

**POLICE OFFICER STANDARDS AND TRAINING COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

**October 29, 2020**

**Special Meeting**

**CONNECTICUT POLICE ACADEMY**

**MERIDEN, CONNECTICUT**

**Remotely via Zoom**

**IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THIS DOCUMENT IS AN ABRIDGED VERSION OF THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 29, 2020 POST COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING. THE MEETING TRANSCRIPT IS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST FROM THE ACADEMY ADMINISTRATOR.**

**(This was a taped proceeding with a court reporter)**

**HEARING**

**CALL TO ORDER: 9:19 A.M.**

**RE: CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUE SECTION 7-291c  
AND  
OFFICER CERTIFICATION OF JUSTIN CULLEN POST ID #17880**

**Council Members Present:** Chief Mark Palmer, Coventry Police Department; Chief Thomas Kulhawik, Norwalk Police Department; Dr. Amy Donahue; Kurt Cavanaugh, Public Member; Chief James Viadero, Newtown Police Department; Doug Glanville, Public Member; Commissioner James Rovella, DESPP; Director Guy Vallaro, DESPP-DSS; Town Administrator Michael Freda; First Selectman Laura Francis, Town of Durham; Chief State's Attorney Richard Colangelo; Chief John Daly, Southington Police Department; Chief Ronnell Higgins, Yale University Police Department; Chief Paul Melanson, Farmington Police Department; Chief Keith Mello, Milford Police Department; Chief Vernon Riddick, Jr., West Hartford Police Department; State Victim Advocate Natasha Pierre, Office of the Victim Advocate; Mr. Patrick Rittmon.

**Other Attendees:** Academy Administrator Karen Boisvert; Attorney Colin Milne, DESPP Legal; AG Terrance O'Neill, Attorney General's Office; Executive Assistant Brian Foley, DESPP; Barbara Fullenwiley (POSTC) Administrative Staff; Hartford Courant.

Plainville Police Department: Attorney John Chomick; Attorney Pat Tomaskiewicz; Chief Matthew Catania; Town Manager Robert Lee; Probationary Officer Justin Cullen; Mary Mayhew, Court Reporter.

Chief Mello convened the special meeting to hear whether the certificate of Probationary Officer Justin Cullen POST ID #17880 shall be reinstated.

Chief Keith Mello stated the following procedure:

To determine whether CGS 7-291c prohibits the reinstatement of Officer Justin Cullen's police officer certification for Probationary Officer Justin Cullen who resigned from the Manchester Police Department while under investigation to what department deemed as serious misconduct.

The hearing is public and will fall within the purview of the Freedom of Information Act

All testimony will be under oath and all laws against perjury apply to all those providing testimony; please be advised that perjury is taken very seriously and any instances will be referred to the appropriate authority for prosecution.

Testimony is recorded by tape and digital recordings the council may request testimony if necessary.

Council members may ask questions of the participants of the witnesses at any time.

All submissions/testimony be relevant to the following:

1. Whether the conduct in question was malfeasance or serious misconduct in accordance with CGS 7-291c
2. Whether Officer Justin Cullen was exonerated of said conduct as pursuant to CGS 7-291c

The council reserves the right to question any witnesses at any time, if necessary;

At the conclusion all testimony you may make a brief closing statements;

The council shall close the record and enter into deliberations;

The council shall enter its final decision at the November regular meeting.

Attorney Chomick made an opening statement for the Town of Plainville on behalf of Probationary Officer Justin Cullen.

Argument:

1. Under 7-291c POST does not have the standing to deprive Officer Cullen of his certification.

Issues:

1. What Malfeasance is and what malfeasance is not
2. Serious misconduct
3. Exoneration

Argument

1. Accusation was withdrawn
2. Southington closed file

WITNESSES:

1. Robert Lee, Town of Plainville Town Manager
2. Justin Cullen, Probationary Officer
3. Chief Matthew Catania, Plainville Police Department
4. Attorney Gregory Jones, Fazzano & Tomasiewicz

CLOSING ARGUMENTS:

Attorney Tomasiewicz stated the series of events; the hiring agency isn't POST; and Officer Cullen was given two considerations – resign or fired.

Officer Cullen met the elements of certification

1. Hold a position of probationary officer in a law enforcement unit
2. Completed a basic training program
3. Completed a supervised Field Training Officer program

Completion of all of the above is considered certified.

Definition of malfeasance was not met.

Definition of serious misconduct was not met.

Chief Mello read the list of exhibits submitted by the Town of Plainville.

Per agreement Plainville is to hand deliver the polygraph and psych. to Academy Administrator Boisvert.

Chief Mello denied IA to hold in public confidence - considered a public document.

Chief Mello stated Council will deliver a vote in the November 12<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Chief Mello read POST exhibits for the record.

Attorney Tomasiewicz to file his brief by November 5<sup>th</sup>.

Meeting concluded at 1:33 p.m.

THE TRANSCRIPT OF THIS MEETING WILL BE IN PLACE OF THE MINUTES.

Respectfully Submitted,



Barbara Fullenwiley  
Administrative Assistant  
POSTC