

**HIGH POINT CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
(Virtual Meeting)
June 1, 2020- 4:00 P.M.
3RD FLOOR LOBBY CONFERENCE ROOM #302**

MINUTES

In order to maintain the health, safety, and well-being of our residents, staff, and the City Council, this meeting was conducted electronically. As part of the city of High Point's COVID-19 Mitigation efforts, in-person attendance was not allowed at this meeting. Instead, the meeting was live-streamed and a link was provided to the public to listen to the meeting as it was being live-streamed. www.HighPointNC.gov/VirtualPublicMeeting

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Wagner called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Following a roll call vote for attendance, the following were identified as being present:

Mayor Jay W. Wagner (physically present)
Mayor Pro Tem Christopher Williams- Ward 2 (physically present)
Council Member Tyrone Johnson- At Large (physically present)
Council Member Britt Moore- At Large (remote participation)
Council Member Cyril Jefferson- Ward 1 (physically present)
Council Member Monica Peters- Ward 3 (physically present)
Council Member Wesley Hudson- Ward 4 (remote participation)
Council Member Victor Jones- Ward 5 (remote participation)
Council Member Michael Holmes- Ward 6 (remote participation)

The following staff members were **physically present**:

Ken Shultz, Chief of Police; Lisa Vierling, City Clerk

The following staff members **participated remotely**:

JoAnne Carlyle, City Attorney; Mary Brooks, Deputy City Clerk; and Robby Stone, Assistant Public Services Director

PRESENTATION OF ITEMS

2020-185

Update from the High Point Police Department on Crime Statistics

Police Chief Kenneth Shultz will provide an update to the City Council on crime statistics in High Point.

Chief Shultz stated that statistics say a lot about effort, commitment, officers, and partners and the numbers are indicative of their dedication and efforts.

The Chief provided some statistics from the 2020 Crime Trend through Week 22. Overall, he reported a 11% reduction in total Impact Crimes as compared to last year. The city has had two (2) homicides so far this year, compared to eight (8) last year at this time. He reported they have seen an uptick in the number of aggravated assaults and robberies and spoke to how this is unusual and also spoke to how the current trend is robbing individuals after arranging to meet on social media apps for either sex or to sell an item.

The current trend indicates that violence is on the rise again. The department has seen a lot of larceny of autos and numerous weapons are being stolen out of cars. Chief Shultz advised that the biggest challenge attributing to the motor vehicle theft/crime is unlocked and unattended running vehicles stolen by groups of juvenile offenders from various locations in the Triad. Approximately 40 firearms have been stolen from unlocked vehicles and over \$170,000 in personal property.

Regarding gang activity in High Point, the Chief advised that the department continues to track two major gang groups that led to spikes in crime and back and forth violence. One group has over 22 validated gang members and 19 associates, while the other group has over 11 validated members and 12 associates. There are three individual gang members that are major drivers for the crime that is occurring in High Point, all of which have been through the Violent Crimes Task Force and were all called in to participate in the Focused Deterrence/Notified Offenders Call-Ins.

Seizure of illegal weapons has increased 86% and the Chief spoke to how the gun investigation efforts continue to be part of their diligence to stop violence in the city. He reported that narcotics/opioids continue to be a major ongoing problem resulting in an increase in Opioid deaths the last three months and spoke to the need to work on the education side, treatment side, and how enforcement is needed. The Narcotics Vice unit's focus is on heroin. Over the last six weeks, the unit has executed four (4) search warrants resulting in the seizure of 13 firearms because they were used in connection with illegal narcotics or the possessor was a convicted felon or because the guns were stolen.

Addressing the effects of COVID-19 on the criminal activity, the Chief advised that they have seen a 25% reduction in calls for service because of the businesses not being in operation and people staying at home. He stated they do, however, have concerns about an increase in domestic violence/partner violence situations as they continue to see issues.

Fair and Impartial Policing in North Carolina

Chief Shultz spoke to the issues regarding the Minnesota incident involving the death of George Floyd, who died while in police custody and how ideas are now surfacing for

police reform. He stated that North Carolina is extremely progressive in standards and the required training for police officers having a 34-member board of professionals called the NC Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission. The board assures that all of the State's criminal justice officers are both competent and ethical in the conduct of their duties.

He proceeded to share some statistics for the High Point Police Department Discipline and Accountability for the period since he has been the Police Chief (2016-2020) and assured Council that he does take discipline and accountability of his officers very seriously.

He mentioned the six (6) pillars of effective policing that were identified in the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing report and implementation plan that was released in May of 2015 that promote fair and impartial policing/implicit bias crisis intervention training and de-escalation techniques because a large number of calls involve mental illness.

The six (6) building blocks of Community Policing identified in the report were:

1. Building Trust
2. Policy
3. Technology
4. Crime Reduction
5. Training
6. Officer Wellness and Safety

The Task Force addressed and discussed the training pillar in depth because of the skills and knowledge required for officers to deal with these needs in-depth. (i.e. community policing and problem-solving principles; interpersonal and communication skills; bias awareness; scenario-based, situational decision making; crisis intervention; procedural justice and impartial policing; trauma and victim services; mental health issues; analytical research and technology; languages and cultural responsiveness).

Chief Shultz advised that the following mandated training is required for officers:

- ✓ Firearms Training and Qualification (4 hours)
- ✓ Legal Updates (4 hours)
- ✓ Strategies to Improve Law Enforcement Interactions and Relationships with Minority Youth (2 hours)
- ✓ Equality in Policing (4 hours)
- ✓ Communication Skills with Persons in Crisis (4 hours)
- ✓ Law Enforcement Intelligence Updates (2 hours)
- ✓ Officer Safety: Surviving Planned Attacks Against Law Enforcement Officers (4 hours)
- ✓ Leadership Through Community Partnerships (2 hours)

The Chief shared some North Carolina Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) Trends for the period of 2013-2016 that shows a drastic drop in the number of students going through the BLET program (2,713 went through the program in 2013, while only 1,067 were part of the BLET program in 2016). Some of the recruitment and retention challenges that are preventing applicants from getting approved are:

- ✓ Drug use
- ✓ Debt
- ✓ Obesity (general physical condition)
- ✓ Generational Preferences
- ✓ “Police are a Dying Breed”
- ✓ Pay
- ✓ Societal Attitude/Perception of Police

At the conclusion of his presentation, Chief Shultz provided an update on recent events that took place in Greensboro and High Point during demonstrations tied to George Floyd’s death. He shared the following:

- ✓ High Point provided mutual aid to Greensboro during the unrest and activity that took place in downtown Greensboro as part of the demonstrations on Saturday, May 30th. Our officers relieved Greensboro officers from 1:00 a.m. to 5:00 a.m.
- ✓ Demonstration in High Point on Sunday, May 31st involving a group marching down S. Main Street.
- ✓ High Point Police were called to the Walmart on S. Main Street later that evening where 40-50 people used forced entry, grabbed merchandise and fled.
- ✓ ABC Store on Wendover Avenue was broken into; alcohol stolen.

Some other businesses that experienced damages were located at 131 W. Commerce; 118 S. Main Street; Penny Path Café; Grocery store at 1924 English Road, various showrooms downtown, etc.... The Chief spoke to getting the message out that the High Point Police Department does not condone Civil Rights violations and unfair justice and he spoke to the importance of people supporting officers as they are doing their jobs to protect everyone.

Council Member Peters asked about the percentage of those protesting peacefully versus those that are rioting. Chief Shultz stated he was not aware of the numbers, but that definitely is not the message that needs to be conveyed. Council Member Peters offered support for the Police Department in efforts to make the rioting stop. Chief Shultz advised that people are coming in from other areas with a motive to destroy property and causing all kinds of problems.

Mayor Wagner commended Chief Shultz for listening to the people and for the restraint used when they showed up at the Police Department on Leonard Avenue on

Sunday, May 31st. He applauded the professionalism of Chief Shultz and his department.

Council Member Jefferson thanked the Chief for the information shared today and for what he communicated at the Police Department yesterday and commended him for actually talking to the people without any barriers in between. He thanked the Chief for very quickly denouncing what happened and for making it clear that is not what his officers do. Council Member Jefferson shared it is his hope that better relationship building between the residents and law enforcement will continue. Chief Shultz agreed and stated the safety and success of our community certainly depends on it.

2020-184 Closed Session- Property Acquisition

The City Council is requested to go into Closed Session pursuant to N.C. General Statute 143-318.11(a)(5) for property acquisition.

At 4:55 p.m., Mayor Pro Tem Williams moved to go into Closed Session pursuant to N.C. General Statute 143-318.11(a)(5) for property acquisition. Council Member Johnson made a second the motion. Following a roll call vote by the Mayor, the motion carried by the following unanimous 9-0 vote:

Aye (9): Mayor Wagner, Mayor Pro Tem Williams, Council Member Johnson, Council Member Moore, Council Member Jefferson, Council Member Peters, Council Member Hudson, Council Member Jones, and Council Member Holmes

Upon reconvening into Open Session at 5:28 p.m., Mayor Wagner announced there would be no action taken as a result of the Closed Session.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:28 p.m. upon motion duly made by Council Member Jefferson and second by Mayor Pro Tem Williams.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jay W. Wagner, Mayor

Attest:

Lisa B. Vierling, City Clerk