



Public Safety & Health Committee - Board of Representatives

Jeffrey Stella, Chair

Eric Morson, Vice Chair

Committee Report

Date: Thursday, January 25, 2024

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Place: *This meeting was held remotely.*

The Public Safety & Health Committee met as indicated above. In attendance were Chair Stella, Vice Chair Morson, and Committee Member Reps. Berns, Campbell, Camporeale, Graham, Pavia, and Pollack. Absent or excused was Rep. Roqueta. Also in attendance were Reps. Adams, Matheny, Summerville, and Walston; Josie Carpanzano, Deputy Director of Operations; Lou DeRubeis, Director of Public Safety; and Dana Lee and Michael Toma, Law Department.

Chair Stella called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

Item No.	Description	Committee Action
1. PS31.047	ORDINANCE for final adoption; Amending Chapter 242 of the Code of Ordinances Adding § 242-5 Prohibiting the Possession of Firearms and Explosives in Government Buildings and Polling Places. 09/05/23 – Submitted by Lou DeRubeis 09/21/23 – Approved by Committee for Publication, as Amended, 5-0-1 10/26/23- Public Hearing Held and Approved by Committee for Final Adoption, as Amended, 4-0-1 11/08/23 – Recommended to Steering by Full Board 11/29/23 – Approved by Committee for final adoption 6-0-1 12/04/23 – Recommended to Steering by Full Board	Approved 6-0-0

Mr. Lee and Mr. DeRubeis discussed Item No. 1 with Committee members. Items discussed included the following:

- The ordinance applies to buildings, the grounds those buildings are on, and entryways as well as sensitive places. It does not apply to every property that is owned by the City of Stamford nor does it apply to locations such as golf courses
- The ordinance also prohibits firearms and explosives within 500 feet of polling places or ballot boxes. The 500 foot rule does not apply to government buildings but would apply to the Government Center because it is a polling location.
- This ordinance is an exercise of the broad police powers provided to municipalities by the State legislature to protect citizens and the property that is owned by the municipality.
- If the ordinance is not followed, it is not a criminal offense, but it would result in a fine as municipalities don't have the authority to enact criminal laws. In addition, the ordinance cannot be enforced if there isn't a sign posted.
- Signs will be posted in the Government Center.
- Training may be necessary for security so that they do not engage anyone who is in

violation of the ordinance.

- The public needs to be made aware of the requirements of this ordinance; including listing the places to which it applies on the City website.

A motion to approve Item No. 1 was made, seconded, and approved by a vote of 6-0-0 (Reps. Stella, Reps. Berns, Camporeale, Graham, Pavia, and Pollack in favor). Reps. Morson and Campbell had not joined the meeting at the time of the vote.

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| 2. PS31.034 | REVIEW; Difficulties of Enforcement of City Ordinances under Civil Citation process and possible solutions, including Cross-Training of Civil Citation Officers.
12/06/22 – Submitted by Reps. Stella and de la Cruz
02/13/23 – Moved to Pending
11/29/23 – Held by Committee | HELD |
| 3. PS31.020 | REVIEW; Of a "duty to report law" Requiring Property Managers, Building Superintendents, Security Personnel, Doormen, Etc. to Notify 911 of any Emergencies.
04/06/22 – Submitted by Reps. Curtis, Stella, and Pavia
04/20/22 – Report Made & Held by Committee 6-0-0
05/18/22 – No Action Taken
06/22/22 – Report Made & Held in Committee 7-0-0
07/11/22 – Moved to Pending
03/01/23 – Held by Committee 6-0-1
03/13/23 – Moved to Pending 07/10/23
– Moved to Pending 11/29/23 – Held by Committee | HELD |
| 4. PS31.029 | REVIEW; Legal Role and Authority of City Constables.
09/07/22 – Submitted by Rep. Stella
09/12/22 – Moved to Pending
01/09/23 – Moved to Pending
08/14/23 – Moved to Pending
11/29/23 – Held by Committee | REPORT MADE & HELD 6-0-0 |

Rep. Stella stated he put this on in order to get clarification on the role of City Constables, and whether they could have the same roles as Marshals in New York City to seize vehicles.

Committee members discussed Item No. 4 with Mr. Toma. Items discussed included the following:

- There are two types of constables, elected and appointed. Municipalities do not have to have appointed constables, but there is authority for Mayors to appoint them within the law.
- The authority of elected constables lies in certain civil duties such as serving civil process
- Constables do not have law enforcement authority unless a municipality allows elected constables to become law enforcement officials by ordinance.
- If the Board were to consider such an ordinance granting constables law enforcement authority, the Board should get input from the Chief of Police and the constables might need to be trained as law enforcement officers. There might also be collective bargaining issues raised by constables performing law enforcement duties, as to police officers, park police and traffic violations officers, which are all members of different unions
- There are opportunities for elected constables who are given law enforcement

authority to enforce certain laws under State statutes, such as animal control laws, nuisance laws, motor vehicle laws, and preventing election disruption.

- The authority of Stamford's constables comes from State Law.
- The powers of elected constables include serving legal process, tax warrants, serving orders to garnish wages, serving subpoenas, and related activities; they also have a roll in landlord/tenant issues, but can't execute evictions, they can only serve the preliminary papers. It is not expressly written in the statutes what an elected constable can do compared to an appointed constable, but the statutes that deal with law enforcement do not apply to elected officials without a specific ordinance. These functions all relate to civil litigation and the need for an indifferent person to serve papers. Constables know how to fulfill these roles.
- State statute does not expressly describe the mechanics by which elected constables could perform law enforcement duties, including the same duties as a police officer, but an ordinance would have to be in place that authorizes them to do so; this would require input from the police department and the HR department
- Appointed constables are largely law enforcement officials.
- There is a company that boots cars on behalf of the City; would using constables save the City money?

A motion to hold Item 4 was made, seconded, and approved by a vote of 6-0-0 (Chair Stella, Reps. Berns, Camporeale, Graham, Pavia, and Pollack in favor). Vice Chair Morson and Rep. Campbell had not joined the meeting at the time of the vote.

5. [PS31.050](#) RESOLUTION; Requiring the City of Stamford to purchase Bunker Gear/Turnout Gear free of PFAS (Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances) as soon as available (follow up from [PS31.030](#)). 12/06/23 – Submitted by Rep. Stella **HELD**

Rep. Stella noted that this is a resolution and that currently there is no PFA-free gear.

Committee members discussed this item with Mr. DeRubeis.

Director DeRubeis urged the committee to invite interim Fire Chief Morris to the next meeting to discuss the plans that he currently has in place regarding this item. This is a top priority of the administration's.

Committee members expressed concerns regarding the urgency of this matter. that that this be addressed quickly due to the dangers of PFAs. Rep. Berns, Campbell and Pavia voiced their opinions on the urgency of the matter with Rep. Berns asking Chair Stella to also reach out to and meet with the Mayor on behalf of the Committee. Chair Stella explained that the gear is not yet available, however, he promises to pass the resolution during the next meeting regardless. Rep. Walston requested that the Committee meet with interim Fire Chief Morris before passing the resolution. Rep. Camporeale agreed, adding that the language of the resolution isn't strong enough and doesn't mandate that the Mayor will purchase the gear once it's available.

A motion to hold Item No. 5 to invite the Fire Chief, the Mayor, Director DeRubeis, the Firefighters union, and the media to the next meeting was made, seconded, and approved by a vote of 8-0-0 (Reps. Stella, Morson, Berns, Campbell, Camporeale, Graham, Pavia, and Pollack in favor).

6. PS31.049 REVIEW; Park Police Staffing and Park Enforcement for 2024 **HELD**
12/06/23 – Submitted by Rep. Stella

Chair Stella adjourned the meeting at 8:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeffrey Stella, Chair

This meeting is on [video](#).