

CITY OF WEST HAVEN, CT
BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS
Minutes of the meeting held Tuesday, March 5, 2019

The regular meeting of the West Haven Board of Police Commissioners was called to order at 7 p.m. by Chairman, Raymond Collins, III at Police Headquarters, 200 Saw Mill Road. All those present rose and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

ATTENDANCE

Raymond Collins, III, Chairman	present
Paul E. Butler, Vice-Chairman	present
Keith Sweeney	present
Peter BonTempo, Secretary	present
Deborah B. Wright, Pension Board	present
John Karajanis, Chief of Police	absent
Joseph Perno, Deputy Chief of Police	present
Lee Tiernan, Corporation Counsel	absent

Commissioner Sweeney MOVED to accept the agenda as presented amended; SECONDED by Commissioner Butler. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED unanimously.

1. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

Commissioner Sweeney MOVED to accept the minutes of February 19, 2019 as presented; SECONDED by Commissioner Butler. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED unanimously.

2. PUBLIC SESSION

Commissioner Collins asked three times if any member of the public wished to address the Commission. Being none, he declared the public session closed.

3. COMMUNICATIONS

The Commission reviewed the following Communications:

- 3.1 Investigative Services Report – January 2019
- 3.2 Letter of Appreciation from Special Olympics CT and Law Enforcement Torch Run Program to WHPD and Officer Audrey Jefferson
- 3.3 Letter of Appreciation to Officer Kevin Bowerman from Ronni Mandell re-helping a citizen in distress

4. REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF POLICE

Deputy Chief Perno reported, on the agenda is item 7.1 – the promotion of Officer Jon Healey to the rank of Sergeant. Officer Healey is currently on military leave and is not available to be here. A formal swearing in ceremony will be held upon his safe return. Please keep him in your thoughts and prayers.

Officer Allard has been conducting training for the changeover to our new duty weapons. They are the same make and caliber only a new generation. There will be no additional costs such as holster, etc. The Training Division is also in the process of accreditation.

As you are aware, Officers Knuth and Hayward rescued an individual from harming themselves recently and a formal recognition will be forthcoming.

The department is currently staffed at 109. With items 7.1 and 7.2 on tonight's agenda, the Sergeants' rank will be fully staffed. The rank of Detective is currently understaffed by one; names will be provided to the board for consideration by March 19th.

We have two potential lateral transfers; at least one will be presented on 3/19 and if all goes well there will be two.

This goes hand-in-hand with news that the department will be losing two officers to other departments in the very near future. The command staff and I have met regarding the filling of the vacancy caused by 7.2 in the Street Crime Unit; I will divulge that name in executive session if needed.

5. REPORT OF THE COMMITTEES

None presented.

6. OLD BUSINESS

None presented.

7. NEW BUSINESS

7.1 Promotion to Sergeant – Officer Jonathan Healey

Commissioner Sweeney **MOVED** to approve the promotion of Officer Jonathan Healey to the rank of Sergeant, effective Friday, March 8, 2019; **SECONDED** by Commissioner Wright. A voice vote was taken and the **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

7.2 Promotion to Sergeant – Officer Jeremy Meurice

Commissioner Sweeney MOVED to approve the promotion of Officer Jeremy Meurice to the rank of Sergeant, effective Friday, March 8, 2019; SECONDED by Commissioner Butler.

Deputy Chief Perno reviewed Officer Meurice's credentials, stating, "Officer Meurice was hired by the West Haven Police Department April 11, 2008. He advanced to level of Grade A in April, 2013. He has served in the Patrol Division as an FTO, a CRO, and most currently in the Street Crime Unit. In addition to his Police career, Officer Meurice has held the rank of Sergeant and Staff Sergeant in the 125th Battalion, 1st Marine Division, Charlie Company from 2003 to 2011. He served a combat tour in Iraq from 2005-2006 and was honorably discharged in 2011 at the rank of Staff Sergeant. He recently graduated from the University of New Haven with a Bachelors Degree in Criminal Justice. As he continues to develop and grow, we expect him to do the same with our younger officers. Thank you for choosing West Haven Police Department; good luck and God bless."

A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED unanimously.

Sergeant Meurice was then sworn in by Deputy Chief Perno; his Sergeant's badge was pinned on by his wife. [Applause rang throughout the forum.]

7.3 Ordinance Violation – 57 Kaye Road

Animal Control Officer Denise Ford asked that the Commission uphold the ticket. She explained that this ticket was issued after repeated violations. She was given repeated warnings, and she still did not comply.

Commissioner Sweeney MOVED to uphold the ticket; SECONDED by Commissioner Butler. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED unanimously.

7.4 Ordinance Violation – 36 Center Street

Mr. Jared Mastej was present and addressed the Commission regarding his belief that the laws forcing him to immunize his animals are unfair and illegal, and perpetrated by fraud. He feels it is his Constitutional right to refuse to immunize his animals.

In conversation with the Commissioners and Animal Control Officer Ford, Mr. Mastej was directed to speak with his State Representatives about the laws. He was told in no uncertain terms that the West Haven Police Department has a duty to uphold and enforce the laws that are on the books, whether Mr. Mastej believes them fair or not.

ACO Ford addressed the Commissioners. She explained that she has explained to Mr. Mastej that the City has no control over actually changing the laws, and that he would have to go to a higher authority. He has yet to comply with what the City is asking.

Since the City Ordinance ticket was given, he has not complied. He has gone to a veterinarian several times, but never actually received treatment or vaccination for his animal. Upon his failure to comply, on February 27th a State ticket was issued. Not only has he not complied on the City ticket, but now the State ticket as well. The last veterinarian reports the animal has severe ear infections and a mammary tumor that needs surgery. He has failed to comply with that medical advice as well. The only thing the City can do is ask to uphold this ticket, ask that the State upholds its ticket, and if he fails to comply from here on, the City will seek misdemeanor animal cruelty charges for failure to provide veterinary care by way of neglect in not giving services to an animal that needs it.

Mr. Mastej continued to assert his views on vaccinations, how he feels they are toxic, harmful and over-prescribed.

Commissioner Collins reiterated to Mr. Mastej that it is the law to vaccinate the dogs.

ACO Ford concluded that the City has been requesting vaccinations since 2017 when the dog was involved in a dog bite. Mr. Mastej has not received an exemption from vaccinating from any of the veterinarians he has seen to date, he has not gotten the required City dog license due to non-vaccination. She recommends the Commission uphold the ticket.

Commissioner Sweeney MOVED to uphold the ticket; SECONDED by Commissioner Bon Tempo. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED unanimously.

Commissioner Collins directed Mr. Mastej to take it up at the State level.

8. PENSION BOARD

Commissioner Wright MOVED to add Item 8.1, Retirement of Sergeant Eric Pimer; SECONDED by Commissioner Sweeney. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED unanimously.

8.1 Retirement of Sergeant Eric Pimer

Commissioner Wright reported that she has the information for the retirement package for Sergeant Pimer. She confirmed that the numbers are correct.

Commissioner Sweeney MOVED to accept the retirement package for Sergeant Eric Pimer, retroactive to February 1, 2019; SECONDED by Commissioner Butler. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED unanimously.

Commissioner Sweeney thanked the Chief's Secretary and the people at City Hall for finally straightening out the matter. Hopefully from now on it will be a smoother process. He noted that the Finance Officer also was extremely helpful.

Commissioner Wright thanked Commissioner Sweeney for taking the bull by the horns and doing a lot of the legwork that it took to accomplish getting people paid the way they should be paid.

9. COMMISSIONER REPORTS

None presented.

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There were no matters on the agenda for Executive Session.

11. RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION/ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Bon Tempo MOVED to adjourn; SECONDED by Commissioner Butler. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Patricia M. Bruder
Secretary