

Old Saybrook Police Commission

Regular Meeting
November 28, 2022
MINUTES

A regular hybrid meeting of the Old Saybrook Police Commission was held on Monday, November 28, 2022. The meeting was recorded and can be viewed in its entirety at <https://youtu.be/81Y2pBcNZmU>

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

I. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance (0:21)

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)

There were no comments from the Public.

III. Discussion and Possible Action on the Meeting Minutes for: (0:59)

a. October 24, 2022 Regular Meeting (1:00)

Secretary Notar-Francesco made a motion to approve the October 24, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Von Dassel seconded the motion. The motion passed with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

IV. Executive Reports (1:17)

a. FY 23 Operating Budget (1:23)

Chief Spera stated that the Department is doing well. He stated that forty-eight percent (48%) of the entire budget has been spent so far.

b. FY 24 Budget Process (2:49)

Chief Spera stated that he and the Chairman recently met and decided that Chief will present the budget to the Commission this year. He asked the Commission if they wanted to invite the Board of Finance to join. The Commission agreed.

Chief Spera stated that the budget process usually includes a lot of emotion and this year he would like to take a more professional approach. He stated that 95% of the budget is contractual.

Chief Spera stated that there is not much to talk about for General Expenditures. He stated that he cannot predict what gas prices will be July 1, 2023.

He advised the Commission that the benefits and health care numbers are given to the Police Department by the Finance Director and that those often change.

The Commission discussed possible dates for the proposed budget presentation, discussion and vote.

c. Off Budget Accounts (2:06)

The Commission discussed the new presentation style for the off budget accounts.

d. Personnel Matters (13:57)

Chief Spera advised the Commission that custodian Pat Hanley is still out on an extended sick leave. His leave should come to an end mid-December. To make sure that he can safely perform the duties of his job, Mr. Hanley will be going to an independent medical examiner before returning.

e. Fleet Update (14:40)

Chief Spera advised the Commission that he is continuing to sell vehicles. He stated that they cannot get in touch with two of the highest bidders from the last auction, but they are still working on it.

Chief Spera stated that they are close to satisfying the Town goal. He asked the Commission for permission to sell the cars for below reserve, since the goal of forty-five thousand dollars (\$45,000) will be fulfilled.

Secretary Notar-Francesco made a motion to ask the Chief to use his discretion to dispose of these vehicles in a way he deems most expeditious and economical. Commissioner Manning seconded the motion. The motion passed with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

f. Professional Development Update (19:41)

Chief Spera stated that all of the medically certified staff recently completed RSV training with Middlesex Hospital Paramedics.

Chief Spera stated that dispatcher Lea Offner is currently taking classes to become a training officer.

The Chief advised the Commission that the entire Department recently participated in a Strategic Planning day.

g. Activity Report (21:30)

The Commission discussed the activity report.

V. Commission Workshop – Internal Operational Strategic Planning. (24:42)

Chief Spera presented to the Commission a workshop focusing on Internal Operational Strategic Planning.

VI. Discussion and Action on Recommissioning Three (3) Ford Interceptors for Use by the School Resource Officers. (1:32:43)

The Commission took a recess starting at 8:32 PM.
The Commission was back in session at 8:38 PM.

Chief Spera asked the Commission if they received his memo regarding the recommissioning of three vehicles.

Chief Spera stated that he spoke with each of the School Resource Officers and the leadership team to get their thoughts and ideas.

Chief Spera stated that the consensus was having a set car for each SRO is helpful. It is not disruptive to fleet operations and it allows the SRO to hang on campus for a little bit longer. One SRO is a soccer coach and this would allow him to keep his cruiser on campus during that time.

Chief Spera stated that the plan is operationally and fiscally sound. There will be no increased cost to the tax payers. The money to pay for maintenance will come from the off budget outside services account.

The Commission discussed the proposal.

Commissioner Calle made a motion to accept the recommendation proposed by Chief Spera to recommission the three vehicles for SRO use. Vice Chairman Shippee seconded the motion. The motion passed with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

VII. Discussion and Action on Police Commission Meetings Dates and Times for 2023. (1:38:22)

The Commission discussed meeting dates and times for 2023.

Chairman Wilcox read the proposed 2023 dates into the minutes.

The proposed dates are January 23, February 27, March 27, April 24, May 22, June 26, July 24, August 28, October 23 and November 27.

The Commission discussed September 25 (Yom Kippur) and December 25 (Christmas) as alternative dates will need to be chosen.

Chairman Wilcox suggested not scheduling a regular meeting in December. Chairman Wilcox stated that a special meeting can be scheduled should something come up.

The Commission discussed an alternate date for the September 25th meeting. The Commission decided on September 26th or September 18th as alternate dates, pending conference room availability.

The Commission discussed changing the start time from 7:00 PM to 6:30 PM.

Commission Manning made a motion to establish the proposed dates for the calendar year 2023 as listed (January 23, February 27, March 27, April 24, May 22, June 26, July 24, August 28, September 26 or September 18, October 23, November 27) at 6:30 PM. Commissioner Calle seconded the motion. The motion passed with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

VIII. Discussion and Action on setting Special Meeting Dates and Times for Special Meetings Considering the FY 24 Budget. (1:47:00)

The Commission discussed setting special meeting dates and times earlier in the meeting, but due to scheduling conflicts with some Commissioners, they decided on January 5 at 6:30 PM, January 10 at 7:00 PM and January 13 at 7:00 PM.

Secretary Notar-Francesco made a motion to schedule special budget meetings at 6:30PM on January 5, January 10 and January 13. Commissioner Manning seconded the motion.

Commissioner Calle stated that the Commission decided on 6:30 PM on January 5th to accommodate the Board of Finance and 7:00 PM on January 10th and 13th.

The Commission agreed.

Secretary Notar-Francesco made a motion to schedule special budget meetings on January 5 at 6:30 PM, January 10 at 7:00 PM and January 13 at 7:00 PM. Commissioner Calle seconded the motion. The motion passed with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

IX. Presentation and Discussion on the new Public Comment Conduct and Procedure By-Law Proposal. (1:49:34)

Chairman Wilcox stated that the next several items on the agenda are concerning the proposed by-law changes. He stated that three of the by-laws were presented at the last meeting but minor changes were made to reflect comments from that meeting. He also stated that since the last meeting he has spoken with Jon Berchem. Mr. Berchem and Mr. Fortuna have signed off on the fourth by-law amendment concerning citizens' complaints. He stated that the Commissioners have all four of the amended by-laws.

Chairman Wilcox suggested to the Commission that they vote on these at the next meeting.

Commissioner Maselli asked if there was something in writing from Jon Berchem or the First Selectman.

Chairman Wilcox stated that he has an email from the attorney. In the email the attorney states that these by-laws are consistent with laws and policy.

Commissioner Maselli stated he still has concerns over CIRMA.

Secretary Notar-Francesco asked Commissioner Maselli if an email from the First Selectman regarding CIRMA would suffice.

Commissioner Maselli stated yes.

Chief Spera voiced his concerns regarding drafts and revised changes. He stated that there has been no red lined versions and no discussions. He stated that the discussions should be taking place in public and not behind the scenes.

The Commission discussed the progression.

Chief Spera asked why the Police Commission removed the word commendations. He asked why the Police Commission is removing the “positive word” about someone’s employment.

The Commission discussed the Public Comment Conduct and procedures by-law.

Chairman Wilcox stated that the point was never to discourage positive comments.

Commissioner Maselli stated that he feels a big piece is missing. He stated that the one positive thing was removed.

The Commission discussed including verbiage to welcome constructive and positive public comment.

X. Presentation and Discussion on the New Police Commission Correspondence By-Law Proposal. (1:49:34)

Commissioner Von Dassel stated that he feels all correspondence should go through the Chairman. He states that he doesn’t agree with this proposed by-law.

XI. Presentation and Discussion on the New Responsibilities of Commissioners By-Law Proposal. (1:49:34)

The Commission discussed the Responsibilities of Commissioners by-law.

XII. Presentation and Discussion on the Citizens’ Complaint By-Law Proposal. (1:49:34)

The Commission discussed the citizens’ complaint by-law.

Chief Spera asked what the process is on handling a complaint against a Police Commissioner.

Chairman Wilcox stated that can be added.

Chairman Wilcox stated that the reasoning for this proposed by-law was to make it so citizens could submit a complaint directly to the Commission.

Chairman Wilcox stated that a complaint against the Chief would be forwarded to the First Selectman. The First Selectman would decide who should investigate the complaint.

Chief Spera asked where the Board of Selectman is in his chain of command.

Chairman Wilcox stated that the he doesn’t think the Board of Selectman is in Chief’s chain of command.

Chief Spera stated that there has been no informal or formal negotiations regarding this.

The Commission discussed the citizens’ complaint by-law proposal.

Chief Spera suggested the Commission take the January regular meeting and focus just on the by-laws.

Vice Chairman Shippee made a motion to table items 9, 10, 11 & 12 until a special meeting can be scheduled. If a special meeting date cannot be scheduled then this will be tabled till the January regular meeting. Secretary Notar-Francesco seconded the motion. The motion passed with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

XIII. Discussion Concerning a Commission Retreat with the Chief of Police. (2:46:18)

Chairman Wilcox stated that he and Chief Spera have discussed having a commission retreat. Chairman Wilcox stated that Dr. Lynn will be invited to serve as a facilitator. He stated that he is looking for dates but that this is not time sensitive.

XIV. Correspondence (2:47:42)

There was no correspondence.

Secretary Notar-Francesco suggested adding a correspondence procedure discussion to a future agenda.

The Commission discussed the current procedure.

The Commission decided to re-visit this on a later date.

XV. Report of the Ad Hoc Committee to Develop an Evaluation Instrument for the Position of Chief of Police. (2:56:26)

Secretary Notar-Francesco updated the Commission on the progress made by the Ad Hoc Committee.

XVI. Discussion and Possible Action to Enter into Executive Session to discuss a request for a leave of absence. (2:58:34)

Vice Chairman Shippee made a motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss a request for a leave of absence and interview candidates for the position of Patrolman/Patrolman Trainee inviting Chief Spera and Captain DePerry to join. Commissioner Maselli seconded the motion. The motion passed with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

The Commission entered into Executive Session at 10:05 PM

Ben White entered at 10:05 PM.

Ben White exited at 10:14 PM.

Larry Hayden entered for technology help at 10:17 PM.

Larry Hayden exited at 10:24 PM.

XVII. Discussion and Possible Action to Enter Executive Session to Interview Candidates for the Position of Patrolman/Patrolman Trainee. (2:58:34)

Anthony Inzitari entered at 10:23 PM.

Anthony Inzitari exited at 10:32 PM.

The Commission exited Executive Session and resumed public session at 10:42 PM.

XVIII. Discussion and Possible Action Concerning the Request for a Leave of Absence. (2:59:42)

Vice Chairman Shippee made a motion to grant Officer Ben White a one year leave of absence. Secretary Notar-Francesco seconded the motion. The motion passed with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

XIX. Discussion and Possible Action Concerning the Appointment of a Patrolman/Patrolman Trainee. (3:00:18)

Commission Maselli made a motion to offer Anthony Inzitari a position of patrolman upon completion of any additional hiring requirements, at a time and date determined by the Chief, which supports the operation of the Department. Secretary Notar-Francesco seconded the motion. The motion passed with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

Chief Spera asked the Commission to authorize himself as the Chief of Police, until January 23, 2023, to hire the next eligible candidate to the position of patrolman or patrolman trainee and report that activity back to the Police Commission.

Commissioner Maselli made a motion to support the Chief's recommendation. Secretary Notar-Francesco seconded the motion. The motion passed with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

XX. Comments from the Public (3:02:15)

There were no comments from the Public.

XXI. Comments from the Chief of Police (3:02:25)

Chief Spera commented.

XXII. Comments from Police Commissioners (3:05:34)

Commissioner Manning commented.

Commissioner Maselli commented.

XXIII. Adjournment (3:06:42)

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

The meeting adjourned at 10:49 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:

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