that has given so much to the community. She is a licensed clinical social worker.

Adrienne Billings-Smith: She is a local attorney on hiatus due to volunteer work. She is also a flight attendant. She is honored and humbled to be here and excited to work with this Board.

Bjorn Burke: He has been a resident of West Hartford for 4 years and in the United States for a little more than 21 years. He is excited to work as cohesive unit.

Nabin Chettri: He was originally from Nepal and moved to the United States 14 years ago. He has two children; one in high school one in middle school. It is an honor and privilege to be on the Board. He looks forward to working with everyone.

Alberto Cortes: He has lived in West Hartford for 23 years and has two boys in West Hartford Public Schools. He is a retired corrections officer.

Robin Kallor: She has lived in West Hartford for 17 years. She is an employment lawyer in Hartford. She is looking forward to working with this talented group.

Olinda Morales: She has been a West Hartford resident for over 25 years. She lives with husband and has daughter also living here. She is an attorney who practices immigration law.

## 2. Alternates:

Gabriella Downey: She has been a resident of West Hartford for 25 years. She graduated from schools in West Hartford and went to college locally. Think change is needed and is excited for this opportunity.

Kathleen Hindman: She is a social worker. Lived here 25 years. Consult in child protection cases. Raised 4 sons who went through schools here in West Hartford. Want to do my part to make community vibrant.

Matthew Horowitz: He and his wife lived here for 30 years. They have two grown adult children. He is an attorney who has handled matters similar to those that will be addressed by the Board. He is looking forward to working on issues with everyone.

## B. Election of Officers

Mayor Cantor: The role of the Chairperson is to: Call meeting to order, state all questions that come before the Board, and work with town staff. Any member may nominate themselves or someone else. Nominations open for chairperson.

Adrienne Billings Smith-would like to nominate Olinda Morales. No other nominations; nominations closed.

Olinda Morales: In the course of work in Department of Public health I advise boards and oversee meetings. We see cases and we focus on evidence without any bias. So, I think process is very important. I have a lot of experience and hope I can guide the Board.

Vote: Unanimous.

Mayor turned meeting over to Chairperson Morales.

Chairperson Morales: Role of Vice Chair is to provide leadership in absence of chair and serve on an as needed basis. Nominations open for Vice Chair. Alberto Cortes nominates himself. No other nominations; nominations closed.

Vote: Unanimous

Chairperson Morales: Duties of secretary is to draft agenda, maintain record of votes and prepare minutes for handing in to Town Clerks office.

Veronica Badiola nominates Robin Kallor. No other nominations; nominations closed.

Vote: Unanimous.

- C. Identify Meeting Schedule: 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of every month 8am or 6:30pm. Meetings will be at 6:30 pm on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of every month. First meeting will be June 23, 2021 at 6:30 pm.

- D: Overview of informational sessions.

Matthew Hart, Town Manager: Thank you for the work you are about to embark upon. We look forward to working with you to make sure your service is successful. We have put together a curriculum for you. Will give it to the Chair. We expect that the training will include 8-10 hours of mandatory training. The Board can decide to either do it all in one long day or break it up into 2 days. We also have voluntary elements that we recommend.

Mandatory: orientation, discussion of various legal considerations, condensed version of our police academy that we run in town. We expect to review the organization of the department, its procedures, including its use of force procedures, etc. Next, we would also like to review your board procedures with you, including how to run your hearings and meetings, case reviews, how to keep a record, etc.

Voluntary: Ride along, (one or 2 at a time), attend and witness a use of force simulator (there is one in Milford). This would involve bringing you to a facility and it would help you understand how police officers are trained to use the use of force and how to deescalate.

They will raise the contents of this training with the Public Safety Committee one more time to review before the contents of the training is finalized.

Chairperson Morales: Are you expecting a certain number of cases to review?

Chief: This year we have had 5 complaints, last year we had 11

Chairperson Morales: how do complaints come in?

Chief: We will take complaints on a napkin. We will take them however they come in. There is a form on-line that people can fill out and hand in.

Veronica Badiola: When would we start our training?

Town Manager: We will coordinate with the chair as to whether to do the training in one day or over multiple days. We would not recommend extending over several months.

Nabin Chettri: As a group?

Town Manager: As a group. Training would be given by Chief, ACT, Corp Counsel. They would train as a group, with the exception of voluntary exercises.

Olinda Morales: Is this the June meeting or would there be another meeting for June?

TM: That would depend upon the group. If you would like to dedicate your meeting in June to the training, that is an option.

### **III. Adjournment**

Chairperson Motion asked for a motion to adjourn

Motion: Adrienne Billings-Smith

Second: Alberto Cortes

Meeting ended: 6:15pm