

Old Saybrook Police Commission

Regular Meeting

September 28, 2020

MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Old Saybrook Police Commission was held on Monday, September 28, 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 6:00 PM. He then led those in attendance with the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Discussion, and Possible Action Concerning Meeting Minutes

a. Regular Meeting – August 24, 2020

Records Clerk Damato stated that she would like to note the error on the call to order time. It says 7:00PM when the meeting was called to order at 6:00PM.

Secretary Maselli made a motion to approve the August 24, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes with the noted edit on the call to order time. Vice Chairman Reid seconded the motion.

Commissioner Shippee wanted to note that Chairman Keeney invited Chief Spera to participate in Executive Session along with Attorney McHale and Attorney Cronin.

The motion to accept the August 24, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes with the two noted edits passed with a vote of 7 in favor and 0 against and 0 abstaining.

III. Comments from the Public

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

Secretary Maselli summarized the public speaking rules.

Bruce Carlson from 35 Cricket Court spoke about how he is concerned about Item #6 regarding how the Police Commission receives mail. He stated the Commission needs to know what is happening and in regards to the new proposal that Chief Spera made regarding the Police Commission mail he is still concerned that the mail will be sent to the Police Department and that the Commissioners will be kept in the dark regarding citizen complaints about Officers.

Paul Carmichael stated he wanted to thank the Police Commission and the Police Department for the hard work they do. He stated even though it has been tough times lately for multiple reasons the

Department has been running great. He thanked First Selectman Fortuna, Superintendent Perruccio and Chief Spera stating that the leadership in this town is amazing.

Steve Beeler from Willow Brook Farm Road thanked the Public Safety Leadership for keeping his two boys safe at school and he stated that he has never had an issue with communication and he is here to support.

Mark Hand from 17 Wild Apple Lane stated that he is concerned with restricting access to elected officials. He stated that the Police Department does a fine job, the Chief does too but asked what the downside to the Police Commission having their own email is.

IV. Executive Reports

a. Financial

i. FY 21 Status

Chief Spera stated that all financials were included in the Commission packet that they all received. He stated he has no concerns. He asked if the Commission had any questions.

The Commission had no questions regarding FY21 financials.

b. Administrative

i. Police Operations Briefing

1. Fleet Replacement Program

Updates, Discussion and Possible Actions

Chief Spera stated that he has asked Chairman Keeney to put the Fleet Replacement Program on the agenda as a regular agenda item until the process is completed. He stated that the Chevy Tahoe Police Package is currently available to order.

Vice Chairman Reid asked if the Chief looked into state contract prices.

Chief Spera stated that any municipality can buy off state contract and that often the Town does purchase off state contract.

Vice Chairman Reid stated that he would like to allow the Chief to look into state contract pricing regarding the new vehicles.

Chief Spera stated that he can contact the state contractor and see how they went about creating the contract for the vehicles.

Vice Chairman Reid stated that the Commission needs a comparison of state contract price vs dealership prices.

Commissioner Shippee asked where the Board of Finance stood on this matter.

Chief Spera stated that this was no longer a Board of Finance matter.

Commissioner Shippee asked what dealerships the state is purchasing them through and if Grossman will be servicing the vehicles.

Chief Spera stated that he couldn't remember the dealership names and that any Chevrolet dealership can and will warranty and service them.

Chief Spera stated he could put together a bid package and send it out and in 30 days report to the Commission what the difference between the bid results vs state contract.

He stated that the Fire Marshal and the Fire Department recently purchased their Tahoe's off of state contract and did not go out to bid.

He also added that ordering just opened and he would like to get in the first batch of ordering so the vehicles will be on the road by July 2021.

Vice Chairman Reid made a motion to authorize the Chief to purchase the Chevy Tahoe's off the state bid list. Secretary Maselli seconded the motion.

Commissioner Shippee asked if the Chief will still sending out bids now.

Chief Spera stated no the state did the leg work and due diligence finding the best prices.

The motion passed with a vote of 4 in favor and 3 against and 0 abstaining.

2. Executive Report

a. Employee Status Report

Chief Spera stated that the promoted staff members are doing very well. Patrolman Kostek just got off probation and Patrolman Tourjee will be off very soon as well.

The Commission had discussed having them both come in and discuss their first year with the Department and update them. Chief stated that is still available to them should they want that.

He also advised the Commission that a Patrol Sergeant is currently out on a non-work related injury.

b. Hiring / Promotional Processes – Update

Chief Spera stated that the Sergeant promotional process has been posted and five people have applied, four are eligible and one is not but it's a great professional development experience for that Officer who is not eligible.

c. Labor Matters – Update

Chief Spera stated that he had a three hour lunch with Ron Suraci the COPS Union Representative the other day and it led to great discussion.

He approached the First Selectman to prevent arbitration for 30 days and they can hopefully work hard to come up with a better solution that appeases everyone.

Chairman Keeney asked if the negotiating team will resume meeting.

Chief Spera stated that probably not as it will be an off the record settlement package.

Chairman Keeney stated that is great news.

Commissioner Shippee asked about the other pending grievances.

Chief Spera stated that they were all part of the positive conversations.

3. Correspondence

V. Discussion and Possible Action Concerning the Performance/Conduct of a Public Official

Chairman Keeney stated that at the August 24, 2020 meeting following their Executive Session he directed Secretary Maselli to draft a letter in regards to the conduct of a Police Commissioner.

Secretary Maselli read the letter. The letter went as follows.

Dear Commissioner Wilcox,

This letter is written to express the disapproval of your actions since you were appointed to the Old Saybrook Police Commission. Your repeated inappropriate behaviors are unwelcome. You put the commission in a difficult position when you do not follow regulations and guidelines for public commissions. Of specific concern are the following:

1. Independent investigations of police matters outside public meetings
2. Your outbursts and disparaging comments regarding Chief Spera and other members of the Department of Police Services
3. Your inappropriate references to social media posts
4. The conducting of illegal meetings

We ask that you cease these actions immediately and begin to conduct yourself in a professional and productive manner.

Chairman Keeney asked if there was a motion to accept the letter, have the Commission sign the letter and allow the Chairman to carry out the will of the Commission.

Commissioner Quish made the motion to accept the letter and allow the Chairman to carry out the will of the Commission. Secretary Maselli seconded the motion.

Commissioner Shippee asked what this investigation was about. She stated there was no outburst from Commissioner Wilcox and she questioned who is participating in illegal meetings.

Secretary Maselli stated that all had been discussed in Executive Session.

Chairman Keeney stated the same.

Commissioner Shippee stated that this was absolutely outrageous.

Secretary Maselli stated that there has been correspondence outside of a public meeting.

Commissioner Wilcox stated he assumes he will have the opportunity to respond after he receives the letter.

The motion passed with a vote of 5 in favor and 2 against and 0 abstaining.

VI. Discussion and Possible Action Concerning a new Commission By-Law Concerning Police Commission Correspondence

Chairman Keeney stated that after the last meeting he was hoping to have an update regarding Police Commission Correspondence. He was unable to get a new proposal reviewed by legal counsel in time for the meeting. He is planning on having the new proposal for the Commission to review at the October meeting, voted on at the November meeting and should it pass it will become an added by-law.

Chairman Keeney also stated that he will leave letters addressed to the individual Commissioners at the Police Department to be picked up the following day. They may read the letter and return them to the Police Department. He stated that whatever is adopted he feels that all letters should be kept and filed at the Police Department.

VII. Comments from The Chief of Police

Emergency drills at the schools have resumed.

The Police Department assisted with the flu clinic this weekend. When a COVID19 vaccine becomes available it will be distributed in the same manner.

Chief Spera stated regarding the new mask laws he has directed his staff to educate not enforce.

VIII. Comments from Commissioners

Vice Chairman Reid asked Chief Spera how the young boy from the Shorts4Sean program is doing.

Chief Spera stated that the program this year is Shorts4Saybrook and about \$40,000 has been given out to families in Old Saybrook in need. Chief Spera stated that Sean and his family actually moved away for a bit due to family employment but sadly his cancer has returned and he and his family will be returning to Old Saybrook to be with family and friends as he continues his battle.

Secretary Maselli stated that he is frustrated with members of the public and media. He stated that very few people including members of the Police Commission actually understand what the Police Commission does. He stated that a civilian should not be the Point of Contact for the Police Commission. He stated that in his capacity as a Principal he understands that it would be inappropriate

to send a teacher complaint to the Board of Education and not the superintendent. He also raised concern about someone sending the Commission a letter that needs immediate police attention.

Commissioner Quish thanked Secretary Maselli for putting that in a different context. She stated that she also wanted to address a comment that a member of the public made at the last Police Commission meeting regarding the Commissioner Clerk. She stated that the secretary is separate from the Chief of Police. Clerking the Police Commission meetings is part of her job description and contract with the Town. The meetings are video and audio taped and each month the Commission has the opportunity to agree or disagree with minutes. She stated that Jen is diligent

Chairman Keeney stated he agrees.

Commissioner Von Dassel stated he agrees Jen does a fantastic job and that the Commission can amend the minutes if they don't reflect what went on.

Commissioner Shippee stated that the Police Commission needs a better system for the mail as people from the general public do not understand why the mail doesn't go to the Police Commission as a whole but just to the Chairman.

Commissioner Wilcox stated he doesn't agree with Secretary Maselli and that if someone received a concerning email they would call 911. Citizens wanting to file a complaint with the Commission need to be able to reach the Commission.

Commissioner Von Dassel stated that citizens can reach Police Commissioners each month at the Police Commission meeting during public comment. He also agreed with Secretary Maselli stated while it's a long shot it could happen where an important email goes missing etc.

Chairman Keeney stated he had nothing else to add besides thanking the Police Department for all their hard work.

IX. Adjournment

Commissioner Quish made a motion to adjourn. Secretary Maselli seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn passed with a vote of 7 in favor and 0 opposed, 0 abstaining.

The meeting adjourned at 7:16 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:

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