

POLICE OFFICER STANDARDS AND TRAINING COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

May 13, 2021

CONNECTICUT POLICE ACADEMY

MERIDEN, CONNECTICUT

Remotely via Zoom

IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THIS DOCUMENT IS AN ABRIDGED VERSION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 13, 2021 POST COUNCIL MEETING. THE ORIGINAL MINUTES ARE IN THE FORM OF A DIGITAL RECORDING AND AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST FROM THE ACADEMY ADMINISTRATOR.

Council Members Present: Mayor Ellen Zoppo-Sassu; Town Administrator Michael Freda; Mr. Michael Lawlor; Chief Keith Mello; Chief Roberto Rosado; Chief Vernon Riddick; Chief James Viadero; Mr. Jonathan Slifka; Mr. Douglas Glanville; Ms. Pamela Mautte; Chief Scott Sansom; Chief Ronnell Higgins; Chief Paul Melanson; Mr. Anderson Curtis; Lt. Mark Davison; Commissioner James Rovella; Mr. Iran Nazario; Special Agent- In-Charge David Sundberg; Chief Fernando Spagnolo.

Other Attendees: Academy Administrator Karen Boisvert; Director Marc Fasano, POSTC; Attorney Colin Milne, DESPP Legal; Barbara Fullenwiley (POSTC) Administrative Staff; Carrie Jo McGuffey, Certification Officer; Director Ken Barone, CCSU; Chief Brian Gould; Chief Warren Hyatt, Jr.; Captain Joseph Race; Lt. Antonio Bastos.

Council Members Absent: Ms. Patricia Rehmer and Chief State's Attorney Richard Colangelo

CALL TO ORDER

Chief Keith Mello, POST Council Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Approval of the Minutes of the March 11, 2021 Regular Meeting

Chief Mello requested a motion to accept the Minutes of the March 11, 2021 regular meeting as submitted. Motion to accept the minutes made by Commissioner James Rovella; seconded by Chief Paul Melanson. Minutes accepted.

2. Chiefs/Public Comment:

Representative for Paul Cari - Attorney Elliott Spector addressed Council regarding letter which included in packet. On behalf of Paul Cari regarding CT statue 31-51i sub section B where no employer may require an employee to disclose existence of any arrest, criminal charge or conviction; the records of which have been erased pursuant to section 46B-146a and the other statues referenced in letter. Since letter was written, Paul Cari has received a gun permit and is certainly qualified to carry a gun in the State of CT; to refuse his request would be a disservice for the police department and the entire community. The statues that have been mentioned essentially confirm under a full pardon, the issue of his arrest did not exist at all, this is very important and should not control any decision regarding his career. More significantly, his immediate supervisor, Paul Gretch, who is on this ZOOM this morning could discuss why this would be a disservice to the police department and the city not to allow Paul to have certification.

Lt. Paul Gretch representing Bridgeport Police Department spoke on behalf of Paul Cari. Paul Cari's professionalism, extremely hard work and is here before anyone. Officer Cari is not just professional, but he has matured, respects people and treats people with respect. Officer Cari is well-roundedness, does charity work, and works with schools and never once asking for anything in exchange. Lt. Gretch believes Officer Cari deserves a second chance, and this is an officer we want on the frontline.

Mr. Glanville gave an update of his impressionable meetings with various state Senators regarding the George Floyd Justice bill and acknowledge the work that the council is already doing in regard to the police accountability act and civilians are allowed to engage in such levels of intimacy in policy making. Also, CALEA setting the minimum standards so that we can all work in the same space and operating on the same base line.

Chief Mello discussed committee assignments: certification and committees would require a deeper analysis with recommendations from the council with decertification being enhanced and expect to see a number of decertification in the near future and their insight would be important whether we should or should not certify or recertify police officers.

Chief Mello discussed accreditation, subcommittees and Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 possibly replacing CALEA. Accreditation Committee – would need to develop training manuals and CLESP and define the role of Accreditation group.

Chief Mello requested a motion to establish an accreditation working group subcommittee and to move question along for discussion.

Motion made by Chief Paul Melanson; seconded by Chief Roberto Rosado. Motion passes.

Chief Mello stated the Curriculum committee has not met yet but will have a busy summer. This is part of our Legislation including training and where law enforcement interacts with persons with intellectual and physical disabilities. This is an area which requires a deeper analysis, this council was created with representatives from the disability community primarily for that reason. Looking forward to the work that Academy Administrator Karen Boisvert and the curriculum committee will do over the summer and hoping to have a report ready in September so that we can act on some of these measures. Administrator Boisvert spoke to the heavy workload; she

will meet with Chief Fernando Spagnolo first, to lay out the plan on how to move forward and then will be in touch with committee.

Chief Mello mentioned the CT Bar Policing Task Force – various group of men and women from many disciplines, legal committees, US Attorney’s office, and others – a strong group doing great work. There is a number of recommendations being made going to different departments. This proposal has not passed but want to place on the floor for consideration – the establishment of a Social Justice working group.

Discussion about what this group can do, and have group comprised of council members but members from other groups outside the council. It needs to be a well-represented group in terms of diversity throughout the community in the state. Hoping to advise all of our committees as it relates to our authority specifically in the areas of training curriculum standards and development of policy. Policy development that is under our charge which doesn’t include everything. Further this group is a conduit to our communities and to other stake holders, community and advocacy groups, especially in our larger and marginalized communities. The goal of this committee better informs our work, the work that we do on our council, the work that the committee do relating training and standards. Suggestion would be for this group would partner with an organization outside of council to help assist us in gather information. Gather information from communities from groups mention to be helpful to us to establish new training requirement or improve training we already have, ie. Listening sessions or community service or both.

Chief Mello requested a Motion to establish a Social Justice working group as standing committee for this council.

Motion made by Chief Paul Melanson; seconded by Chief James Videro.

Discussion on committee: Jonathan Slifka commented that the Social Justice committee will have a disability community component to it.

Motion passes.

CERTIFICATION COMMITTEE

Request for Comparative Certification

1. BRITO, Anthony – Stonington Police Department
2. BROOKS, Joseph – Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Police Department
3. CURIOLI, Nicholas – Stratford Police Department

Recommended Motion for Comparative Certification for 1 thru 3

To grant comparative certifications to 1 thru 3 pursuant to Section 7-294d(5) of the CGS with the completion of the specific requirements approved by Council within one calendar year from the date of appointment. Motion made by Chief Ronnell Higgins; seconded by Chief Vernon Riddick. Motion passes.

Add on request – after certification subcommittee met.

4. SOKOLOWSKI, Mateusz – East Hampton Police Department

To grant comparative certification to Officer Mateusz Sokolowski pursuant to Section 7-294d(5) of the CGS with the completion of the specific requirements approved by Council within one calendar year from the date of appointment. Motion made by Chief Ronnell Higgins; seconded by Chief James Viadero. Motion passes.

Request for Recertification

1. MANSON, Mark – East Hartford Police Department

Chief Scott Samson submitted a request for recertification for Mark Manson, the committee having reviewed all the documents and information submitted, believed that Mark Manson has met the requirements for recertification. Chief Ronnell Higgins; seconded by Chief Paul Melanson. Motion passes.

2. CARI, Paul – Bridgeport Police Department

Chief Ronnell Higgins advised that certification subcommittee reviewed a request from Paul Cari. Cari received a pardon and certification subcommittee discussed the effect his pardon would have on his certification.

Attorney Colin Milne discussed the statutory framework would be under 46A-79 to 46A-81. Under those laws a state agency cannot use erased records against an individual. An absolute pardon erases records which then cannot be used to deny employment.

Attorney Colin Milne discussed application of a pardon to certification issues of a law enforcement agency. He advised that POSTC has no grounds to deny certification at this time. Because the pardon removed his criminal convictions, there are no factors which prevent him from being recertified. He has met all the conditions to be certified by Council. He recommended that council approve Cari's certification.

Attorney Milne noted in his discussion above that Council should create a policy for certification extension requests to determine if they should be granting them in certain circumstances.

Chief Mello requested a motion to recertify Officer Paul Cari. A Motion to recertify Officer Paul Cari by Chief Paul Melanson; seconded Chief Roberto Rosado.

Discussion: The council discussed potentially making changes not to grant certifications to someone who applies for a pardon. Mr. Lawlor asked if there was a Bridgeport internal investigation into Paul Cari - that whatever content and outcome would not be affected by a pardon. Mr. Lawlor asked the council if we have the authority to request the IA and the outcome from Bridgeport. Attorney Milne stated because this happened in 2015 Officer Cari cannot be decertified under the current law.

Mr. Lawlor stated that he would vote yes because he is constrained by the law but for the record that Officer Cari should not be involved in anything or any investigation that would be jeopardized by his previous misconduct from the Bridgeport Police department.

Motion to recertify Officer Paul Cari passes with four abstentions – Chief Keith Mello, Chief James Viadero, Mr. Mike Freda, and Mr. Anderson Curtis.

Request for Certification Extension- A. Injury/Medical

1. SULLIVAN, Sean – Southern Connecticut State University Police Department
2. RONDANO, Edward – Stamford Police Department
3. WARNER, Mary Jo – Bristol Police Department
4. WATSON, George – Hartford Police Department
5. WEST, Paul – Hartford Police Department
6. ROBINSON, Christopher – Bridgeport Police Department
7. MARTIN, Craig – Danbury Police Department
8. HICKS, James – Danbury Police Department
9. O'DONNELL, Karen – *Monroe Police Department- since resigned***

To grant certification extension to 1 thru 8 pursuant to Section 7-294d(5) of the CGS with the completion of the specific requirements approved by Council within one calendar year from the date of injury/medical. Two categories were injury and COVID. Motion made by Chief Ronnell Higgins; seconded by Chief Paul Melanson. Motion passes.

B. Military

10. HOLLAND, William – Bethel Police Department

Chief Paul Melanson received request to grant extension for William Holland. Motion by Chief Ronnell Higgins; seconded by Mr. Michael Lawlor.

C. Administrative

11. MARTIN, Jonathan – Seymour Police Department

Chief Paul Melanson received request to grant extension as Jonathan Martin meets all requirements. Motion by Chief Ronnell Higgins; seconded by Chief Scott Sansom.

D. Request for Extension of the One-Year Probationary Candidate Status

1. BATCHELOR, Cameron – Vernon Police Department – Extension request not needed. Probationary candidate separated from police department.

Basic Training Academy Applications

1. New Britain Police Academy

Recommended Motion for Basic Training Academy Application – New Britain Academy

Council approve New Britain Police Department's application to commence a Basic Police Officer Training Recruit Academy for a maximum of fifty (50) recruits noting items 1-12 and the recommendations. Motion made by Chief Ronnell Higgins; seconded by Chief Vernon Riddick. Motion passes.

2. Hartford Police Academy

Recommended Motion for Basic Training Academy Application – Hartford Academy

Council approve Hartford Police Department's application to commence a Basic Police Officer Training Recruit Academy for thirty (30) to forty-five (45) recruits noting items 1-12 and the recommendations. Motion made by Chief Ronnell Higgins; seconded by Chief Vernon Riddick. Motion passes.

3. Waterbury Police Academy

Recommended Motion for Basic Training Academy Application – Waterbury Academy

Council approve Waterbury Police Department's application to commence a Basic Police Officer Training Recruit Academy for a maximum of forty (40) recruits noting items 1-12 and the recommendations. Motion made by Chief Ronnell Higgins; seconded by Chief Vernon Riddick. Motion passes.

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE

1. Bristol – Tier 3 Reaccreditation

Recommended Motion for Tier 3 Reaccreditation – Bristol Police Department

Council to approve Tier 3 Reaccreditation to the Bristol Police Department. Motion made by Chief Paul Melanson; seconded by Chief James Viadero. Motion passes.

Acknowledgement of acceptance by Chief Brian Gould.

2. Guilford – Tier 3 Reaccreditation

Recommended Motion for Tier 3 Reaccreditation – Guilford Police Department

Council to approve Tier 3 Reaccreditation to the Guilford Police Department. Motion made by Chief Paul Melanson; seconded by Mayor Ellen Zoppo-Sassu. Motion passes.

Acknowledgement of acceptance by Chief Warren Hyatt, Jr.

3. Madison – Tier 3 Reaccreditation

Recommended Motion for Tier 3 Reaccreditation – Madison Police Department

Council to approve Tier 3 Reaccreditation to the Madison Police Department. Motion made by Chief Paul Melanson; seconded by Mr. Jon Slifka. Motion passes.

Acknowledgement of acceptance by Captain Joseph Race.

4. Naugatuck – Tier 3 Reaccreditation

Recommended Motion for Tier 3 Reaccreditation – Naugatuck Police Department

Council to approve Tier 3 Reaccreditation to the Naugatuck Police Department. Motion made by Chief Paul Melanson; seconded by Chief James Viadero. Motion passes.

Acknowledgement of acceptance by Lt. Antonio Bastos.

5. West Haven – Tier 1 Initial Reaccreditation

Recommended Motion for Tier 1 Initial Accreditation – West Haven Police Department

Council to approve Tier 1 State Accreditation to the West Haven Police Department. Motion made by Chief Roberto Rosado; seconded by Mr. Mike Freda. Motion passes.

INFORMATION ITEMS

1. Academy Administrator's Report – Written Report Submitted

Administrator Karen Boisvert announced Thomas Gray joined POST staff last Friday. Administrator Boisvert stated Tom brings extensive training to the team and welcomed him. POST received CALEA accreditation on March 15, 2021 and applauded the team and staff for this great accomplishment. Session 372 is a commuter class beginning in June. Session 373 currently scheduled to begin in September will start as a commuter class due to COVID and the amount of staffing needed to keep all safe.

2. Use of force reporting form update - Ken Barone, CCSU

Ken Barone gave a powerpoint presentation of an updated model use of force reporting form for most police departments use, Public Act 19-90, the legislation required the universal reporting of use of force incident where serious physical occurs or may have occurs. Ken discussed the completion of 2019 use of force data efforts as required by law, there just over 600 qualifying use force incidents reported in 2019 and is in the process of 2020 data. In the last two years, there are a number challenges that use of force is reported; some short comings in the current model forms that are used in some departments. Working with the Criminal Justice system since September to redesign the State police reporting form (screen shared with new form). Upon form rollout each police department will decide who fills out the form. No more manual data entry this will be electronically entered and sent to email.

Chief Mello requested a motion to accept new form and move forward. Motion to except form to move forward by Jonathan Slifka; seconded by Chief Riddick. Motion passes.

3. Sub – Committee reports (assignments via email)

Use of Force Committee – Chief James Viadero stated a use of force training program committee was formed during the summer. The committee is comprised of several individuals and currently chaired by Duane Lovello, who currently works for Yale. The committee is dissecting the policy and breaking it down into segments to develop a training program/lesson plan consistent with POST model policy and statue specifically for Connecticut law enforcement officers.

Certification Committee – the committee meets separately to discuss certification.

Accreditation Committee – the committee reviews all requests; proposals for Tier I, II, III, CLESPP; needing to know if departments are complying. Write a report and present to Council.

Curriculum Committee – the committee provides ongoing assessment of recruit curriculum.

Personnel Committee – the committee reviews new hire for Post Staff Council, provides recommendations.

OLD BUSINESS: None


NEW BUSINESS: None

ADJOURNMENT

Chief Mello moved to adjourn the meeting; motioned made by Chief Vernon Riddick; seconded by Chief James Viadero.

The meeting adjourned at 11:19 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,


Barbara Fullenwiley
Administrative Assistant
POSTC