BLOOMFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
PUBLIC SAFETY SUBCOMMITTEE

There was a regular meeting for the above-referenced subcommittee held at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, December 9, 2019 in Conference Room #5, Bloomfield Town Hall, 800 Bloomfield Avenue, Bloomfield, CT.

Present were: Councilor Kevin Gough, Chair, Deputy Mayor David Mann, Councilors Stephanie Calhoun, Joseph Merritt and Danielle Wong

Also present were: Robert E. Smith, Town Manager, Police Chief Paul Hammick, Chief William Riley – Bloomfield Center Fire, Chief Willie Jones – Blue Hills Fire, Pat Braun - EMS Committee and India Rodgers, Clerk of Council

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

The subcommittee received the following updates and status reports from:

POLICE

The police department’s FY 2019/2020 budget is on track with no unexpected expenditures to date in each division.

Personnel Updates

The department has a total of 61 employees, budgeted for 49 sworn officers and currently at 47. Chief Hammick noted that Sergeant Ellen White retired on September 27, 2019. She also applied for the civilian position along with a small group of candidates. Ms. White was the top candidate after the Human Resources sponsored process and was hired as the civilian director in October.

Cadet Corey Googe was released from employment on October 9, 2019, following an internal affairs investigation and a sustained finding of misconduct.

Officer Erik Markiewicz tendered his resignation December 9, 2019, effective December 23, 2019. He has been hired by the Town of Middlebury.

Police Officer Brian Beecham graduated from the Police Academy in October and is in his field training. He is doing well at this point.

Promotions

Officer Stacey Thomas was promoted to the rank of Sergeant on September 29, 2019. He is currently on the midnight shift.

Crime

Captain Hammick reported crime decreased 41% during the month of November and down 18% year to date. It was noted that there has been a decrease in larcenies (33 total for the month of November), as opposed to 49 year to date. There were 4 auto thefts compared to 12 last year to date. There was a decrease in calls dispatched for
the month, approximately 2,767 calls for service, compared to last year at 3,036 calls. It was noted that officer initiated calls have decreased 9% year to date.

Officers issued 110 Town ordinance parking violations in the month of November. The department have focus on large parking enforcement. Parking enforcement continues on Phoenix Crossing due to the tractor trailer issues. New no parking signs have been installed as well.

**Traffic Concerns**

- Mills Lane - The speed meter was placed on this road from November 24 - November 30, 2019. There were 7,500 cars tracked on the street and the average speed was 29mph. The department will continue to follow up with enforcement action in this area.

- Gabb Road - Conducted stop sign enforcement in response to a complaint. There were 19 tickets issued in November.

- Terry Plains/Tunxis Avenue - Stop sign enforcement resulted in several infractions in the area.

**Community Services**

Officer Robert Wilkins supported Social & Youth Services and the holiday functions over the past few months.

In addition, the Police Department supported the Holiday Parade on Saturday, December 7, 2019. The event was a great success. However, the parade route and traffic will be a point of discussion next year. The route proved to be very problematic.

The Bloomfield Police was awarded Advanced Accreditation on November 21, 2019, by the Commission on Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies at the fall convention in Cincinnati.

**Professional Standards**

**Use of Force** – There were three involving the use of force this reporting period, 24 incidents from year to date.

- Officers used force to restrain an Emotionally Disturbed Person that was being transported for committal.
- Officers used force to restrain and handcuff an arrestee.
- Officers used force to restrain a juvenile that was being arrested and referred.

All reviewed and found to be in compliance with department policies and state statute.

**Internal Affairs**

There was one open internal affairs case. The officer is deployed on military leave and the case will resume upon his return.
There were two volunteers who recently joined BVA. One of them recently was a graduate from the last EMT class.

The EMR Refresher was held for nine BPD officers and all successfully completed the course.

As a result of the generosity from citizens in the community, the BVA Fund is purchasing a new ambulance that is scheduled for delivery in Spring 2020. The cost of the new ambulance is approximately $210,000.

BVA volunteers also supported all of the Bloomfield High School home games and were able to provide a crew/ambulance at each game. They also participated in the Town Hall parade and a Holiday Parade in Simsbury along with donating items to Bloomfield Social & Youth Services Food Bank and holiday gift giving programs.

There ensued a discussion regarding parking concerns and violations around Town.

Councilor Mann - Parking tickets given to truckers in the Trader Joe Distribution area, Town ordinance is $25.00 and state infractions are $100. Trader Joe’s Administration recently installed signage that specifically states “No Parking” areas. They have also sent e-mail, flyers and other social media notifications about parking concerns. Councilor Mann also inquired about issues on East Wintonbury Avenue/Blue Hills Avenue. There have been no additional reports of concern for residents in this area. The police department will continue to closely monitor both areas.

Councilor Calhoun asked the police department to consider installing the “blue light” for alternative parking areas during winter snow storms to curb on street parking concerns.

Councilor Wong asked for a statistical breakdown of violent vs. non-violent crimes. She also asked about a minority hiring policy for the police department. Over the past several years, the police department has a comprehensive recruitment for its staff. They are in compliance with the Affirmative Action Plan and have taken the necessary steps to ensure diversity in the department.

Councilor Mann inquired about historical crime statistics for the Town. He also asked for an updated report of the SABA incident from last summer relative to the charge of cruelty to animals and their current status.

**Review and Discussion of the Bloomfield Police Department Social Media Policy**

The current Social Media Policy has been in effect for the past five years. This policy was developed in accordance with the accreditation process of CALEA standards, combined efforts of a model policy and input from a consultant for policy development.

Councilor Mann asked if there were any violations of this policy and what the potential penalties for violations are. All violations are addressed with the general Employee Misconduct Policy with reference to subject policies.
**Review and Discussion of Traffic Concerns, Jurisdiction and Next Steps**

Chief Hammick noted that traffic enforcement is conducted in response to complaints and as a proactive safety measure.

All complaints are investigated and a response is sent to the complainant.

The department is proactively conducting enforcement throughout the town in response to accident data, complaints and areas of concern.

The subcommittee also asked about the status on Environmental Traffic Calming as an ongoing public discussion. There was some discussions regarding road diets, speed bumps and additional stop signs.

Councilor Mann also mentioned parking and speeding concerns in the Pershing Park neighborhood. The police department is willing to participate in any study that is designated to address these concerns, among others such as blight in this neighborhood.

**FIRE**

*Center Fire District*

Chief William Riley reported 512 calls for service statistics through the month of November. Most of these calls were minor regarding smoke detectors and carbon monoxide monitors. The department participated in the Torchlight Parade.

Chief Riley reported that the department received a new tanker in service as of August 2019. They have also upgraded their dispatch consoles, radio system complete and are fully operational.

Councilor Mann inquired about the levels of Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in the nearby landfill in Windsor and other town facilities. It was noted that the Council and the Town of Windsor would have to request testing for status of levels.

*Blue Hills Fire District*

Chief Willie Jones reported 484 calls for service total through November, with 54 calls for service for the month. There was a 10-12% decrease for year to date. Most of the calls involved hazardous condition with motor vehicle accidents, false alarms, November windstorm, small structural fire and fireplace damage in a home. Chief Jones also reported response to a tractor trailer fire at 200 Phoenix Crossing.

The Blue Hills Fire District will continue to do public outreach to local businesses and the community regarding the importance of fire safety and drills.

Councilor Mann asked about manpower levels and the need for additional volunteers. Blue Hills is definitely in need of more volunteers. Chief Riley mentioned the property tax abatement benefit to attract more volunteers to this role. Currently, qualified volunteers received $1000 tax abatement credit towards their property taxes. However, recently the State of Connecticut Legislature passed a bill to increase this amount from $1000 to $1500 for both fire districts and BVA volunteers.
In 2021, this amount is expected to increase to $2000 per year.

EMS Report

Mr. Pat Braun reported ambulance service statistics from the last quarter:

- **1300 total for the quarter**
  - 457 - BVA
  - 145 - 2nd Paramedic
  - 698 - AMR Backup Ambulance

The New BVA Coordinator, Ms. Ellen White is also filling in day shifts when needed. There was a poor response in the interest for CPR classes this past quarter. The State of Connecticut has changed their requirements for EMT classes. They are requiring a 160 hour class, in addition to a practical written test. The cost for the new EMT class is $800 - $1000.

BVA Fund donations approved the purchase of a new ambulance in the amount of approximately $210,000. This ambulance will be equipped with the power loader. Mr. Braun noted that this is the 14th ambulance donated to the Town since its inception in 1977.

**OTHER PUBLIC SAFETY CONCERNS**

There were no additional public safety concerns discussed.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

It was moved by Councilor Merritt, seconded by Councilor Mann to approve the minutes from the following meeting dates:

- May 13, 2019
- July 8, 2019
- August 12, 2019

**VOTE:**

AYE: K. Gough, J. Merritt, D. Mann
NAY: None
ABSTAIN: D. Wong, S. Calhoun

The motion passes 3-0-2.

**ADJOURNMENT**

It was moved by Councilor Merritt, seconded by Councilor Mann to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 p.m.