BLOOMFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
PUBLIC SAFETY SUBCOMMITTEE

There was a regular meeting for the above referenced subcommittee held at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, December 13, 2021 via Zoom meeting.

Present were: Deputy Mayor Gregory Davis, Councilors Suzette DeBeatham-Brown, Kenneth McClary and Shamar Mahon

Also present were: Police Chief Paul Hammick, Fire Chief Willie Jones, Fire Chief William Riley and India Rodgers, Clerk of Council

Absent was: Pat Braun, EMS Committee

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

The subcommittee received the following updates and status reports from:

POLICE

Crime Statistics

Chief Hammick reported a 2% decrease in crime statistics during the month of November. The following categories list details of the crime stats for November:

- Homicide (0)
- Sexual Assaults (0)
- Robbery (1) – Third party reported. A woman called Geissler’s Supermarket manager and reported being robbed the previous evening in the parking lot. Video reviewed, but not enough information to proceed. No victim information or suspect description.
- Assaults (0)
- Burglary (0)
- Larceny (55) – significant statistical increase involving incidents with shoplifting, fraud cases, car breaks targeting Planet Fitness gym parking area early morning and Catalytic Converters – statewide program of precious metals.
- Auto Theft (3) keys/fob left in the vehicle, vehicle left running, 2 from the Mobil Gas Station on Blue Hills Avenue

Personnel Updates

The department has a total of 61 employees, budgeted for 49 sworn officers and currently at 48. The department continues actively recruit sworn personnel during the recruitment process.

Chief Hammick also reported that there is also 1 sworn police officer, possible 2nd vacancy, 1 full time and 1 part time Dispatcher position vacancies.
The staff morale is good, citing outstanding issues with retirement contract status. The proposed Police union contract is under review and Council action is in the foreseeable future.

**Hiring**

Chief Hammick reported that two recruits will graduate from the Police Academy on Friday, December 17, 2021. Mr. Randy McFarlane and Matthew Bangs. Recruit Nathan Chesworth started the academy today. The department currently have 7 recruits in the training phase.

There were no promotions at this time.

**Citizen Traffic Complaints**

- **Chapel Street (speed)** – The Speed Shield was deployed northbound on Chapel Street. The posted speed limit is 25 mph. During that period, there was a total of 6,136 motor vehicles traveling north on Chapel Street, with an average speed of 19.71 mph. The results indicated that 77.5% (4,760) of motor vehicles traveled at a speed of 25 mph or less, 22.2% (1,367) of motor vehicles traveled at a speed of 26-34 mph, less than 0.01% (9) of motor vehicles traveled at a speed of 35-44 mph. No motor vehicles traveled at a speed of 45 mph or greater.

The department is also collecting data on:

- Prospect Street
- Woodland Avenue
- Brown Street

**Traffic Details**

- Brookline Avenue – 55 directed patrols in the area
- Cottage Grove Road – 9 Motor Vehicle details
- Gabb Road – 14 Motor Vehicle details
- Blue Hills Avenue – 12 Motor Vehicle details

**Greater Hartford Regional Auto Theft Taskforce**

Bloomfield is participating in a regional auto theft, property crime and violent crime taskforce. The purpose is to address stolen cars, and their nexus to property and violent crime within the region. The State has authorized funds for “unfunded” personnel expenses. Bloomfield has been awarded $30,000. Detective Lionel Rodriguez has been assigned to coordinate and work with the taskforce in addition to normal caseload.

**The Taskforce was very productive in November:**

- 65 stolen cars recovered
- 22 arrests
- 9 firearms seized
Support Services Division

The Community Services Unit and Patrol Division continue to work with The University of Hartford regarding some of our problematic addresses within Town on Simsbury Road, 61 Mountain Road and off campus student housing issues.

The department has communicated directly with the residents and property owners regarding noise and late night disturbances.

Internal Affairs

There was one citizen complaint for the month of November:

- The complainant was arrested for trespassing during a domestic violence investigation. An internal investigation found that the officer acted appropriately, and in compliance with State Statute.

Use of Force

There were three incidents during the month of November:

- On November 20, 2021, officers responded to a domestic violence incident where a suspect was hostile, highly intoxicated and uncooperative, and was placed under arrest. The suspect did not cooperate with officers, was handcuffed, but refused to walk out of the house and to an awaiting police car. Officers had to carry the suspect out of the house. The suspect assaulted officers by kicking and spitting at them. Because the suspect was spitting at officers, a face mask was applied while officers were exposed to the suspect. The suspect was transported to the detention facility and secured in a holding cell.

- On November 26, 2021 at 2:30 a.m., a patrolling officer observed an active dispute in the roadway on Wedgewood Drive at Blue Hills Avenue. The dispute was a domestic incident and one of the participants was intoxicated and became extremely uncooperative during the investigation and threatened the investigating officer.

  Officers attempted to detain the suspect, but the suspect became aggressive and threatening. They gave several warnings to the suspect, but had to use the department issued Taser. The Taser had no effect on the suspect. An additional officer and supervisor responded and were able to use compliance techniques to subdue and handcuff the suspect. There were several witnesses to the incident and body worn camera footage.

- On November 30, 2021 at 3:30 p.m., officers responded to a person suffering from emotional or mental health issues. The subject was naked and in an agitated state. The subject left the house and began running east bound on Park Avenue. Officer detained the person, and had to physically restrain them in order to secure them to a stretcher for transport/evaluation. The amount of force utilized by the officer was necessary, reasonable and in accordance with department policy.
BVA

Chief Hammick reported the following updates regarding the Bloomfield Volunteer Ambulance:

- Five new members joined BVA as volunteers
- BVA is averaging about (2) COVID related calls a week
- BVA received a very large donation of disinfecting wipes and has distributed quantities to other Town departments.
- BVA assisted in the COVID booster clinics at 330 Park Avenue with the West Hartford Bloomfield Health District.
- BVA participated in the Town Holiday Parade as well as provided stand by coverage at the Bloomfield High School football games.
- There has been an increase in the number of shifts that have been filled due to the increased incentive program.

Update on CHR Clinician Program

The CHR Clinician worked from November 9 – November 30, 20 hours per week. A total of 6 separate shifts. She has assisted with 12 cases and made referrals and follow ups regarding all. She has also assisted with multi-disciplinary team and been a good resource.

Discussion

Councilor DeBeatham-Brown inquired about thinking out of the box to promote mass communication efforts to the general public about auto theft prevention. She asked about a social media campaign along with internal plans with e-mail blasts through Leisure Services and the library. The department has utilized all available resources, in addition to notifications in the Bloomfield Messenger, BATV and town newsletters.

Councilor Mahon asked about any car dealership thefts of catalytic converters in Town. There have been none to date.

Councilor McClary expressed concerns about recent domestic violence incidents in Town, noted in increased monthly statistics reported. Chief Hammick reported that there has been no public outreach relative to prevention methods. He will inquire about an educational campaign, to share available resources and statewide Victim Advocate services.

Deputy Mayor Davis asked about larceny cases at Copaco Shopping Center in 2020 and the 2 year trend of statistics with steady increases. Most of the larceny cases reported are attributed to thefts at Home Depot, Lowe’s, Stop & Shop and Burlington.

Councilor Mahon inquired about speeding concerns on Ledyard and Packard streets. The newly initiated Traffic Calming Committee have been addressing ongoing issues around Town. The department will increase direct enforcement and install more speed shields to deter issues. Officers initially issue warnings that may lead to traffic infractions, if needed.

Councilor McClary commented on the effectiveness and use of speed shields. He also asked about the Town conducting a comprehensive Traffic study town wide. Chief Hammick noted that this is a recommendation of the Town Engineer and has been included in the department budget proposal.
FIRE

Center Fire District

Chief William Riley reported 44 calls for service statistics for the month of October 2021 and 34 calls for November 2021, totaling 487 calls year to date.

Most of the calls were related to smoke/CO detector activations, heating malfunction systems, motor vehicle accidents (clean-up of hazardous fluids), power lines down and malicious false alarms at Spark Apartments (under investigation).

Chief Riley also reported that the district has sold 2 older fire engines and is awaiting delivery of a new rescue engine, which should be in-service mid-January 2022.

Blue Hills Fire District

Chief Willie Jones reported 40 calls for service statistics for the month of October and 47 calls for November 2021, totaling 477 calls year to date. There were no major incidents during the months of October and November. Most of the calls were related to motor vehicle accidents with minor injuries, clean-up of fluids and unintentional smoke detection activations. Chief Jones reported an increase in activity of 8%.

The new battery operated rescue tools have been ordered to assist with motor vehicle extractions.

The renovation work plans for district headquarters at Station 1, 1021 Blue Hills Avenue is ongoing. Bids for contractors have been submitted awaiting approval and selection. Chief Jones noted that new and improved LED lighting from Eversource will be installed in all three firehouses. In addition, for Station 1, enlarge washroom area, IT room, access control system, front ramp of firehouse (concrete) and modifications to the HVAC system.

Councilor McClary asked if there were any additional renovation cost to the taxpayers. Chief Jones noted that a slight increase is already in place within the current budget. This increase should cover the renovation plans for the district. There are no immediate plans to request additional tax increases.

Councilor DeBeatham-Brown thanked Chief Jones for partnering with “Save our Schools” to distribute food for the Thanksgiving holiday to families in need.

The district continues to promote their search for more volunteers.

OTHER PUBLIC SAFETY CONCERNS

Councilor DeBeatham-Brown inquired if there was program to assist seniors with winterizing (snow shoveling driveways).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The meeting minutes of October 12, 2021 will remain in draft form, due to newly elected Council and subcommittee members.
ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Deputy Mayor Davis, seconded by Councilor DeBeatham-Brown to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 p.m.