There was a regular meeting for the above-referenced subcommittee held at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, February 10, 2020 in Conference Room #5, Bloomfield Town Hall, 800 Bloomfield Avenue, Bloomfield, CT.

Present were: Councilor Kevin Gough, Chair, Deputy Mayor David Mann, Councilors 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, Councilor C.F. Politis and India Rodgers, Clerk of Council

Absent was: Councilor Stephanie Calhoun

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 full capacity of 49.

Police Officer Gabriel Catania and Officer Kara Klimasvewski were hired and began employment in January 2020. Officer Catania is doing well in the Police Academy. Officer Klimasvewski is awaiting a training date and performing administrative functions.

Crime

Captain Hammick reported crime increased 54% during the month of January will the same statistics year to date. It was reported that there were 57 crimes, 46 larcenies, mostly shoplifting in the Copaco Shopping Center.

There was a decrease in calls dispatched for the month, approximately 2,780 calls for service, compared to last year at 3,237 calls. It was noted that officer initiated calls have decreased 14% year to date.

Officers issued 24 Town ordinance parking cases were generated and a total of 12 parking tickets were issued during the month of January.

Traffic Concerns

- Phoenix Crossing – A total of 55 Property checks were conducted. All “No Parking Signs” near Trader Joes are missing therefore no tickets issued, however officers frequently ask drivers to move their trucks.
In addition, there were 55 motor vehicle accidents, 248 motor vehicle stops, 45 motor vehicle details and 0 DUI arrests.

**Traffic Calming Initiative:**

Chief Hammick organized a meeting with John Lawlor, Director of Public Works, Jonathan Thiesse, Town Engineer and Jose Giner, Director of Planning and Economic Development to discuss the task of identifying five streets in town for traffic calming initiatives. The meeting was very beneficial, in which they discussed the Town’s Complete Streets Initiative and the matrix that they used to prioritize streets and rank them based on subjective criteria. Mr. Thiesse also noted that several communities have policies in place that identify a process to identify streets needing calming initiatives. As a working group, they gathered a number of the policies for further review and modification.

**Professional Standards**

**Use of Force** – There were four involving the use of force this reporting period. The following details for each incident:

- Taser was turned on and the laser pointed at arrestee where compliance was gained.
- Violent dog that was actively attacking owner was shot 3 times.
- EDP was attempting to get into a bedroom and refused verbal commands so officers grabbed her, handcuffed her and held her down until she was restrained to the stretcher.
- Brother of detainee was interfering with an arrest so Taser was activated but not used.

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 now that he has returned. There have been a total of 10 total citizen complaints for 2019.

**BVA - Bloomfield Volunteer Ambulance**

There were two volunteers who recently joined BVA. One of them recently was a graduate from the last EMT class.

There has been a significant increase in the number of calls where the secondary Paramedic has transported with AMR. A large portion of this is due to the fact that the Paramedic is no longer riding aboard the primary ambulance when we don't have a volunteer due to the Coordinator riding instead (primarily on Thursday's and Friday's).

BVA has seen an increase in Opioid overdoses within the past couple weeks. The officers effectively administered Narcan to the patients and assisted BVA/AMR with further medical care. There doesn't appear to be a pattern associated with the overdoses.

The new ambulance has been ordered and delivery is approximately 4-5 months. The cost of the ambulance ($210,000) is covered by the generosity of residents and businesses in Town.
Currently, BVA Volunteers who are Town of Bloomfield residents receive a $1,000.00 Property Tax Abatement against their Town of Bloomfield Property Tax. The requirements to receive the Tax Abatement include volunteering a minimum of 2 shifts a month and attend 70% of the training sessions which are town funded.

A Volunteer Incentive Program provides (1) point for each 5 hour shift they work with a point value of $10 per point paid on a quarterly basis using gift cards. This program is funded from the BVA Budget.

When a new EMT successfully completes an EMT class in Bloomfield and they sign up to join BVA, they may receive $200 reimbursement from the Bloomfield Volunteer Ambulance Fund, Inc. To be eligible they need to work 2 shift per month for 6 months and attend 70% of training session.

The EMT Class Tuition is reduced to assist in providing a more affordable EMT Class. The average cost for our in town EMT Class is $600 compared to an out of town cost as high as $1200.00 (plus) per student, any difference has been absorbed in the EMS budget.

Other incentives and volunteer support:

The department also offers educational incentives for our active members such as covering the cost to attend the annual EMS Expo and other trainings. Non-active members can attend trainings at a reduced rate. There are other incentives available throughout the year such as awards banquets, member appreciation dinners, job shirts/polos etc. however, a large portion of those items are financially covered by the Bloomfield Volunteer Ambulance Fund, Inc.

**Discussion regarding unlicensed Dog Kennel – 452 Tunxis Avenue Extension**

Chief Hammick reported the details of an unusual incident at 452 Tunxis Avenue Extension.

On January 22nd, our Animal Control Officer, Christine Sparks received a complaint that there were dogs left outside at the property overnight in freezing conditions. This marked the third similar complaint in two weeks including dogs barking and excessive noise, and was a factor in leading the ACO to believe that there may be an unlicensed kennel or breeding operation at the location.

A preliminary investigation of the property revealed that it is listed to Beech Tree Ranch LLC, a company owned by James and Margaret Boisture.

A quick internet search revealed that Beech Tree Ranch LLC is the owner of Star Mountain Kennel, identified as operating out of Windsor Locks CT, as a breeder of champion Portuguese Podengo Puqueno dogs.

The Town Clerks Office confirmed that no kennel license was issued, or has been issued for the address. The ACO checked with surrounding towns and learned that Star Mountain had a kennel license in Windsor CT, but no breeding license.

The State Department of Agriculture informed us that investigations of unlicensed breeding operations are the responsibility of the local animal control official.
Two days later, on January 24th, ACO Sparks, accompanied by Officers, traveled to the location in an effort to investigate the complaints and ascertain if an unlicensed breeding operation was taking place. They were met by Mrs. Boisture, identified themselves and were told that they could not inspect the property. ACO Sparks informed Mrs. Boisture that based on complaints and information, she would be seeking a search and seizure warrant from the court.

Approximately 3 hours later, ACO Sparks returned with a valid search and seizure warrant issued by a judge of Hartford Superior Court. She served the warrant and inspected the barn facility. Inside she discovered 34 dogs, 15 in one area and 19 in an adjacent area. The 15 dogs were stacked in crates on top of a long table sitting atop puddles of urine. The dogs showed signs of being restricted in the kennel for long period of time, the owner could not produce vaccination records or veterinary records for the dogs.

The ACO and officers processed the scene and seized 15 of the dogs as well as one goat that was tied in an adjacent area of the building.

The remaining 19 dogs, consisting of nursing mothers and puppies, appeared to be in good condition and were ordered to shelter in place rather than be removed from the facility.

We have applied for an arrest warrant for the property owners and are waiting on the prosecutor to review.

In the meantime, we have been working with Attorney Needleman’s office and attorneys for the property owner on replacing the dogs at the property. The owner is required by law to obtain a kennel license and construct sufficient sized kennels for the breeding of dogs. All animals will be returned once this is complete.

**Council Comments**

Deputy Mayor Mann inquired about notification of crime incidents in Bloomfield through social media. He also noted that Bloomfield was identified as the 6th most dangerous community in the State of Connecticut. Deputy Mayor Mann commented on the importance to communicate to the public about crime statistics.

Chief Hammick stated that in 2018, there was a high rate aggravated assaults, car breaks, and property crimes (larcenies). He also noted that FBI/UCR Webpage display statistics of 19 sexual assaults in 2018 and 14 in 2019. Most of these reports are directly from the Department of Children and Families, in which children are taken into custody. The department must report these statistics as incident by law. Stats are posted for quarterly and annual reporting.

Councilor Merritt noticed that Bloomfield is rated poorly due to the close proximity to Hartford and crime entering suburban communities. The federal statistics are inconsistent with town’s population, compared against – Windsor, Wethersfield, West Hartford rather than Canton.

Councilor Politis inquired about the level of capacity at the department to accommodate female officer locker room space. The last two hires were female and the department has reached full capacity to provide adequate space to females.

Councilor Gough commented on the Complete Streets Prioritization efforts under review at working group, to obtain citizen feedback for implementation. He inquired about the timeframe and criteria to be evaluated, identify streets with policy and proceed to address issues of concern. In addition, he recommended the review
surrounding community policies to develop our own. Councilor Gough suggested that town staff should check streets submitted against other streets of concern. It is appropriate to plan for a special meeting on traffic calming and invite people from different neighborhoods.

Deputy Mayor Mann asked about the commonalities of streets considered. He suggested to consider performing a demonstration to test prior to final implementation.

Councilor Merritt spoke about the visual effect of road narrowing on Duncaster Road.

Councilor Politis stated that there is a huge problem with speeding and drag racing on Prospect Street.

Public Comment

1. **Laurie Julian, 43 Maple Avenue** commented on traffic issues on Maple Avenue. Mrs. Julian is an avid biker and walker. She expressed concerns about safety and speeding in the area. In addition, Mrs. Julian presented pictures showing needed road improvements and safety concerns. (See Attached)

**FIRE**

*Center Fire District*

Chief William Riley reported 31 calls for service statistics through end of January 2020. Most of the calls were from Smoke & Carbon Monoxide detectors.

*Blue Hills Fire District*

Chief Willie Jones reported 32 calls for service through end of January 2020. There was a 22% decrease for year to date. The department responded to three significant incidents in the month of January:

- 522 Cottage Grove Road - Welder’s Tank Fire
- Dudley Town Road - Envirocycle Fire
- 1280 Blue Hills Avenue - Car extrication with significant injuries

Chief Jones noted that two new volunteers joined the district.

There will be a Volunteer Recruitment Open House held in March or April 2020.

New Members are currently enrolled in Fire Fighter I class.

The subcommittee asked about the minimum threshold on scene or total for volunteers. Currently, there are 30 active volunteers on the list.

**EMS Report**

Mr. Pat Braun commented on the detailed BVA report given by Chief Hammick regarding department initiatives. He noted that it is a major expense for some individuals to take the EMT classes. Most individuals have used this mechanism as a tool to obtain employment rather than commit to volunteer at BVA.
It was noted that there will be an emphasis on the increase of tax abatements during this budget cycle. The primary goal is to retain volunteers as well as continue the recruitment process from other volunteer organizations, outside of the training environment. It was also mentioned that the Town is currently supplementing some EMS cost.

**OTHER PUBLIC SAFETY CONCERNS**

There were no additional public safety concerns discussed.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

It was moved by Councilor Merritt, seconded by Deputy Mayor Mann to approve the minutes from January 13, 2020.

**ADJOURNMENT**

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