

Old Saybrook Police Commission
Special Meeting
Subcommittee to Create a "Responsibilities of Commissioners" By-Law
April 6, 2023
MINUTES

A special hybrid meeting of the Old Saybrook Police Commission was held on Thursday, April 6, 2023. The meeting was recorded and can be viewed in its entirety at <https://youtu.be/TbEN7KAZyBA>

Present: Chairman Wilcox, Secretary Notar-Francesco and Commissioner Maselli.

I. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance (0:24)

Secretary Notar-Francesco called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM and led those in attendance with the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Public Comment (0:49)

There were no comments from the Public.

III. Subcommittee Charge (1:10)

Secretary Notar-Francesco stated that at the February Police Commission meeting there was a suggestion to form a subcommittee to work through the "Responsibilities of Commissioners" By-Law. It was also suggested to take a look at some of the Board of Education policies concerning Code of Conduct.

Secretary Notar-Francesco stated that she prepared a sample as a starting off point for tonight's discussion.

Secretary Notar-Francesco stated that she took a look at the Board of Education policy in Old Saybrook, Southington, Bolton and CABE (Connecticut Association of Boards of Education) and integrated them in to the draft.

Secretary Notar-Francesco stated that at the last Police Commission meeting it was also suggested to look at other Police Commissions in the state of CT. She stated that she did not find a lot of there. She did find some items from Canada, specifically Manitoba and Edmonton.

IV. Collaborate to Create "Responsibilities of Commissioners" By-Law (3:13)

Secretary Notar-Francesco asked that the subcommittee take a look at what has been provided.

Chairman Wilcox stated that he was in favor of all of these.

Commissioner Maselli shared what he came up with. He stated that he is looking to put together a professional looking and sounding document. He stated that it is important that the lens is for all Old Saybrook Police Commissions not only for the present group. He stated that it be a document that lives beyond the current group.

Commissioner Maselli stated that he feels the "Role of Commission Members" should be spelled out explicitly.

Commissioner Maselli stated that he brought a working draft which took Secretary Notar-Francesco's draft and added a few things.

Commissioner Maselli stated that #7 under the "Code of Conduct" *declare in advance any possible conflicts of interest to the Commission Chair*; needs to be explicitly stated.

Secretary Notar-Francesco stated that she looked at that this, too. She stated that By-laws from Manitoba had "shall adhere to the Town's conflict of interest policy."

Chairman Wilcox stated that he finds much of this draft useful, but does have a couple of concerns. His concern is with the sentence *"Commissioners will follow all Robert's Rules in the conduction of public meetings."*

Commissioner Maselli agreed. He stated that the Commission has to follow some kind of protocol, but the draft wording might not be the correct wording.

Chairman Wilcox stated that #6 under Code of Conduct *"accept decisions reached by the Commission as a collaborative body;"* should read *"respect decisions reached by the Commission as a collaborative body."*

Chairman Wilcox stated that he would also suggest to add #9 that *"Commissioners should strive to keep themselves informed."*

Commissioner Maselli stated that he is not sure what that means.

Chairman Wilcox stated that, as an example, there was a newspaper article that came out a year or so ago about officers leaving. He stated that he sees nothing wrong with a Commissioner speaking with the former officers who left as it is important to the Commission.

Commissioner Maselli stated that he strongly disagrees on this particular case.

Chairman Wilcox and Commissioner Maselli continued to discuss this point with differing perspectives.

Secretary Notar-Francesco stated that she thinks that it is a slippery slope if Commissioners think they can do everything and anything they want as individual members. She stated that they have to rely on the direction of the Commission as a whole.

Secretary Notar-Francesco stated that she becomes uncomfortable with some of the language that is too broad, and the Commission has to act as the body.

Chairman Wilcox stated that "actions" are only taken as a body. Chairman Wilcox stated that Commissioners should be blessed in seeking out information in matters within their purview.

The subcommittee continued to discuss Chairman Wilcox's suggestion. He stated that our counsel has developed this proposed language.

The subcommittee went through the draft document and changed what they felt needed to be changed.

The subcommittee discussed and decided on the following language for #5 under *Code of Conduct*:

"Consider all of the information that is part of an official Commission meeting when voting on any matter."

The subcommittee returned to "strive to keep themselves informed."

Secretary Notar-Francesco asked if the subcommittee wants to consider this for another meeting. She stated that everyone can think more about Chairman Wilcox's suggested addition and the Robert's Rules wording.

Chairman Wilcox suggested an alternative: *"strive to bring to bear their individual as well as collective life experiences and judgment respecting all matters within their purview pursuant to state law and the town charter."*

Commissioner Maselli stated that he struggles with the "life experiences" wording.

Chairman Wilcox asked how can you tell people to ignore their own life experiences.

Secretary Notar-Francesco stated that she knows she will bring her life experiences to the table. She doesn't think we need to state it

Chairman Wilcox stated that the role of Commissioner is especially important. He stated that they don't just evaluate what the police administration tells them. He said it is only one point of view or one perspective.

Secretary Notar-Francesco stated that she agrees the commission needs resources for information, but that can cross a line. She stated that interviewing former officers isn't right. She doesn't feel comfortable taking that leap. She stated that she doesn't see a problem speaking with other Chief's about a dog. She stated that there is a line and the subcommittee has to figure out a way to find middle ground.

Commissioner Maselli agreed with her.

The subcommittee continued the discussion.

Secretary Notar-Francesco asked the subcommittee to think long and hard on these outstanding items and bring it back. She stated that they made good progress, but that they need to collect their thoughts and sort through this.

The subcommittee agreed to meet again.

The draft document has been attached to the minutes.

V. Discussion and Possible Action to Bring a Proposed By-Law Concerning "Responsibilities of Commissioners" to the Police Commission for Consideration (58:21)

Secretary Notar-Francesco stated that the subcommittee is not ready to bring the draft to the Police Commission for consideration.

VI. Public Comment (59:10)

Linda Mahal commented.

Larry Hayden commented.

VII. Adjournment (1:05:15)

Commissioner Maselli made a motion to adjourn. Chairman Wilcox seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn passed with a vote of 3 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

The meeting adjourned at 7:34 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:

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

Old Saybrook Police Commission

Role of Commission Members

- A. The Old Saybrook Police Commission represents the residents of Old Saybrook in carrying out their roles as a member of the Commission.
- B. Commissioners understand that Commission authority rests only with the whole Commission assembled in a duly noticed public meeting.
- C. Commissioners will familiarize themselves with the requirements of the Connecticut Freedom of Information Act and strive to follow those guidelines.
- D. Commissioners will follow all of **Robert's Rules** in the conduction of public meetings.
- E. Members of the Old Saybrook Police Commission understand their powers are specifically defined by CT General Statute Chapter 104 Section 7-276 and the Old Saybrook Town Charter.

Code of Conduct

All Old Saybrook Police Commissioners will:

- 1) adhere to Commission bylaws;
- 2) maintain confidentiality including refrain from divulging to anyone any details discussed in Executive Session;
- 3) conduct themselves in a fair and impartial manner;
- 4) strive to support the operation of the Old Saybrook Department of Police Services;
- 5) consider all information that is part of an official Commission meeting when voting on any matter;
- 6) respect decisions reached by the Commission as a collaborative body;
- 7) declare in advance any possible conflicts of interest to the Commission Chair;
- 8) understand that the demonstration of bias or prejudice will interfere with the ability of that Commissioner to participate in certain Commission discussions and decisions.

**** Possible addition**

Strive to bring to bear their individual as well as collective life experiences and judgment respecting all matters within their purview pursuant to state law and town charter