BLOOMFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
PUBLIC SAFETY SUBCOMMITTEE

There was a regular meeting for the above referenced subcommittee held on Monday, January 10, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom meeting.

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

Also present were: Stanley D. Hawthorne, Town Manager, Police Chief Paul Hammick, Fire Chief Willie Jones, Fire Chief William Riley, Lou Blumenfeld, Chair – EMS Committee 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 1% increase in crime statistics during the month of December. The following categories list details of the crime stats for December:

- Homicide (0)
- Sexual Assaults (1) – Past tense assault, 31 year old victim reported an assault that happened in middle school.
- Robbery (3)
  - 12/15/2021 – 12 Mountain Avenue in the plaza a panhandler used force when stealing from a woman who was getting into her vehicle.
  - 12/18/2021 – A known offender was stealing a case of soda from Stop & Shop and he struck store security in the face. An arrest was made.
  - 12/18/2021 – A man was observed shoplifting. When confronted, he wielded a box cutter and ran from the store.
- Assaults (3)
  - Domestic incident resulted in a party stabbed. Minor chest injuries. Warrant issued.
  - Domestic related struck in face with a bag containing heavy object. Warrant issued.
  - MV accident escalated in fist fight, assailant fled. Investigation pending.
- Burglary (1) – 885 Blue Hills Avenue, outside storage area burglarized
- Larceny (29) – Significant increase in shoplifting
- Auto Theft (2)
  - Vehicle parked in the driveway and running. Recovered in Bloomfield processed for DNA.
  - Person left their vehicle running and went into a store in Copaco Plaza. Vehicle recovered in Hartford, two suspects arrested.
**Personnel Updates**

The department has a total of 61 employees, budgeted for 49 sworn officers and currently at 47. The department continues actively recruit sworn personnel during the recruitment process. Detective Laiuppa retired and the end of 2021.

Chief Hammick also reported that there is 1 full time and 1 part time Dispatcher position vacancies.

The staff morale is fair, citing outstanding issues with retirement contract status. The proposed Police union contract is under review and Council action is in the foreseeable future. The department has also been challenged with COVID-19 issues and staffing.

**Hiring**

Chief Hammick reported that there are 4 recruits in the Police Academy. There are 3 officers in field training. There were no promotions at this time.

**Promotion**

Daigle Law Group was hired by Human Resources to conduct testing for Sergeant and Detective positions.

**Citizen Traffic Complaints**

- Ledyard Avenue, Mills Lane, Prospect Street
- Speed meters – Prospect Avenue, Woodland Avenue, Brown Street, Burr Road and Ledyard Avenue
- Commercial Truck restrictions begin January with signage and targeted enforcement

**Traffic Details**

- Mills Lane – Speed limit is 25 mph, average speed travelled at 32 mph, 80% of vehicles travelled greater than 25 mph, 40% of vehicles travelling over 35 mph.
- Prospect Street – Speed is 25 mph, average speed travelled at 34 mph, 80% of vehicles travelled over 25 mph, 35% over 35 mph.

Chief Hammick noted that are some significant speeding issues on these streets. He has plans to continue working with Mr. Jonathan Thiesse, Town Engineer on additional traffic calming measures and evaluating environmental impacts.

**CHR Clinician**

The CHR Clinician worked 11 shifts for the month of December 2021. She has assisted and followed up with several cases at the Police Department as well as coordinated with local medical and mental health facilities, Senior Services, Social & Youth Services and the Police Department.
**Internal Affairs**

There were no citizen complaint for the month of December.

**Use of Force**

There were two incidents during the month of December:

- On December 21, 2021 – Officers responded to a disturbance involving an intoxicated person in mental emotional distress. Officers escorted the individual from the business and he was secured in a cruiser. When AMR arrived from transport, the individual became combative and they had to be restrained and secured to the stretcher. The force used was minimal and consisted of hand controls, a takedown and pressure to restrain and secure the individual in the police car and on the stretcher. The use of force was reviewed and found reasonable in the situation.

- On December 26, 2021 – Officers responded to a medical call involving a person in mental health crisis, believed to also be under the influence of narcotics. The individual was determined to be a danger to herself when the ambulance arrived, officers had to escort the individual to the stretcher and hold her down to be secured to the stretcher for transport. The use of force was minimal and reasonable.

**BVA**

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

- Slight increase in medical calls involving COVID-19 patients. Area hospitals have experienced a large surge in COVID-19 positive patients. Our Medical Control through St. Francis Hospital and Medical Center has instituted a treat and no transport policy to address those who are ill and encouraging them to remain home rather than be transported. However, it is suggested that they stay home and monitor themselves. By implementing this plan, we hope that the stress on limited resources will be reduced and will also help limit the unnecessary exposure of the virus to additional people.

- BVA provided a large number of KN95 masks to Town departments and residents.

- An EMT Class is planned for April 2022. There will be a reduced course cost for Town residents and an additional reimbursement for students who successfully complete the course and volunteer with BVA for a minimum of 6 months after they obtain their certification.

The increased incentive trial has been in place since October 1, 2021. However, the response to filling shifts is not as much as we had hoped for. BVA continues to be dedicated to serving the community, however COVID-19 and volunteerism as a whole has become more challenging to manage.
**FIRE**

*Center Fire District*

Chief William Riley reported 34 calls for service statistics for the month of December 2021, totaling 541 calls year end. 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). There was one structure fire originating in the kitchen at 35 Prospect Street.

Chief Riley also reported that the district recently acquired rescue equipment, 1 Firefighter completed Level 1 training and they participated in the Light up the Town Parade.

*Blue Hills Fire District*

Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai commented on the inquiry regarding tax increases. She noted that there were two meetings held in 2021 to discuss tax appeals. There was a settlement on assessment from 2018-2021. Commissioner Jaunai discussed the process how taxes are assessed and the use of funds for overdue renovations. The fire tax has not been raised in 9 years and is currently at .25% mill rate. The renovation plans have already been budgeted. The Board of Fire Commissioner will conduct a meeting if and when the tax rate should be raised. The public will be notified for their input and a final decision will be determined.

Chief Willie Jones reported 37 calls, there were no major calls in the Blue Hills Fire District, but we did have a dual response to 2 fires in the Bloomfield District that were actual fires, one at 35 Prospect Street and the other at 2 East Lane. Of the 37 calls the majority of them were Unintentional Alarm Activations, smoke from Cooking Detector Activations, Motor Vehicle Accidents with Fluids and Minor Injuries.

There were 479 total calls for service for year ending 2020.

There were 514 total calls for service for the year ending 2021.

An approximately 7% increase in calls for 2021 verses 2020

*Equipment*

The Department received New Battery-Operated Hurst Tools, Spreader, Cutters and RAMS, this Equipment is portable and would better assist Fire Units in Motor Vehicle Accidents that involves Extrication.

*Training*

Training has currently been suspended because of the High Covid Positivity Rate, but we do have Big Plans of various training Evolutions on getting newer members certified to State Level of Operating and getting newer members certified and trained to drive Fire Apparatus. Several Firefighters have passed Firefighter I Certification and 2 Officers have passed Instructor I and Safety Officer Certification class.
(OSHA) Occupational Safety and Health Administration Compliance

The Department recently completed a Compliance visit from OSHA that lasted several months, this visit was to make sure that the department is providing an accident-free and healthy environment by eliminating recognized hazards from the workplace and to ensure that all our employees and volunteers are protected. Everything checked out and now the Blue Hills Fire Department is in Compliance with the State of Connecticut (OSHA) Occupational Safety and Health Administration Standards.
Projects

Due to the Holidays the Fire Department extended the Bid Proposals on the upcoming Renovation Project until the end of January. Also, work has begun on the Lighting Project to make our Firehouse more Energy Efficient, the Program is sponsored by Eversource.

Community Involvement

Blue Hills Fire Department Staff and Volunteers was on site volunteering to help with the distribution of the Drive-Thru Covid-19 Test Kit and Mask Distribution directing traffic and handing out kits and masks to residents.

He thanked the Town, Bloomfield Leisure Services, Social & Youth Services, Senior Services, and the Bloomfield Police Department for reaching out to the district for support.

EMS

Mr. Lou Blumenfeld, Chair of the EMS Committee gave a brief report on the continued discussions to develop an approach for future direction of BVA and its volunteers.

OTHER PUBLIC SAFETY CONCERNS

Councilor DeBeatham-Brown thanked the Police Department and Blue Hills Fire for their assistance in distributing the COVID-19 self-home test kits. The Incident Command Team did a wonderful job as well.

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.