

Memo

To: Mayor Hall
From: Sanya Vitale
cc: City Council
Date: May 9, 2023
Re: City of Hartford Reserve Officer Policy

The City of Hartford has a long history of having reserve officers support the Hartford Police Department.

Over the years, these reserve officers have been afforded training that would allow them to work as outlined in the City of Hartford, Hartford Police Department Policy Manual, updated most recently in 2020 per former Chief T. Beltran, as required in Sections 3.14.VI and 3.14.VIII (see attached)

However, since COVID hit, there has not been any training of the reserve officers within the Hartford Police Department and no training records exist after 2019.

Additionally, the City of Hartford's current Reserve Officer Policy Section 3.14.V states:

V. AUTHORITY OF A RESERVE OFFICER

Reserve Officers have no police authority and may only take enforcement action when they are working in conjunction with, and are under the direct on-site supervision of, a police Officer of this Department.

The City of Hartford, Hartford Police Department policy is in line with the City's current insurance provider's standards surrounding reserve officers which states that there is liability coverage for Law Enforcement Personnel as follows:

SECTION VI. 15.b Auxiliary, reserve police officers, or posse members under the direct supervision of a certified police officer (only) exercising arrest powers

And per our account executive at Meadowbrook (see attached email correspondence)- under direct supervision means: *"in the presence of a "sworn Officer with arrest authority"*

I have spoken to an alternative insurance provider who provides insurance for Coloma and Covert- Berends, Hendricks, Stuit out of Grandville, MI. I spoke with Chris Arendshorst, who stated that many communities have been reaching out to consider their options with regards to Reserve Troops. He stated that BHS *does* offer insurance through the Michigan Township Participating Plan which is offered to municipalities (not just townships) in Michigan. Mr. Arendshorst stated that the Michigan Township Participating Plan and another similar plan offers liability insurance that covers the municipalities and their reserve programs, however, under Michigan State law, they cannot offer liability insurance that covers the actual reserve officer. So, if the reserve officer on duty, would, for example, shoot someone, the City would be insurance but not the reserve officer.

That said, the reserve officer would likely be eligible for their own insurance through a provider like the NRA at a cost that they, themselves would have to bear.

With events like the Memorial Day parade, Concerts in the Park, the Cinco de Mayo Festival and Strawberry Festival coming up, the City Council should decide to accept the City of Hartford, Hartford Police Department Policies for Training Requirements and Reserve Officer Oversight as currently outlined in the Hartford Police Department Policy Manual or as a Council decide to take on the liability and allow the reserve officers to work without being in the presence of a sworn Officer with arrest authority.