The regular meeting of the West Haven Board of Police Commissioners was called to order at 7 p.m. by Chairman Raymond Collins, Ill at Police Headquarters, 200 Saw Mill Road. All those present rose and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

### Attendance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Status</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raymond Collins, Ill, Chairman</td>
<td>present</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paul E. Butler, Vice-Chairman</td>
<td>present</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keith Sweeney</td>
<td>present</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peter BonTempo, Secretary</td>
<td>absent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deborah B. Wright, Pension Board</td>
<td>present</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joseph Perno, Chief of Police</td>
<td>present</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carl Flemming, Interim Deputy Chief</td>
<td>present</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lee Tiernan, Corporation Counsel</td>
<td>present (7:20)</td>
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</tbody>
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### Agenda

Commissioner Butler MOVED to accept the agenda as presented; SECONDED by Commissioner Wright. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED unanimously.

1. **Minutes for Approval**

Commissioner Sweeney MOVED to accept the minutes of January 21, 2020; SECONDED by Commissioner Wright. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED unanimously.

2. **Public Session**

Chairman Collins asked if any member of the public wished to speak.

**Carroll E. Brown, President, West Haven Black Coalition**

I am a 56-and-a-half-year resident of West Haven. I stand before you tonight because of the recent incident with the victim of a shooting and a murder that took place in West Haven. I’m very concerned with the fact that as a taxpayer, knowing that our Police force is not equipped with body cams. I want to lobby all of you, if the Mayor has not asked for body cams, as a 56-year resident I am asking you to consider the body cams that all Police Officers be prepared to wear a body cam.

We don’t know what happened and wouldn’t know what happened if it was not for the State Troopers. A lot took place and everybody is blaming the West Haven Police Department because there were four or five West Haven Police involved. How that incident took place from what we have read and from what we have heard should not have happened. There should not be the consideration of, “We can’t afford body cams, it’s too expensive, taxes are
going to go up." A life was taken. A life was taken. If I must come to every meeting that you have to make you understand that a life was taken, and the money that you spend on salaries, and God knows what else you spend money on, remember that you are there to protect and to serve, and not wearing body cameras, we don't know what happened to that young man. I know what the story tells me. But I'd like to introduce you tonight to Rev. Dr. Boise Kimber, because he has been in our town for the last 72 hours trying to make our Mayor and the people of West Haven understand that something serious happened.

Now, I'm saying, because I am an African-American woman who has always been extremely vocal and outspoken, but had this been an all-black Police force, and the victim was an Irish or Italian, this situation would have gone a different way. Yes, it has racial overtones. Yes, West Haven is suffering from a racial problem. It's always been a racial problem. I may be a long-time resident, but I fought West Haven for many years because of the racial problems that do exist in this town. And so, I'd like you to hear what Rev. Boise Kimber has to say, and the kind of recommendations that he is recommending. We didn't come here to fight tonight, we came to express our concerns. As two African-American leaders, we came to express our concerns for the family.

I thank you, Chief Perno, for meeting with the family last week. We didn't have to drag him out of the Police Department to come down. He knew that Reverend Kimber was in town and wanted to meet, and he came down to City Hall. So, without further ado, before I repeat, I will be your lobbyist if I need to. If she hasn't asked the Commissioners or Board of Alder, or, we are Council people. If she has not gone to them and asked for money for the body cams, if they have not come to you, Chief Perno, as a taxpayer and a long-time resident, I'm asking you to please consider putting it in your budget, because a life was taken by one of our people all but in our city. So if I may introduce Rev. Dr. Boise Kimber from Calvary Baptist Church in New Haven.

Rev. Dr. Boise Kimber, Calvary Baptist Church, New Haven

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and to the Board of Commissioners and to the Chief of Police. I wanted to share with you tonight that there is a public safety problem here in West Haven. When I say there is a public safety problem here, if something happens to a civilian in this city, we would never know the truth about what transpired, because it is a civilian word against an officer's word. And most likely, the officer will be the one who will be heard. The public safety problem here is that a young man was murdered right down the street from this Department. We don't know what transpired; all we know is the fact of what one body camera showed us, and that was with the State Police Department.

I think that it behooves this Department here to move into the 21st century, that you will be able to keep an eye upon your own officers and what they do, what they say, how they deal with the public. The Mayor said today that she did not have the money in her budget. Listen, when you have a public safety problem, you find the money to protect the citizens of your city and of your community.

There needs to be some trauma training with this Department. This Department has to understand how to deescalate. I know you say, "well, we've had those services." You can never get enough of services and practice and learning in any department or any city that

02-04-2020 West Haven BOPC
deals with the public. Urban trauma. I believe that the officers of this West Haven Police Department certainly need to understand what urban trauma is. Urban trauma is dealing with people of a different race, a different ethnicity. And so I come and I rise this evening to say that there is much work that needs to be done with this Department. Let’s look around. How many black, colorful officers do you have on this force? How many black males or females? How many Hispanics do you have? How many Asians do you have? How many Police Officers are there in general that work here in West Haven, and what are we going to do about it?

We cannot sweep this murder under the rug and say that West Haven was not involved in it. There’s not been a comment from the Chairman of the Board. The Mayor put out a small comment the other day. We must take and you must take responsibility of what transpired in this city. A horrific crime.

So, Mr. Chairman, tonight I rise to ask you to lead this Board of Commissioners to begin to get body cameras for this force. That the public will act in a way of safety in this community. Thank you. We’re meeting with the Chief on this Thursday to talk about policies. What are the policies of this Department? What drives this Department? What is the working capital of this Department? When I say, “working,” who do the officers of this town report to? It is the Chief. Who does this Board report to? It is the Mayor, or do you have your own autonomy? Let’s forget about the fact that we don’t have money. There is a public safety problem, you find the money. So, I ask Mr. Chairman that you would lead this Commission to get body cameras, that this community can be safer, as we walk and as we drive in the City of West Haven. Thank you so very much for your time, and for listening this evening.

Chairman Collins replied, thank you for your comments. He asked three times if anyone else wished to address the Board. Being none, he declared the public session closed.

Chairman Collins then stated, this is out of the norm, but I’m going to respond with one specific statement. We cannot comment on an ongoing Police investigation that is out of our jurisdiction, and most importantly, involves another department. This is not West Haven’s issue.

Reverend Kimber responded, Mr. Chairman, I’ll rise and say this is a problem in West Haven. This issue happened in West Haven, and you must take responsibility for what happens on the streets of West Haven.

Chairman Collins stated, again, it’s an ongoing investigation.

Reverend Kimber stated, it is an ongoing investigation, but there are some things that West Haven, and you as the Chairman of the Commission, can do to prevent this ever happening again in this City.

Chairman Collins thanked Rev. Kimber for his comments.

3. Communications

The Commissioners reviewed the K-9 monthly activity report for December, 2019.
4. Report of the Chief

No report.

5. Report of the Deputy Chief

No report.


No report.

7. Old Business

7.1 726 Savin Avenue – Ordinance Violation

Commissioner Sweeney inspected the property today and has an update from the officer who issued the original ticket. He finds there have been no improvements, and that another item has been added to the back yard to make the problem even worse.

Commissioner Sweeney MOVED to impose a fine of $100 per day until the property is brought into compliance, and that a certified letter is sent indicating same. SECONDED by Commissioner Butler. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED unanimously.

7.2 Retirement of Officer Radames Goncê

Commissioner Wright MOVED to TABLE item 7.2 until Corporation Counsel arrives; SECONDED by Commissioner Butler. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED unanimously.

8. New Business

8.1 Disputed Tow – 43 Maple Street – Mr. Mohamad Bawi

Commissioner Sweeney stated, I find no reason to dispute this as the photos show that there was still snow on the car three days after. The vehicle displays tags from Texas; the gentleman has a Connecticut driver’s license from Hamden; he has not changed his address with Motor Vehicles within 48 hours as is required by law.

Commissioner Sweeney MOVED to uphold the tow; SECONDED by Commissioner Wright.

Chief Perno commented, there was no ticket issue; they disputed the tow bill alone. It was listed as an abandoned vehicle and was towed.

A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED unanimously.

02-04-2020 West Haven BOPC
9. Pension Board

9.1 Retirement Pension of Officer Radames Gonce

Commissioner Wright MOVED to TABLE Item 9.1 until Corporation Counsel arrives; SECONDED by Commissioner Butler. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED unanimously.

10. Commissioners Reports

None presented.

RECESS

At 7:15 p.m., the Commissioners observed a five-minute recess.

At 7:20 p.m. the meeting resumed as Corporation Counsel Tiernan had arrived.

7.2 Retirement of Officer Radames Gonce (previously tabled)

Corporation Counsel Tiernan reported that all of proper documentation has been signed, and the medical documentation is in order. He recommended that the Commission rehire Officer Gonce contingent upon him receiving a disability pension and solely for the purpose of receiving a disability pension.

Commissioner MOVED to hire Officer Radames Gonce contingent upon him receiving a disability pension and solely for the purpose of receiving a disability pension, effective February 5, 2020; SECONDED by Commissioner Butler.

Discussion:

Commissioner Wright stated, I am extremely torn about this entire incident. We have discussed this with Corporation Counsel; this Board has gone above and beyond and has done all they could and is now feeling backed into a corner. I believe it’s the best thing for the Commission and the Department.

Corporation Counsel stated, I recommend settling at this level to get rid of a lot of pending litigation, as well as, you can’t have this person back on the force. This, regrettably, is the best course of action.

Commissioner Sweeney stated, I feel the Board fired him with just cause.

A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 3 Yes, 1 No (Sweeney).
9.1 Retirement Pension of Officer Radames Gonce (previously tabled)

Commissioner Wright stated, I've been given the package for the disability retirement of Officer Radames Gonce effective 2/5/2020 at the 55 percent.

Commissioner Collins MOVED to approve the disability retirement package of Officer Radames Gonce, effective February 5, 2020; SECONDED by Commissioner Butler. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 3 Yes, 1 No (Sweeney).

11. Executive Session

No Executive Session was observed.

12. Adjournment

At 7:26 p.m., Commissioner Sweeney MOVED to adjourn; SECONDED by Commissioner Butler. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

[Signature]

Patricia M. Bruder
Secretary