PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, JANUARY 24, 2022 VIA WEBEX

1. Chairman Ford Calls Meeting to Order at 7:00 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councilman Darnell Ford, Chairman
Councilwoman Linda Salafia
Councilman Anthony Mangiafico
Councilwoman Meghan Carta

MEMBERS ABSENT: Councilman Philip Pessina

STAFF PRESENT: Erik M. Costa – Chief of Police

2. Approval of Minutes – December 20, 2021
Councilman Mangiafico made a motion to approve the PSC Minutes for December 20, 2021:
Seconded by Councilwoman Salafia. There being no discussion or objection, Motion passed.

3. Public Hearing – Matters on the Agenda Only
None

4. Correspondence
   a. Officer’s Accolades
Chief Costa reported that he had received three (3) Thank You letters. One was from Chief Hunt of
the Naugatuck Police Department regarding Officer Bodell & K9 Bear for assisting with a
Christmas Community Outreach Event. A letter was received from Larry McHugh of the Middlesex
Chamber of Commerce thanking the Police Department, especially Officer Botsacos of Traffic and
Officer Bodell & K9 Bear for assistance with the Holiday on Main Street. A letter was also received
from the Clinton Police Department, thanking Officer Bodell & K9 Bear for presenting an overview
of their program to the Clinton Police Commission.

5. Monthly Reports (Attached)
   a. Overtime Balances
Chief Costa reported that similar to the Fire Department, the Police Department’s Overtime Budget
has been greatly affected by COVID-19 absences. Chief Costa stated that when he took over as
Chief, the department was short seventeen officers, due to worker’s comp cases, disciplinary leaves
and retirements. Chief Costa said that he was happy to report that the department’s “order-in’s”

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have dropped from as many as twenty-six (26) per weekend to just one (1) over the past weekend. Some major investigations which had also impacted the department’s overtime are coming to a close. Chief Costa said he is looking forward to getting the department back up to full strength.

b. Community Reports
Chief Costa stated that he was very proud of the officers in their response to COVID, handing out masks and at home test kits that were provided by the State and the City Health Department, including the support of the Common Council and Mayor Florsheim. The officers identified members of the community who were at risk and in need and handed out the supplies while on patrol. Chief Costa mentioned the incident at Perkatory Coffee shop where their masks were destroyed by an irate customer. The officers went to the shop and replenished their supplies. Chief Costa said the outreach was extended to the schools and the homeless community.
Chief Costa mentioned the collection of items for the victims of the Kentucky tornados, the outpouring of support from the community and the help of the local news media and radio stations. Some of the overflow of donations were donated to local food banks and community outreach as the 53-foot trailer was filled with donated items.

Chief Costa stated that this coming Friday will be the memorial service for Sgt. Dingwall for all that want to attend. Chief Costa said that he attended the wake of fallen New Haven Officer Diane Gonzalez last week and it was very moving. Chief Costa said that he met with the Youth Leadership here in the City and will continue that program. Plans are to hold monthly breakfast meetings at various locations with the youth to help bridge the gap between the officers and the youth at risk. Specialty officers from various units will be identified and selected to participate in these programs. Mentorship will be the biggest part of the program to support the youth leadership in the city and identifying programs needed.

Chief Costa said that he attended a meeting with the LBGTQ Commission to begin planning the PRIDE March in June. Chief reported that he will meet with Mary Ellen of the Soup Kitchen to help identify some of her needs and how he can provide better support for her and the Officers working in the North End. The Department plans on increasing foot patrols in the North End, to assist the homeless and those in need of mental health needs, warm shelter or anything else they need. The River Valley Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Program is about to start and will be a big help in responding to Mental Health calls throughout the city.

Chief Costa said that there will be new Use of Force Training starting under the Police Accountability Act. The Instructors have all been trained and the required training with the officers is about to begin. The Body Worn Camera Infrastructure is in the Agency and the next step is to get the cameras up and working and begin test trials.

c. Incident Statistics Report
Chief Costa said that the Monthly Calls for service were down for the past month to 2600 Calls for Service, not including Property Checks. Chief Costa stated that unless there were any specific statistics the group wanted to discuss, he would move onto the next topic.

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Chairman Ford said that he had a couple of questions before they went any further. Chairman Ford asked if a location was picked for the Youth Leadership Program. Chief Costa said that the “Free Center” was chosen as the focal point, but some churches might be utilized as well. Chairman Ford asked how the youth in need would be identified. Chief Costa said that the schools would be the initial resource, to find out who is at risk. The Program would also look to community leaders and churches to identify youths. Chief Costa said the goal is to get the P.A.L. Program listed as a 501 (e)(3) since the department has a tremendous amount of potential funding out there, but needs to get the non-profit account set up first. Once the program is set up, Chief Costa said they will meet with the schools to coordinate transportation and messaging to go out to the parents of students in need, while school is still in session.

Chairman Ford asked Chief Costa if there was any collaboration with CIT, Behaviorists or any other services as they were identifying the youths for the program. Chief Costa said that they were reaching out to DCF, State Entities, River Valley Services, Gilead and Park and Recreation Departments to all be involved.

Chairman Ford asked how an adult would be able to connect the department with any child they might know of in need of services. Chief Costa said that the services would be on the Department Website, Social Media with additional email blasts going to the contacts of the board of directors, news media, etc.

6. Old Business
   a. Civilian Complaints
   Chief Costa noted that there were No Civilian Complaints for the month of December. The one complaint in November was vetted and the officer was exonerated.

   b. 2022 PSC Meeting Calendar
   Chief Costa explained to the Commission that the print out of the yearly meeting calendar was not sent for last month’s packet and had to be approved by the commission (now that they had a chance to review it). Councilman Mangiafico made a Motion to approve the 2022 Calendar, seconded by Councilwoman Salafia. There being no discussion or objection, Motion passed.

7. New Business
   a. Mutual Link
   Chief Costa said that he was glad to see that Fire Chief Woron was still on the meeting and explained that last week Fire Chief Woron and Police Chief Costa (and others) had met with representatives from Mutual Link. Mutual Link is a program and resource that when an emergency or crisis occurs, the subscriber can press a button which links the cameras systems and radio systems to that entity so as they are responding in real-time, they can see the camera and hear the radios of those at the scene. The system would be linked at the Police Department and would be free of charge. Chief Costa said that Middlesex Community College is ready to connect with the Police Department, Chief Costa said that he would be looking to build partnerships with the school system.

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and other city agencies and their camera systems. Business owners in the community can also subscribe to the service and if they had a situation in their business such as a robbery or a medical crisis, they could press a button which would link their camera system to the responders. Chief Costa said that our officers and potentially the Communications Center could have a direct sight into that location and would be able to see what’s happening in real time. Chief Costa said the Police Department would be able to taper the response appropriately. Chief Costa gave an example of responding to a fight at the High School. Chief Costa said that it is great technology that enables the Department to utilize their resources effectively within the city and the technology can be used on a phone or at a work station. Chief Costa said that the first two years of the program would be free of charge, after that the State of Connecticut might cover the cost for two or three years. Chief Costa said that he feels it is a good product, worth investing in and asked if anyone had any questions.

Chairman Ford asked Chief Costa if this would fit in with the active shooter program. Chief Costa said that it would work with any incident if the facility was connected to the program. In the event of an active shooter (in a school), Chief Costa said that they would press the button which would allow their technology in the school to speak to the Police Department’s technology and active the camera system. Responding officers would be able to identify victims, suspects, points of entry etc.

Councilwoman Salafia asked if the program would require special cameras or adapters. Chief Costa said that the platform is based on IP address and would work with the camera system currently in the school, can adapt to any camera system.

Chairman Ford clarified that access could only be gained if permission to the IP address was obtained, Chief Costa agreed. Chairman Ford asked Chief Costa if same access could be given to the Fire Department, Chief Costa said that the same access could be given to the Fire Department. Chief Costa reiterated that permission to get access to the system would have to be granted in advance and that the button would have to be pushed at the facility to connect the camera system to the responding agency.

5. b. Community Reports (re-opened)
   Chairman Ford asked Chief Costa if he could provide a snapshot of the beginning and end of the Youth and Leadership Program that Chief wants to do, an outline of the program. Chairman Ford asked Chief Costa if he could email him an outline of the program in the next couple of meetings. Chief Costa gave an update of the current status of the P.A.L. Program. Lt. Godwin is the Chief’s designee to run the program, the group is meeting weekly to structure the 501 (c)(3) Corporation and have applied to the National P.A.L. Program to gain accreditation. Once the 501(c)(3) is in place, the group can start to accept donations and hopefully begin programs in the spring.

Chairman Ford asked Chief Costa how the Community Connection was progressing, especially in the North-End and with the homeless population. Chief Costa stated that it was going well, he had met with the Stakeholders in the community, Gilead and River Valley Services are a part of that. Chief Costa explained that when someone is committed to the hospital with Mental Health Issues, a report is submitted to River Valley Mobile Crisis to follow-up services with a case worker.

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beginning in January. An in-house CIT Person will also be involved, to identify who needs the programs.

Chairman Ford asked if there was a Task Force or specific officers involved or it was the officers patrolling the area. Chief Costa said that right now, it is everyone patrolling their area. Chief Costa stated that he is currently preparing the budget and will be re-structuring the agency to include a Human Services Division, where specialized units will be under the direction of a new Captain. That Captain will follow through with River Valley and CIT Officers that are dealing specifically with Homeless, Opioid Addiction and Mental Health issues to ensure consistency, build relationships and follow through to ensure treatment. Chief Costa stated that he and Deputy Chief Davis have directed the Officers to check on the homeless during this cold weather. Many have refused to use the Warming Centers. Chief Costa said in some situations if it appears that the person is in danger in the sub-zero temperatures, the Department is working on utilizing Emergency Committals to get the person treatment if it appears that it is above and beyond their mental faculties to get out of the sub-zero weather. Chief Costa said it would be important to have someone dedicated to this.

Chairman Ford asked if this was reflected in the Incident Statistics Report. Chief Costa said it is sometimes coded as Well-Being check, suspicious person or Patrol Checks. Chief Costa said once River Valley comes on board, they will work with NextGen to create special codes and capture the data properly when doing the interactions with the homeless.

Chairman Ford asked if anyone else had any questions for Chief Costa, hearing none, the topic was closed.

8. Public Hearing Re-Opened – Other Matters
None.

9. Meeting Adjourned
Councilwoman Salfia made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilwoman Carta. There being no discussion or objection, Motion approved unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:32 PM.

Next Public Safety Commission Meeting, Monday, February 21, 2022 at 6:30 PM.
TO VIEW THIS MEETING IN IT’S ENTIRETY, PLEASE VISIT THE FOLLOWING WEBSITE:
www.cityofmiddletown.com
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2022
Public Safety Commission (PSC)

Respectfully Submitted,

William J. Warner
Recording Secretary

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