

**BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 19, 2026, AT 6:00 p.m.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

PRESENT:

Mayor Ellen Zoppo-Sassu, Chairperson
Commissioner Rory Ghio - via Zoom
Commissioner Dean Kilbourne
Commissioner Paul Lemieux
Commissioner Terry Lewis
Commissioner Gloria Sapp Smith
Council Member Sue Tyler
Board of Finance Liaison, Jon Mace

ABSENT:

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Zoppo-Sassu called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

2. PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

Mr. Robinson received the Distinguished Citizen Award for putting himself in grave and imminent personal danger to protect someone else, as well as substantially assisting in the apprehension of a criminal.

Sergeant Franek and Officers Fisher, Levine, Bzarewsky, Frechette, Wallace, Soucy-Field, Tarascio, and Mitchell received the Department Silver Star and were named Officers of the Month for March. Their actions resulted in a felony arrest while maintaining public safety and security within the City of Bristol.

Officers Petzing, Hogan, and Warzecho received a Letter of Commendation. Due to their outstanding performance and work ethic, which has assisted in charging one of the suspects for their crime.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Jim Pelletier, President of the Bristol Police Union, spoke about the Awards Committee. (see attached)

Jon Mace, Board of Finance Liaison, spoke about the FY27 budget.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Sapp Smith moved to APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE APRIL 21, 2026, REGULAR POLICE BOARD MEETING WITH THE FOLLOWING AMENDMENT CHANGING CHIEF LEMIEUX TO COMMISSIONER LEMIEUX. Seconded by Commissioner Ghio.

VOTE: UNANIMOUSLY PASSED

5. APPROVAL OF VARIOUS MONTHLY REPORTS

Commissioner Lemieux moved to APPROVE MONTHLY REPORTS AND PLACE ON FILE, Seconded by Commissioner Kilbourne.

VOTE: UNANIMOUSLY PASSED

6. CORRESPONDENCE

Commissioner Ghio moved to ACCEPT AND PLACE ON FILE, Seconded by Commissioner Lemieux.

VOTE: UNANIMOUSLY PASSED

7. COMMITTEE MINUTES

Awards Committee

Commissioner Ghio moved TO APPROVE THE AWARDS COMMITTEE MINUTES, Seconded by Commissioner Sapp-Smith.

A discussion was held regarding the award recommendations.

Commissioner Kilbourne moved to APPROVE THE AWARD RECOMMENDATIONS PRESENTED IN THE PACKET TO THE POLICE COMMISSIONERS, Seconded by Commissioner Sapp-Smith.

VOTE: PASSED

Yes – 5

Abstained – 2

Mayor Zoppo-Sassu brought forward the request from Jim Pelletier, Bristol Police Union President, to reconsider the process by reverting to the way it was done prior to our vote at the April meeting.

Commissioner Kilbourne made a motion TO RECONSIDER THE ORIGINAL PROCESS FOR THE AWARDS COMMITTEE, Seconded by Commissioner Lewis.

A discussion was held regarding the Awards Committee process. Commissioner Kilbourne stated that he fully supports the Awards Committee process reverting to the way it was done prior to our vote.

Commissioner Sapp Smith stated that she is ok with the process reverting to the way it was done before.

Council Member Tyler stated that she doesn't disagree with many of the points that Officer Pelletier made during his public participation. She stated that she was asked to attend the Awards Committee meeting two months in a row because of many issues we had heard about as a commission for over two years. Council Member Tyler believes this committee should be defined either as a department committee or as a subcommittee of the Police Commission. A discussion was held regarding this.

Commissioner Lemieux stated that he has confidence in the process with the command staff making a decision that is done properly and correctly. A vote was taken to reconsider the original process for the Awards Committee.

VOTE: PASSED

Yes – 6

Abstained – 1

Council Member Tyler moved to REFER TO CORPORATION COUNCIL FOR CLARIFICATION AND GUIDANCE ON THE ROLE OF THE AWARDS COMMITTEE, Seconded by Commissioner Ghio.

Commissioner Lemieux stated that, whatever decision the Corporation Counsel makes, he would still like the awards to be presented at the Police Board meeting.

VOTE: UNANIMOUSLY PASSED

8. OLD BUSINESS

8.1 Chief Morello

None

8.2 Police Commissioners

None

9. NEW BUSINESS

9.1 Chief Morello

i. Board of Finance Request

Commissioner Kilbourne moved to APPROVE THE APPROPRIATION REQUEST TO MOVE \$275,865 FROM THE CANNABIS DISPENSARY FUND TO TWO OFFICERS FOR COMMUNITY POLICING, Seconded by Commissioner Ghio.

VOTE: UNANIMOUSLY PASSED

ii. Riverside Avenue Extension

Mayor Zoppo-Sassu explained that many groups are monitoring the encampments. Officers Cardona and Finkle conduct patrols regularly to discourage littering and panhandling.

The Opioid Task Force will submit a request to reinstall the no-panhandling signs and direct citizens to donate instead. We have several groups working together that do case management. The Public Works Department goes there once a week to pick up garbage bags.

iii. Chief's Report

Deputy Chief Moskowitz discussed the Chief's Report.

9.2 Police Commissioners

Council Member Tyler shared with the Commissioners a complaint that had been received in the Mayor's office in April. This complaint is from Attorney Eric Brown, Attorney for the Bristol Police Union. Council Member Tyler is named as someone who is harassing one of the police department's officers. This complaint has been sent to Corporation Counsel for handling, with Council Member Tyler consulting her own counsel.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Lemieux moved to ADJOURN, Seconded by Commissioner Sapp-Smith.

VOTE: UNANIMOUSLY PASSED

The regular meeting of the Board of Police Commissioners called for the 19th day of May, 2026, was HEREBY ADJOURNED AT 6:54 p.m.

Lisa Ziogas
Recording Secretary

Bristol Police Union President Jim Pelletier.

Good evening, Madam Mayor and Police Commissioners. I come here before you to speak on several matters.

I ask the Commission for their patience and goodwill so that I may be heard tonight in entirety. I do have a lot to say and will surpass the normal 3 minutes. Out of respect for the Commissioners' time, I have significantly reduced the length of my speech from fifteen minutes to seven.

Regarding my speech, the Union does have some supporting documentation that it received through the Freedom of Information Act, if the Commission so desires.

I agree with the commission approving the awards prior to them being handed out. As far as the new process where each award submission is voted on separately, I strongly disagree with that. If anything, this should be a place on file or a consent calendar. Voting separately on each award duplicates the efforts made by the Awards Committee and potentially brings conflict to this Commission.

The conflict will arise if Commissioners call into question the decisions of their colleagues on the Committee, or worse, if Commissioners reject or question awards that have already been approved by the Committee. Suggesting that an award is undeserved or unwarranted after approval by the Committee will lead to mistrust within the ranks, and damage morale in our department. Award submissions come from peers, they are reviewed and debated by peers and then reviewed and approved by the Chief.

Last month I would have offered you a word of caution that the action taken by the Commission could potentially lead our men and women to feeling unsupported. As more Union members watch that meeting, that's exactly what is happening.

Some of you may believe that there have been too many awards handed out. To put things into perspective the Bristol Police Department responded to 58449 calls for service in 2025. 49 awards were presented to employees during that calendar year.

I believe that that there is a debate on whether the Awards Committee is a subcommittee of the Commission. It does not run like a typical subcommittee.

The Chair only has a voice, no vote.

The committee runs off a General Order, not an ordinance or direction from the Commission.

The members of this committee are selected by the Chief of Police not the mayor.

The members of the Awards Committee could be ordered to attend (not very much like volunteers).

To further complicate this issue, through your motion and determination to rename the Awards Committee as a subcommittee, you may have broken the system.

Recently, the Animal Control Facility subcommittee was reorganized due to non-electors being on the committee. There are only two members of the Awards Committee that are electors!

Furthermore, due to the need to receive the award worksheets prior to the meeting additional work is being created in the Records Division, which is currently running understaffed.

If the Commission does not have to follow our General Order. What guidelines are you following for your approval? Is this now going to be political? It was clear during the meeting last month that Councilwoman Tyler believes that it should be arbitrary when she voted against an award that fit the criteria within the general order.

I challenge whether this is a subcommittee and when the action was made to make it a subcommittee. I believe that this is a department committee with a liaison from the commission so that the employees can be recognized publicly at the Commissioner meetings.

I respectfully request that you reconsider your motion.

The bigger problem starts when a commissioner refers to some awards as "jokes" because they don't agree with them or someone reached out to them and complained about a certain award.

The April Awards Committee meeting started with Councilwoman Tyler stating that she spoke on behalf of the entire commission and that it did not matter what the Awards Committee approves because the Police Commission would decide from that point forward what awards would come before them. Councilwoman Tyler further stated that we could still present the other awards, but we could do that at lineup, in the hallway or in the locker room. An awards Committee

member asked for confirmation if Councilwoman Tyler spoke for the entire Commission to which she replied yes.

Several members attempted to explain that it was a bad decision and would have a negative impact on the department.

This occurred during the Stafford Ave motion and the Committee missed the fact that the arrest was not made yet and because of that the Silver Star was not appropriate. This was caught by the Chief and he returned the award submission to the Awards Committee. The system worked!

During new business I made a motion to send a question to Corporation Counsel for their opinion. This action was later called disrespectful by Councilwoman Tyler.

After the meeting Councilwoman Tyler refused to sign the Max Pizza award indicating that the award was approved through the Awards Committee. This was an apparent dereliction of her duty as the chairman; in fact, she unilaterally decided to act against the Committee's authority following a unanimous vote. The requirement of a signature is ministerial and not discretionary.

I found out later that Councilwoman Tyler believed that I was unprofessional and disrespectful during the meeting and was going to make a complaint. All that I did was perform my duties as a committee member, at no time did I participate in the back-and-forth discussion with councilwoman Tyler.

Councilwoman Tylers' behavior during that meeting was distracting and demeaning to every employee present, basically making them feel that they are not worthy to make the decisions on awards and, even worse, the message that was sent, through her, from the entire Police Commission that some employees are not worthy to receive recognition in front of the Commission even after the award was approved by the Committee and the Chief.

Imagine sitting on a committee, performing your duties, only to find out that a City Councilwoman is trying to silence you, have you investigated and removed from the committee; all in retaliation for you not supporting and not bowing in submission to her will and beliefs. WHAT KIND OF GOVERNMENT ARE WE RUNNING HERE??? I am pretty sure that our form of government is designed to allow discussion and disagreement without concern of retribution. When did it become disrespectful to send a legal question to Corporation Counsel?

Councilwoman Tyler's actions to attempt to silence and retaliate against her opposition are disgraceful!

What about the May award committee meeting? Three awards were tabled for more information. During New Business, Councilwoman Tyler attempted to have the Committee neglect their duties and just pass an award through to the Commission to have them figure it out...When is this going to end?

Councilwoman Tyler states that she supports the men and women of the BPD but her actions are speaking louder.

Voting against recognizing the Officers of the Max Pizza incident. Moving to disregard the work of the Awards Committee. Not supporting the greatest technological advancement, the department has seen in decades...and we cannot forget about pushing for an outside Chief. It is starting to appear that she may have some animosity against the Bristol Police Department.

Councilwoman Tyler, We will not let you diminish the good work done every day by our amazing employees by referring to some awards as jokes. We will no longer sit idle and watch you undermine this department!

We will remain on alert as a brother and sisterhood and monitor your actions to protect ourselves and the community we serve from arbitrary and capricious decisions.

It is not too late for the rest of the Police Commission to repair the damage done by Councilwoman Tyler. You can start by saying that she does not speak for you and you can finish by putting the Awards Committee back to where it was because it was not broken. The other option would be for the Union to determine a better place to recognize the amazing men and women of the Bristol Police Department other than in our locker room!

Thank you for your time.