



# EAST HAVEN DEPARTMENT OF POLICE SERVICES

471 NORTH HIGH STREET • EAST HAVEN, CONNECTICUT 06512

Mayor Joseph A. Carfora

Honorable Board of  
Police Commissioners

## HONORABLE BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING OCTOBER 27, 2020 AT 7:00 PM

### VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM

**COMMISSIONER(S) PRESENT:** Chairman Paul Carbo (presiding), Vice Chairman Dominic Balletto, Commissioner Eduardo Torrealba

**ALSO PRESENT:** Chief Edward Lennon, Deputy Chief Patrick Tracy, Captain Joseph Murgo, Clerk Marsha Maldonado, Attorney Michael Luzzi, Town Council Chairman Joseph Deko, Councilman Robert Ranfone, Detective Shirley Conyers, Lorena Venegas, Dianne Romans, Citizen X, ASUS's iPhone, MacAir

Chairman Carbo called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

*Due to Governor Ned Lamont's March 10, 2020 declaration of a public health emergency and civil preparedness emergency and subsequently issued Executive Orders, and Mayor Joseph A. Carfora's March 16, 2020 declaration of a state of emergency in the Town of East Haven due to the spread of Coronavirus Disease 2019 in the State of Connecticut including New Haven County, in-person public access to this meeting will not be permitted.*

[The public can access this meeting from a computer, tablet, or smartphone. Tonight's regular meeting is taking place remotely via ZOOM. Videoconference links and dial-ins were provided to the public.]

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Moment of Silence
3. Roll Call - Clerk Maldonado; quorum obtained
4. Announcement(s)
5. Consider and act upon the approval of the Regular Monthly Meeting minutes of September 29, 2020

Vice Chairman Balletto made a motion to accept and approve the regular monthly meeting minutes of September 29, 2020 as received; seconded by Commissioner Torrealba. All in favor. No one opposed or abstained. Motion carried unanimously.

6. Consider and act upon the approval of the Monthly Reports (October 2020)

Vice Chairman Balletto made a motion to accept the monthly reports as received; seconded by Commissioner Torrealba. All in favor. No one opposed or abstained. Motion carried unanimously.

7. Consider and act upon Committee Reports & Recommendations

a. Traffic and Public Safety Committee

- i. Commissioner Torrealba presented his written subcommittee reports regarding ATV/Dirt Bikes and the Noise Ordinance. Discussion ensued about moving these recommendations to the Town Council. Commissioner Torrealba made a motion to submit these reports to the Town Council for consideration. Vice Chairman Balletto asked how the Board can possibly submit these reports without the input of the Chief, the Town Attorney and people this would affect – it is a very detailed report with a lot of legal aspects, and he would like the opinion of the Chief and the Town Attorney.

Commissioner Torrealba asked Chief Lennon for his input. Chief Lennon would like time to properly review the eight-page document before giving an opinion or any comment at all.

Attorney Luzzi commended Commissioner Torrealba for his admirable effort. His recommendation is that this needs additional review with the Chief and Deputy Chief, and other traffic authorities. While at some point it might be appropriate to evaluate at the Town Council level, with the amount of detail provided, it certainly needs review, evaluation to ensure that it is legally consistent and appropriate, and his recommendation is that this matter not be forwarded to the Town Council at this point.

Attorney Luzzi sent an email earlier today to the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Board regarding some matters that have been requested of his office. With respect to these types of items and given what is going on in our society today, and the burdens that are being placed on this community because of COVID, he is not going to get to this until after the first of the year. These are items that are important, there is no question, but given where we are with other conditions in this community, he thinks this is a reasonable timeframe. Again, his recommendation is that it is premature to forward to the Town Council.

Commissioner Torrealba made a motion to accept or reject the subcommittee reports. Attorney Luzzi's recommendation is not to reject the subcommittee report or not to evaluate the information – his recommendation is not to act upon it until it is reviewed with the appropriate authorities within our police department. Commissioner Torrealba disagreed and requested a roll call vote. Voice Vote: Carbo – No; Balletto – No; Torrealba – Yes. Majority opposed. Motion does not carry.

Vice Chairman Balletto made a motion to move this item to the Chief and the Town Attorney for future review; seconded by Chairman Carbo. Voice Vote: Carbo – Yes; Balletto – Yes; Torrealba – Yes. All in favor. No one opposed or abstained. Motion carried unanimously.

- ii. Laurel Street Request to New Haven Traffic Authority – Commissioner Torrealba received a response from Mr. Hausladen, our counterpart in New Haven, regarding our pending request with the DOT for “No Thru Trucks” saying that it has been forwarded to the proper people in their Department and it is under review.

Chief Lennon further commented that Captain Emerman had made contact with Mr. Hausladen prior to Commissioner Torrealba hearing back and the impression is that this is not a priority for New Haven. We may not receive a response at all so we will have to follow up again in a few months, and possibly figure something else out.

Chairman Carbo asked that Commissioner Torrealba stay on top of this with New Haven and he agreed that he would stay in touch with Mr. Hausladen.

8. Public Comment

- a. Lorena Venegas – Extended her thanks to Chairman Carbo, Chief Lennon, Deputy Chief Tracy and Attorney Luzzi for being on the line.

She would like to read an email that she wrote and wanted to make sure is part of the record; she does not expect any action tonight nor in the near future but does want to take a moment to do some community building that we need.

While she is finding her email, she “would also like to encourage the Board – I see that there is an opening on the Board – I believe Mr. Conte was on here and he is no longer on the roll call as of tonight so that’s a public record, and I just want to make sure that maybe we encourage a woman or a person of color to join this Board. I think that would be really neat for East Haven to do.”

Her email, dated October 15, was originally addressed to State Representative Joe Zullo and Captain Murgo:

*“I’m reaching out to initiate a discussion on bike kids and police action. It is dated October 15th. Today children and parents are at the New Haven courts challenging summons that were issued by East Haven Police Department. One was issued for not having a bicycle helmet to a teenager. This is an example of negative policing and it needs attention and correction. I spoke to State Representative Joe Zullo in August while standing outside of the East Haven High School when the teachers were doing their union protest. And, I spoke to him about how Branford Police sometimes uses a different approach to policing complaints about children on bicycles and instead of issuing a court summons, a call is made to the parents where they have to come pick up the child on the spot, pick up that bicycle and repair whatever incident happened in the present. Sometimes it’s done almost like as a shaming effort for the family – they don’t want to pick up their kid but they have to. On that day, on October 15, we had parents that missed a day’s pay from work in a pandemic and we had children that missed a day of learning from our school so there were really no winners. We have plenty of other children that don’t have helmets that didn’t get a court summons, and we have plenty of other people who break other rules like go-carts and golf carts and ATV and bikes, but they don’t get a summons either so this might create more tension than we need in our community between family members, between family and policing, and can degrade some of the community building that we want to see because we love living here. So, I really would want to encourage East Haven and our Board, and our awesome police officers to help us create like a real dialogue and solutions on local issues. It’s really time for the public to have some input on how we can do good community building with the police department. And, that way maybe we can encourage the creation of some programs for children so that they are engaged not only physically but also mentally and that way we can help our families with their stressors, whatever unmet needs they have because we do know that some of them do lack the resources to seek the help. But the main thing that I learned on that October 15th, and we learned that from the judge, is that we definitely want to keep East Haven children out of the court system. So out of that conversation, what has evolved is that State Representative Zullo promised to reach out to Chief Lennon and see if maybe the Juvenile Review Board would be an outlet instead of issuing that court summons. And, I don’t know all the ramifications of that but if that’s a better avenue that would create a way for families to alleviate that stress or whatever or maybe some issues that juveniles deal with, I think we should try it and if it doesn’t work then we should try something else. So that’s it, that was my email. Thank you very much.”*

Commissioner Torrealba commented that part of the subcommittee proposal was to make the infractions for our young people that are riding illegally, and only riding illegally, instead of a misdemeanor that would send them to court, the proposal is that they become Town infractions so that we don’t have our young men and woman that are sometimes doing stupid things to keep them out of the court system. He

encourages Ms. Venegas that if she feels there is a need in the youth population of East Haven for bike safety equipment, she should reach out and fundraise to fulfil the needs of our young residents.

Chairman Carbo suggested that the two political parties in Town put together some type of fund to help provide helmets to those children who do not have the ability to purchase them.

- b. Commissioner Torrealba noted that his commission expires on January 31, 2021. He would like to read an email he sent to Mayor Carfora and members of the Board about his reappointment to the Police Commission as part of the public comments:

*Mayor Carfora,*

*As you know, my commission with the East Haven Board of Police Commissioners expires in January, 31 2021. The purpose of this letter is to inform you that, If you would like to reappoint me to the commission for another two years period, I am willing to continue to volunteer my time for the benefit of the citizens of East Haven by remain in my position with the Board.*

*It has been a great honor to be in the Board. From the time I was first appointed about six years ago, when the town enter into the consent decree with the Justice Department, I have worked along with my fellow board members and the men and women of the police department to improve the department for the betterment of the town. The credit for that improvement goes to the members of the department that have worked tirelessly under the leadership of two exceptional Chiefs, First Chief Larrabee and now Chief Lennon, that have brought the department from where it was to now be one of the best Police departments in the country. I am not being braggadocios, Chief Lennon was invited to Washington DC by Attorney general Loretta Lynch to receive The Community Policing Commendation Award at the Inaugural Attorney General's Award for Distinguished Service in Community Policing in Washington, D.C. The East Haven Police Department was only one of 12 departments honored with that award.*

*As the Chairman and Hearing Officer of Traffic & Public Safety Committee I have done my best to address the concerns of the community. I have presided over every one of the contestment hearings for the Parking violations issued by the police department. Additionally, I help write the letters forms use to communicate with the individuals that had been issued tickets under the town ordinance. I also did the translation of the contestment form into Spanish.*

*I have also shared, along with my fellow commissioners, the satisfying work of hiring police officers for the department. I have also shared the solemn duty of disciplining members of the department when they have fallen short of the high expectations set for them and in occasion I had the sad duty of firing officers. Disciplining the members of the police department is the hardest part of being a commissioner, but a necessary one in order to keep the high standard, the moral and pride the men and women of the this police department have earned.*

*Mayor, please, let me know at your earliest convenience if I may continue to receive the honor of seating as a commissioner in the East Haven Board of Police Commissioners.*

*Respectfully,*

*Eduardo Torrealba, Esq.*

9. Correspondence Received/Sent

- a. Tonia Macholl and Joanne Ansaldo (90 William Street), postmarked September 30, 2020; received October 5, 2020 – Request for Handicap sign.
- b. Courtney Hood (Garry Drive), received via email October 11, 2020 – Request for traffic enforcement and speed bumps.
- c. Katia Astudillo (210 Russo Avenue), dated October 12, 2020; received October 16, 2020 – Request for traffic enforcement, traffic signage and speed bumps.
- d. Resident (Bennett Road), received via email October 22, 2020 – Request for NO THRU TRUCK sign.

10. Department Updates (Chief Lennon)

a. Personnel Matters/Injured Employees

- i. Two (2) personnel remain on long term injury – one returned, another went out
- ii. Two (2) lieutenant vacancies; testing process is ongoing and should be complete in a few weeks
- iii. Five (5) patrol officer vacancies. The most recent testing process for Recruit Grade C Police Officer was completed by Civil Service and we are beginning the applicant backgrounds. Of note, the applicant response was very, very low which is a national problem. We are hopeful that we can secure Academy seats in late January/February. We plan to have the backgrounds complete for as many candidates to present to the Commission between Thanksgiving and Christmas.
- iv. Ultimately, lieutenant [promotions] will create an additional two (2) more patrol officer vacancies and will also possibly create Detective vacancies due to Sergeant and Lieutenant promotions. Potentially, there could be seven (7) patrol officer vacancies by the end of the year. We currently have 55 positions filled with more potential hirings in the next six to eight weeks.
- v. We have open enrollment for certified officer applicants with a few backgrounds in progress – the benefit of transfers is no further Academy training.

b. Overtime

Tracking higher than normal. Due to COVID and throughout the pandemic, we had minimal trainings. Now, we have to complete mandatory training before the end of the year to meet statutory requirements and our Department standards which has contributed to an uptick in overtime. It should stabilize over the next several pay periods.

c. Awards & Commendations

d. Noteworthy News

Due to COVID safety protocols, a very small, non-public promotional/hiring ceremony is scheduled for November 12, 2020 for our personnel and their families. It is very important to recognize these promotions and for the community to see what is happening at the Police Department.

Chairman Carbo suggested that we videotape to share with the public – reach out to ETV to video/broadcast.

II. Old Business

12. New Business

- a. Request Civil Service initiate the testing process for Detective

Vice Chairman Balletto made a motion to request Civil Service initiate the testing process for Detective; seconded by Commissioner Torrealba. Roll call vote: Carbo – Yes; Balletto – Yes; Torrealba – Yes. All in favor. No one opposed or abstained. Motion carried unanimously.

13. Adjournment

Vice Chairman Balletto made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Chairman Carbo who adjourned the meeting at 7:49 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Marsha M. Maldonado  
Clerk to the Honorable Board of Police Commissioners

*[Audio recording on file – duration 48:07]*