

**CITY OF NORWALK
BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
JUNE 17, 2009**

ATTENDANCE: Mayor Richard A. Moccia; Peter Torrano, Daniel O'Connor (4:18 p.m.)

STAFF: Harry Rilling, Chief of Police; Thomas Kulhawik, Deputy Chief Of Police

OTHERS: Sgt. Susan Holland, Officer Russell Ouellette, Officer James Mosher, Officer Mark Suda, Julie Burton, CNNA; Ms. Dunlap, Washington Village; Diane Lauricella, League of Women Voters; Al Raymond, Spring Hill/Hospital Neighborhood Association; Mindy Houck, Anna Duleep, Common Council Member; Rev. Ray Dancy; Mr. Frank Favano, NPD; Mr. Fred Green, CIRMA

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Moccia called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 26, 2009 MINUTES

**** COMMISSIONER TORRANO MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 26, 2009 MEETING.**

**** MAYOR MOCCIA SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 26, 2009 MEETING AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

MAY TRAINING REPORT

Chief Rilling reviewed the monthly training report of the 28 Class Sessions on a variety of subjects held for a total of 164 class hours with the Board.

EDUCATIONAL STIPEND

(Officer Jordan Oliveira)

Commissioner O'Connor arrived at 4:18 p.m. and assumed chairmanship of the meeting.

**** COMMISSIONER TORRANO MOVED TO APPROVE THE EDUCATIONAL STIPEND REQUEST FROM OFFICER JORDAN OLIVEIRA.**

**** MAYOR MOCCIA SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

MEDAL OF MERIT

(Officer Russell Ouellette, Officer James Mosher)

The Chief stated that the review process has changed recently and gave a brief overview of the new procedure.

He reviewed the details of the accident scene where the first officer to arrive, Officer Mosher, discovered a head on collision of two vehicles. One vehicle's front end was engulfed in flames with the driver still trapped in the vehicle. After several attempts, Officer Mosher was finally able to liberate the driver from the burning vehicle and with the assistance of Officer Ouellette, removed the victim a safe distance from the vehicle. Both officers placed themselves in harm's way in order to save the life of this accident victim. The Medal of Merit is a Lifesaving Medal and the Chief wanted everyone to be aware that it is an honor to be the recipient of this award.

**** COMMISSIONER TORRANO MOVED TO APPROVE THE NOMINATION OF OFFICERS MOSHER AND OUELLETTE FOR THE MEDAL OF MERIT.**

**** MAYOR MOCCIA SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Commissioner Torrano said that as a retired police officer, he would like to personally go on record as saying these two officers went above and beyond duty. He also wished to thank them personally for their brave actions.

The Commissioners then presented the two officers with their Medals of Merit.

Chief Rilling said that he would like to acknowledge the presence of retired Norwalk Police Officer Phil O'Grady who is working with the State Attorney's Office and Mr. O'Grady's wife, Cookie.

The Mayor said that he wished to extend his best wishes for a safe and speedy recovery to Officers Lapore and Fallow following their recent vehicular accidents.

MAY OFFICER OF THE MONTH

(Officer Mark Suda)

The Chief reviewed the recent case report regarding Officer Suda with the Commissioners. The Commissioners then presented Officer Suda with an Officer of the Month certificate.

ACCEPTANCE OF ASSET FORFEITURE FROM SPECIAL SERVICES

**** COMMISSIONER TORRANO MOVED TO ACCEPT THE ASSET FORFEITURE FROM SPECIAL SERVICES.**

**** MAYOR MOCCIA SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

JAG GRANT REVIEW

Chief Rilling introduced Sgt. Holland and said that she had been working very hard on this grant application. The JAG grant allows funds to be distributed to the various law enforcement agencies over a four year period and is designed to support officers with equipment and training. Mayor Moccia said that he had met with Chief Rilling, Deputy Chief Kulhawik, Sgt. Holland, and Ms. Pytleski about this grant.

Ms. Burton introduced herself to the Board and said that she was representing CNNA, which is a group comprised of 20 different neighborhood groups, which she then listed. She said that CNNA had been discussing neighborhood safety and hoped that the comments that would be made by the public would be applied to the use of the grant money.

Ms. Burton said that the Tenant's Association sensed tension and added that they would support the police in maintaining a presence in high incident areas. She then said that at the CNNA meeting, one attendee had related how the beat officer used to stop in for a cup of coffee and knew all the neighbors. When this particular person had a small brush with the law, the beat officer was able to straighten it all out. Ms. Burton said that she believed that more interaction was needed between the officers and the residents. Sitting in a patrol car isolates an officer

Mayor Moccia pointed out that the officers have 250 miles of roadway to patrol in Norwalk. He added that there had been a liaison officer at Roodner Court, but budget cuts required that the officer be transferred elsewhere. Some areas have officers assigned, but the officers have to rotate. It is also difficult to have the officers out of the cars when they are alone.

Currently, Norwalk has 11 officers in the Academy, which is 42 weeks. Most of the other Police Departments are laying off officers or freezing. Norwalk is hiring and it is nearly unheard of to have 11 students at the Academy. A major outreach effort has been made towards the complexes.

Chief Rilling said that he used to have "Meet the Chief" meetings, but they stopped because of lack of attendance. He said that he would be willing to start the meetings up again.

The discussion then moved to overtime funding from the grant. Ms. Burton said that she had major concerns about gang activities. Sgt. Holland explained that previously, the grant funding had allowed funds for overtime, but this is no longer the case. The Chief also pointed out that following a recent incident where a student was accosted by a stranger at school, officers have been assigned to the various schools during arrival and dismissal times.

Ms. Dunlap from Washington Village said that it would be important to have the meetings with the Chief because of the high turn over in the officers. She added that the Housing Authority needed to be involved and then related the details of a recent incident that occurred in her complex.

Ms. Lauricella, the President of the League of Women Voters, said that she had been involved in CNNA since its' inception and that she supported Julie Burton. Ms. Lauricella said that the Grant Funds would be an opportunity. She then listed a number of issues with a particular area and said that she had discussions with the Housing Authority about them. Ms. Lauricella said that there seems to be a communications disconnect. She then asked if the Department would reconsider the use of bicycles.

Ms. Lauricella said that CNNA has done their due diligence and that the SONO Alliance had seemed like a good idea, but had not worked out.

Ms. Lauricella then said that as the President of the League of Women Voters, if the meetings could be moved to 5 p.m. so that the public could attend.

Chief Rilling explained that the Department had applied for six programs, but really only hoped to get 2. He added that the officers who are in the Academy are being trained for the use of the bicycles.

Mayor Moccia outline the procedure for patrol requests and said that if the caller tells the officer not to come to the house, the officer will not contact the caller. He also briefly reviewed the TIPS program, which is in the process of being introduced.

Mayor Moccia said that many parents want a curfew, but it is unconstitutional and also requires a tremendous amount of manpower to enforce. Among the budget cuts for the Department were 10 new patrol cars that were on order so that the personnel would not be cut.

Mr. Raymond, from the Spring Hill/Hospital Neighborhood Association, said that CNNA was looking into the Guardian Angels because they have extensive research on combating crime. Mayor Moccia explained that the issue was coverage, since all cities have crime. Mr. Raymond replied that he was trying to be part of the solution. Chief

Rilling said that the best venue to discuss this would be scheduling a meeting to discuss the issues, but the Guardian Angels were not on the agenda. Chief Rilling said that while he was willing to set up a meeting and wanted the community's assistance, he was not interested in discussing the Guardian Angels. The chief said that he had made his feelings on the matter quite clear at other times.

Ms. Houck said that she was a parent at Roton on Highland Avenue. She then said that there was a program called "Safe Routes to School" which she felt might help with the other grant funding. 85% of the vehicles that travel Highland Avenue are going at 42 mph. She said that she appreciated the officers being at the various schools since the incident. Chief Rilling said that he would be more than willing to work with the group on this issue.

Mayor Moccia said that in a recent study, Connecticut had ranked as #48 in terms of poor driving. He then encouraged the Neighborhood Associations to consider doing the homemade signs that the children had done in the past, which told drivers to slow down. These had been done during the Esposito Administration and they were actually quite effective.

Ms. Houck then asked about the officer directing traffic at Brien McMahon during dismissal. The Mayor said that he believed that the Board of Education hired an officer for that time period.

Mayor Moccia then went on to speak about Safe Streets, and said he had recently been in contact with them. They specialize in stop signs with flashing lights, which catch the attention of the drivers.

Commissioner Torrano said that the University of Bridgeport has slowed down traffic on Park Avenue by using a series of orange traffic cones in the middle of the road. It has worked well.

Ms. Duleep, a Common Council member, explained that she teaches in Westport and there is a major speeding problem along North Avenue in that town. In order to address this, the Westport Police position themselves in strategic locations along the road. She then said that she had several suggestions for the Department. Chief Rilling said that the Department was working on various items, but the traffic issues really belong on the Traffic Authority agenda.

Rev. Dancy asked if the allocation for the JAG funding has been totally allocated. Chief Rilling said that the \$76,000 was primarily designated towards equipment. He added that he had been discussing the possibility of mini-grants with Ms. Pitilessly. Rev. Dancy said that he felt a Weed and Seed program would be appropriate. Chief Rilling said that the

Weed and Seed program was no longer being funded but Department was currently looking to start a Police Explorer program.

Chairman O'Connor asked if there were any additional comments. Hearing none, he closed the hearing at 5:18 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

**** MAYOR MOCCIA MOVED TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS PERSONNEL.**

**** MR. TORRANO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The Board of Police Commissioners, Chief Rilling, Mr. Favano and Mr. Fred Green, from CIRMA entered into executive session to discuss matters pertaining to personnel at 5:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Service.

