



SPECIAL MEETING
MINUTES
BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS

Town of Waterford, Connecticut Police Commission Special Meeting

Training Room at the Waterford Police Department

02/24/2022 4:00 PM

Zoom Access

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86834616740>

Meeting ID: 868 3461 6740

Passcode: 068620

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kc4FPW1r67>; +1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

PRESENT: Commissioner James Dimmock Commissioner Mark Gelinias, Commissioner Chris Gamble, Commissioner Thomas Sheridan, First Selectman Robert Brule and Eileen Dugan

ABSENT: N/A

DEPARTMENT: Interim Chief Marc Balestracci, Lt. Timothy Silva, Lt. Nicole VanOverloop, Officer Mark Devine and Secretary Jennifer Anderson

CALL TO ORDER AND ESTABLISH QUORUM:

Chairman Gelinias called the special meeting to order at 4:04 p.m. in the General Meeting Room of the Waterford Police Department. A Quorum was established.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

PUBLIC INPUT: No public input.

MOTION made by Commissioner Sheridan and **SECONDED** by First Selectman Robert Brule to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing the Chief of Police position at 4:05 p.m. **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 4:49 p.m. There were no motions made or actions taken while in Executive Session.

Commissioner Gelinas thanked the three candidates for their participation in the process and advised that it was a difficult decision as they all did so well.

MOTION: First Selectman Brule made a motion to appoint Interim Chief of Police Marc Balestracci to Chief of Police. **SECONDED** by Commissioner Gamble. **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

STATEMENT:

The Board of Police Commissioners congratulates Marc Balestracci upon his appointment as Chief of Police. While the board of Police Commissioners had the ability to open the appointment process to candidates from outside the department, upon careful consideration of what Interim Chief Balestracci brings to the Department, we have declined to do so.

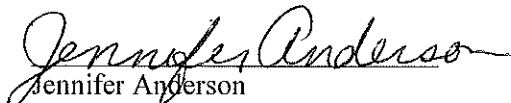
Interim Chief Balestracci has worked his way from Patrolman, to Sergeant, Lieutenant, Interim Chief and now Chief and we believe he will continue to serve the Town of Waterford well. We expect that Interim Chief Balestracci will ensure the continuance of the many positive aspects of our department, such as its reputation in the law enforcement community, its culture of teamwork and camaraderie, and its emphasis on community engagement. We also expect that he will critically analyze the Department's compliance with the overarching requirement to treat all with fairness and equality in an era where relationships between the public and police are complex, and can change quickly. Members of the Board of Police Commissioners have had the opportunity, over about 4 months, to observe and speak with Interim Chief Balestracci, and to learn more about his intentions if appointed Chief. During this time, we have understood Interim Chief Balestracci to be an extremely knowledgeable officer and supervisor, to be at the forefront of the Department's efforts to enhance community engagement (such as his recent pursuit of a comfort K9) and to create a more diverse Department from the ground up, and to be simply a fine person.

As there has been a significant reduction in the number of candidates locally, statewide and nationally applying to become a Police Officer, regardless of ethnicity or gender, the Department has taken several proactive steps, either created or furthered by Interim Chief Balestracci, to promote diversity in applicants. These steps include, but are not limited to, recruiting at 3 colleges in Eastern Connecticut, meeting with Ms. Jean Jordan of the New London NAACP to improve relationships with that organization, implementing intern programs at both the college and high school levels to increase interest in law enforcement, development of a free seminar to assist candidates with their application and interviewing skills and the recent hiring of two Hispanic Community Service Officers. We fully expect that Interim Chief Balestracci not only will keep us updated on these existing efforts, but also will work with the Department to identify or develop additional ways to cast a broad net to attract diverse candidates.

The Board of Police Commissioners values the existing culture and reputation of our Department, and values the need to infuse our Department with more diverse personnel. These values are not mutually exclusive, and, in fact, each complements the other. We've identified Interim Chief Balestracci as the person who will further all of these values. As an internal candidate, he knows what makes the Department tick and what makes it special. As an internal candidate, he knows the very difficulties that the Department has faced in attracting candidates in general, and candidates of diverse background, who are then able to pass the rigorous vetting process. As an internal candidate, he knows the local and state resources available to aid in attracting diverse candidates, and he recognizes the need to continue identifying and pursuing new opportunities. We thank Chief Balestracci, and wish him, the members of the Department and all the future members of the Department, well.

MOTION: made by Commissioner Sheridan and **SECONDED** by Chairman Dimmock to adjourn the meeting at 4:54 p.m. **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by:


Jennifer Anderson
Recording Secretary