

OLD SAYBROOK POLICE COMMISSION

Special Meeting
January 10, 2017
MINUTES

A special meeting of the Old Saybrook Police Commission was held on Tuesday, January 10, 2017 at the Old Saybrook Town Hall.

Present: Chairman Stuart, Vice Chairman Von Dassel, Secretary Moran and Commissioners Burnham Maselli and Coppes and Cooper. Chief Spera and Lieutenant Roche were present from the Department of Police Services.

This meeting was video and audio taped by the Town of Old Saybrook.

I. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Stuart called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Comments from the Public

There were no comments from the Public

III. Discussion and Action concerning the Proposed Operating and Capital Budgets for FY 2018

Chief Spera stated there have been no official number changes to the budget since the last Special Meeting as gasoline and health care costs have not been negotiated by the Town yet and the Police Union contract remains unsigned.

Chairman Stuart asked the Police Commission members if they had any questions regarding the budget.

Vice Chairman Von Dassel stated that he has no questions he is just concerned that the new reporting system makes the Police Department numbers look huge.

Chairman Stuart asked Finance Director Lee Ann Palladino if there was a way for the Town to make a booklet explaining the new reporting process and make it available on the Town website for the residents.

Lee Ann Palladino advised that the budget information will be presented to the town as a whole. It will show the percentage that the Town as a whole will be up or down. There will also be spreadsheets to show the real department by department increases. She stated that she would be happy to come back and present to the Police Commission what the actual increase is.

Commissioner Burnham asked if decreases will be shown also.

Lee Ann Palladino stated yes both increases and decreases will be shown in the overall costs.

Commissioner Coppes asked if the Town sets an overall objective for year over year increases.

Lee Ann Palladino stated that no the Town does not but would like to see it similar if not less to last year's overall increase.

Chairman Stuart stated that his main concern is making sure the new UCOA reporting system is properly explained to the residents.

Lee Ann Palladino stated that the goal is to make budgets easier to compare across the board.

Secretary Moran asked the Chief to keep the Commission updated as numbers get solidified.

Chief Spera stated that the Commission will always be kept in the loop and that new booklets will be updated and handed out as each step is taken in the budget process.

Commissioner Burnham stated that Lee Ann Palladino answered any questions that she had.

Commissioner Maselli stated that he recommends the Police Commission leaving the Holiday Replacement line item as is presented and letting the Board of Selectman and the Board of Finance choose to fully fund it this year or spread it out over a couple of years.

Commissioner Burnham agreed with Commissioner Maselli.

Chairman Stuart agreed stating that the Police Commission is letting the Board of Selectman and Board of Finance know that the Holiday Replacement line item needs to be addressed by approving it in the budget.

Commissioner Coppes stated he doesn't feel that the Commission has pushed the budget enough. He feels that he hasn't seen enough facts to backup what would happen if the Commission choose to cut certain services or not fully fund certain liabilities.

Chairman Stuart stated that there are things the Commission should look at more in depth but that the budget needs to be on the First Selectman's desk in five days. He stated that the operational study will look into those questions and hopefully answer them.

Commissioner Coppes asked if staff was reduced on certain shifts what the results would be. He stated that he's not advocating reducing the force but wants to understand it better.

Chief Spera stated that last year he presented the budget along with a power point presentation that showcased various national staffing levels and his goals for the future within the Department. He spoke about per diem employees and how Public Safety staffing and manufacturing levels differ.

Chairman Stuart stated that the Department cannot go below three on a shift as it is not safe.

Commissioner Cooper asked how many members of the Police Department live in Old Saybrook.

Chief Spera replied currently four or five.

Commissioner Cooper asked if there is a geographical requirement for Police Officers.

Chief Spera stated no that is against labor laws.

Commissioner Cooper stated that he has the same questions as Commissioner Coppes. He doesn't understand why other towns do the same thing but for a lot less money.

Chief Spera stated that comparing town to town budgets is very difficult right now. The numbers do not line up across the board for the Departments.

Commissioner Burnham stated that with this new reporting process it will be easier to compare Towns to each other moving forward. She stated the Commission needs to give the process a year or two and then it should be more accurate.

Chief Spera advised the Commission there is still a possibility that each line item town by town will not match up.

Lee Ann Palladino agreed with Chief Spera stating that if each Town is properly coding everything it should be comparable but at the present time not all Towns are doing it as detailed as Old Saybrook is.

Commissioner Burnham made a motion to approve the implementation of the Taser Program with program implementation costs to be derived from union donations, funds in the asset forfeiture account, and Town funds. Such capital costs shall not exceed \$11,904 annually. Commissioner Maselli seconded the motion. The motion to approve the implementation of the Taser Program with program implementation costs to be derived from union donations, funds in the asset forfeiture account, and Town funds. Such capital costs shall not exceed \$11,904 annually passed with a vote of 7 in favor and 0 against.

Commissioner Maselli made a motion to approve the police vehicle replacement program, and recommend to the Board of Selectman to enter into a financing agreement, to include a non-appropriation clause, to fund the purchase of vehicles and designated capital equipment. Such capital costs shall not exceed \$94,800. Secretary Moran seconded the motion. The motion to approve the police vehicle replacement program, and recommend to the Board of Selectman to enter into a financing agreement, to include a non-appropriation clause, to fund the purchase of vehicles and designated capital equipment. Such capital costs shall not exceed \$94,800 passed with a vote of 7 in favor and 0 against.

Vice Chairman Von Dassel made a motion to approve the Department of Police Services' Operating Budget in accordance with the new UCOA reporting guidelines for the 2017-2018 fiscal year in the amount of \$4,555,574. Commissioner Maselli seconded the motion. The motion to approve the Department of Police Services' Operating Budget in accordance with the new UCOA reporting guidelines for the 2017-2018 fiscal year in the amount of \$4,555,574 passed with a vote of 5 in favor, Commissioner Cooper opposed the motion and Commissioner Coppes abstained from voting.

Commissioner Burnham made a motion to approve the Department of Police Services Marine Patrol Operating Budget for the 2017-2018 fiscal year in the amount of \$60,784. Secretary Moran seconded the motion. The motion to approve the Department of Police Services Marine Patrol Operating

Budget for the 2017-2018 fiscal year in the amount of \$60,784 passed with a vote of 7 in favor and 0 against.

IV. **Personnel Update**

Chief Spera stated that the Records Department has two part time employees, Michelle Berner works 30 hours a week and Mary Lou Sunday works 15 hours a week. Under the affordable care act Michelle Berner must be offered health care through the town. Michelle Berner was given a package that has a \$5,000 deductible with no contribution coming from the Town. Mary Lou Sunday is willing to give up 5 hours of work each week to Michelle Berner to put her at 35 hours which means she would qualify for insurance through the Town. Since Dispatcher Rob Dahlstrom left and was receiving the Family Insurance package and Michelle would only require a single insurance package the swap would be at no additional cost to the Town of Old Saybrook. Michelle's position would be a non-exempt, non-union member. The change would be cost neutral.

Chief Spera stated that he has already spoke with First Selectman Fortuna and Finance Director Palladino regarding the request and he now is requesting the Police Commission give the First Selectman the ability to swap the 5 hours of work to give the benefit package to Michelle.

Chairman Stuart stated that the Town can provide her with a better plan. It's the human thing to do he said. Michelle is being asked to come up with a lot of money and by swapping the hours it's helping someone out.

Chief Spera stated that he wanted to re state that he is not increasing any hours within the Department. The total for the Records Department has been 45 hours and it will stay 45 hours.

Lee Ann Palladino stated that the Town currently has 10 employees at the 30 hour a week mark. The Town is required to offer her insurance she stated. The premiums are actually higher for a 30 hour employee for the Town so it is in the Town's best interest to offer her a better and more aggressive package.

Commissioner Maselli made a motion to request the First Selectman to approve a budget neutral plan to increase Record Specialist Berner's hours from 30 to 35 hours per week and reduce Record's Specialist Sunday's hours from 15 to 10 hours per week as soon as practicable and to carry such practice into the 17-18 fiscal year. The motion was seconded by Secretary Moran. The motion to request the First Selectman to approve a budget neutral plan to increase Record Specialist Berner's hours from 30 to 35 hours per week and reduce Record's Specialist Sunday's hours from 15 to 10 hours per week as soon as practicable and to carry such practice into the 17-18 fiscal year passed with a vote of 7 in favor and 0 against.

Chief Spera advised the Commission that one Police Officer who was out on paid administrative leave pending a fitness for duty test has returned to work full time after being cleared to work.

He also advised the Commission that a Patrol Sergeant was injured off duty and is out of work right now. Chief Spera is hopeful that it's not a major injury and that the Sergeant will be back soon.

V. **Adjournment**

Commissioner Maselli made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Secretary Moran. The motion to adjourn passed by a vote of 7 in favor and 0 against.

The meeting adjourned at 8:57 PM.

The next regular Police Commission meeting is scheduled for February 27, 2017 at 7:00 PM in the first floor conference room at the Old Saybrook Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted by:

Jennifer Damato
Records Clerk for the Old Saybrook Police Commission