

**City of West Haven, CT
Board of Police Commissioners
Minutes of the meeting held Tuesday, May 16th, 2023**

The regular meeting of the West Haven Board of Police Commissioners was called to order at 7:07 p.m. by Chairman Raymond Collins III at West Haven City Hall, 355 Main Street, 2nd Floor Harriet North Room. All those present, rose and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Attendance

Nancy R. Rossi, *Mayor of the City of West Haven*
Raymond Collins III, *Chairman Present*
Paul E. Butler, *Vice-Chairman Present*
John M. Carrano, *Commissioner Present*
Christopher Suggs, *Commissioner Present*
Deborah B. Wright, *Pension Board Chair and Commissioner Present*
Joseph Perno, *Chief of Police Present*
Carl Flemmig, *Deputy Chief Present*

Agenda

Chief Perno MOVED to add Item 8.2 under New Business regarding Awards; SECONDED by Deputy Chief Flemmig. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Butler MOVED to accept the agenda as amended; SECONDED by Commissioner Carrano. Motion carried unanimously.

1. Minutes

Commissioner Wright MOVED to accept the previous minutes from the meeting on May 2nd, 2023; SECONDED by Commissioner Butler.

2. Public Input

Chairman Collins announced that based on previous practices, public portion will be limited to only items on the agenda. This includes promotions, retirements and awards.

Chairman Collins asked three times if any person from the public wished to speak. There being none, he declared the public portion closed.

3. Communications

3.1 Animal Control Report - April 2023.

3.2 Attendance Report - April 2023.

3.3 Traffic Management Report - April 2023.

3.4 Training Report - April 2023.

4. Report of the Chief - None

5. Report of the Deputy Chief - None

6. Report of the Committees - None

7. Old Business - None

8. New Business

8.1 Memorial Day Parade - Monday, May 29, 2023

Commissioner Butler MOVED to accept; SECONDED by Commissioner Carrano. Motion carried unanimously.

8.2 Awards

Lieutenant Jay Masi of the West Haven Police Department presented the following statement regarding an incident that occurred on January 10th of this year:

On January 10, 2023, members of the West Haven Police Department's Street Crime Unit were conducting mobile surveillance in an undercover capacity in the area of Hinman Street and Gilbert Street in West Haven. Members of SCU were assisting the Detective Division with surveillance of a gray Honda Accord, which was the vehicle used in an armed robbery on January 7, 2023, of Smoker's Vape Cigar and Cigarettes located at 596 First Avenue in West Haven. During this robbery, two suspects entered the establishment armed with handguns, ordered one of the employees to the floor before making off with cash in the amount of eight hundred dollars.

Detective Aklin and Detective Bogert were assigned to the investigation, and along with the Street Crime Unit worked tirelessly to identify the vehicle in question. Through their investigation, the Honda was determined to belong to a female who resides at 116 Hinman Street in West Haven. On the aforementioned date, Officer Abate and members of SCU conducted mobile surveillance of the Honda and the suspects to the Town of Shelton, before returning to the area of Hinman Street. Officer Abate parked his undercover vehicle in the area of Hinman Street, east of Gilbert Street in an attempt to observe the Honda, and any potential suspects. During this time, Officer Abate observed the Honda traveling on Hinman Street, pass his parked vehicle and come to a stop in the middle of the road, across from 51 Hinman Street. At this time, a male exited the rear driver side door of the Honda, pulled out a handgun, and began firing in the direction of Officer Abate.

At approximately 7:00 P.M. a radio transmission that no police officer ever wants to hear was received by Officer Nick Abate reporting the vehicle he was operating was being shot at. At this time, all working personnel of the Evening Shift responded. Officer Abate stated the male then fled on foot towards Gilbert Street before getting back into the Honda and driving off. Officer Abate relayed this information over the police radio to which all available units responded. Officer Brandon Butler, who was also operating an undercover vehicle in the area observed the Honda heading towards New Haven. ERS Dispatchers quickly notified the New Haven Police Department via the Hotline that our officers were attempting to locate and stop the Honda.

Detective Sergeant Ciccocanti, Officer Vitelli, Officer Evora of the West Haven Police Department, Sergeant Milslagle, Officer Gallagher, and Officer Flaherty of the University of New Haven Police Department arrived in the area of 51 Hinman Street, and with the assistance of Officer Abate were able to locate six (6) spent 9mm shell casings. Surveillance footage from concerned homeowners in the area was also seized and utilized in the furtherance of this investigation by officers on scene. Surveillance footage depicted the terrifying scene of the suspect opening fire on Officer Abate. As this was occurring, West Haven Patrol Units had responded to the last known location of the Honda within the City of New Haven. Members of the New Haven Police Department, utilizing their License Plate Readers ran the registration of the Honda and discovered that it frequented the area of 1523 Chapel Street, which is an apartment complex. Officers from New Haven Police later located the Honda in the rear parking lot of 1523 Chapel Street New Haven. The Honda was found parked and running with a female seated in the passenger seat, identified as the registered owner. The female explained to the New Haven Police officers on scene that her boyfriend, had earlier picked her up in Shelton and they came to this address to pick up items from apartment 105. A query through a law enforcement database revealed that the suspect's name is an alias, which identified his real name and date of birth.

At approximately 8:06 P.M., members from both the West Haven Police Department and New Haven Police Department set up a perimeter around the apartment complex of 1523 Chapel Street. Detective Anthony Simone and Detective Jeff Gabianelli subsequently interviewed the female passenger who provided more information with regards to the investigation. The New Haven Police Department's Intelligence Unit contacted the apartment complex's maintenance department and were able to access the security footage from inside of the complex. It was learned that the suspected shooter may have left the building prior to police arrival, however the suspect had dealings with both Apartment 105, and was believed to be presently inside Apartment 305.

Once it was apparent that the suspect was hiding inside of apartment 305, the West Haven Special Response Team ("SRT") was activated and responded to the location at 9:30 P.M. Detective Aklin was at this time securing Search & Seizure Warrants for the Honda Accord, 116 Hinman Street, 1523 Chapel Street Apartment's 105 & 305. At approximately 10:00 P.M., the SRT Team attempted to make contact with the occupants of Apartment 305. Based on the severity of the incident, and the fact a search warrant was being drafted, a "hit and hold" was executed to obtain the suspects in the shooting. At approximately 10:10 P.M., with the assistance of then Officer Marchitto and his K9 partner Ado, Detective Wolf of the SRT Team notified dispatch that the suspect had been located and taken into custody. It

should be noted that the suspect, who had an active Domestic Violence warrant was found to have immediately cut his dread locks off to change his appearance, which was evident once police secured him inside of the apartment.

Once back at West Haven Police Headquarters, Detective Simone and Detective Jason Aklin were able to determine that a black male was the individual responsible for firing at Officer Abate.

Based on the totality of information at hand, the suspect was placed under arrest and charged with Conspiracy to Commit Assault in the First Degree. He was then processed and held on bond.

Detective Gabianelli completed an arrest warrant which was subsequently approved for the shooter for Criminal Possession of a Firearm, Conspiracy to Commit Assault in the First Degree, and Criminal Attempt to Commit Assault in the First Degree.

Detective Aklin completed an arrest warrant for both the first suspect and the shooter as a result of the Robbery from January 07th. It should be noted that the shooter, based on this information obtained through these two incidents, assisted New Haven Police in identifying him as a suspect in a homicide in their city.

On Thursday, May 04, 2023, at approximately 6:12 A.M., The United States Marshall Service Fugitive Task Force located and apprehended the suspect, hiding in a crawl space at 564 East Main Street in Bridgeport. This was done with the assistance of the West Haven Street Crime Unit, the West Haven Special Victims Unit, and members of the Bridgeport Police Department. He was subsequently transported to the New Haven Police Department for their Homicide Arrest Warrant.

The members of the West Haven Police Department on duty that evening, West Haven ERS Dispatchers, New Haven Police Department Officers, University of New Haven Police Department Officers, should be recognized and commended for their actions. The moment the call from Officer Abate went out over the radio, this was an ever-evolving, dynamic situation. There were officers who were called in and without hesitation, responded from their homes to assist a brother officer. Two individuals, who obviously had no regard for not only the public, but for law enforcement were at large. Officers quickly located the suspect vehicle, established a perimeter, and were able to take into custody one of the two dangerous suspects. Through their diligent investigation, the suspect responsible for shooting at Officer Abate, and for the Homicide in New Haven was quickly developed.

It should also be noted, this incident put an enormous strain on the manpower of the Patrol Division as one can imagine. Officers did an outstanding job not only dealing with the situation in New Haven which involved multiple crime scenes between the two cities but continuing to provide professional and efficient police services to the members of our West Haven Community. Lieutenant Dave Hancock and I were extremely proud and honored to be the Shift Commanders of such a hard-working operation that evening. Again, it is my recommendation that these officers be recognized and commended for their hard work, diligence, and courage for a job well done.

Chief Perno, Deputy Chief Flemmig, Chairman Collins, Mayor Nancy R. Rossi, Commissioner Carrano, Commissioner Butler, Commissioner Wright and Commissioner Suggs lined up to present an award to recognize and commend the following list of officers for their brave actions on January 10th 2023:

Detective Sergeant Ron Celentano 085
Detective Sergeant Ciccocanti 174
Detective Sergeant Zwickler 199
Sergeant John Healey 195
Sergeant Antoine Hayward 180
Sergeant Craig Thompson 202
Sergeant Jeremy Meurice 191
Sergeant Scott Allard 175
Sergeant Keving Bowerman 238
Detective Tammy Murray 135
Detective Robert Fazzino 143
Officer Scott Vitelli 198
Officer Justin Standish 217
Officer Michael Croce 224
Officer Thomas Marchitto 232
Officer Joseph Riehl 247
Officer Paul Stutzman 264
Officer Steven Evora 274
Officer Nicholas Abate 280
Officer Brian Wydra 288

Detective Sean Faughnan 136
Detective Jon Suraci 172
Detective Jason Aklin 192
Detective Craig Casman 137
Detective Anthony Simone 128
Detective Stephen Viele 129
Detective Jeffrey Gabianelli 152
Detective Brian Bogert 165
Detective Michael Wolf
Detective Michael Vivencio 216
Officer Andre Jakubowski 187
Officer David Schaefer 210
Officer Robert Rappa 221
Officer Paul Butler 231
Officer Jeffrey Nielsen 246
Officer Brandon Butler 254
Officer David Rivera 265
Officer Joseph Bepko 279
Officer Michael Hoey 285
Officer Ian Williamson 289

Officer Richard Naccarato 292
ERS Dispatcher Richard Standish
ERS Dispatcher Marissa Spisak
UNH Sergeant Robert Milslagle 550
UNH Officer Thomas Gallagher 566
Lieutenant David Hancock
Lieutenant Scott Kleinknecht
Lieutenant Jay Masi
Captain Joseph Romano
Captain Chris Zitney

Officer Collin Braziel 298
ERS Dispatcher Patrick Lato
ERS Dispatcher Zoie Soares
UNH Ofc Thomas Flaherty 571
ERS Dispatcher Richard Standish
ERS Dispatcher Marissa Spisak

Chief Perno gave concluding remarks by expressing his pride in witnessing the team's excellent communication and coordination during the intense events that occurred on January 10th, 2023.

9. Pension Board - None

10. Commissioners Report

Commissioner Wright commended the efforts of the West Haven Animal Control Department.

11. Executive Session

Commissioner Carrano MOVED to enter Executive Session to discuss the following:

11.1 Street Crime Report - April 2023.

The motion was SECONDED by Commissioner . Motion carried unanimously.

The commissioner entered Executive Session at 7:27 p.m.

12. Return to Regular Session/Adjournment

At 7:40 p.m., the Commissioners returned to regular session and adjourned by a motion by Commissioner Butler; SECONDED by Commissioner Carrano. Motion carried unanimously.