

Old Saybrook Police Commission
Regular Meeting
April 25, 2022
MINUTES

A regular hybrid meeting of the Old Saybrook Police Commission was held on Monday, April 25, 2022. The meeting was recorded and can be viewed in its entirety at <https://youtu.be/-OlrU-wiZXU>

Present: Chairman Wilcox, Vice Chairman Shippee, Secretary Notar-Francesco, Commissioners Calle, Manning, Maselli and Von Dassel. Chief Spera and Captain DePerry were present from the Department of Police Services.

I. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance (0:20)

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

II. Comments from the Public (0:44)

Michael Looney commented.

III. Police Commission Workshop Series – Information Technology (2:53)

Sergeant Gardner presented a Power Point presentation regarding the Information Technology program at the Old Saybrook Police Department.

IV. Discussion and Possible Action on the Meeting Minutes for: (1:15:45)

a. March 28, 2022 Regular Meeting (1:15:50)

Secretary Notar-Francesco made a motion to approve the March 28, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Manning seconded the motion.

Secretary Notar-Francesco requested to add “*no discussion was had*” under agenda items that the Police Commission did not discuss. The Commission agreed.

The motion to accept the March 28, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes passed with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

b. April 21, 2022 Special Meeting (1:17:25)

Secretary Notar-Francesco made a motion to approve the April 21, 2022 Special Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Maselli seconded the motion.

Chairman Wilcox requested to add “*no discussion was had*” under agenda items that the Police Commission did not discuss. The Commission agreed.

The motion to accept the April 21, 2022 Special Meeting Minutes passed with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

V. Executive Reports (1:18:27)

a. FY 23 Operating Budget – Update (1:18:27)

No discussion was had.

b. FY 22 Operating Budget (1:18:40)

Chief Spera stated that he is concerned with the legal line item being over budget. He will be watching other line items as the end of the fiscal year approaches.

c. Off Budget Accounts (1:19:30)

The Commission discussed the off budget accounts and also reviewed the new format presented to them.

d. Personnel Matters (1:22:51)

James Simpson will be graduating from the Police Academy May 5th and then will be assigned to field training with Patrolman White.

Patrolman Schulz is still out on paid administrative leave.

Patrick Hanley is still out on family medical leave.

Patrolman Rooney will be participating in mandatory training/recertification this week.

Patrolman Mora and Tourjee were signed up to attend an interview and interrogation class this week. The instructors came down with COVID and the class has been cancelled and will be rescheduled to a later date.

Fleet Update (1:23:57)

One car is fully outfitted and currently mission ready.

The Department is working with Whelen Engineering to fully outfit the rest of the fleet and all should be on the road soon.

The Commission discussed how the Ford vehicles will be auctioned off.

The Commission took a short break starting at 8:29 PM.

The Commission returned from break at 8:37 PM.

VI. Discussion of Town Counsel's Legal Opinion Concerning Proposed Amendments to Police Commission By-Laws (1:30:05)

Chairman Wilcox advised the Commission that Attorney Cronin's opinion was unchanged from his first letter in which he cautioned the Commission about adopting the new by-laws.

VII. Discussion and Possible Action on the "Complaints Made to Commissioners" By-Law Proposal (1:30:39)

Chairman Wilcox stated that in Attorney Cronin's letter, regarding the "Complaints Made to Commissions" by-law, he references a statute that gave the POST council standards which Police Departments have to abide by but nothing about what Police Commissions could or couldn't do.

He stated that he believes Attorney Cronin's opinion is wrong.

He advised the Commission that he will be speaking to First Selectman Fortuna regarding spending money to rectify this matter.

Commissioner Manning made a motion to table item VII till a future time. Vice Chairman Shippee seconded the motion. The motion to table agenda item VII till a future time passed with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

VIII. Discussion and Possible Action on the "Police Commission Correspondence" By-Law Proposal (1:35:40)

Vice Chairman Shippee made a motion to approve the "Police Commission Correspondence" By-Law Proposal. Commissioner Calle seconded the motion.

The Commission discussed the proposed by-law.

Commissioner Maselli stated that Attorney Cronin's legal opinion is that the Commission does not adopt this by-law.

Chairman Wilcox stated that he feels that Attorney Cronin doesn't understand the intent of the by-law.

Commissioner Maselli asked if Attorney Cronin can update his opinion if the intent is explained.

Chairman Wilcox stated that he has spoken with Attorney Cronin and once he understood the intent he agreed.

Commissioner Von Dassel stated that the rest of the Commission did not hear these discussions and asked how this is transparent.

Secretary Notar-Francesco stated that she sees no problem with this proposed by-law.

The Commission discussed the correspondence by-law proposal and if it should be passed tonight or tabled until Attorney Cronin can revise his letter.

The motion to approve the “Police Commission Correspondence” by-law passed with a vote of 5 in favor (Wilcox/Shippee/Notar-Francesco/Calle/Manning), 2 opposed (Maselli/Von Dassel) and 0 abstaining.

IX. Discussion and Possible Action on the “Responsibilities of Commissioners as to Inquiries” By-Law Proposal (1:50:54)

Secretary Notar-Francesco made a motion to delete the current section titled “Investigations of Personnel Related Matters” and replace it with the newly amended by-law. Vice Chairman Shippee seconded the motion.

The Commission discussed the by-law proposal and Attorney Cronin’s opinion.

Chairman Wilcox stated that Attorney Cronin is being very conservative in his opinion.

Chairman Wilcox stated he will instead be guided by the Connecticut Supreme Court.

Commissioner Maselli asked why the Commission is taking the opinion of one lawyer but not the opinion of the Town Attorney.

The motion to delete the current section titled “Investigations of Personnel Related Matters” and replace it with the newly amended by-law passed with a vote of 5 in favor (Wilcox/Shippee/Notar-Francesco/Calle/Manning), 2 opposed (Maselli/Von Dassel) and 0 abstaining.

X. Discussion and Possible Action on the “Public Comment” By-Laws Proposal (1:58:27)

Commissioner Manning made a motion to approve the by-law change replacing current paragraph 4 with the paragraph 4 that is in the packet.

Commissioner Manning read the proposal. *“Subject to the limitations below, speakers may make comments as to any topic within the jurisdiction of the Police Commission, including commendations, criticisms or other comments about individual employees of the Department, as well as general or specific comments concerning Police Department policies, procedures, programs, budgets and the like. However, in order to protect the reputational interests of individual employees, speakers making a personnel comment are to refrain from identifying individual employees by name, rank, badge number, or any other specific reference that tends to identify the employee.”* Vice Chairman Shippee seconded the motion.

The Commission discussed the Public Comment by-law proposal.

Commissioner Manning stated that she sees no problem with this document as Attorney Cronin’s language change was incorporated into this.

The motion to approve the by-law change regarding Public Comment passed with a vote of 6 in favor (Wilcox/Shippee/Notar-Francesco/Calle/Manning/Maselli), 1 opposed (Von Dassel) and 0 abstaining.

XI. Correspondence (2:01:38)

The correspondence was passed around.

The Commission discussed handing in correspondence to the Commission Clerk and agreed to do that moving forward.

XII. Discussion Concerning Progress Toward Annual Evaluations of the Chief of Police (2:02:18)

Chairman Wilcox stated that they do have some progress to report. Secretary Notar-Francesco and Commissioner Calle have taken a lead in developing a draft regarding an evaluation instrument.

The draft was passed around to the other Commission members and the Chief of Police.

Chief Spera questioned who authorized the draft.

The Commission discussed the process that led to the draft and spoke about scheduling a special meeting.

XIII. Comments from the Public (2:26:38)

Brittany Eckert commented.

Brendan Crowley commented.

XIV. Comments from the Chief of Police (2:28:48)

Chief Spera commented.

XV. Comments from Police Commissioners (2:30:53)

There were no comments from Commissioners.

XVI. Adjournment (2:31:07)

Commissioner Maselli made a motion to adjourn. The motion to adjourn was seconded by Vice Chairman Shippee. The motion to adjourn passed with a vote of 7 in favor and 0 opposed, 0 abstaining.

The meeting adjourned at 9:38 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:

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