



## ***Public Safety & Health Committee - Board of Representatives***

Jeffrey Stella, Chair

Eric Morson, Vice Chair

# **Committee Report**

**Date:** Tuesday, December 22, 2020

**Time:** 6:30pm

**Place:** Meeting was held remotely

The Public Safety & Health Committee met indicated above. In attendance were Chair Stella, Vice Chair Morson and Committee Member Reps. Curtis, Giordano, Matherne, McMullen, Palomba, Sandford, and Sherwood. Also present were Reps. Adams, Cottrell, Roqueta, and Watkins; Ted Jankowski, Director of Public Health, Safety and Welfare; Mark McGrath, Director of Operations; Police Chief Timothy Shaw; Jennifer Williams and Kevin Murray, Parks & Facilities; Kathryn Emmett, Dana Lee, and Chris Dellaselva, Law Dept.

Vice Chair Morson called the meeting to order at 6:32pm.

A motion to take the items up out of order and proceed in the order of Items No. 6, 4, 3, 1, 2, and 5 was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 8-0-0 (Reps. Morson, Curtis, Giordano, Matherne, McMullen, Palomba, Sandford, and Sherwood in favor).

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Committee Action</b>
<sup>1</sup> 6. PS30.081	REVIEW; Recent Gun Violence in City of Stamford. 12/10/20 – Submitted by Rep. Stella	<b>Report Made</b>

Mr. Jankowski and Chief Shaw gave details on this item and there was discussion.

- The spike in shootings has settled now. At first there was little community cooperation, but the community has come forward to assist the SPD.
- The shootings have been narrowed to a small group of people.
- These were neighborhood territorial issues, and not drug or gang wars.
- There are plans to increase the “Park and Walk” and other programs which help with police interaction within the community. After COVID restrictions, these will resume.
- Patrol presence has been added near Westover School.
- There are currently six new candidates at the police academy.
- The SPD has reconnected and rebounded with the community after the events of May to September.

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<sup>1</sup> Video Time Stamp: 00:02:05

- <sup>2</sup>4. PS30.079      REVIEW; Stamford Police Training in Dealing with      **Report Made**  
Individuals with a Mental Crisis.      **& Held 8-0-0**  
12/02/2020 – Submitted by Reps. Roqueta, Cottrell,  
Matherne, and Stella

Mr. Jankowski and Rep. Roqueta spoke on this issue and there was discussion. (Rep. Roqueta stated he has worked for 18 years in the mental health field and formerly was a certified police instructor).

- Recruits receive four hours of training for handling a mental health crisis, and two hours during their three-year training cycles.
- The SPD Crisis Intervention Team completes a 40-hour course. The cost for this is the cost for 40 hours to replace the officer from their shift.
- Funding will be needed to train 100 officers in the next six to 12 months.
- Out of 264 Stamford officers, 103 are trained in crisis intervention. The ultimate goal is to have all officers trained, but the priority right now is patrol officers.
- SPD responds to at least one mental health crisis every 24 hours.
- Police often have multiple encounters with the same person. There should be continued outreach to that person.
- Triage at the 911 dispatch center would be extremely helpful if Stamford had the funding. The City of Phoenix has the best model for this.
- Ms. Payea, the City's Public Safety Analyst, will provide to the BOR pre- and post- COVID trends regarding mental health emergency calls.
- The police accountability bill provides no funding for State mandates. Therefore there will be an increased budget request for the SPD.

A motion to hold Item No. PS30.079 was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 8-0-0 (Reps. Morson, Curtis, Giordano, Matherne, McMullen, Palomba, Sandford, and Sherwood in favor).

- <sup>3</sup>3. PS30.078      REVIEW; Mental Health and Mental Health Mobile      **Report Made**  
Crisis Services in Stamford.      **& Held 7-2-0**  
12/02/2020 – Submitted by Reps. Roqueta, Cottrell,  
Matherne, and Stella

- A 24 hour/seven day per week resource center is critical. A mental health crisis does not only when resources are open.
- The Dubois Center deals with chronic issues, not emergencies. Five years ago the staff was decreased by half.
- Stamford needs to recover services that the City had before the services were regionalized and moved to Bridgeport.
- A respite house would be very beneficial. Often a mental health crisis victim is evaluated in the hospital emergency room, and then sent back home with no assistance.
- Police Officers should be trained in how to respond to a mental health crisis, but they cannot be expected to be social workers or therapists. Their duty is to de-escalate and retain safety.

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<sup>2</sup> Video Time Stamp: 00:25:20

<sup>3</sup> Video Time Stamp: 01:18:00

- Mr. Jankowski has been working with the State delegation to increase mental health crisis services.

A motion to hold item PS30.078 was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 7-2-0 (Reps. Stella, Morson, Curtis, Giordano, Matherne, Sandford, and Sherwood in favor; Reps. McMullen and Palomba opposed).

- <sup>4</sup>1. [PS30.082](#) APPROVAL; Agreement between City of Stamford and Century Protective Services, Inc. for Security Services for the Stamford Government Center under RFP No. 793. [previously submitted as PS30.075]  
12/10/20 – Submitted by Mayor Martin  
12/10/20 – Approved by Board of Finance **Approved 7-2-0**

Mr. McGrath and Ms. Williams reviewed this item and there was discussion.

- This contract increases 5.8% yearly. This is due to 1) bringing all of the guards up to the State minimum wage, and future minimum wage requirements and 2) the increase in workers' compensation and liability insurance premiums.
- The contractor is currently not in compliance with all the guards' wages. The first year increase includes bringing all guards up to current wage standards.
- Insurance rates are rapidly increasing due to COVID.
- Mr. McGrath will get a table to the BOR showing the breakdown of increases for each year.
- A City team worked to review all the bids.
- Security changes have been implemented at the Government Center. The specifics would be best discussed in executive session.
- The City should make sure safety protocols are updated on an as-needed basis.
- This is a three year contract, and it can be reviewed and renewed every year.

A motion to approve Item PS30.082 was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 7-2-0 (Reps. Morson, Giordano, Matherne, McMullen, Palomba, Sandford, and Sherwood in favor; Reps. Stella and Curtis opposed).

- <sup>5</sup>2. [PS30.076](#) RESOLUTION; Advocating that the City of Stamford Prepare And Seek State Approval of an Air Quality Monitoring Program and Implement Such a Program.  
11/05/20 – Submitted by Rep. de la Cruz, Stella, Sherwood, Lee, Giordano, Adams, Coleman, Curtiss, Pratt, Matherne and Cottrell  
**12/03/20 – Held by Committee 6-1-0** **Approved 7-2-0**

Ms. Emmett reviewed this item and there was discussion.

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<sup>4</sup> Video Time Stamp: 01:55:45

<sup>5</sup> Video Time Stamp: 02:14:00

- Expert assistance is needed with an air monitoring program. The City would need to find a partner with this.
- Air quality is extremely important to the quality of life.
- Governor Lamont has signed a regional air quality bill.
- Stamford might have been ahead of the school mold problem if there had been an air quality program in place.
- The City needs to develop a solid plan and price this out before the BOR gives a proposal to the State.
- Outdoor air quality is the jurisdiction of DEEP.
- Much more information needs to be gathered such as:
  - What is the City's authority on monitoring indoor air quality?
  - What are the consequences if the air quality fails?
  - How will the program be funded?
- An ordinance would need to be adopted and submitted to DEEP.
- This Resolution is a good start to forming an air quality program.

A motion to amend the proposed resolution to strike the sentence "Whereas the State program does not cover indoor air quality" was made, seconded and failed by a vote of 2-7-0 (Reps. McMullen and Palomba in favor; Reps. Stella, Morson, Curtis, Giordano, Matherne, Sandford, and Sherwood opposed).

A motion to approve item PS30.076 was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 7-2-0 (Reps. Stella, Morson, Curtis, Giordano, Matherne, Sandford, and Sherwood in favor; Reps. McMullen and Palomba opposed).

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| <p><sup>6</sup>5. PS30.080</p> | <p>REVIEW; Public Safety Issues Arising from the Increased Presence of Coyotes in Densely Populated Areas of Stamford, Particularly the Cove and Shippan and Possible Solutions.<br/>12/10/20 – Submitted by Reps. Watkins, Michelson, Cottrell, Stella and Sherwood</p> | <p><b>Report Made</b></p> |
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Mr. Jankowski reviewed this issue and there was discussion.

- A professional trapper has been hired for the Cove and Shippan areas. Connecticut does not allow coyotes to be relocated, so any coyotes that are caught by the trapper are euthanized.
- Animal control is patrolling the area daily. It is believed they are in the preserve near Cove Island.
- There have been many calls to Animal Control asking to not remove the coyotes as they are part of nature.
- This has been happening in Stamford for a long time. There are approximately 100 calls annually on coyote sightings.
- Sightings in Cove and Shippan areas are new, most likely due to looking for food.
- Rep. Watkins stated he has seen videos of a coyote chasing an elderly woman walking her dog.
- Should there be a permitted coyote hunting season?
- Coyotes are native to this area. What message is the City sending to the public if

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<sup>6</sup> Video Time Stamp: 03:01:38

- the coyotes are killed?
- Trapping is not necessarily the answer, as when one is trapped there is always another one.
  - Mr. Jankowski stated the best recourse is educating residents. Do not leave food out for coyotes; do not let small children and small pets outside alone; make noise, wave arms, use air horns. Coyotes are usually afraid of humans.

Vice Chair Morson adjourned the meeting at 10:06pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Eric Morson, Vice Chair

This meeting is on [video](#).