



Public Safety & Health Committee - Board of Representatives

Jeffrey Stella, Chair

Eric Morson, Vice Chair

Committee Report

Date: Thursday, February 29, 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. Campbell, Camporeale, Graham, Pavia, and Pollack. Rep. Berns was excused and Rep. Roqueta was absent. Also present were Reps. Matheny, Summerville, and Walston; Mike Toma and Burt Rosenberg, Law Dept.; Director Jody Bishop-Pullan, Raquelle Early, and Ebrima Jobe, Health Dept.; Chief Rex Morris and Assistant Chief Mike Robles, Fire Dept.; Chief Tim Shaw, Police Dept.; Director Frank Petise, Transportation Dept.; Director Lou DeRubeis, Public Safety, Health & Welfare Dept.; and members of the public.

Chair Stella called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

ITEM NO.	DESCRIPTION	COMMITTEE ACTION
1. PS31.051	REVIEW; City Citation Officers; How City ordinances are Enforced under the City's Citation Process, and its Difficulties. 02/07/24 – Submitted by Reps. Stella and de la Cruz	HELD
2. 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 01/25/24 – Held by Committee	HELD

13. [PS31.029](#) REVIEW; Legal Role and Authority of City Constables. **REPORT MADE**
09/07/22 – Submitted by Reps. Stella and Pavia
09/12/22 – Moved to Pending
01/09/23 – Moved to Pending
08/14/23 – Moved to Pending
11/29/23 – Held by Committee
01/25/24 – Report Made & Held by Committee 6-0-0

Chair Stella explained that he is looking at scofflaws - people who owe parking tickets - and allowing city constables to pick up the vehicles. He is not looking for constables to have law enforcement authority. Possibly the city could set an amount, for example anyone who owes over a certain amount in fines would have their vehicle picked up by a constable. The only way the scofflaw would be able to retrieve their vehicle is to pay the tickets. In NYC marshals are appointed by the Mayor. The marshals take out a bond so they have their own insurance. They get paid if they recover a vehicle.

Attorney Toma stated that current State law does not allow city constables to enforce parking and traffic violations. The only way to allow them to enforce these, or to tow vehicles, is to make them peace officers, who usually have law enforcement training.

Director Petise said the Stamford ordinance currently allows anyone with more than \$250 in fines or at least three delinquent tickets to go on the scofflaw list. This allows the city to tow or mobilize their vehicle. Stamford mostly uses the booting program now, as towing is laborious. Last year approximately 800 vehicles were booted and approximately \$500K in fines were collected. The current ordinance says only a police officer or a traffic violation officer can tow or boot. There are currently three traffic violation officers on staff who do all of the booting.

Chief Shaw stated at this time he would not be in favor of granting constables any type of police authority given the amount of time it would take for the training, and he is not sure if this would benefit the city.

Attorney Toma stated this could become a union issue by giving people who are not city employees work that is presently being done by unionized employees. This would have to be discussed with the Human Resources Dept.

25. [PS31.043](#) ORDINANCE for publication; Amending Chapter 146, **APPROVED 5-0-1**
Section 13 of the Code of Ordinances Concerning the
Setting of a Fine that may be Imposed by the Health
Department for Violation of Chapter 146 of the Code of
Ordinances.
06/13/23 – Submitted by Jody Bishop-Pullan
07/10/23 – Moved to Pending

Item #5 was taken up out of order. Vice Chair Morson took over Chairing the meeting.

Director Bishop-Pullan explained that this ordinance change came about because the Health Dept. felt there was a need for consequences of multi-family dwelling owners who do not follow thru on Health Dept. orders to bring their residences into non-violation status.

¹ Video Time Stamp: 00:02:20

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Attorney Toma stated this is an existing ordinance and what is new is the proposed penalty. BOR does not have the authority to impose criminal penalties. The proposed new paragraph is important because it gives the city the ability to impose a fine. If adopted, the Director of Health would have the authority to have inspectors give out citations. These would be a civil fines.

The property owner can either pay the fine or contest it. Stamford has civil citation officers who would hold hearings to determine whether or not the fine was appropriately levied. If determined the fine was appropriate and is still not paid, the city can seek an order from the Superior Court to have the fine enforced. This is spelled out in Chapter 97 of the code.

A motion to approve Item #5 was made, seconded, and approved by a vote of 5-0-1 (Reps. Morson, Campbell, Graham, Pavia, and Pollack in favor; Rep. Camporeale abstained).

- ³6. [PS31.044](#) ORDINANCE for publication; Amending Chapter 146, Section 34 of the Code of Ordinances Concerning the Setting of a Fine for the Late Submission of a Renewal Application for a Multi-Family Dwelling Operating License. **APPROVED 6-0-1**
06/13/23 – Submitted by Jody Bishop-Pullan
07/10/23 – Moved to Pending

Item #6 was taken up out of order.

Director Bishop-Pullan explained this is an amendment to an existing ordinance regarding multi-dwelling property owners who do not renew their licenses. This is for three-family and above. Her department has worked diligently to find these owners, including hiring additional staff to do so. This is a health and safety issue as some of these residences are continually not getting licensed, which means they are not getting fire and health inspections. This also means the properties are not in the city system and it can be difficult to know these residences exist.

Attorney Toma stated the existing ordinance requires renewal of licenses, but no fine for failure to renew. This change says failure to file within 60 days is a violation subject to a \$250 fine. This is the maximum fine that a municipality is allowed to levy under State law. The city has no authority to place liens on the properties. Would have to request a court order for a monetary judgement, and then the court could possibly rule on a lien.

There was discussion, some points include:

- License renewal fees depend on the number of units in the dwelling.
- If in violation, the owner has to pay the regular renewal fee, plus the fine.
- The health and safety of our residents should be a priority. How did Stamford get to this point that there are so many violations?
- This ordinance change is an attempt to make things safer for the residents.
- It is a very difficult process to find these apartments and owners. Many of the owners do not live locally it can be difficult to find them and make contact.
- Rep. Graham suggested stating on the property tax bills that the owner is non-compliant and needs to contact the Health Dept. about the violation.
- Ms. Early stated they have been trying to take a uniformed approach by dealing with other departments in the city such as the Tax Assessor's office, Cashiering and Permitting, and the Fire Marshal's office. The license itself has been updated to reflect more information because sometimes an owner has a lack of knowledge and is not

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intentionally being non-compliant.

- Mr. Jobe said it could be a good idea to work with the tax department so when the property taxes are paid, the tax bill will not be released until the license fees are paid.
- Some Representatives suggested having a higher level of fines for owners with larger dwellings. Some Representatives disagreed with this stating it is about safety and not making money. Further, these fines will end up being passed along to the residents in their rent.
- It was suggested to take this issue up with the State delegation. Director Bishop-Pullan agreed this is worth exploring but would also like to see if this ordinance change has any effect on the situation.

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

44. [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 Reps. Stella and Pavia
01/25/24 – Held by Committee 6-0-0
- APPROVED AS
AMENDED 7-0-0**

Chair Stella resumed chairing the meeting.

Fire Chief Morris and Assistant Fire Chief Robles gave a presentation on the current gear and the new gear free of PFAS:

- Fire Chief Morris stated the station gear, which is worn all of the time while on duty, has PFAS in it, and this is irritating to the skin. There is a good alternative, which is an all-cotton, PFAS-free material. NYFD is currently using this product.
- The vendor the SFD has chosen has the items currently available, although there are supply chain issues. Every firefighter will receive three sets. This will be a very big benefit to the department.
- The bunker gear that firefighters currently wear has no PFAS on the outside shell or inner shell. The PFAS is encapsulated between those two shells so it does not touch the skin. This gear provides both thermal protection and protection from sharp objects. There is also a moisture barrier.
- Last year the first generation PFAS-free bunker gear was a fail. The product did not let any body heat back out. This is very dangerous and can cause heat stress.
- The second generation PFAS-free gear is not yet compliant with NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) but is going on the market for testing. He will get a set to test.
- The SFD gets 50 sets of bunker gear each year on a regular basis. Every year changes are made to make the gear better. That is why 250 sets are not ordered at one time, so there is always improved gear in rotation. The same goes for the new PFAS-free gear. The newer generations will continue to improve.

There was discussion on the resolution.

Attorney Rosenberg stated he removed “shall” as an editorial change to make it easier to read, but he can put that back in.

⁴ Video Time Stamp: 01:11:40

Rep. Stella stated he would like “as soon as possible” to be in the resolution so that the city does not wait and then fire departments are trying to get this gear and the manufacturers run out, such as what happened with COVID supplies.

Chief Morris said he would be more comfortable not saying “as soon as possible”. SFD needs gear that is both PFAS-free and performs on the level of the gear they are purchasing now. This might take a few generations of the product. He would like to continue buying on the purchase schedule they use now, which means testing out the product and buying 50 at a time. Each product incrementally gets better. He does not want to put a specific number of gear to purchase in the resolution as that number might change for various reasons.

Chair Stella and Attorney Rosenberg noted that this resolution will not affect Chief Morris’ authority to purchase the gear and what he determines is best for the Fire Department.

The Committee discussed the following changes:

“ . . . and that the City of Stamford ~~shall~~ shall purchase clothing and PPE, ~~as soon as it becomes available, that is~~ free of PFAS chemicals which meets the requirements of the Stamford Fire Department, in such quantities as shall be determined in the sole discretion of the Stamford Fire Department.”

A motion to approve the amended language was made, seconded, and approved by a vote of 7-0-0 (Reps. Stella, Morson, Campbell, Camporeale, Graham, Pavia, and Pollack in favor).

A motion to approve Item #4 as amended was made, seconded, and approved by a vote of 7-0-0 (Reps. Stella, Morson, Campbell, Camporeale, Graham, Pavia, and Pollack in favor).

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

Respectfully submitted,
Chair Stella

This meeting is on [video](#)