

# TOWN OF WINDSOR, CONNECTICUT

## Special Meeting Notice



**AGENCY:** Health & Safety Committee

**DATE:** October 26, 2016

**TIME:** 6:00 PM

**PLACE:** Town Hall – Ludlow Room

### AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Public Comment
3. \*Discussion of Gun Buy Back program
4. \*Discussion of FY 17 Quarterly Traffic Stop data
5. Staff Reports
6. Approval of Minutes
  - a) \*June 16, 2016
7. Adjournment

\*Backup materials

Public Act 75-312 requires notice of Special Meetings to be posted in the Town Clerk's Office not less than 24 hours prior to the time of such meeting. No other business shall be considered at this meeting than that listed on this Agenda.

## Agenda Item Summary

Date: October 26, 2016

To: Members of the Health & Safety Committee

Prepared By: Don Melanson, Police Chief  
Peter Souza, Town Manager 

Subject: Gun Buyback Program

### Background

The Town Council has requested information relative to the possibility of the town conducting a “gun buyback program.” Gun buyback programs occur on a fairly regular basis in Connecticut’s major cities, such as Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport, and Stamford. These communities have on occasion held buyback programs twice a year. Staff research indicates very few programs being held in Connecticut communities of our size.

### Discussion/Analysis

Most buyback programs provide gift cards in varying amounts depending on the type of firearm turned in. It appears that on average, most programs provide \$200 for a working handgun, \$100 for a rifle and \$400 for an assault rifle. Results from these programs vary, however it is most common that rifles or long guns are turned in, usually at a ratio of 3 rifles for every handgun.

The programs have been funded in various ways. Some have been through public funds while others have been funded through private donations from individuals, foundations and businesses.

It is difficult to determine how successful such a program would be in Windsor. Some of the larger cities in the State with four times the population have had anywhere from 125 to 200+ guns turned in at a single event, while Ridgefield, CT, (25,000 population), had slightly over 100 weapons exchanged. The Ridgefield program in 2013 offered a much higher dollar value for weapons being turned in than those other cities. Norwalk with a population of 88,000 held a buyback program in June 2014. During that program, 20 guns were turned in. The program was funded by \$5,000 in private donations.

As way of background, in February 1994, the Windsor Police Department participated in “Operation Guns for Goods”, a statewide gun buyback program. This month long campaign allowed residents to turn in guns in exchange for \$100 gift certificates for operable firearms and \$50 for non-operable firearms. For the entire month, 60 firearms were turned in, 10 being inoperable.

Currently, the Police Department accepts firearms from residents at any time. Residents can call the police department and arrangements are made to secure the unwanted firearms, ammunition, or any other weapon. Residents use this method several times a year. For instance, this summer on two occasions residents turned over a total of eight weapons (3 shotguns, 4 rifles, and a revolver) they no longer wanted in their homes. When the Police Department takes custody of these weapons, they are sent to the Connecticut State Police Crime Lab to be destroyed.

Staff has reached out to several neighboring communities to inquire if they have or are planning to host such a program. Of the five communities contacted, only one indicated they had held a program and that was 16 years ago. None of them indicated they have plans to host a program in the future.

Financial Impact

The cost of holding such a program would involve police personnel, the cost of providing gift cards as well as marketing costs. The overtime costs for police staffing (1 supervisor and 1 officer) would be approximately \$1,050. The cost for gift cards would be \$3,400 assuming 20 rifles/shotguns @ \$100 each and 7 handguns @ \$200 each are turned in. Therefore the total estimated cost of the event could be approximately \$4,750 including \$300 for printing/miscellaneous expenses.

Other Board Action

None

Recommendations

This item is presented for information purposes only.

## Agenda Item Summary

Date: October 26, 2016

To: Members of the Health & Safety Committee

Prepared By: Donald Melanson, Chief of Police

Reviewed By: Peter Souza, Town Manager 

Subject: Traffic Stop Data

### Background

At the June 2016 Health and Safety Committee meeting, staff was requested to provide information on traffic stop data on a quarterly basis during FY 17. An overview of the first quarter traffic stops is provided below in the Discussion / Analysis section.

As background, Central Connecticut State University (CCSU), in conjunction with the State Office of Policy and Management (OPM), has produced two state wide reports entitled "Traffic Stop Data Analysis and Findings." One was for the period October 2013 through September 2014 and the second was for the period October 2014 through September 2015.

The first report, released in April 2015, identified the Windsor Police Department (WPD) traffic stop data as being disparate to certain benchmarks. However, the disparities did not reach a threshold warranting a full follow-up analysis by CCSU.

The May 2016 report covered the 12 month period from October 1, 2014 through September 30, 2015. The second report calls for the WPD to undergo a follow-up analysis by CCSU staff because of three factors: 1) our composite synthetic control test results; 2) our descriptive benchmark test results; and 3) the data from the first report. While none of these results taken individually would be sufficient to trigger a full follow-up analysis, when they are considered together, they make a sufficient case for CCSU staff to perform such an analysis.

The police department took several steps after the reports were released. These included:

- WPD supervisory staff, the Town Manager and the Assistant Town Manager met with CCSU staff in an effort to better understand the report, Windsor's numbers and to get suggestions for appropriate staff training.
- All WPD supervisory staff and officers attended Fair and Impartial Policing training classes held at various dates from May through July 2015. All new officers hired attend similar training during their academy and field training.
- Officers received re-training on data input procedures in May 2015.
- Implementation of a new computer aided dispatch and records management system which improved integration of field reporting software.

### Discussion/Analysis

From July 1, 2016 through September 30, 2016, WPD made 1,116 Motor Vehicle stops. Of these stops, 34% were Windsor residents. Eighty-one percent (81%) of those stopped were issued either verbal or written warnings for their violations. Fourteen percent (14%) were issued infractions and four percent (4%) were either issued summons to court or taken into custody for criminal charges. The WPD searched the vehicles on just over two percent (26 vehicles) of these stops and found contraband on twenty-seven percent (27%) of the searches.

The chart below compares the racial composition of those stopped during the first quarter with those stopped in the 2014 – 2015 CCSU full year report:

<u>1<sup>st</sup> Qtr. FY 17</u>	<u>2014-2015 Report</u>
• 38 % White	45 %
• 46 % Black	44 %
• 12 % Hispanic	9 %
• 4 % other	2 %

In the FY17 first quarter report, sixty-three percent (63%) of the drivers were male and 37% of the drivers were female. Almost 90% of the FY17 traffic stops lasted less than 15 minutes.

In addition, earlier this month WPD supervisory staff, the Town Manager and the Assistant Town Manager met with CCSU staff to begin a more detailed review and analysis of the traffic stop data. This more detailed analysis included mapping of WPD traffic stops, a comparison of traffic stop data to census tract data (2010 US Census), review of geographic factors that affect the driving population, including roadway characteristics such as state roads, shopping areas, schools, and business/commercial areas. Additional factors to be reviewed include officer staffing and deployments, taking into consideration calls for service data and motor vehicle accident data. CCSU and town staff also discussed analyzing traffic stop data at the individual officer level to determine if a small group of officers were driving data disparities.

In evaluating the more detailed information provided by CCSU, there are several initial observations that can be made from the data. Some of these observations include:

- Almost two-thirds (64%) of traffic stops in Windsor involved drivers that are not Windsor residents. This matches the police department's data related to motor vehicle crashes investigated by WPD, where approximately two-thirds of drivers involved in accidents in Windsor involve drivers who are not Windsor residents.
- The majority of traffic stops occurred along the state roads in Windsor, including Routes 159, 218, 315, 75, and 178. They also occurred near the on and off ramps of the town's access points for Interstate 91, 291 and Route 20.
- CCSU identified a greater proportion of traffic stops along the southern portion of Route 159 and the Route 218 corridor. Police calls for service and motor vehicle accident data is in correlation with this increase in police presence. A discussion of the area included the increased traffic due to I-91 and I-218 on and off ramps along with the traffic into the Windsor Shopping Plaza.
- CCSU identified three officers as having disparities in traffic stop data compared to similar stops made by other officers in Windsor. Although the disparities do not appear to be great, we will work with CCSU to review this observation in more detail in the coming months.

- CCSU staff reviewed vehicle search data in comparison to what they have seen in other jurisdictions. Vehicle searches are categorized into three categories, Inventory, Consent, and Other. An inventory search is conducted whenever WPD tows a vehicle due to enforcement action. A consent search is when an officer asks the driver of the vehicle permission to search a vehicle. The “Other” category is when the officer has probable cause to search a vehicle. CCSU staff did not express concerns that WPD is searching vehicles inappropriately. The WPD does not use motor vehicle stops as pre-textual basis to search vehicles for contraband.
- Initial discussions with CCSU staff indicate that the disparities identified in traffic stop data may be due to pass through traffic from the multiple highway on and off ramps as well as the increased traffic to shopping and business / commercial areas.

The Police Department will continue to work with CCSU staff to finalize the review of the 2014-2015 traffic stop data. CCSU staff has indicated a final report is expected by late this coming winter. The department will also continue to monitor traffic stop data throughout the year.

Financial Impact

None

Other Board Action

None

Recommendations

This item is presented for information purposes only. No action is requested of the committee.

Attachments

None

**TOWN OF WINDSOR  
HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE  
SPECIAL MEETING  
JUNE 16, 2016  
TOWN HALL – LUDLOW ROOM**

**UNAPPROVED MINUTES**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairwoman Jenkins called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Councilors Simon and Govoni were present. Town Manager Peter Souza, Police Chief Don Melanson and Assistant Town Manager Jonathan Luiz were also present.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Ruth Fahrbach of 592 Poquonock Avenue spoke in favor of the Town requiring that dogs be leashed at Northwest Park.

**3. DISCUSSION OF ANIMAL CONTROL ORDINANCE (Section 12-65)**

Town Manager Souza briefly discussed the history of the ordinance and touched upon the details in the agenda item summary provided to members of the Health and Safety Committee.

Councilor Simon said that based on the data provided, his initial thought is that there does not exist a significant problem that requires fixing.

Councilor Jenkins said her initial thought on the matter is that perhaps a longer leash should be required so that the state ordinance is matched. She questioned whether sufficient signage exists at the moment regarding current obligations of people that take their dogs to Northwest Park.

Councilor Govoni said that it is the dog's nature to chase certain things and animals. He said it is better for both dog and owner to have a requirement that the dogs at Northwest Park be on a leash.

In response to a question, Police Chief Melanson said the failure to maintain control of a dog, even when the dog may under the law be off the leash at Northwest Park, can result in an infraction being issued.

Councilor Simon asked how many dog bite complaints there are in town. Chief Melanson said very few.

Chairwoman Jenkins put forth the idea of having the dogs leashed in the park with a fifteen foot retractable leash, and also having additional signage in Northwest Park that states the town's requirements of dog owners. Chairwoman Jenkins pointed out that Northwest Park features a dog park and that other public spaces do not.

Councilor Govoni said he is also concerned about dogs being off leash at the smaller parks in town because at small parks there is a greater chance of people interacting with dogs.

Chairwoman Jenkins said that based on the data provided, she does not see this as a problem that needs fixing.

Councilor Simon said he is also not convinced of the need to change the ordinance.

Councilor Govoni inquired about what other towns allow at their public parks. Chief Melanson said it is all across the board with respect to what other municipalities allow.

Councilor Simon inquired as to the frequency of violations of the ordinance. Chief Melanson explained that very few citations have been issued for violation.

Chairwoman Jenkins inquired about the size of Northwest Park. Town Manager Souza said the size of the Park is approximately 550 acres.

Chairwoman Jenkins said she thinks the matter is one that requires common sense of dog owners.

Councilor Simon inquired about existing signage at Northwest Park. Town Manager Souza said he recalls at least one sign at Northwest Park on the subject of dogs.

Councilor Simon said he is not convinced that a change to the ordinance is warranted.

Councilor Govoni said he would like to start with changing the ordinance so that only Northwest Park has a leash requirement.

Councilor Jenkins suggested enforcing the existing ordinance via additional signage at Northwest Park and perhaps having a designated area at Northwest Park where dogs could be off leash. Town Manager Souza noted that while there are a variety ways to inform the public of the leash requirements at Northwest Park, additional signage might not be the best way to inform people.

Chairwoman Jenkins said she would plan to provide a summary update of tonight's discussion to the full Town Council at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

#### **4. DISCUSSION OF STATE OF CONNECTICUT TRAFFIC STOP ANALYSIS STUDY**

Town Manager Souza indicated the State of Connecticut has released the traffic stop analysis study for the period October 2014 through September 2015 and also outlined the

fair and impartial policing training the Windsor Police Department staff went through last summer, and the improvements to data recording that the department has made as a result of better training and new software.

Chairwoman Jenkins asked what types of data submissions may have been overlooked before. Chief Melanson said he thinks officers may have incorrectly entered data in the past due to lack of training and due to the complexities of previous software reporting systems.

Chairwoman Jenkins asked if the software that we presently use can generate reports related to demographics of persons stopped for traffic violations. Chief Melanson distributed a report generated for the month of June related to traffic stops which included demographic information.

Councilor Simon asked if the data presented could be broken down further by age group. Chief Melanson said that he is not sure at this time, since the department has been using the software for about one month.

Councilor Simon said the report provided tonight indicates that the department had a greater propensity to give out warnings to whites and give out tickets to blacks. Councilor Simon said that the real issue is the bias that every single person carries within themselves as a result of living in this society. He said that implicit bias is quite likely what is behind the results of the report. Town Manager Souza and Police Chief Melanson said that the biggest part of the fair and impartial policing training course was on the subject of implicit bias.

Councilor Simon asked about whether or not the police staff undergoes implicit bias training on a repeated basis. Chief Melanson answered yes. He said that the topic of implicit bias is periodically incorporated into the daily roll calls at shift change.

Councilor Jenkins asked if the computer system can drill down to the officer level. Chief Melanson said he is not sure if the town's software can break down the data to the officer level. Chief Melanson said that CCSU does have the ability to drill down to the officer level.

Councilor Govoni said that license plate scanning technologies can provide a neutral way of policing.

Councilor Simon said that what tends to happen is that people's unconscious thinking about things influences their behavior. Councilor Simon said even a black officer could act in a biased manner towards black citizens.

Chairwoman Jenkins said she thinks implicit bias should be discussed often with the officers and that implicit bias should not go to the wayside. Chief Melanson said the department is developing an integrated system to track such items as citizen complaints and use of force complaints against officers. Chief Melanson explained that the tracked information could then perhaps be paired with data from CCSU that drills down to the officer level. Chief Melanson noted that CCSU's estimated driving data is based on a host of data sets with some from the 2010 census.

Chairwoman Jenkins asked what would be the level of discipline that could be brought upon an officer that is not compliant with respect to the report. Chief Melanson said that police chiefs are wrestling with that question right now, but that the initial focus would be on getting the officer training.

Councilor Simon said there is no need to wait for CCSU to issue another report when the Windsor Police Department could run its own reports on a periodic basis.

Councilor Jenkins asked for an explanation of the "synthetic control" test. Town Manager Souza and Police Chief Melanson indicated this is a new element in CCSU's methodology and replaces the previous "peer town" test. The test is a complex formula that includes variables such as town demographics, land area, and traffic stop data. Town Manager Souza said he expects CCSU staff to meet with town staff in the coming months to begin a more in-depth review of Windsor's traffic stop data.

Councilor Jenkins asked if other actions are tracked similarly to traffic stops. Police Chief Melanson said that the department does gather arrestee demographic information.

Councilor Simon asked how an officer develops a preference to enforce speeding as opposed to some other type of offense. Chief Melanson explained that every officer is different and that the difference exists because of experiences and desires.

Town Manager Souza said he expects to provide the Health and Safety Committee with more information about CCSU's report, along with FY 17 traffic stop data after the first of the year.

## **5. STAFF REPORTS**

Town Manager Souza said that the new CAD program has been up and running for about thirty days.

Town Manager Souza noted that three police officer recruits are in the police academy and will be entering field training program late summer / early fall. Town Manager Souza said there are currently two open officer positions, that one employment offer has been made and another candidate is undergoing a background check.

Chief Melanson said one dispatcher that was hired is on his own now and that another dispatcher is undergoing training. Town Manager Souza explained that one full time dispatcher recently resigned due to a state ruling about retirement benefits.

Chairwoman Jenkins inquired about the status of vehicles. Town Manager Souza said the procurement process for new vehicles would begin shortly now that the FY 17 budget has been approved.

**6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

a) January 21, 2016

Councilor Simon MOVED and Councilor Govoni seconded to approve the unapproved minutes of the January 21, 2016 minutes of the Health and Safety Committee with changes.

The motion passed 3-0-0

**7. ADJOURMENT**

Councilor Simon MOVED and Councilor Govoni seconded to adjourn at 8:35 p.m.

The motion passed 3-0-0

Respectfully submitted by,

Jonathan Luiz, Assistant Town Manager