

Old Saybrook Police Commission

Regular Meeting

August 28, 2023

MINUTES

A regular hybrid meeting of the Old Saybrook Police Commission was held on Monday, August 28, 2023. The meeting was recorded and can be viewed in its entirety at https://youtu.be/dwYd_OteVLs

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

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

Chairman Wilcox called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM for the Police Commission and led those in attendance with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chief Spera requested a moment of silence for former Commissioner Jean Winkler, who recently passed away, at the age of 99. Commissioner Winkler served on the Police Commission for over two decades.

II. Comments from the Public (1:44)

Mark Hand commented.

Deb Wilkie commented.

Frank Glowinski commented.

III. Discussion and Possible Action on the Meeting Minutes for: (7:46)

a. Regular Meeting – July 24, 2023 (7:50)

Secretary Notar-Francesco made a motion to accept the July 24, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Maselli seconded the motion. The motion to accept the July 24, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes passed with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

IV. Discussion Concerning the Content of Meeting Minutes with Respect to Public Comment. (9:06)

Chairman Wilcox stated that this agenda item stems from a citizen's request that the minutes have a brief overview for any public comments.

Chairman Wilcox stated that he added this agenda item so that the Commission could discuss it. He stated that he feels that the Commissioners pay attention and listen to public comment. He doesn't know if it would hurt to have a brief synopsis but doesn't want to go into great detail.

Secretary Notar-Francesco stated that she would like to keep the minutes in regard to public comment as it is. She stated that she has several reasons for that decision. She stated that it can be hard to extract just a few words from what citizens sometimes say. She stated that she doesn't want to get into

situations where members of the public come back to meetings saying that the minutes do not reflect what they said. She stated that public comment is timestamped and members of the public who want to hear public comment can get the video. She suggested possibly timestamping each comment.

Commissioner Maselli agreed.

Commissioner Manning agreed to keep the minutes as is.

Vice Chairman Shippee stated that she agrees as long as it stays consistent.

Commissioner Calle and Commissioner Von Dassel agreed with everyone else.

After consensus, the Commission decided to not change the format of the meeting minutes in regards to public comment.

V. Discussion of Citizen's Concern Regarding Pedestrian Safety in Street Crossings. (15:50)

Chairman Wilcox stated that this agenda item also stems from a citizen's concern. He asked Chief Spera to report to the Commission where pedestrian safety in street crossings currently stand.

Chief Spera stated that Main Street is a state highway and that the Town has to get permission from the state to change anything. Chief Spera stated that he met with the First Selectman and the town engineer on how the crosswalks are done. He stated that he just emailed the First Selectman and that the issue is with the town engineer. He stated that he doesn't believe the plan has been funded or put out to bid yet.

VI. Executive Reports (17:14)

a. FY 2024 Operating Budget (17:22)

Chief Spera stated that Commission has received the 2024 Operating Budget spreadsheets. He stated that the budget has been frozen except for the necessary expenditures. Chief Spera advised the Commission that the town has not entered into a contract for fuel which makes it very hard to predict costs.

Chief Spera passed around the finalized fiscal year 2023 budget. He stated that the Police Department returned \$233,222.15 back to the town. He stated that the majority of the returned money was from personnel.

Chief Spera advised the Commission that the officer safety enhancements that the Commission endorsed have all been purchased from the fiscal year 2023 budget.

b. Off Budget Accounts (19:55)

The off budget account spreadsheets were included in Commission packets. The Commission briefly discussed the off budget accounts.

c. Personnel Matters (23:34)

Chief Spera advised the Commission that Detective Tabor resigned. Detective Tabor took a job with the Middletown Police Department. The Chief stated that he is not taking a salary or benefit reduction by going there. Chief Spera wished him well and a safe career.

Chief Spera advised the Commission that custodian Patrick Hanley is still out on unpaid leave. He stated that the Department has been without a custodian since last March. He stated that he will reach out to Pat and see if he's planning on coming back.

d. Professional Development Update (25:52)

Chief Spera advised the Commission that all Police Officers have been fully transitioned and qualified with their new duty weapons.

Chief Spera stated that the mobile firearms trailer came down to help with the transition and qualification. He stated that the police officers are currently carrying their new side arms. Chief Spera thanked the Commission and the Committee of Department members for their recommendations and support.

Commissioner Manning asked what happened with the old equipment.

Chief Spera stated that in regards to the tactical vests he is not sure yet. He stated that there are no expiration dates on them. He asked the Commission if they want to sell them or give them away. He stated that he is going to look into this and come back to the Commission with recommendations and the Commission can decide what to do with them.

Commissioner Maselli thanked everyone who worked to safely open schools this year.

Chief Spera stated the Department did active shooter training in all three schools and at St. John. He stated that the Department spent the day working on tactics and response plans.

e. Activity Report (30:40)

Chief Spera stated that he hopes members of the public are going to the website and looking at the dashboard, checking out the live activity reports.

VII. Discussion and Possible Action Concerning Employee Onboarding and Offboarding Activities. (36:14)

Captain DePerry spoke about the onboarding process that each potential officer has to go through within the Department. He handed out a checklist for the onboarding process for the Commission to review.

The Commission discussed the onboarding process.

Chief Spera passed out to the Commission the Employee Exit interview packet. He reviewed the process with the Commission.

Chief Spera stated that he spoke with Chairman Wilcox and wants the Commission to review and let the Chief know if something is missing.

Chief Spera stated that he would welcome a HR consultant to draft a new exit interview. He stated that the Police Department is currently the only department in town that conducts a formal exit interview. Chief Spera stated that it should be a town wide practice with a standard form.

The Commission discussed who should handle the exit interview process. Chief Spera stated that he would be fine with an HR Director handling the process, but would like some law enforcement savvy person to be present to ask some technical questions.

Vice Chairman Shippee stated that she was disappointed to see Captain DePerry's letter added to the Justin Hanna exit interview.

Chief Spera stated that the Captain's memo was a perception from a member of the leadership team.

The Commission agreed to review the exit interview document and discuss at a future meeting.

Chairman Wilcox asked the Commission if there were any objections to moving to agenda number 9. There were no objections.

VIII. Discussion Concerning the Status of the Proposal Regarding the Annual Evaluation of the Chief of Police. (1:34:03)

The Chairman asked Chief Spera if, by the September meeting, he could give the Commission a reaction to the document he was given previously.

IX. Update, Discussion, and Possible Action on the Police Commission's Request of the First Selectman Concerning Employee Benefits, Recruitment and Retention.(1:18:52)

Chairman Wilcox stated that he was happy to report that he met with First Selectman Carl Fortuna and that he is in favor of an actuarial study, an outside consultant to review the current compensation and benefit package, and a consultation to advise on recruitment and compensation as the sole reason for turnover.

Chairman Wilcox stated that the First Selectman is also interested in exploring a human relations consultant to work on department onboarding and offboarding.

Secretary Notar-Francesco asked if the First Selectman gave a timeline to the Chairman for this action.

Chairman Wilcox stated that the search is already underway and that the First Selectman stated that they did not have to go through the RFP bid process to hire people.

The Chief and the Commission discussed whether skipping an RFP may not be as transparent.

Chief Spera asked the Commission for direction regarding hiring.

The Commission discussed their options.

The Commission decided to hold a special meeting inviting the Board of Selectman to join them to discuss the situation.

X. Discussion and Possible Action Concerning a new “Responsibilities of Commissions” By-Law. (1:35:11)

The Commission took a break starting at 8:04 PM.

The Commission resumed at 8:11 PM.

Chairman Wilcox presented the new “Responsibilities of Commissioners” By-Law. He opened up the floor for discussion on the document.

Commissioner Maselli asked why all these discussions and revisions have been taking place behind closed doors. He also asked why a document that everyone agreed on did not have one motion to move it forward.

Secretary Notar-Francesco stated that she walked away from that meeting feeling uncomfortable. She stated that she drafted part of the document tonight that she feels would satisfy her discontent.

Commissioner Maselli asked why the Commission cannot follow a process. He stated that at the last meeting the Chairman came in and changed the document. He stated that so much time and so much good work of everyone working together was wasted.

Secretary Notar-Francesco stated that all points and everything discussed by the committee were included in the document. She agreed that the Commission had done so much good work and not wasted.

Commissioner Calle stated that she was also not at that meeting but doesn’t understand why there was no motion made. She asked why nobody said something at that collaboration meeting if they were uncomfortable.

Vice Chairman Shippee stated that she followed Secretary Notar-Francesco and Commissioner Maselli’s lead, but was very uncomfortable how everyone tore the draft up.

Commissioner Calle stated that is what they were supposed to do. Everyone was supposed to collaborate and that she understand Commissioner Maselli’s frustration.

The Commission discussed the Role of Commission Members By-Law.

However they decided to not completely wordsmith the draft tonight, but will have a redline version for the next meeting for Commissioners to review.

Chief Spera and Secretary Notar-Francesco will meet to put together the redline version.

XI. Correspondence (2:16:17)

Chairman Wilcox stated that he had no other correspondence than what was previously shared.

XII. Comments from the Public (2:16:30)

A member of the public asked a question.

XIII. Discussion and Possible Action to Enter Executive Session to Discuss the Employment of the Captain. (2:17:23)

Commissioner Maselli made a motion to enter into Executive Session inviting Chief Spera and Captain DePerry to join. Secretary Notar-Francesco 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 8:54 PM.

Chief Spera exited Executive Session at 9:02 PM.

Commissioner Calle exited Executive Session at 9:29 PM.

The Commission exited Executive Session and resumed public session at 9:45 PM.

XIV. Comments from the Chief of Police (2:17:59)

Chief Spera commented.

XV. Comments from Police Commissioners (2:22:09)

Commissioner Von Dassel commented.

Commissioner Maselli commented.

Secretary Notar-Francesco commented.

Vice Chairman Shippee commented.

Commissioner Manning commented.

Chairman Wilcox commented.

XVI. Adjournment (2:23:55)

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:51 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:

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