

City of West Haven, CT
Board of Police Commissioners
Minutes of the meeting held Tuesday, September 20th, 2022

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Patricia C. Healy
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The regular meeting of the West Haven Board of Police Commissioners was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chairman Raymond Collins III at West Haven Police Headquarters, 200 Sawmill Road. All those present, rose and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Attendance

Raymond Collins III, <i>Chairman</i>	Present
Paul E. Butler, <i>Vice-Chairman</i>	Present
John M. Carrano, <i>Commissioner</i>	Present
Christopher Suggs, <i>Commissioner</i>	Absent
Deborah B. Wright, <i>Pension Board Chair and Commissioner</i>	Absent
Joseph Perno, <i>Chief of Police</i>	Absent
Carl Flemmig, <i>Deputy Chief</i>	Present

Agenda

Commissioner Butler MOVED to add Item 8.3 to the agenda regarding the recognition of Officer Tim Healey; SECONDED by Commissioner Carrano. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Butler MOVED to add Item 8.4 to the agenda regarding the support for the blinking cross walk light at the intersection of Orange Terrace and Forest Road; SECONDED by Commissioner Carrano. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Carrano MOVED to add Item 8.5 to the agenda regarding a presentation about the West Haven Animal Shelter Bottle Redemption Remodel Project; SECONDED by Commissioner Butler. Motion carried unanimously.

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

1. Minutes

Commissioner Butler MOVED to accept the previous meeting minutes from September 6th, 2022 as presented; SECONDED by Commissioner Carrano. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Public Input

Walter Casey addressed the board regarding the conversation about the police pension fund that was discussed at the previous meeting. He expressed his disagreement with some of the comments previously made by the President of the West Haven Retired Officers Association about giving the \$5,000 benefit to the post 1993 retirees. He explained that giving out \$5,000 to

the twenty-four individuals affected by the contract would amount to a big sum of \$120,000 that would come out of the pension fund. He emphasized that the money in the pension fund should be protected, and that the integrity of the pension fund shouldn't be jeopardized. He further explained that the contract was negotiated in good faith in 1993, and all officers hired after the contract went into effect should've been aware of what was contained in that document. Mr. Casey also congratulated the new detective sergeant on his new position.

Russ Kniehl, president of West Haven Retired Officers Association, 200 Sawmill Road, addressed the board and explained that he stood by all the comments he made at the previous meeting two weeks ago. He elaborated that the money in the pension fund also belongs to the twenty-four individuals on behalf of whom he spoke previously and that it is their pension money also. Mr. Kniehl also commented that he is still looking forward to a decision to be made by the board regarding the situation.

Chairman Collins responded to Mr. Kniehl and explained that he did meet with Corporation Counsel last week and that the attorney will have a written statement by next meeting.

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

3. Communications

- 3.1 Traffic Management Report – August, 2022.
- 3.2 Attendance Report – August, 2022.
- 3.3 Letter of Appreciation – Det. Stephan Viele, Mr. Ellis Ratner.

4. Report of the Chief – Personnel not present

5. Report of the Deputy Chief

Deputy Chief Flemmig offered the following report:

“With tonight’s resignation and 2 potential hirings we will be staffed at 113 Officers. We are minus 9 Officers in Police Academy, 1 Officer on FTO, 2 Sergeants and 7 Officers out Injured/Light Duty, which leaves us a total of 94 available officers. We anticipate one resignation and one retirement in October. The 7 Academy recruits will graduate in December and we currently have two seats for the next POSTC class that starts the end of this month. The potential 2 new hires will start at POSTC Academy on September 23, 2022 and will graduate in March/April 2023.

Capt. Kate Flavin is receiving an award from the West Haven Annawon Lodge #115 for her dedication and community service to the residents of West Haven. The award ceremony is Monday September 26, 2022 at 6:00 pm at the West Haven Masonic Temple located at 263 Center St.”

6. Report of the Committees – No Report

7. Old Business

7.1 Swearing in Detective/Sergeant Jordan Zwickler.

Detective/Sergeant Jordan Zwickler was sworn in by Deputy Chief Flemmig.

8. New Business

8.1 Action on Police Applications – Effective September 21, 2022

Item 8.1 was tabled by Chairman Collins.

8.2 Resignation – Ofc. Constantinos Gakidis – Effective September 30, 2022

Commissioner Butler MOVED to accept Ofc. Constantinos Gakidis's resignation; SECONDED by Commissioner Carrano. Motion carried unanimously.

8.3 Recognition of Officer Tim Healey

Chairman Collins presented Officer Tim Healey with the Certificate of Achievement on behalf of the Board of Police Commissioners that certified that Officer Healey had been awarded ATF Boston Field Division 2022 Task Force Officer of the Year.

Chairman Collins read aloud an email from Scott Riordan, the Resident Agent in Charge from the ATF New Haven Field Office:

“Please accept my sincere apologies for not being able to attend tonight. Congratulations to ATF New Haven Task Force Officer Tim Healey on this well-deserved recognition. As some of you may know, in addition to tonight's recognition, Tim was recently named the ATF Boston Field Division, “Task Force Officer of the Year.” This was based on his excellent investigative work. Over the past two years, I have witnessed an incredible growth in Tim. Tim came to ATF as a patrol officer with a minimal investigative background. Through his tireless effort and steadfast work ethic, he has become one of the best investigators in the office. During his time as a Task Force Officer, Tim has disrupted several firearms trafficking rings, originating from states like Georgia, South Carolina, and Alabama. Tim's efforts put a stop to the flow of illegal firearms into our communities and resulted in significant federal sentences to those involved. Tim also obtained numerous federal and state arrest and search warrants targeting convicted felons who illegally possessed firearms in West Haven. Additionally, Tim worked numerous cases involving violent gun crime. One case included federally charging a West Haven resident who was involved in a violent drug robbery with a firearm. Moreover, the suspect had also committed a triple shooting in a neighboring city. But most importantly, Tim never lost sight of his duty, which was to make the streets safer for the citizens of West Haven. I cannot express to you how much I and the entire ATF family have enjoyed working with Tim. I look forward to continuing to work closely with TFO Healey and the entire West Haven Police Department in our effort to combat violent crime in our communities.”

8.4 Commissioners' Support of a Blinking Crosswalk Light at Orange Terrace and Forest Road

Commissioner Butler MOVED that the Commissioners were in favor of a blinking crosswalk light at Orange Terrace and Forest Road; SECONDED by Commissioner Carrano. Motion carried unanimously.

8.5 West Haven Animal Shelter Bottle Redemption Area Remodel Presentation

Angela Maria Malerba shared a video about the West Haven Animal Shelter's bottle redemption program and explained that all the money made from the redeemed bottles go towards raising more money to support the animal shelter. She explained that since the years 2015 and 2016, there have been various outreach projects with Vertical Church, where members have helped with projects such as the deep cleanings of the shelter and the welcome mural project.

Before the pandemic, the animal shelter used to work with Redemption Centers of America on Boston Post Road in West Haven where the shelter would transport all their collected bottles, and the center would separate the bottles for them. She added that the separation process was taking up to a month, depending on the number of bottles collected. She explained that once the pandemic began, there was a fire in the redemption center and the animal shelter could no longer bring the bottles to them and they had to find someplace new. She mentioned that the shelter was able to utilize Stratford Redemption Center where the center would accept the bottles with a turnaround time of 24 hours only if the bottles were previously separated. Now the animal shelter is tasked with finding more volunteers to assist with bottle separation and clearing the bottle cages for them to be redeemed at the new location in Stratford.

Ms. Malerba proposed the remodel of the bottle cage to help with its maintenance. By flipping the orientation of the cage and making it vertical on the lot, rather than the horizontal orientation it's currently in, it would allow the bottle cage to be a self-service area that is enclosed to shield it from bad weather as well as make it cleaner and more secure. She explained that some marketing has begun in West Haven to inform the public to pre-separate their plastic, glass, and metal and aluminum cans. She further explained that the cost for this project is estimated around \$8,000, but the cost may vary depending on the cost of labor, if there are volunteers who can help, and if people can donate to support the project.

Ms. Malerba also emphasized the importance of pre separating the bottles. By doing so, the animal shelter is able to get four cents of the nickel for each bottle. The remaining one cent goes to the gentleman who transports the bottles to the center using his own truck and gas.

Commissioner Carrano added that this is the first step in the project, and that they need to figure out what the next best steps are and how to secure more funding. He explained that there is no separate budget for projects like these. However, there is some grant money available, but it has to go through the city council since they are in control of the budget.

Ms. Malerba added that Vertical Church was asked to take on the project since they are a non-profit. As a result, they don't have control of the money, they only steward it. The money is held

in an account, designated by now retired Sergeant Eric Pimer of the shelter. When the shelter needs things like surgeries or vaccines, the church is contacted, and the bills can be paid for.

Commissioner Carrano added that he spoke to some of the Animal Control Officers and they said the real estate change due to the remodeling of the bottle redemption area would not cause any issues. He explained that the services provided by the bottle redemption program are very beneficial to the shelter.

Chairman Collins asked Ms. Malerba if there have been any ideas for community fundraising to help raise more money for the project. She answered that she hopes to model many of the fundraisers off those held by the Stratford Animal Rescue Society (SARS) if possible, where all the proceeds are able to go to the shelter.

9. Pension Board

9.1 Dave Moran – Raymond James

Mr. Moran's presentation was tabled by Chairman Collins for the next meeting.

10. Commissioners Report

Commissioner Carrano publicly thanked both Officer Dorsi and Detective Wolf for all the support and consideration they showed Commissioner Carrano and his family when one of his family members passed away. He commented on all the challenging and emotional situations they endure as police officers and emphasized that they both represented the department admirably.

11. Executive Session

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

- 11.1 Exit Interview Constantinos Gakidis
- 11.2 Applicant Interviews

Motion was SECONDED by Commissioner Carrano. Motion carried unanimously.

The Commissioners entered Executive Session at 7:31 PM.

12. Return to Regular Session/Adjournment

At 8:00 PM, the Commissioners returned to regular session and adjourned by a motion from Commissioner Butler; SECONDED by Commissioner Carrano. Motion carried unanimously.