

Old Saybrook Police Commission
Regular Meeting
September 18, 2023
MINUTES

A regular hybrid meeting of the Old Saybrook Police Commission was held on Monday, September 18, 2023. The meeting was recorded and can be viewed in its entirety at <https://youtu.be/AnHRtc0g1wE>

Present: Chairman Wilcox, Vice Chairman Shippee, Secretary Notar-Francesco, Commissioners Manning, Maselli and Calle (via Zoom). Chief Spera was present from the Department of Police Services.

Absent: Commissioner Carl Von Dassel

I. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance (0:22)

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.

II. Comments from the Public (0:40)

There were no comments from the public.

III. Discussion and Possible Action on the Meeting Minutes for: (0:54)

a. Regular Meeting – August 28, 2023 (0:54)

Secretary Notar-Francesco made a motion to approve the August 28, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes. Vice Chairman Shippee seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed with a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

IV. Executive Reports (1:12)

a. FY 2024 Operating Budget (1:17)

Chief Spera stated that the Department is still in the beginning months of fiscal year 2024.

Chief Spera stated that he recently spoke with the First Selectman about locking in fuel prices for gasoline. He stated that the Department is paying “at-the-pump prices” right now and that it is hard to budget and predict how that will affect that line item.

Chief Spera stated that he has recently been advised by the Finance Director to start drafting the 2025 budget. The Finance Director stated that non-union employees will be getting a 2.5% salary increase, and to include a 10% increase in healthcare costs.

b. Off Budget Accounts (2:55)

Secretary Notar-Francesco asked Chief Spera about the “Town Hall Transfer” line item under the Police Admin Off Budget Account.

Chief Spera stated that it is part of the pistol permit costs that are infused back into the budget.

c. Personnel Matters (3:44)

Chief Spera had no updates.

Commissioner Calle asked about the status of Patrick Hanley.

Chief Spera stated that he is still out on unpaid medical leave until December.

d. Professional Development Update (3:52)

Chief Spera stated that Patrolman Mora is now a certified physical fitness evaluator.

e. Activity Report (4:42)

Chief Spera stated that the activity report was included in the packet. He stated that the agency was extremely busy over the past month.

f. 2024 Executive Goals of the Chief of Police – Update (8:42)

Chief Spera presented an update of his Executive Goals to the Commission.

1. Create an Annual Report that highlights Department Personnel, traditional and nontraditional services provided, the number and dispositions of internal investigations, a fiscal statement, interaction demographics, program highlights, fleet data, and facility information. (WORK IN PROGRESS, expected completion in January 2024)
2. Create a Professional Development matrix for sworn employees that encompass Agency needs and employee interested with retention hooks. (WORK IN PROGRESS)
3. Revitalize/restart the Police Explorer Program (WORK IN PROGRESS)
4. Develop the framework for a Capital Improvement Plan focusing on long term facility maintenance needs. (WORK IN PROGRESS)
5. Refresh the Department's website and renew the Agency's presence on various social media platforms to foster increased communication, transparency, and engagement among those we serve. (COMPLETED)
6. Establish a comprehensive gun safety program that focuses on safe gun storage/ownership, the collection of unwanted guns/ammunition, and coordinate a "gun turn in event" in June. (Gun Safety Month) (COMPLETED)
7. Work with Department Personnel to create opportunities that promote emotion and physical wellness for individuals and our team. (COMPLETED)
8. Establish a committee to review existing safety, nonlethal, and lethal equipment to ensure that we are providing the most superior and contemporary equipment for our Police Officers. (COMPLETED)
9. Lead a team of Professionals to prepare for an accreditation assessment and attain State of Connecticut, Police Officers Standards and Training

Council (POST-C) Tier 1 Accreditation (COMPLETED) and IAED (Dispatch) Accreditation. (WORK IN PROGRESS)

The Chief thanked Captain DePerry, Patrolman Milardo and Dispatcher Gosselin for all their hard work achieving Tier 1 Accreditation. The Commission congratulated Chief Spera for this accomplishment.

10. Work together with the Commission to help reset our professional relationship. This can be accomplished through honest conversation and active listening. Then, I hope to move forward together, working transparently, respectfully, and collaboratively as one team, with different individual roles, to achieve success on behalf of our employees and our citizens in areas related to matters of public interest and organizational vision. (COMPLETED)

V. Update, Discussion and Possible Action on the Police Commission's Request of the First Selectman Concerning Employee Benefits, Recruitment and Retention. (52:30)

Chairman Wilcox stated that the entire Commission received First Selectman Fortuna's email. He stated that he feels it's appropriate to send a response.

He stated that he would like to first thank the First Selectman for acknowledging the urgency of the Commission's request. He also agreed with the First Selectman to examine the overall health of the department, but he feels that is a responsibility of the Commission.

Chairman Wilcox stated that the Commission should be part of the process, identifying the scope of the work, and selecting the consultant.

Secretary Notar-Francesco made a motion to authorize the Chair to draft a letter from the Police Commission and send it to the First Selectman. Commissioner Maselli seconded the motion.

Commissioner Maselli stated that the Chief came to the Commission for help. The Commission went to the First Selectman and, instead of agreeing to meet, he sent back a letter. Commissioner Maselli stated that he would like to feel more supported.

Chief Spera stated that the Commission has to be involved in defining the scope. He stated that the study would have different results if some of the proposed enhancements were implemented.

Vice Chairman Shippee stated that the Commission can write the letters, but that the rest is out of their hands.

Secretary Notar-Francesco stated that the Commission needs to have a seat at the table and that they need to have an understanding of what the First Selectman is thinking.

The motion to authorize the Chair to draft a letter from the Police Commission and send it to the First Selectman passed with a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

VI. Discussion and Possible Action Concerning a new "Responsibilities of Commissioners" By-Law. (1:08:37)

The Commission took a brief break at 7:39 PM.

The Commission was back in session at 7:41 PM.

Chief Spera had a red-line version that he and Secretary Notar-Francesco put together and the Commission went line by line over the draft, collaborating on changes.

Secretary Notar-Francesco made a motion to move the "Responsibilities of Commissioners" By-Law to the next meeting with the recommended changes from this meeting to approval in October. Commissioner Manning seconded the motion. The motion passed with a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

THE NEW BY-LAW IS ATTACHED TO THESE MINUTES.

VII. Correspondence (1:26:21)

Chairman Wilcox stated that all correspondence has been previously shared.

VIII. Comments from the Public (1:26:36)

There were no comments from the public.

IX. Comments from the Chief of Police (1:26:55)

Chief Spera commented.

X. Comments from Police Commissioners (1:40:14)

Secretary Notar-Francesco commented.

Commissioner Manning commented.

Commissioner Calle commented.

Commissioner Maselli commented.

Chairman Wilcox commented.

XI. Adjournment (1:46:49)

Commissioner Maselli made a motion to adjourn. Vice Chairman Shippee seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn passed with a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

The meeting adjourned at 8:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:

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

Old Saybrook Police Commission By-Law Amendment

The current by-law entitled "Investigation of personnel-related matters" is repealed and replaced with the following:

Role of Commission Members

1. The Old Saybrook Police Commission represents the residents of Old Saybrook in carrying out their roles as a member of the Commission.
2. Commissioners understand that Commission authority rests only with the whole Commission assembled in a duly noticed ~~{public}~~ meeting.
3. Commissioners understand that the Commission's powers derive from applicable Connecticut statutes ~~statutes and~~ and the Town Charter, ~~and this document.~~
4. Commissioners ~~will~~ are expected to actively engage in the work of the Commission. This includes reading distributed material, asking questions, participating in discussions, and keeping informed regarding matters within their purview and in accordance with law.

Code of Conduct

All Old Saybrook Police Commissioners will:

1. Adhere to Commission bylaws;
2. Familiarize themselves and strive to comply with parliamentary procedures and the requirements of the Connecticut Freedom of Information Act;
3. Maintain confidentiality in matters discussed in confidence including refraining from divulging to anyone any details discussed in Executive Session;
4. Conduct themselves in a fair and impartial manner during all Commission meetings or when discussing Commission ~~{proceedings} meetings~~ business; ~~or when discussing Commission {proceedings} meetings;~~
5. Strive to ensure that the Department of Police Services has the personnel, training and equipment to fulfill its ~~their~~ mission;
6. Consider all information that is part of the record at Commission meetings when voting on any matter;
7. Abide by decisions reached by the Commission as a collective body;

8. Disclose in advance to the Commission Chair any possible conflicts of interest regarding matters on the agenda for a Commission meeting;
9. Understand that the demonstration of bias or prejudgment may prevent that Commissioner from participating in discussion or decision made by the Commission ~~when the Commission is acting in its quasi-judicial capacity~~ with respect to personnel matters;

~~10. Recognize that a commissioner may need to serve in a quasi-judicial capacity and there must always refrain from acting in an investigative capacity.~~

~~— Recognize that a Commissioner may need to serve in a quasi-judicial capacity in matters involving employee discipline, and therefore, when receiving information from a citizen regarding such a possible matter, must refrain from further discussing or corresponding regarding such a complaint at the earliest of:~~

- ~~a. Learning that the citizen has made or intends to make a complain pursuant to General Order 4.6;~~
- ~~b. Learning that an internal investigation is already underway; or~~
- ~~c. Forming a preliminary conclusion that an internal investigation into the matter may be warranted, regardless of whether or no the citizen intends to proceed with the complaint. In that latter event, the Commissioner should promptly bring the matter to the attention of the Chief of Police for further processing pursuant to General Order 4.6.~~

10. Commissioners should be attentive to and listen to citizens' concerns regarding the Department of Police Services, but in order to protect the due process right of the employees of the Department, Commissioners should not engage in individual investigations concerning personnel-related issues.

11. Commissioners should encourage citizens expressing a personnel-related complaints to ~~a Commissioner to submit that complaint directly to the Department of Police Services~~ follow complaint guidelines.

Commissioners should also communicate such citizen concerns to the Chief of Police.

12. Individual commissioners should not hold themselves out as representing the Commission unless they have been authorized to do so by the Commission at a duly noticed meeting.