



# Public Safety & Transportation Committee Report

## Part 1

### City of Newton In City Council

**Thursday, May 6, 2021**

Present: Councilors Downs (Chair), Markiewicz, Bowman, Grossman, Lipof, Oliver, Lucas and Malakie

Also Present: Councilors Greenberg, Albright, Norton, Kelley, Wright, Krintzman, Crossley, Humphrey, Danberg, Noel, Baker, Kalis, Leary, Gentile and Ryan

City Staff: Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer; Mayor Fuller; Interim Chief Howard Mintz; Lt. George McMains and Lt. Bruce Apotheker, Newton Police Department; Michelle Pizzi O'Brien, Human Resources, Director; Maureen Lemieux, Chief Financial Officer and Ellen Ishkanian, Director of Community Communications

Others Present: Chief John F. Carmichael Jr., WBZ and NewTV

**#159-21      Appointment of John F. Carmichael Jr. as Chief of Police**

HER HONOR THE MAYOR in accordance with Chapter 279 of the Acts of 1992 and Sec. 3-3 and 3-4 of the City Charter, appointing JOHN F. CARMICHAEL JR. as Chief of Police.

**Action:      Public Safety & Transportation Approved 7-0, Councilor Lipof not voting**

**Note:**      Chief John Carmichael Jr. and Mayor Fuller joined the Committee for discussion on the appointment of Chief F. Carmichael Jr. as the new Newton Police Chief.

Mayor Fuller stated that she appointed Chief Carmichael as the new Newton Police Chief subject to the confirmation of City Council. Chief Carmichael assumes leadership in a difficult time, it is a time of intense scrutiny of Police Departments and policing across the country and in Newton. Police involved shootings foster distrust, over-representation in enforcement activity on people of color has understandably raised concerns. Systemic racism and racial disparities extend to health care, health outcomes, education, employment, earnings and housing but the focus on criminal justice and policing has grown during the pandemic. In Newton, the experience of Mr. Tim Duncan, the death of Mr. Michael Conlon and the possibility of gun dealers, are some of the important events on everyone's mind.

Mayor Fuller stated that during the FY22 Police Department Budget discussion May 20<sup>th</sup>, she will include a comprehensive and lengthy description of her goals for policing in Newton. Tonight, the Committee will focus on the next leader of the Newton Police Department.

Mayor Fuller stated that her criteria for selecting a Police Chief were heavily influenced on input received from the Newton Police Reform Task Force, City Councilors, residents, and members of the Newton Police Department with the help and leadership of Ms. Pizzi-O'Brien, Human Resources Director. An extensive and thorough search process was conducted to locate the appropriate person as the new Police Chief. The process began with a Request for Proposals (RFP) to find a firm to guide the search. The focus was to encourage and welcome candidates from the Newton Police Department (NPD) internally, as well Massachusetts and the USA. The mayor's focus: to ensure the City job advertisement would welcoming men, women and people of color. In the beginning, Mayor Fuller thought deeply on what the job description entailed and what the City desired for the NPD. City staff conducted many interviews and background checks.

Mayor Fuller introduced Chief Carmichael and stated that she is confident that Chief Carmichael is the correct person for the job. Mayor Fuller stated that in Carmichael she found integrity, experience, compassion, leadership, listening skills, knowledge, communication skills, a person who believes in transparency and openness, with a commitment to fair and impartial policing, forward-thinking, engaged and warm. These are the reasons she chose Chief Carmichael and why she is certain he will earn respect in the community and within the NPD.

Mayor Fuller stated that she is very proud of the NPD, which was responsive and hard-working during the pandemic and under intense scrutiny. The department is committed to fairness, justice, respectfulness, and safe and effective community policing.

### **Committee members and Councilors comments, questions and answers.**

#### Comments:

We are hopeful you will join the LGBTQ community when we kick off pride month on June 1<sup>st</sup>, annual rainbow flag raising and speakers.

#### Questions/Answers:

**Please describe 21st century policing (fair, equitable and community policing)?** Chief Carmichael answered that in 2015, President Obama's administration released a vision of 21<sup>st</sup> century policing. The vision document provided many recommendations and suggestions to Police Departments that could be adopted and put into practice. In Massachusetts, Police Departments began implementing the strategies and philosophy. The focus is on preventing crime and to establishing public trust, respect, and community cooperation; addressing the use of force issues, fair and impartial policing and deescalating which all revert to the 1800's.

Chief Carmichael stated that when the vision was created it was to create positive relationships, trust between the police and community, officer wellness and most importantly, police legitimacy and developing procedural justice within Police Departments. In 2015, when Massachusetts departmental Chiefs reviewed this policy, the policy was broken down and implemented in Massachusetts with the recommendations and suggestions made and incorporated into police training. This included implicit bias, eyewitness identification and community collaboration, use of force training, and reporting. Chief

Carmichael then stated that, when those recommendations came out, it was about the same time that he became Chief of Police in Walpole and it was great to be able to make that transition and to take those practices and immediately put them into place.

**Newton has many mental health calls. What do you think is NPD responsibility and their position regarding these types of calls?** Chief Carmichael answered that Walpole had a Community Crisis Intervention Team (CCIT) for over ten years. The Police Department began to see increases in mental health calls and mental health crisis calls. The CCIT has been very successful because it brings in all the partners that are involved in a mental health crisis. It is not just the police; it includes parents, the Home for Little Wanderers, social workers.

The CCIT brings people together to review case studies looking at how the department responds to these types of calls and has proven to be incredibly successful. Walpole is just like the rest of the state and the country, mental health calls are the most significant public safety issue and public health issue that the police face right now, along with substance abuse. Walpole established a response system, after the 21st Century policing came in, Walpole signed on to the 'One Mind Campaign' through the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). The IACP helped the department to train officers in crisis intervention training, de-escalation training and mental health first aid taking a pledge to work with partners and create collaboration within the community and to establish policies and procedures that reflect the issue of mental illness. The outcome has been tremendous. Many of the mental health cases are referred through healthcare facilities. It is not perfect, but it is something that the department will continue to work on, because it is just so prevalent.

**What can Councilors do to help a Police Chief do their job the best they can?** Chief Carmichael thanked the Councilors for their support. He asked that Councilors please support the officers, clinicians and social workers and what they do.

**Walpole has eliminated the civil service exam requirement for new recruits to make their force more diverse. Do you plan to remove Newton from the civil service system?** Chief Carmichael answered that there will be discussion as it has been recommended in the Police Reform Task Force Report. There is a lot of necessary work before this is decided. There will need to be discussions with the unions, a review of benefits, the pros and cons of being in civil service and being out of civil service. In Walpole, eliminating the civil service has worked very well. A benefit of leaving civil service was to make the Walpole Police Department more diverse, so that department was representative of the community and the Massachusetts community. Walpole was able to establish much larger pools of candidates. Officers from a range of backgrounds may relate to residents better when they also share backgrounds or something else in common. Generally, officers are happy with the move out of civil service.

**Please tell us about yourself, and your career trajectory. What makes you feel enthusiastic about working in the City of Newton?** Chief Carmichael answered that policing has obviously been through a rough time over the past few years and strongly believes that it is one of the most noble professions. Police officers, dispatchers and first responders are some of the finest people. This

period, he feels, is a good time to capture the opportunity and move things forward. The Newton Police Department has a great reputation and he looks forward to working with the officers and personnel.

Chief Carmichael answered that he is originally from Hyde Park and graduated from Medfield High School. After high school, Chief Carmichael enlisted into the United States Army Military Police, for three years. He wanted to be a police officer. He got a position as a police dispatcher for the Medfield Police Department, and was there four years before being hired as an officer. Chief Carmichael transferred to the Walpole Police Department after three years. He worked there 25 years on patrol, DARE officer, drug abuse officer, motorcycle patrol, detective, Honor Guard, and up the ranks. Chief Carmichael stated that he is passionate about policing and has is very involved in a lot of committees at the state level and locally.

Chief Carmichael received the Newton job brochure and it matched his interests. He also welcomes challenges. The job requirements asked for the precise issues he has been focused on his last six years as a Chief.

The Remaining comments, questions and answers will be provided at a later date.

Without further discussion Councilor Grossman made the motion to approve the appointment of John F. Carmichael, Jr. as the new Newton Police Chief. Committee members agreed 7-0, Councilor Lipof not voting.

At approximately 9:40 p.m., Councilor Markiewicz made a motion to adjourn. Committee members agreed 7-0, Councilor Lipof not voting.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Andreae Downs, Chair**