

# MEETING OF PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

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**Wednesday, June 10, 2020**

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §20, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the City of Westfield Public Safety Communications Commission will be conducted via remote participation. Specific information can be found on the City of Westfield website at [www.cityofwestfield.org](http://www.cityofwestfield.org). For this meeting, members of the public who wish to listen to the meeting may do so by tuning into Channel 15 or online at [westfieldtv.org](http://westfieldtv.org). No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. In the event that we are unable to do so, despite best efforts, we will post on the City's website an audio recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting.

The Westfield Public Safety Communications Commission meeting was remotely called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Commission Chair Bernashe. Immediately following, Commissioner Emmings made a motion to go into recess for five minutes. Commissioner Bernashe seconded the motion and the recess began.

At 5:37 p.m. the meeting resumed and roll call was taken.

Roll Call: Police Chief Valliere – Present  
Commissioner Emmings – Present  
Commissioner Bernashe – Present  
Fire Chief Egloff – Absent  
Commissioner Nunez – Absent



Open Participation: Commissioner Bernashe announced that traditional public participation is not being held at this time. No members of the public had contacted any commissioners prior to the start of the meeting.

Approval of Last Meeting Minutes: A motion was made by Commissioner Emmings to vote on the approval of the minutes from the last regular meeting that was held on March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and to have Commission Chair Bernashe sign on behalf of the board. Chief Valliere seconded the motion. Vote was taken.

Commissioner Emmings- Yes/ Chief Valliere- Yes/ Commissioner Bernashe- Yes  
All in favor.

New Business:

Covid-19/ Emergency Management and impact to the PSC Director's role:

Administrator Barszcz gave an overview of what work she accomplished in the Emergency Operations Center while it was active during the Covid-19 pandemic. The time frame was roughly between March 13<sup>th</sup> and May 22<sup>nd</sup>. She explained that because of proximity to the EOC and many overlaps in operational functions, her role as Director in the dispatch center could be of use in EOC during a very hectic and vulnerable time for the city. Responsibilities that Administrator Barszcz took on in the EOC, beside Director Wiggs, included organizing and partaking in multiple conference calls per day and week, assisting with developing policies, procedures, and continuity plans for emergency management, developing daily situation reports to distribute to City leaders, updates to the website, Facebook, and MEMA's WebEOC, PPE inventory and distribution, and even filling in for Director Wiggs while he was out of state for several days. She explained that was not an exhaustive list but those duties pointed out were the ones that consumed the most time in all. During all of the pandemic planning and mitigation, Administrator Barszcz was still working full time fulfilling her job responsibilities as the department head for dispatch on and off hours. She stated that in total over the course of 10 weeks, she worked a total of 125 extra hours in addition to her regular fulltime 35 hours per week. Currently, because Director Wiggs is now moved out of state and only working remotely for one more week, Board of Health Director Joe Rouse and Administrator Barszcz were both given the responsibility of some duties of the Emergency Management Director in the interim before the vacancy is filled. Weekly, Administrator Barszcz is accomplishing duties such as ordering, obtaining, inventorying, and dispersing PPE as needed, WebEOC check-ins and updates, speaking with MEMA via phone, partaking in conference calls for local EMDs, the upkeep of RAVE Alerts, and staying aware of budget and grant processes for the EM department.

Commissioner Bernashe read an excerpt from an email that Director Wiggs sent the Commission recognizing Administrator Barszcz's assistance in the EOC and all the work she put into helping him in his position. Chief Valliere acknowledged and thanked Administrator Barszcz for her efforts and made a motion to speak with the Mayor about setting an additional pay structure for having assisted with and continuing to assist with responsibilities in the EM role. Commissioner Emmings seconded the motion. It was put to vote.

Commissioner Emmings- Yes/ Chief Valliere- Yes/ Commissioner Bernashe- Yes  
All in favor. Commissioner Bernashe stated that she would follow up with the Mayor on this item.

Old Business: Administrator Barszcz advises there is no old business.

Director's Report:

Dispatcher Recognition:      • Dispatchers Rulon-Miller, Hartmann, Gustafson, Gladding, and Tong were recognized for their performance during a large structure fire that occurred on Western Ave.

- Dispatchers Tong and Sabonis were recognized for their performance during a call where a female sustained serious injuries after a fall from about 25 feet off a bridge ladder.
- Dispatcher Hartmann was recognized as having the highest score average for reviewed medical calls during the month of May.
- Dispatcher Garfield was recognized as having the highest score average for reviewed police and fire calls during the month of May.
- Dispatcher Terkelsen was recognized for gifting masks that she handmade to each employee in the center at the beginning of April.

**Covid-19's Impact on the Center:** Overall, call volume is down, though times on calls have slightly increased due to dispatchers needing to ask a series of screening questions. Inside the center, plexiglass barriers had gone up in between consoles at the beginning of April because proper social distancing standards could not be met. The wearing of masks is not mandated at this time because of the plexiglass barriers. There is bottles of hand sanitizer at each entrance to the center and at each desk. There is an abundance of cleaning supplies readily available for the cleaning of desks and chairs after and before each shift.

**Training/ Cont Education Status:** Since the beginning of Covid-19, all training classes have been a halted. Certification expirations have been extended for up to six months. Currently, there are two dispatchers who need to be recertified in CPR and they now have an extended time to do that. Westfield will be hosting a dispatcher's Protecting Law Enforcement class in August that was originally scheduled to be in April. Because of in attendance of training classes for several months, our FY20 Training Grant was not able to be used fully.

**Budget & Grant Updates:** This year's budget was entered for \$787,997. After the initial meeting with the Mayor and Auditor, \$2,500 was cut from the Per Diem line and \$20,000 was cut from the overtime line. Finance Committee will meet next week on Monday to vote on Emergency Dispatch's budget and Administrator Barszcz will be in attendance. The FY21 State 911 Department's grants were applied for and mailed out as of the day prior. The EMD Grant application was for \$564.46, the Training Grant application was for \$27,760.23, and the Support and Incentive Grant application was for \$164,488. The majority of that grant will reimburse personnel costs.


**Director's Schedule:** Because of the lack of school and summer camps, Administrator Barszcz advised the Commission that she has had to adjust some of her days throughout each week to accommodate for child care issues. Many times she is coming in early in order to leave earlier in the day. Administrator Barszcz has one week of vacation scheduled for July 18-25 and another week at the end of August.

Regular Meeting Schedule: The schedule for the meetings of the Public Safety Communications Commission are the second Wednesday of every other even month.

Next Regular Meeting: Announcement was made for the next scheduled meeting on August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

Motion to Adjourn: At 6:18 p.m., Commissioner Emmings made a motion to adjourn, the motion was seconded by Chief Valliere. All Commissioners in favor; meeting adjourned.

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Commission Chairperson Lenore Bernashe