



Public Safety & Health Committee - Board of Representatives

Jeffrey Stella, Chair

Eric Morson, Vice Chair

Committee Minutes

Date: Thursday, September 21, 2023

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, Garst, Pavia, and Pollack. Absent or excused were Reps. Coleman and Roqueta. Also present were Reps. Adams, Curtis, de la Cruz, Goldberg, and Summerville; Lou DeRubeis, Director Public Safety, Health & Welfare; Tom Cassone and Dana Lee, Law Dept.; Fire Chief Trevor Roach; Grants Officer Anita Carpenter; and members of the public.

Chair Stella called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

Item No.	Description	Committee Action
11. PS31.047	ORDINANCE for publication; 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	Approved as Amended 5-0-1

Attorney Lee and Director DeRubeis reviewed this item and there was discussion.

This proposed ordinance prohibits open and concealed carry of a firearm or explosives in a government building, and also in polling places on Election Day.

Signage is required to be posted at the entrance to these buildings and in polling places.

Exceptions: working law enforcement officers, working security guards, military personnel engaged in official duties, and possession of a firearm in a motor vehicle.

Penalties for not abiding by the ordinance: The person must leave the building. If they refuse, they may be subject to criminal penalties and a fine of \$250. This amount is a State statute cap. It would be a citation. If someone is asked to leave and they refuse, this would be trespassing, and would be potentially a criminal offense.

This ordinance came to light when all security standards in Stamford's municipal buildings were being assessed. This issue was identified as a gap and vulnerability in current practices. Forming this ordinance is taking a step to make sure our City employees and residents are safe when in and around municipal buildings.

¹ Video Time Stamp: 00:01:40 (Part 1)

Municipalities and states have the ability to restrict firearms in what is considered a sensitive place. These restrictions are not prohibited by the Second Amendment.

There is a State statute prohibiting firearms in schools and State buildings. There is no state statute regarding municipal buildings.

The following two amendments were discussed for "Section D. Exceptions":

(d) The carrying or possession of a firearm inside a motor vehicle or the lawful storage of a firearm in a motor vehicle.

(e) Any retired law enforcement officer in good standing with current HR 218 credentials and with photographic identification issued by the agency from which the individual separated from service that identifies the person as a retired law enforcement officer.

A firearm may be kept in a vehicle but it needs to be properly locked in a safe or lockbox.

The reasoning for allowing retired law enforcement officers to carry a firearm is because in the event of a crisis most retired law enforcement officers will step in and protect the public as needed.

In order to be considered in good standing, a retirement law enforcement officer needs to have current HR 218 credentials which have to be renewed every year.

A motion to take up Item #1 was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 6-0-0 (Reps. Stella, Morson, Berns, Campbell, Garst, and Pavia in favor).

A motion to amend Item #1 to include the language presented by Attorney Lee was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 5-0-1 (Reps. Stella, Morson, Campbell, Garst, and Pavia in favor; Rep. Berns abstained).

- ²2. [PS31.002](#) REVIEW; Administration Plans to pursue Air Quality Monitoring as Proposed in [Resolution 4081](#). (Previously PS30.092) **Recommended to Steering 6-0-1**
- 12/08/21 – Submitted by Reps. de la Cruz, Berns, and Grunberger
 - 12/13/21 – Moved to Pending
 - 03/01/23 – Report Made
 - 03/06/23 – Recommended to Steering at Board Meeting by Unanimous Voice Vote
 - 03/13/23 – Moved to Pending
 - 04/20/22 – Held by Committee 6-0-0
 - 05/18/22 – No Action Taken
 - 06/13/22 – Moved to Pending
 - 05/18/23 – Report Made
 - 06/05/23 – Recommended to Steering by Full Board
 - 06/12/23 – Moved to Pending
 - 08/24/23 – No Action Taken

Rep. de la Cruz introduced this item and there was discussion.

² Video Time Stamp: 00:41:00 (Part 1)

When the school mold crisis came about in 2020 advocacy began for a air quality monitoring program. The BOR was told by Corporation Counsel that a program had to be submitted to the State. Resolution 4081 was passed for this reason. No plan has yet to be put in writing.

There is an air quality monitoring grant that will be voted on at the Fiscal Committee Meeting on 9/27/23.

Chair Stella asked Ms. Carpenter if this grant can be tweaked to get a different type of monitor. If there are better monitoring systems we should try to put those in the districts to pick up some of the other pollutants that the monitors in this grant might not be able to pick up. Ms. Carpenter said that probably yes, from a grant perspective, proposing a different type of monitor to purchase could be done as long as the requirements of the grant are being met.

Director DeRubeis explained that he has had many in depth discussions about the air quality program with DEEP, the Stamford Health Department, the Grants Department, and attorney Tom Cassone. The requirements of Resolution 4081 were met based on how it was written. What has not been addressed is an indoor monitoring program.

The State Dept. of Public Health fact sheet suggests that municipalities do not move forward with indoor monitoring right now because there is no data to support recommendations at this time.

There are many considerations with an air quality program regarding how it will get implemented and sustained. Many things have to be addressed, such as technical knowledge, staffing resources required, and financing.

Rep. Campbell discussed that the grant narrative in Fiscal Item #F31.228 refers to a comprehensive air quality monitoring program, so if there is no such program, the grant application needs to be looked into further. Reps. Garst concurred with this.

Director DeRubeis stated that the Administration is committed to preparing such a program. He will continue to move forward with the discussion.

A motion to recommit Item #2 to Steering was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 6-0-1 (Reps. Stella, Morson, Berns, Campbell, Garst, and Pollack in favor; Rep. Pavia abstained).

- ³³. [PS31.030](#) REVIEW; Health Risks related to use of PFAs (Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances) in Public Safety Agencies PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) and all Other Safety Equipment, as well as to the Environment. **Held 7-0-0**
09/06/22 – Submitted by Reps. Stella and Curtis
10/19/22 – Report Made & Held by Committee
11/14/22 – Moved to Pending
08/24/23 – No Action Taken

Chief Roach reviewed this item and there was a brief discussion.

³ Video Time Stamp: 01:34:20 (Part 1)

PFA's are very dangerous. The City of Stamford and SFD have been very proactive in trying to discontinue the use of PFA's, but there is no viable product on the market that is safe to replace them.

Chair Stella has proposed [language](#) for a resolution for this item. When a safe replacement becomes available, he would like it to be ordered right away otherwise it could be difficult to acquire.

The financial costs should not be that different than the current gear because it would only be one small item in the gear that is changed. A wholesale change to replace two sets of gear for all firefighters would be just over \$2M, including the volunteers. It takes about 90 days to get new gear.

Chair Stella stated the firefighters put their lives on the line every day and the City should make sure they are as safe as possible.

A motion to hold Item #3 was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 7-0-0 (Reps. Stella, Morson, Berns, Campbell, Garst, Pavia, and Pollack in favor.

Possibly in Executive Session:

44. PS31.049	REVIEW; of How the City of Stamford is Handling the Presumed Occupational Cancer within the Fire Department 04/05/2023 – Submitted by Reps. Stella, Curtis, Watkins, Campbell, Baxter, Figueroa, Matheny, Boeger, Pierre-Louis, Pavia, Roqueta, de la Cruz, Tomas, Sherwood and Garst. 04/20/23 – Held 05/18/23 – Held by Committee 06/12/23 – Moved to Pending 08/24/23 – No Action Taken	No Action Taken
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Chair Stella stated there would be an executive session for this item due to a pending litigation on the subject. The following people went into the executive session at 8:19 p.m.: Committee Reps. Stella, Morson, Berns, Campbell, Garst, Pavia, and Pollack; Reps. Curtis, de la Cruz, Goldberg, and Summerville; Director DeRubeis; Attorney Cassone; and Chief Roach. Rep. Adams joined during the session.

The executive session ended at 8:48 p.m. No action or votes were taken.

55. PS31.048	REVIEW; Stamford's Ban of Plastic Straws and the Safety of Paper Straws. 09/06/23 – Submitted by Rep. Stella	Held
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This item was held.

⁴ Video Time Stamp: 01:43:25 (Part 1)

⁵ Video Time Stamp: 00:00:40 (Part2)

As a Secondary Committee at the Fiscal Committee meeting 9/27/23 – 7:00 p.m.:

- ⁶6. [F31.228](#) ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION (Grants Budget); EPA Air Quality; 31 Month Air Quality Monitoring Grant from the EPA; Program will focus on NO₂, Particulate Matter and Ozone (Source of Funds: 100% grant funded).
05/30/23 – Submitted by Mayor Simmons
06/08/23 – Held by Board of Finance 6-0-0
06/12/23 – Held at Steering
07/13/23 – Approved by Board of Finance 6-0-0
07/24/23 – Approved by Committee 9-0-0
08/07/23 – Recommended to Steering by Full Board
08/28/23 – Approved by Committee 10-0-0
09/05/23 – Recommended to Steering by Full Board

This item will be discussed at the Fiscal Committee Meeting on 9/27/2023.

Chair Stella adjourned the meeting at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Chair Stella

This meeting is on video ([Part 1](#) & [Part 2](#))

⁶ Video Time Stamp: 00:01:15 (Part2)