

**VIRTUAL PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING
MARCH 2, 2022, 6:30 P.M.
MINUTES**

1. Call to Order

- A. Chairwoman Carol Anderson-Blanks called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

Attendees – Mayor Shari Cantor; Councilors Carol Anderson-Blanks, Adrienne Billings-Smith, Alberto Cortes, Mary Fay; Acting Town Manager Rick Ledwith; Police Chief Vernon Riddick; Asst. Police Chief Robert Riccobon; Fire Chief Greg Priest; Asst. Fire Chief Hugh O’Callaghan and Fire Marshal Robert Grimaldi.

2. Business Items

- A. Approval of Minutes; January 5, 2022, and February 2, 2022 – Minutes approved.

3. Communications

4. Staff Reports

- A. Fire Department – Chief Priest briefly went over the written report submitted by Asst. Chief O’Callaghan (uploaded to CivicClerk). Chief Priest reported on some supply chain issues affecting the stations and vehicles. Several vehicles were down due to part delays; however, only one vehicle remains out of service. Fire Station 5 was without heat for an extended period of time due to boiler, circuit board and fuse issues but heat has been restored. Chief Priest also reported the negotiation of a service contract with American Medical Responses (AMR), who will be the transport provider for the Town. The most predominant issue arising from the contract is there will be one dedicated ambulance 24 hours a day with 2 ambulances during the dayshift, which is the busiest. The ambulances will be at our disposal and are dispatched with performance metrics allowing for better data (how long it takes to get ambulances) and there will be direct communication with them via radios. As part of this, the billing agreement with them will improve the revenue line for the amount of money coming from Medicaid patients. This was money being left on the table, was not being billed. This occurred around the time the paramedic program began. While additional funds will be recovered through the contract with AMR, they will not be coming at the cost of the tax payer. It will be coming from a federal payer through AMR.
- B. Police Department – Chief Riddick reported 13 vacancies and 7 members eligible for retirement within the next 10 months, 4 of which have already given their intent to retire within the next 3 months. There are two officers in field training and six recruits in various police academies across the state. The body cameras were deployed to the field on February 14. Regarding motor vehicle accidents and stops, there were 151 motor vehicle accidents and 139 car stops in February 2021 and for February 2022, there were 148 motor vehicle accidents and 139 car stops. The social worker is working out well. There have been 34 cases

referred to the police liaison social worker. Chief Riddick reminded everyone about the partnership with Interval House. There have been nine lethality assessment screenings and of those nine, four were considered high danger. Chief Riddick stated the demographics data regarding previous pistol permits had not been kept; however, they are compiling the data starting this year. The demographics will be kept by gender, not by race or anything else. A YTD report will be given at the next meeting. Regarding recent police activity, the search is ongoing regarding the recent carjacking. The vehicle has been recovered and processed for prints and other evidence. The investigation regarding the parking lot distraction thefts is also ongoing. An arrest has been made regarding the South Street shots fired incident in early February. The arrestee was not the shooter and was charged with conspiracy to commit assault and reckless endangerment. This investigation is ongoing.

The Uber stabbing is still being investigated with anticipation of an arrest in the future. Regarding the HANOC program, there are 20 participants between 3rd and 8th grade. The program assists the students with homework, de-escalation and conflict resolution techniques, internet safety, social skills and group activities. Chief Riddick went over a PowerPoint presentation that was given for and discussed with the command staff. The presentation covered a mall fight in Bridgewater, New Jersey, reflecting different treatment of the persons involved and the use of force by officers. What the public expects from law enforcement is justice, the fair application of the law across the board regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, etc. Chief Riddick also mentioned a tribute to Black History (played during the meeting) was uploaded to the department's social media (Instagram and Facebook). Chief Riddick reminded the Committee last year ended with a decrease in serious crimes but the area with a significant increase was robbery. February stats are still being compiled but they are still trending down for murder, sexual assault, aggravated assault, stolen motor vehicles, etc., but robbery is still going up. The Department has started to do a drill-down of robbery, with and without a weapon, to see how many times a gun was used.

Chief Riddick reported a 5-year lookback was done regarding carjacking's, 2017 through 2022. In 2017, there was only one carjacking. In 2019, there was one. In 2020, there were 3; one physical, one with a cane and one with a gun. In 2021, there were 3 and of those, 2 involved a firearm. So far in 2022, there has been one with a gun. Asst. Chief Riccobon briefly went over the HANOC program. He and the Commander of Community Relations are meeting weekly after each presentation to analyze what the presentation entailed, what was done with the kids and was there success with the officers involved in the program and coordinators of the program. At the end of the program, there will be a deep dive with feedback from the kids on what they thought about the program. Also, a parent's night will be incorporated to bring the parents in. By the end of the program, there should be a good feel on how the program is working and what things could be added in the future.

5. Future Agenda Items

6. Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.
