

Old Saybrook Police Commission

Regular Meeting

August 24, 2020

MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Old Saybrook Police Commission was held on Monday, August 24, 2020 via ZOOM. The meeting was recorded.

Present: Chairman Keeney, Vice Chairman Reid, Secretary Maselli, Commissioners Von Dassel, Quish, Shippee and Wilcox. Chief Spera and Captain DePerry was present from the Department of Police Services.

I. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Keeney called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. He then led those in attendance with the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Discussion, and Possible Action Concerning Meeting Minutes

a. Special Meeting – July 20, 2020

Commissioner Quish made a motion to approve the July 20, 2020 Special Meeting Minutes. Vice Chairman Reid seconded the motion. The motion to approve the July 20, 2020 Special Meeting Minutes passed with a vote of 6 in favor 0 against and 1 abstaining.

b. Special Meeting – August 3, 2020

Vice Chairman Reid made a motion to approve the August 3, 2020 Special Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Quish seconded the motion. The motion to approve the August 3, 2020 Special Meeting Minutes passed with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 against, and 0 abstaining.

III. Comments from the Public

Chairman Keeney asked Secretary Maselli to remind the members of the public about the Police Commission's public speaking rules.

Secretary Maselli summarized the public speaking rules.

Linda Mahal from 5 Sunrise Ave spoke stating that she would like to see an increase in democratic policing. She spoke about the Public Point of Contact requesting that the Police Commission add an email for a majority and minority ranking Commissioner on the website. She spoke about how all complaints should be sent to all members of the Police Commission and not just the Chairman.

Mark Hand from 17 Wild Apple Lane spoke asking the Police Commission to post agendas sooner than the 48 hours in advance notice that is required. He asked for the website to have contact information for the Commissioners individually and then he requested that the Secretary for the Commission be independent from the Police Department.

IV. Executive Reports

a. Financial

i. FY 20 Budget Overview

Chief Spera stated that a final FY 20 overview was included in the Commission packet. He stated that the Department ended the year in the black as predicated and he stated that he was pleased with where the budget wound up.

Chairman Keeney asked if COVID impacted the budget.

Chief Spera stated that there is a separate COVID off budget account that the town set up to pay for COVID personnel and expenditures.

ii. FY 21 Status

Chief Spera reviewed the FY 21 spreadsheets stating everything was normal. He reviewed some of the pre buy items that have already been paid for such as gasoline and the car payment.

Commissioner Shippee asked about deposits in the off budget K9 account asking if they were donations.

Chief Spera responded yes.

b. Administrative

i. Police Operations Briefing

1. COVID-19 Response & Recovery

Chief Spera stated that the Police Department is still responding to COVID 19 cases and continuing to do contact tracing and interviewing each positive resident.

He stated that some special orders that were issued in response to COVID 19 have been withdrawn and some are still in place for the time being.

Shorts 4 Saybrook is underway and families have applied for assistance and the Cares Committee has met and reviewed the applicants and approved some.

2. Tropical Storm Response Recovery

Chief Spera stated that many trees were down due to the Tropical Storm making some road unpassable. The AVT's were utilized and patrolled the areas blocked off due to down trees delivering water to people who needed it and checking in on residents until the roads could be opened again.

3. Fleet Replacement Program

Chief Spera thanked the Police Commission, Board of Selectman, First Selectman Fortuna, Finance Director Lee Ann Palladino and the Board of Finance for supporting the program and approving it.

ii. Executive Report

1. Employee Status Report

Chief Spera stated that the School Resource Officers will be returning to work this week.

He stated this week the Department will be holding their annual Emergency School Response training. He stated that some Departments have chosen to not participate in this training due to COVID but he stated that Old Saybrook will not be doing that.

Chief Spera stated that he will be meeting with the 3 School Resource Officers regarding potentially softening the uniforms they wear.

2. Hiring / Promotions Processes – Update

Chief Spera reviewed the hiring and promotion process.

He stated that the last Police Officer test had 94 people apply and pay. 45 showed up and took the test. 28 passed the test. Those 28 will be part of the oral boards taking place this Thursday.

3. Labor Matters – Update

Chief Spera thanked Detective Williams for bringing up the proposed Sergeant Promotional process to the Union before he stepped down as Vice President. The Union reviewed and accepted the proposal. The proposal will be solidified and signed off on by both parties.

Chief Spera stated that he appreciates the support from the residents that the Police Officers and he has received recently.

iii. Correspondence

Secretary Maselli thanked Chief Spera for the scanned correspondence. He stated he enjoys having the opportunity to read them.

Chairman Keeney stated that Patrolman Karen Gabianelli's letter to the Commission was very nice and thanked her for stepping up and filling a patrolman slot when the Department needed it.

Chief Spera stated that he has heard some comments regarding Commission correspondence and he drafted up a proposal that he thinks might address some of those concerns and he is hoping the Commission will consider adding it to their bylaws.

Secretary Maselli stated that the Commission can ask initial questions right now and that the Commission can review the proposal, seek legal advice regarding the proposal and put it on the next agenda for more discussion and possible action in September.

Chief Spera stated that he will email the proposal to each Commission member so they may review.

Commissioner Wilcox stated that he doesn't understand why just the Chairman would receive the correspondence if it is intended for the whole Commission. He stated he is concerned about complaints not be heard.

Secretary Maselli reviewed the process regarding this being a draft.

Chairman Keeney stated that this process would encourage transparency.

V. Discussion and Possible Action Concerning the Point of Contact listed on the Town Website for the Police Commission.

Commissioner Wilcox stated that he requested this be put on the agenda at the request of Commissioner Shippee.

Commissioner Wilcox made a motion to change the Point of Contact listed on the town website for the Police Commission to the Chairman and the ranking minority member. He then added that he wanted to update the Police Commission webpage and add email addresses.

Secretary Maselli stated that is two separate motions and that the second motion is not on the agenda so that it cannot be voted on.

Commissioner Shippee made a motion to change the Point of Contact listed on the town website for the Police Commission to the Chairman and the ranking minority member. Commissioner Wilcox seconded the motion.

Chairman Keeney stated that he has looked into this a bit and that while looking on every other Commission or Board such as the Board of Finance which has Finance Director Lee Ann Palladino listed as the point of contact not a Chairman.

The motion to change the Point of Contact listed on the town website for the Police Commission to the Chairman and the ranking minority member failed with a vote of 2 in favor and 5 opposed. The motion did not pass.

VI. Anticipated Executive Session for the Purpose of Discussing the Performance of a Public Official and a Public Employee

Chairman Keeney stated that he wanted to invite Attorney Pat McHale and Attorney Cronin into Executive Session.

Secretary Maselli made a motion to enter into Executive Session for the Purpose of Discussing the Performance of a Public Official and a Public Employee inviting Attorney Pat McHale and Attorney Cronin to join. Commissioner Quish seconded the motion. The motion to enter into Executive Session passed with a vote of 7 in favor and 0 against.

The Police Commission entered into Executive Session at 6:51 PM.

The Police Commission exited Executive Session and resumed public session at 8:11 PM.

VII. Discussion and Possible Action Concerning Matters discussed in Executive Session.

Secretary Maselli made a motion to table discussion and possible action concerning matters discussed in Executive Session. Commissioner Quish seconded the motion. The motion to table the discussion and possible action passed with a vote of 7 in favor and 0 against.

VIII. Discussion and Possible Action Concerning Initiating an Inquiry Regarding Administrative Actions/Functions Pertaining to Letters of Complaint and Internal Investigations.

Commissioner Wilcox made a motion to table discussion and possible action concerning initiating an inquiry regarding administrative actions/functions pertaining to letters of complaint and internal investigations. Secretary Maselli seconded the motion. The motion to table the discussion and possible action passed with a vote of 7 in favor and 0 against.

IX. Discussion and Possible Action Concerning Initiating an Inquiry of an Internal Investigation.

Commissioner Wilcox made a motion to table discussion and possible action concerning initiating an inquiry of an internal investigation. Commissioner Quish seconded the motion. The motion to table the discussion and possible action passed with a vote of 7 in favor and 0 against.

X. Comments from The Chief of Police

Chief Spera stated he is still concerned with the behavior from a specific commissioner and stated the Commissioner will soon be receiving a letter from the Chief.

XI. Comments from Commissioners

Vice Chairman Reid asked how the Department made out with the weapon issue.

Chief Spera it's all been taken care of and fixed.

Secretary Maselli stated it was a productive meeting with candid conversations and new faces. He stated that he welcomes new dialog with the new leadership from the Union should they be interested.

Commissioner Von Dassel stated that it was a productive meeting, no other comments.

Commissioner Quish stated that she appreciates the public showing up and sharing.

Commissioner Wilcox had no comment.

Commissioner Shippee asked Chief to clarify his comment asking if she missed an email.

Chief Spera said no she did not miss an email.

XII. Adjournment

Vice Chairman Reid made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Von Dassel seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn passed with a vote of 7 in favor and 0 opposed, 0 abstaining.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:

Jennifer D'Amato
Records Clerk for the Old Saybrook Police Commission