Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for joining me here today. It has been nearly six weeks since the United States Department of Justice released their preliminary report with regard to their investigation of citizen complaints made against the East Haven Police Department. In that time the Town of East Haven has been making great strides to proactively take steps to address those concerns and perhaps even eliminate some of the costly mandates that could be imposed on East Haven in this situation.

At the suggestion of the DOJ we are adding back the rank of Deputy Chief to the department. This rank had previously been a staple in the management of the East Haven Police Department, however, was removed roughly 12 years ago. The Police Commission, along with the Acting Chief and myself, feel that another high ranking officer, outside of the union, will be a tremendous asset to the Chief and the department. This will follow the same organizational structure as our Fire Department and most area police departments. At this evening’s Police Commission meeting the commission will entertain a motion for the Town of East Haven to hire Mr. John Mannion as East Haven’s Deputy Chief subject to completion of necessary POST requirements. Mr. Mannion served with the CT State Police in numerous capacities including Investigative Services and extensive experience in all aspects of police services including administration. I believe he brings the experience and
expertise that is needed to proactively address the DOJ concerns.

Another step we are taking in ensuring that we address DOJ concerns is hiring the Police Executive Research Forum. PERF has worked with other neighboring municipalities in times of crisis; most notably the City of New Haven after its department was rocked with the arrest of several detectives. PERF is highly regarded by the United States Department of Justice as a firm with the capability to look at the challenges and opportunities facing our Police Department and set the road map for the future. Some of the areas PERF will be examining include but are not limited to;

- Assess the manner in which the efforts of department and its' members are planned, directed, controlled and coordinated.

- Review and assess high risk and liability procedures including use of force, officer involved shootings, pursuits and emergency response and determine the extent to which the meet contemporary legal standards and best police practices.

- Assess the relationship and interactions that exist between the department and the community it serves.

- Conduct a thorough review of the current management and organizational structure of the
East Haven Police Department including assessing the effectiveness of the departments management and organizational structure.

- Determine whether the department has the appropriate number of officers, administrative personnel, supervisors and managers needed in each organizational component as justified by workload.

- Review and assess the department’s infrastructure—facilities, vehicles and equipment.

This assessment will be coupled with implementation and while the implementation will be on an on-going basis, the assessment phase should last 3 to 4 months.

We are also engaging the Department of Justice Community Relations division and renowned attorney and former police officer Elliot Spector to host refresher training for our officers in many areas including; diversity training, high risk/low risk stops, gang and sexual violence and conflict resolution. In addition to training classes we will now be showing 15 min refresher training videos at every roll call.

I have talked about the major steps we are taking for the future of the department but I also want to discuss some of the progress made by the Department in the last 4 weeks under the direction of Acting Chief Nappi.
We have adopted a new mission statement for the department which is follows:

(Read from printed statement)

Acting Chief Nappi, at the request of the DOJ, has completely revamped the citizen complaint procedure, including making the forms easier to fill out and eliminating the need for a notary, having it located at not only the PD but also Town Hall, the library and on our website. The form is available in both English and Spanish. In addition, Acting Chief Nappi has taken the step of creating a compliment form for our officers as well. We have many talented individuals in our Police Department and these forms are there so that the public can recognize them as well.

The Acting Chief has also added more staff to our records room to ensure timely compliance with Freedom of Information requests. Many of the FOI requests that the department has received in the last few months are very detailed and time consuming so to ensure that we are complying with the state mandates regarding FOI more staff was needed.

Acting Chief Nappi has also conducted a thorough cleaning and organization of the physical plant as well. The back parking lot has been cleaned and swept and our fleet is now organized in and neat and orderly fashion. He is also reevaluating the evidence collection, storage and retention policies. With that said 37 bicycles collected
over more than a decade have been donated to Goodwill. He is cleaning up and cleaning out the department because he feels, as do I and the commissioners, that our officers deserve to have an environment that is neat, orderly and conducive to getting work done.

The Commission and Acting Chief Nappi are revisiting our alarm and amusement ordinances to ensure that they are being enforced in a manner consistent with the intent of their creators and that will bring East Haven taxpayers some much needed revenue.

The highlight of the last few weeks of the Acting Chiefs appointment has been the ‘directed patrols’ happening all over town. He has been responding to the many calls and concerns from area residents regarding speeding and stop sign violations. It will take time before the entire town can be covered in this manner and on a rotating basis; however, residents in the targeted areas have been very pleased with the results thus far.

Lastly, the Acting Chief, the Commission and myself are taking a look at our DARE program in the schools to see how it is working and if there is a program with more funding that will be more effective. We have already been contacted by East Shore Health District which partners with police department to provide a public health component to the program. Any changes that are proposed would of course be presented to the Board of Education for their approval, however, I have spoken with the Chair of the Board of Ed, former DARE officer Nick
Palladino and he is excited by the prospect of updating the program.

Another item worth mentioning is that we are looking into instituting a program by which all front line town employees will be offered the opportunities to enroll in Spanish classes to better assist the changing population here in East Haven.

My goal as Mayor is to follow the DOJ’s recommendation to take immediate action to not only protect our community but also to protect taxpayer dollars by lessening the liability to the town. We will keep you updated on any changes in the future.

And now we will take a few questions.

The preliminary findings of the United States Department of Justice are clear with regard to the lack of leadership in the East Have Police Department. The vulnerabilities which have been allowed to exist for many years have put East Haven tax payers at great risk for financial liability and compromised the safety of our community. I am following the DOJ’s recommendation to take immediate action to not only protect our community but also to protect taxpayer dollars.