

**GLASTONBURY TOWN COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING/POLICE OPERATIONS WORKSHOP MINUTES
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2020**

The Glastonbury Town Council with Town Manager, Richard J. Johnson, and Police Chief Marshall Porter in attendance, held a Special Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at the Council Chambers of Glastonbury Town Hall, which was broadcast to the public in real time and via a live video stream.

1. Roll Call.

Council Members

Mr. Thomas P. Gullotta, Chairman
Mr. Lawrence Niland, Vice Chairman
Dr. Stewart Beckett III
Ms. Mary LaChance
Ms. Deborah A. Carroll
Mr. Jacob McChesney
Mr. Whit C. Osgood
Mr. Kurt Cavanaugh
Ms. Lillian Tanski

a. Pledge of Allegiance *Led by Dr. Beckett*

2. Special Business as contained in the Call.

a. Presentation and discussion concerning Police operations, protocols and procedures.

Mr. Johnson explained the background behind holding this workshop. He noted that a concern came up of a photo, which circulated on the website of a candidate running for state representative, showing off-duty police officers in uniform. Mr. Johnson brought it to the attention of the bargaining unit, who immediately agreed that it was inappropriate, understanding its unintended consequences, and they removed the photo. Mr. Johnson subsequently asked the Police Chief to update the Glastonbury Police Department's (GPD) policy regarding uniforms, to indicate that uniforms are only appropriate when an officer is on duty and/or on official department matters. He also noted that most officers were not aware that there are state statutes which call for the separation of individual endorsements from their work assignments. Mr. Johnson will send a note to the police department and to all members of Town staff, alerting them of this fact.

Mr. Johnson began the presentation by reviewing the hiring practices and accreditations of police officers, noting that the process to become a police officer in Glastonbury is very rigorous. Chief Porter built on that point, explaining that the GPD is a CALEA accredited agency, which automatically makes them a CLESP accredited agency, as well. He noted that their agency operates under a vast set of standards and policies that are continually reviewed internally and externally by auditors from CALEA. This auditing is primarily done through a software system.

Ms. Carroll remarked that Glastonbury is one of only 28 police departments that are currently CALEA accredited, out of 106. She asked why that number is so low. Chief Porter explained that part of it has to do with cost. The GPD pays CALEA around \$11,500 a year to belong to it and spends another \$5,000 a

year in software fees to ensure compliance. Mr. Johnson added that belonging to CALEA is also a rigorous process, requiring a lot of work from staff. The Chief explained that CALEA's approach is welcomed: they tell them what needs to be done in order to be in compliance, but they do not tell them how to get there.

Dr. Beckett asked if, for non-violent cases, such as those concerning mental illness, how does the GPD address those situations differently than all of the negative cases that have been highlighted nationwide recently. Chief Porter explained that the requisite standards and training put GPD in a good place to respond to things in a tremendous way. When it comes to a concern of mental health, they typically transport the individual to the hospital for a mental health examination. This year alone, they had 107 such cases, but the true number of examinations could be even higher because that statistic only accounts for those who were transported. The Chief also noted that their agency has a crisis intervention coordinator, who is trained and manages their training and policies, reviews cases, and collaborates with other state and local agencies to confer on getting people help. GPD has 23 officers trained in crisis intervention, which is a large number for a department as small as Glastonbury's.

Chief Porter explained the primary functions of the police department, stating that what sets GPD apart from other departments is the tremendous effort they put into community collaboration. They have a lot of specializations that other police departments simply do not have, such as the traffic unit. He also noted that school resource officers play an important role in the school systems, by teaching important topics, like bullying, school safety, and drugs/alcohol safety at the school level.

Ms. Tanski asked for an estimate on the time that the GPD spends on community outreach activities. Chief Porter stated that there is one officer who is dedicated full time to community outreach, but all staff perform some level of community outreach. Ms. Tanski asked if the Chief has an opinion on the importance of personal service in Glastonbury, specifically in regard to its effect on public safety. Chief Porter replied yes, it is important that the community knows and trusts their police department. Policing is much easier and community safety is more solid when the police department has the trust of its community. In the three years he has been the Chief of Police in Glastonbury, the community support and feedback he has received has been incredible.

The Chief explained that GPD has many partnerships. Their community outreach officer collaborates, on some level, with many groups, such as the Community Case Review, which comes together to find a common solution to a specific situation or problem in Town. Chief Porter noted that he has not seen that type of collaboration involving a police department elsewhere. He listed some examples of the types of issues they address, such as working with faith-based organizations, local businesses, and community groups in developing safety plans.

The Chief also explained that their hiring process is very comprehensive. Glastonbury is a very difficult place to become a police officer because they are highly selective. He walked through the process, which starts from HR's posting, written tests, physical tests, interviews (the initial panel interview then an interview with the Chief), background checks, polygraph tests, references, medical examinations/drug screenings, and a physical. At the very end of the process, the Town Manager gets the final say on whether they hire that person or not. Mr. Johnson added that the career fairs they used to attend to try to recruit new hires were great, and they hope to get back to that, once the COVID-19 situation allows. He also noted that workplace diversity is a nice toolkit to best publicize their positions.

Ms. Tanski asked if the GPD has found successful candidates through the efforts of workplace diversity. Mr. Johnson stated that they started some months ago and have not had many recruitments, but their whole effort is to make sure that they have as diverse a candidate pool as possible. Mr. McChesney asked if there are any particular areas they visit, for the job fairs. Chief Porter replied, high schools and a few colleges who reach out to the GPD regularly, such as Quinnipiac University. Mr. Johnson added that they have visited the New Haven area a lot.

Mr. McChesney asked how diverse applicants have been for open positions. Chief Porter stated that he cannot speak to that. He and Mr. Johnson agreed to check in with HR. Mr. Johnson added that one of the challenges with hiring police officers is that, very often, a candidate will apply to many different towns concurrently, and each town is working through the process like Glastonbury. Therefore, that same candidate could have five departments where they have applications pending simultaneously. Mr. McChesney asked if there are other red flags they look for in candidates, other than the polygraph test. Chief Porter stated that psychiatrists look for various psychoses, temperament issues, and the like. Social media, in particular, reveals a lot about an individual's affiliations that may not be in line with the values of GPD. They look at a lot of things and try to put them in the context of the bigger picture.

The Chief noted that once a candidate makes it through the hiring process, they then enter the POST Academy program, which lasts 28 weeks. After that, they enter a 16-week field training program, followed by a one-year probationary period, with monthly evaluations. The final step is the final recommendation from the Police Chief to the Town Manager. Overall, it is a rigorous process, as over 20% of candidates do not get through the post-hire process. The Chief also noted that training never stops. Officers are required by police officer standards to have recertification training every year or every three years, depending on the policy/standard. The Chief added that training is directly correlated with performance and job satisfaction, and Glastonbury goes above and beyond what POST requires.

Mr. Gullotta brought up the nationwide outrage over an officer's fatal act of placing his knee on someone's neck and not being held accountable for it because he was deemed to be simply "doing his job." He asked if there is any focus on ethics in training in Glastonbury, in order to prevent that kind of behavior. Chief Porter stated that their policies reflect CALEA standards, and they are very quick to adapt to situations. Fair and impartial policing is part of everyone's retraining. He acknowledged that, as a police chief, he has no tolerance for that kind of behavior, such as excessive use of force that can result in someone's death. The Chief noted that that problem does not exist in Glastonbury, as he has never received an abuse of force complaint in his entire time as police chief in Glastonbury. Chief Porter also noted that he is working with HR and a vendor to come up with an implicit bias training. Mr. Johnson added that they are working with a consulting firm for the entire Town workforce, to help raise everyone's awareness about this issue, which is kick off soon. Ms. Tanski asked for an estimate of the financial implications of the investment they make in training on a year to year basis. Chief Porter stated that he will get that information to the Council soon.

Chief Porter explained that the Annual Profiling Report, which has existed since 1999, prohibits police officers from stopping, detaining, and/or searching motorists solely based on race, ethnicity, or gender. The IMRP at CCSU analyzes electronic stop stat monthly submissions for the GPD. Glastonbury has never been identified as having racial disparities in their traffic stops. The Chief went over some of the analytics that the system measures, such as the veil of darkness and hit rates, and Glastonbury is right where it needs to be. He also noted that the Racial Profiling Data is accessible to everybody online. Ms. Tanski asked if there is any data on calls for service that the department receives, and any racial

implications that those present. The Chief replied, they have a very robust data mining software, which can pull information on any specific request desired.

Chief Porter then described the complaint process, noting that the department receives complaints about their employees, like every other police department. Many of those complaints revolve around FOI or are just misunderstandings, but they take all complaints seriously and investigate them thoroughly. The GPD complies with CALEA and POST minimum standards when it comes to investigating complaints against staff. The Chief noted that they must retain the records of an officer for a certain period of time following such events as disciplinary action or reprimand.

Chief Porter noted that they see a broad spectrum of complaints for many reasons. Some claims have been refuted by video and/or audio footage from dash cameras. They also have an early warning system to avoid getting to complaints in the disciplinary process. Also, yearly evaluations (monthly and daily evaluations, in the case of new employees), and supervisory notes all serve as preventative methods for complaints against officers. Mr. Gullotta asked if officers' social media posts are still looked at, even after they are hired. Chief Porter said no, but they have a strict social media policy that regulates content. Mr. Gullotta stated that it would be a very good early warning indicator. Chief Porter noted that it is a good suggestion and worth considering, at least with public posts.

Ms. Tanski asked if the policy around social media is reviewed on a regular basis with officers. Chief Porter stated that there are a number of policies that they review regularly. Officers need to review them online on a scheduled basis. In some cases, they are trained on them practically, too, such as with firearms. Ms. Tanski requested that, going forward, they not invest Town resources in staff to baby officers who have been trustworthy so far in their use of social media because they seem to be doing it responsibly.

Mr. McChesney asked about the investigatory complaints process. Chief Porter explained that any staff member can take a complaint, but they are usually directed to a supervisor. Complaints typically go to the Chief, who may assign less serious issues to a line supervisor and very serious ones to either the captain or the lieutenant. Chief Porter noted that, on average, they respond to about 17,500 calls for service per year and receive an incredibly small amount of complaints (3-9 complaints per 17,500 calls), a third of which have been sustained, and all have been investigated. Mr. McChesney asked what the majority of the source of complaints are about. Chief Porter stated that many of them deal with demeanor, such as an officer being rude, but they also typically receive a lot of misinformation or miscommunication types of issues, such as those regarding FOI. Chief Porter noted that the new Police Accountability Act is requiring body cameras by July 2022, but GPD hopes to be ahead of the curve. In-car cameras were installed by October 2018, and the body cameras should be in over the next several months.

Mr. Johnson pointed out that they have received questions about what comprises a personnel file. He explained that the statutes outlined what goes into it. Generally, personnel files are used to determine eligibility of employment, promotion, and discipline. Medical information and civilian complaints are filed separately and are not included in the personnel files. Regarding collective bargaining, their contract with the Town's police department is consistent with State of Connecticut labor laws. Mr. Johnson also clarified that Glastonbury has not participated in the Military Surplus program in two years. Prior to that, they had three rifles for ceremonial purposes. They do have a mobile command center, but it was not part of the Military Surplus program.

Chief Porter went over what the Police Accountability Act encompasses. He noted that the bill is expansive. POST is responsible for coming up with the following: standards and requirements; equipment, such as the requirement of body cameras; training and oversight; certifications; and actions in the field. Ms. Tanski asked about qualified immunity. Chief Porter explained that there are still a lot of questions, so he is not comfortable answering that question. Mr. Johnson stated that changes in liability is on everybody's radar screen, so they will look at that very carefully.

Mr. Osgood asked if there are any issues in performance with officers working overtime. Chief Porter said no, there are rules in place that limit the number of hours of overtime an officer can work. The GPD is also fairly well staffed, and they are careful to make sure that officers are not affected by excessive hours. Mr. McChesney asked how many times the Town has been sued in the last few years for police action, if at all. Mr. Johnson stated that they did have one issue which resulted in a settlement, but that was several years ago.

Dr. Beckett thanked both the Town Manager and the Police Chief for their presentation and remarked that he is very proud of the GPD. Mr. Gullotta echoed his comments. He also noted that while the public was not involved in this meeting, due to the nature of the format caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, members of the public can submit a comment through a Town Council meeting, which will then be directed to the Police Chief and will be addressed.

3. Adjournment.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Lilly Torosyan

Lilly Torosyan
Recording Clerk

Thomas Gullotta
Chairman