

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
HONORABLE BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS  
HELD TUESDAY, JANUARY 19, 2021**

**Zoom Meeting:**

**<https://www.bridgeportct.gov/policecommission>**

The meeting was called to order at **6:05 p.m.**

Item #1

**Roll call of Commissioners:**

Cruz, Lyons, Farrow, and Cuminotto. **Also present:** Chief Rebeca Garcia, Lieutenant Manuel Cotto, Sergeant Brad Seely, Councilmember Marie I. Valle and Matthew McCarthy, Sergeant Joel Carley, and Sergeant Adam Rozum.

Item #2

**a.** None

**b.** On a motion by Commissioner Lyons and seconded by Commissioner Cruz, the board unanimously voted to approve item **2b**.

Item #3

**Reports:**

**a. Chief:** Chief Rebeca Garcia presented the following to the board: 24 homicides for 2020. Increased crime activity is being addressed by Project Longevity team, Task Force who partner with Federal and State agencies, SED assigned to specific Hot Spots throughout the City, Community Services who partner with the Council of Churches and offer gun buy-back programs, Fusion Center staff that provide real time information, Crime Analysis Unit that provides crime statistics, and Narcotics and Vice division. The Chief attends a Bi-weekly meeting with Park City Communities to share information and provide police services. Current staffing is at 358 sworn police officers, the department is budgeted for 426. Seven police officers just resigned from the department due to increased health care cost. Sixteen recruits in the academy right now and will graduate in May. Recruitment effort is underway with an entry level exam being planned by Civil Service. Fifty-seven current officers can retire in July 2021 and additional resignations are anticipated. 2020-promotions include 10 detectives and 6 sergeants. 2021 promotional exams planned for Captain, and Lieutenant openings and entry level for Police Officer and Civilian Detention Officer. Policies are being uploaded to police website and accreditation continues. Possible police training videos for the community to access is being discussed. Police Accountability Bill for 2021 include 20% of the department to receive a Wellness Exam. New Drug Policy will be introduced shortly in the department. Police Accountability 2022 includes every police officer wearing a body worn camera. There will be increased expenses incurred by the City and department because of requirements with the Police Accountability Bill. 2020: 265 firearms and 20 long guns were removed from the streets by Bridgeport police officers. Chief Garcia's goal for 2021: Community Policing is a concept and not a division and to establish relationships with the Community and to have Command Staff work closely with the Community. Commissioners questions and concerns to the Chief, staffing levels and future entry level exam for police officer, officers resigning, increased health care cost for new employees, how to retain current

officers in the department, lateral entry of police officers, increasing benefits for current officers and concerns for officer wellness.

**Union:**

b. Sergeant Brad Seely presented the following to the board: P.O. Nicholas Ortiz-36-year veteran retired on January 15, 2021. Sergeant Seely expressed his concern of who would replace Officer Ortiz and emphasized the department must retain veteran as well as new officers. Sgt. Seely is concerned with new officers leaving the department due to health care cost and currently 100 officers have higher health care cost. Bridgeport police department is the lowest paid department in Fairfield County. Sergeant Seely expressed the following concerns: We have lost several great officers recently to resignation and retirement, what steps need to be taken to improve the police department, how can we retain experienced police officers and why are so many officers leaving the department and that he must express these concerns to Labor Relations. Commissioners questions and concerns to Sgt. Seely: Who else can participate in the exit interview with the Chief, what can be done to keep officers from leaving the department, and the need for lateral entries.

**Executive Session:** None

- c. **OIA:** A monthly report by the OIC of Internal Affairs was submitted to the Police Commission.

**Public Session:**

d. **Clerk:**

- a. Lt. O'Donnell will schedule dates for Barros Hearing in March 2021.

**Special Reports:** None

Item #4

**New Business:**

a. Councilmember Valle discussed the following items with the board: Thanked Lt. O'Donnell for promptly assisting her with questions and concerns. Thanked the BOPC for their direct help and visits to all districts within the City. Request to have commissioners email addresses and telephone numbers. Lt. O'Donnell will provide this information to Councilmember Valle. Requests for update and follow through on all traffic requests and matters including stop signs and speed humps. Requesting the BOPC are invited to attend a Public Safety Committee meeting in March to answer questions regarding traffic matters, etc. Lt. O'Donnell will assist in this matter and contact the board for the March meeting. Expressed concern over the following traffic requests that have not been approved by the Traffic Engineer: Four-Way stops signs, and 2-Pick-up after your dog signs. Councilmember Valle expressed serious concern of what happens after a traffic request is approved by the board and why does it take so long for the installation of a sign. Commissioners questions and concerns: All commissioners expressed that it is unacceptable for long delays in installation of signs

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after approval. This issue must be addressed directly to Public Facilities who are responsible for installation. The board will be asking the Traffic Engineer to attend a meeting to discuss concerns stated by Councilmember Valle.

Councilmember Valle expressed concern regarding the man-power level in the Engineers office to address traffic requests. She also stated the concern over the recent approved 4-Way Stop Sign at Hallett Street and Barnum Avenue and the delay in installation. Other traffic requests and matters at the following locations: Pembroke Street and Barnum Avenue-possible traffic light, and Pembroke Street-Speed Humps. Chief Garcia asked Councilmember Valle for three locations so she can provide increased traffic enforcement. These locations are Pembroke Street at Hamilton to Crescent Avenue, Barnum Avenue at East Main Street and Hallett Street, and Seaview Avenue Corridor.

**b.** On a motion by Commissioner Cuminotto and seconded by Commissioner Cruz, the board unanimously voted to table this matter until the next meeting in February.

Item #5      **Old Business:** None

Item #6      **Correspondence:** None

Item #7      **Letters of Appreciation:** Noted

Item #8      **Widow's Pension:** None

Item #9      **Other Scheduled Matters a:**

**i, ii, iii, iv:** On a motion by Commissioner Cruz and seconded by Commissioner Lyons, the board unanimously voted to combine and approve items **9i, ii, iii, and iv.**

**Other Scheduled Matters b:**

**i:** On a motion by Commissioner Farrow and seconded by Commissioner Cuminotto, the board unanimously voted to table this matter until the next meeting in February.

**Adjournment:** On a motion by Commissioner Diaz and seconded by Commissioner Cuminotto, the board unanimously voted to adjourn at **8:04 p.m.**

NO/