



**TOWN OF WINDSOR  
HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE  
SPECIAL MEETING  
JANUARY 29, 2024  
HYBRID MEETING**

**APPROVED MINUTES**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Councilor Mary Armstrong, Chair of the Health & Safety Committee, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. with Councilor Ojala Naeem and Councilor Lenworth Walker (via zoom) present.

Staff Present: Peter Souza, Town Manager, Scott Colby, Assistant Town Manager and Donald Melanson, Police Chief

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT - None**

**3. REVIEW OF FY 24 TRAFFIC SAFETY AND ENFORCEMENT DATA**

Donald Melanson, Chief of Police stated the Police Department continues to monitor traffic stop data to identify if any potential patterns of racial profiling or bias from police officers occur.

The latest traffic stop data report did highlight positive trends by our Police Department. The Windsor Police was recognized as the top municipal police agency with the highest motor vehicle stop rate per 1,000 residents at 461 stops per 1,000 residents (16+ population). This rate was 57% higher than the next closest municipality (Orange PD at 292 stops / 1000). Windsor was also recognized as being in the top ten departments in the state (#9) for percentage of stops related to speeding at 60.5%.

Below are a few statistics from overall traffic stop information for the first half of FY24:

- A total of 2,588 traffic stops were made from July 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023.
  - July 2023: 382 MV stops
  - August 2023: 863 MV stops
  - September 2023: 490 MV stops
  - October 2023: 357 MV stops
  - November 2023: 381 MV stops
  - December 2023: 497 MV stops
- Windsor residents accounted for 29.9% of the traffic stops made in this period, which is slightly less than previous periods.
- Moving violations (Speeding, Red light, Distracted Driving, etc.) accounted for 86.4% of the MV stops made.

As reported in the past, speeding is one of the most common complaints or calls for service the Police Department receives. All officers are expected to conduct traffic enforcement activities in addition to responding to a wide range of calls for service throughout their shift.

Traffic enforcement remains a priority. As indicated in the latest Traffic Stop Data Analysis and Findings report (October 2023), our department continues to be in the top tier in the state for MV stops per capita.

Chief Melanson explained the calculation errors on the attachment. He went through the data found on the report.

Councilor Naeem asked about the 'general' versus 'blind' categories on the attachment. Chief Melanson explained 'blind' would be something that the officer catches at a distance via laser or radar such as a vehicle that is 1,000-2,000 feet away. 'General' enforcement would be where an officer is much closer and watching an intersection for example.

Councilor Armstrong asked under the 'enforcement' category, what is the N/A column? Chief Melanson said the N/A stands for the authority to search. Of the stops under that category, those are where no searches occurred on those stops.

Councilor Armstrong stated speeding is often one of the concerns she hears from residents. Racial profiling seems to be black, male and female. Is that because of the population of the traffic? When looking at the map, there seems to be a population that those stops were made in a certain part of town. Chief Melanson responded that most of the stops are dependent on officer deployment. We have five districts in town, two which are on the southern portion, one to the east of Windsor Avenue and one to the west of Windsor Avenue, the center area and two bigger areas up north which are less densely populated. 85% to 90% of the motor vehicle stops are occurring on the collector roads such as the state highways like Route 159 (Windsor Avenue) all the way past Palisado Avenue and Route 75, Route 305 and Route 218. That is where the officers are deploying to reduce speeding on those roads.

Councilor Armstrong said she noticed that there are 61 stops per 6,000 residents. Is that high for Windsor? Chief Melanson said those are total motor vehicle stops that were made. Those aren't just resident stops, but a category of the amount of stops we make based on the population of the town. Usually the number of sworn officers in a community is based on the population. 65%-70% of the stops are for those that don't live in Windsor but are travelling through Windsor.

#### **4. OVERVIEW OF POLICE DEPARTMENT CALLS FOR SERVICE ACTIVITY**

Prior to October 2020, the Police Department did not make crime and calls for service data available to the public in a consistent manner. After public inquiry and with guidance from the Health & Safety Committee, the department began publishing monthly data

related to reportable crimes, traffic stops, medical calls, and mental health calls for service on the Police Department web page.

Interpreting police crime data can be a complex and nuanced task. Different individuals can arrive at varied conclusions based on their unique perspectives and contexts. Without a thorough understanding of the circumstances surrounding the data, it becomes challenging to form accurate and unbiased interpretations. For instance, a statistical increase in reported crimes in a certain area might be perceived as indicative of rising criminal activity by some, while others may attribute it to enhanced law enforcement efforts or changes in reporting practices. Additionally, factors such as socioeconomic conditions, demographics, and historical context can greatly influence how people interpret crime data. The lack of contextual information may lead to divergent views on the severity of an issue or the effectiveness of policing strategies. This highlights the importance of considering the broader context when analyzing and discussing police crime statistics.

Town Manager Souza said Windsor continues to be a safe community relative to the overall state wide measures such as “Crimes against Persons” and “Crimes against Property” (see definitions below). Violent crime continues to remain at a low level. Based on statewide data for 2022, Windsor’s rate of “Crimes against Persons” is 3.88 per 1,000 residents, which is much lower than the statewide rate of 8.87 per 1,000 residents. The rate for “Crimes against Property” in Windsor is 23.2 per 1,000 residents, which is slightly lower than the statewide rate of 24.9 per 1,000 residents.

The Police Department has worked with the town’s information technology department to develop a more interactive web-based crime and calls for service data. This dashboard allows users to view police calls for service in a variety of formats using various filters to drill down to view specific data that may interest them. Attached is a screen shot of the calls for service dashboards. We will demonstrate the interactive dashboard at the committee meeting.

It is important to note that because the data is up to date, there is the possibility that as an investigation progresses, it may later be determined that a crime did not actually occur or that a different type of crime occurred. Therefore, there is a disclaimer on the dashboard that states “.... represents how the call was dispatched and/or investigated but doesn’t indicate that an offense was actually committed.”

Town Manager Souza asked Chief Melanson if the ‘larcenies’ are related to shop lifting type of crimes. Chief Melanson stated that 75%-80% of the larcenies can be contributed to shop lifting.

Councilor Naeem asked if organizations that have shop lifters call the Police. Chief Melanson responded these organizations don’t have security there all the time, but they do have several cameras. Many times, they will do an inventory and identify a certain item that is missing. Once that happens, they will view the cameras, identify it, research it and then bring it to the Police Department for enforcement.

Councilor Armstrong asked about ‘invading.’ How effective is the Police Department in that area? Chief Melanson said it all depends. If they can rely on a description or license plate, that is helpful. Sometimes they don’t have a license plate but they can rely on the fixed LPR cameras and see if any cars with that description have gone by that location. The officers can then review that information and get some potential leads.

Councilor Armstrong asked about the medical calls. How does the Police assist with them? Chief Melanson stated that officers are trained at the EMR level which is an Emergency Medical Responder. Officers carry AED’s, medical kits, oxygen, etc. to respond to these calls to start providing medical aid upon arrival at the scene.

Councilor Armstrong said that Chief Melanson had mentioned a website. What is that website? Town Manager Souza showed what the website (interactive dashboard) looks like at this point. It is not yet live. Chief Melanson explained how the interactive dashboard works to the group.

The group asked some questions related to the dashboard.

Town Manager Souza said the dashboard will be live by mid-month in February.

## **5. DISCUSSION REGARDING REPLACEMENT OF CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION VAN**

Chief Melanson stated the Police Department has been researching options to replace the crime scene van. This van would store a plethora of equipment that assists in identifying, collecting and preserving evidence at crime scenes. It also has tools and lighting available to assist detectives at many different types of incidents. Some of the equipment that would be placed on this vehicle include:

- Personal Protective Equipment
- Digital cameras w/ tripod
- Evidence marker number tents
- Scene lighting with stands
- Generator
- Extension cords and reels
- Power and hand tools
- Soil Screener
- Metal detector
- Fingerprint development kits
- Portable fingerprint fuming kit
- Post-mortem fingerprint collection kit
- Impression collection tools (footwear, tire tracks, etc.)
- Snow cast impression kit
- Alternative lighting source kit
- Laser trajectory kit

- DNA sample collection kit
- Evidence packaging materials
- Laptop computer
- Portable printer/scanner
- Traffic cones

These specialized supplies and equipment are a significant financial investment. A Crime Scene Response Vehicle is designed to carry and store this equipment to provide an organized and efficient response by our detectives.

A new crime scene response vehicle would provide:

- Extensive storage for the equipment listed above
- Power generator
- Refrigerator for evidence storage
- Two interior workstations
- Awning for protected exterior work
- Exterior scene lighting,

After conducting research, a committee comprised of supervisory and detective personnel determined that a high top transit style van would best meet the needs as a replacement vehicle.

Chief Melanson added that at this time, it looks like the vehicle will cost approximately \$180,000-\$190,000 and equipment would be \$25,000.

Town Manager Souza stated there are a couple of different sources for funding. The Police Department has a number of vacancies in FY 24. Part of the money for the van can come from unexpended money from the General Fund. There is also what we refer to as the 'Private Duty' fund. When a police officer needs to be on the scene for traffic management, those costs are paid 100% by the contractor. Out of that, we pay the officer at their rate, but the town receives an on-site per hour administrative fee and then if there is need for a vehicle, the officer will use a private vehicle or a town cruiser. There is also a charge for the vehicle. Over time, that fund has accumulated funds. We do use that fund each year to pay for two replacement vehicles. We would like to use some of these funds to purchase the crime van as well as the partial year savings. This request will be going to the Council in February or early March.

Councilor Naeem asked how often the van would get utilized. Chief Melanson said it would be used 5-10 times per month.

Councilor Naeem asked what they are currently doing without a crime van. Chief Melanson said the officers respond to the station, take the different kits they believe they will need and respond to the scene. If they think they need something else than what was originally brought to the scene, they would need to send someone to the Police Department to get that equipment/item.

Councilor Naeem questioned what is the current balance of the private duty fund? Town Manager Souza said it is approximately \$550,000.

Councilor Walker stated this vehicle is needed and he explained why.

Councilor Armstrong commented that sooner rather than later would be good for the Town Council to review this request.

## **6. STAFF REPORTS**

Town Manager Souza said we are continuing, on a staff level, to review our different speed and accident data collected in relationship to developing a plan to come back to the Council regarding using cameras for traffic enforcement.

Town Manager Souza said staff met with a number of residents that live in the town center along Windsor Avenue south of St. Gabe's Church. When the town had the public information meeting regarding the road diet, a number of citizens stated their concerns about Route 159. These individuals live between Sycamore and Park Avenue. We had a meeting with this group and reached out to the State DOT to get some information from them as well since it is a state road. We will be looking at traffic information regarding speeding, accidents, and volumes over the course of the last 3-5 years. Our plan is to have a conversation with the DOT and get their direction on how we can help to slow down the traffic at this location.

Town Manager Souza stated we continue to work with the EMS in three primary areas. We are working with them regarding their data collection and on creating a dashboard so we can look at calls of service and how many calls are being transferred to mutual aid out of town, response time, etc. Secondly, we are monitoring the budget. It looks like they are in good shape for the first six months of this fiscal year. Thirdly, he's had one or two conversations about the service agreements with EMS. They are all at different stages of development. He is hoping in March we will be coming before the Council with an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding). He said that Dan Moylan, President of the Ambulance Association, said they are making progress in filling their vacancies. They have had 5 or 6 offers for two paramedics and a range of EMTs.

Councilor Naeem asked about the board membership for EMS and how active they are being now. Town Manager Souza said they had a board meeting and are updating their by-laws. He is not sure of the outcome of that. He will check with Mr. Moylan in a couple of weeks to see where they stand with that.

Town Manager Souza said the Police Department currently has 6 of the stationary license plate readers. The vendor's name goes by the name of FLOCK. We will be interchanging the terms FLOCK with LPRs during discussion. These are similar to what we currently have in our cruisers as they will read the license plate. Once that information is received, it will go into a national database that gives us a 'hit' if the car is reported stolen or had

some other sort of infraction tied to that license plate. This tool has been well utilized by the town's officers. There was some conversation in late summer/early fall about expanding and adding that as a tool. There is also the same conversation of a shot-spotter or locator which would see the more dense communities, like Hartford. He and the Chief think that because of the density, the per square miles in town, that type of technology is not well suited for the Town of Windsor. It is also quite expensive. Chief Melanson is looking to see if we can expand the number of stationary license plate readers that we have.

Councilor Naeem stated it would be helpful with that proposal to also understand what happens with that data. Chief Melanson said that one of the reasons we chose this vendor is because it does not sell the data. They will maintain the location data for 30 days. After 30 days, it gets wiped. It is a rolling 30 days. He gave an example of how it can be used.

Councilor Armstrong asked what a license plate reader is and how it works. Chief Melanson said it is a camera that is on the side of the road and it takes a picture of the license plate as the car goes by. It's focused on the license plate only. It's also an infrared camera so it captures information both at night and during the day. Any time there is a stolen vehicle, it is added to the national database. So when a car goes by, the camera will pick up the license plate and cross reference it against a list that is in the national database to see if it matches any of that information. If it matches, it will send an alert to the officers.

Councilor Armstrong asked about the shot spotter. Is that for when shots are fired? Town Manager Souza said yes.

## **7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a) August 14, 2023 Special Meeting

MOVED by Councilor Naeem, seconded by Councilor Walker to approve the unapproved minutes of the August 14, 2023 special meeting as presented.

Motion Passed 3-0-0

## **8. ADJOURNMENT**

MOVED by Councilor Naeem, seconded by Councilor Walker, to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

Motion Passed 3-0-0

Respectfully submitted by,

Helene Albert, Recording Secretary