

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS MEETING
HELD MONDAY, JUNE 15, 2009
STAFF CONFERENCE ROOM – POLICE HEADQUARTERS**

Chrmn. Giles called the meeting to order at 7:01 P.M.

1. ROLL CALL

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Sam Bergami, Melvin Eisenhandler; Carol Faruolo; Carlton Giles; Alberta Jagoe; Sharon Marrone; Jerold Wanosky

ALSO PRESENT: Police Chief Mello; Deputy Chief Fournier; L. Stock, Secty; J. Toohey, Board of Aldermen

2. CONSIDERATION OF APPOINTMENTS

None

3. CITIZEN COMMENTS

James Patterson, 514 West River Street, stated he had attended the Ryder Woods celebration and the residents are very concerned about commercial vehicles cutting through the area. He suggested that perhaps signs could be posted, i.e., No Thru Traffic. Chief Mello stated this is within the purview of the department and signs can be posted.

The second reason Mr. Patterson was present was to present the Chief with a \$1,000.00 check from the Milford Lions Club. This is their annual donation to the department.

Kathy Patterson, Planning & Zoning Board Member, explained that she had to attend an awards dinner, but questioned if there were any Planning & Zoning issues before the Commission. The Chief responded there was only one regarding 26 Higgins Drive, Bark Avenue Pet House, and that it was "all set."

Theo Sakellares and her brother, George, were present to discuss their 2nd home, at 28 Richards Street. This has been their summer home for over 40 years. Ms. Sakellares believes they are the victims of criminal acts regarding damage to their property as well as personal attacks and the situation appears to be getting worse. They are being harassed, stalked and verbally abused. They are present seeking police protection as these crimes have escalated since 2005. On February 26, 2005, while checking on the dwelling, they noticed that a neighbor was shoveling the snow from the road and dumping it over their fence onto their property; she told the person to stop and the next day they found all their windows smashed. An investigation was done. When the neighbors moved into 31 Richards Street, they would continually block the driveway and their front gate so they could not enter their property. In addition, another neighbor parks his car and truck in a manner that they cannot gain access to their property and in 2002, this person jammed screws into their padlocks so they couldn't get into their

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS MEETING
HELD MONDAY, JUNE 15, 2009
STAFF CONFERENCE ROOM – POLICE HEADQUARTERS**

property. They had to cut the locks with a bolt cutter. They are continually threatened by this neighbor.

Chrmn. Giles noted that Ms. Sakellares had the information chronicled and asked if she could forward the paperwork to the Chief's office.

According to Mr. Sakellares, there is a conspiracy. He noted that they have called the police on holidays because they could not get into their property and they were told that no one would be sent out. However, when an officer had visited the property, they were told there is no driveway because there is only grass leading to the garage. Ms. Sakellares stated they needed to rectify this issue as to whether or not they had a driveway. Mr. Sakellares interjected that in 2006, they spoke to Linda Stock in zoning and worked with her to designate their driveway by putting in an apron. He explained that the City came out and marked the area and they had an asphalt apron installed according to City specifications. They believed this would solve the issue of whether or not their driveway was being blocked. Ms. Sakellares noted that Sgt. Sharoh did visit the site and see the apron.

Mr. Sakellares continued that on another occasion, their garage door was epoxied shut. He stressed that this is not an unknown coming into the neighborhood and performing the damage, it is someone who lives in the neighborhood.

Chief Mello questioned if an apron had been installed to which Ms. Sakellares responded in the affirmative. The Chief will notify the department that a driveway approach has been installed.

Ms. Sakellares mentioned a "house watch" which they have put on the record at the department. They met with Capt. Mooney after at one point, they called the department and an officer never showed up; they had waited over an hour. Ms. Sakellares felt that during one meeting with an officer, the officer acted as if they were the villains. In addition, he did not appear to be in a hurry to respond to their call. On May 7, 2009, they had to get bolt cutters as screws were driven into their padlocks again.

Chrmn. Giles assured the Sakellares that the Chief would follow up on the issues noted.

Ms. Sakellares commented that Capt. Mooney "was not happy" with the comments they made about the officers that responded to their calls.

Chief Mello questioned their comment about a "house check." Mr. Sakellares responded they inform the department when they will not be there so an officer can drive by to see if anything is amiss. Chief Mello noted that in 2006, the dwelling was checked 7 or 8 times. However, Ms. Sakellares questioned why the department seemed not to have any record of these visits. She added that these requests were hand delivered to Capt. Shea and Capt. Butler who were "very nice."

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS MEETING
HELD MONDAY, JUNE 15, 2009
STAFF CONFERENCE ROOM – POLICE HEADQUARTERS**

According to Chief Mello, they have records of vacant homes along with information as to the location of the owners; the officers do perform drive bys.

Ms. Sakellares stated they have “good shutters” on the back of their dwelling but have never had any on the front. Mr. Sakellares added that if a neighbor hadn’t called about the smashed windows, there would have been more damage to the interior of the dwelling.

Chief Mello stated he would discuss these issues with Capt. Mooney and will have someone get back to them. Regarding the driveway, it has now been established and he will inform patrol so that the vehicles blocking same can be cited.

Ms. Sakellares wondered about the neighborhood watch, because she feels that the neighbors need to see police presence in the area.

Chief Mello reiterated that he will discuss these issues with Capt. Mooney and will work on the parking aspect of the problem. He will review all the information at his disposal.

Mr. Sakellares believes that something is going to get out of control and asked if someone from the department can talk to the neighbors causing the problems. Chief Mello stated this cannot be done at this point. Ms. Sakellares asked if Off. Dumas could do this to which the Chief responded in the negative.

Chrmn. Giles thanked them for coming and wished them a good summer.

Chief Mello noted that much work has been done in this area already. It is a difficult and unfortunate situation because they are summer residents; however, Capt. Mooney has spent a lot of time with them.

Regarding vacant homes, the Chief stated it is difficult to perform house checks. Chief Mello has all of their complaints on record.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was moved by Comm. Eisenhandler and seconded by Comm. Faruolo to approve the minutes of the May 11, 2009 meeting. The motion carried unanimously with no discussion.

Chrmn. Giles entertained a motion add item 6e (Request to carry off-duty weapon – Off. Salas) to the agenda. The motion was so made by Vice Chrmn. Jagoe, seconded by Comm. Wanosky and carried unanimously.

The Chairman then asked for a motion to add item 7a (26 Higgins Road – Bark Avenue Pet House) to the agenda. A motion to add item 7a to the agenda carried unanimously after being made by Vice Chrmn. Jagoe and seconded by Comm. Wanosky.

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS MEETING
HELD MONDAY, JUNE 15, 2009
STAFF CONFERENCE ROOM – POLICE HEADQUARTERS**

5. READING OF CORRESPONDENCE

The following was noted by Chief Mello:

A card was received from the 5th grade class at Live Oaks School, thanking Off. Jim O'Keefe for his D.A.R.E. presentation.

Trisha Rose, Board of Directors for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, sent a letter thanking the department for their outstanding community service. Off. Taylor and his canine Noble had the attention of more than 350 attendees at his demonstration. Off. Taylor also spoke of the intensive training that he and Noble have gone through. Ms. Rose stated she received positive feedback and thanked them for their support.

A thank you letter was received from Carol Klingele regarding the patrolling in the Walnut and Wildemere Beach neighborhoods over the holiday weekend. The increase in patrols has shown improvement in the area and she hopes that they will continue.

Chief Mello explained that he received many e-mails and letters regarding the loss of a police officer.

A Borough of Woodmont resident sent a letter to the Commission regarding noise in the streets and their not being able to sit on their front porch and enjoy the area. They complained about children playing basketball and baseball for long periods of time. It was noted by Comm. Faruolo that there are many noise issues when one lives by the beach. Chief Mello stated this was a difficult situation as they are playing basketball in the basketball court.

Two cards were received from Denise Morris Curt, thanking the department for their assistance with her Artists and Artisans fair on the green. Comm. Faruolo noted that Ms. Curt always thanks the department for their assistance. Chief Mello noted that she also informs him if there is ever a problem as well.

Ms. Curt's second note asked about a giraffe that was taken from the green during the fair.

The South Central Criminal Justice System thanked Off. Localzo for serving on an oral board for new police officers. Chief Mello stated this is a reciprocal situation wherein Milford would also request officers from other towns to assist on their oral boards.

Seal Tight Products President, Thomas Ginz, thanked the department for their response to an alarm at the company.

Off. Keith Ruggiero was thanked by Joanne Anzenberger of Sunset Avenue, for his follow up on a suspicious vehicle investigation and for his professionalism.

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS MEETING
HELD MONDAY, JUNE 15, 2009
STAFF CONFERENCE ROOM – POLICE HEADQUARTERS**

An editorial was written, thanking police officers for their diligent work and how citizens should also thank the police for the work that they do. The police should be thanked for their service as are veterans.

6. CONSIDERATION OF REPORT OF CHIEF ON MATTERS OF ADMINISTRATION

- a. Informational – Officer John Simko has been promoted to Sergeant effective June 2, 2009

It was noted by Chief Mello that Sgt. Simko has been with the department for approximately 26 years and the Chief feels he will be a strong addition to the management team and he looks forward to working with him.

- b. Informational – Sgt. Sean Darby has been promoted to Lieutenant effective June 2, 2009

Chief Mello stated he also looks forward to working with Lt. Darby in his new capacity.

- c. Informational – Sgt. Jeffrey Matchett will retire effective July 3, 2009

Chief Mello stated Sgt. Matchett will take a position with Union Council 15. Chrmn. Giles noted that with Sgt. Matchett leaving, another position will open up.

- d. Accident Free Mileage award for Officer Danielle Frith

According to Chief Mello, Off. Frith has completed 25,000 accident free miles and is entitled to 8 hours accumulated time.

- e. Request to carry off-duty weapon – Off. Salas

Chief Mello informed the Commission that the weapon has been tested and Off. Salas is qualified with same.

It was moved by Vice Chrmn. Jagoe and seconded by Comm. Marrone to approve this request.

DISCUSSION

The Chief explained that when an officer wishes to carry an off-duty weapon, it needs to be tested and the officer must be qualified with the weapon.

There being no further discussion, the motion carried unanimously.

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS MEETING
HELD MONDAY, JUNE 15, 2009
STAFF CONFERENCE ROOM – POLICE HEADQUARTERS**

At this point, Chief Mello offered information on several matters. He attended a meeting with the Wildemere Beach and Walnut Beach residents. Approximately 200 people were in attendance. They were concerned about a recent very large party in which someone shot a bee bee gun, a vehicular head-on collision took place (which they believed was intentional), and a brick was used on a vehicle.

The residents were upset because the department was tied up on the other end town with several fights and two officers had to be dispatched from the other problem area; the State Police and Stratford Police were also sent. They are also upset because they have not seen much police presence.

The Chief attempted to address all of their concerns regarding slow response time and the conduct of one officer. He stated that these are the types of incidents he referenced at the budget hearings. He will attend another meeting on July 14. Although they are locating reinforcements in the area, the residents want more. The residents mentioned problems at Park Avenue, Alfa Pizza, speeding, etc. The Chief will try to get a camera system for the area. He could perhaps use next year's JAG money for the equipment. He will also announce that they will be looking for donations for this camera. In the meantime, they will install a "hard" camera. The meeting lasted two and one half hours.

On a personal note, Chief Mello noted that on his own, he volunteered to a "no increase in pay." He then discovered that he will not receive the \$300.00 bonus that was in his contract. He believes this is a violation of his contract. He felt he should have been approached on this issue prior to it being deleted by the Board of Aldermen. He expected that the City would uphold their end of the contract. Comm. Wanosky asked the Chief who told him the bonus was cut. The Chief responded that the \$300.00 was cut for all non-reps. He wished that someone had discussed this with him; however, he will put in for it in accordance with his contract agreement.

It is the Chief's understanding that there was a statement made at a Democratic Town Committee meeting that an officer was not hired as proposed. He disputed the statement, explaining that he hired the officer on 7/11; they spent three months getting someone ready for the position.

As far as the grant account, it can be used in one of three ways and he testified to that on two occasions. 1) Hire a laid off officer; 2) hire back an officer that had already been laid off; although they need documentation from the governing body that they ruled they will be laid off and what date this will occur; 3) add additional officers to the department. These are the only way to qualify and Milford applied to add officers.

The grant will be awarded as follows: 1) economic conditions of the community; 2) police department budget – were there layoffs within the city. They will have to provide documentation to show that officers will be hired with the grant money. The Chief wants everyone to be clear and that the information is being given out accurately.

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS MEETING
HELD MONDAY, JUNE 15, 2009
STAFF CONFERENCE ROOM – POLICE HEADQUARTERS**

There is only one billion dollars for this year's grants and Chief Mello hopes they do get the grant. If they do get it, he will ask that it be modified to replace officers that will be laid off. Then they will be in compliance.

Comm. Wanosky asked what would happen if officers were not laid off to which the Chief responded this would prevent officers from being laid off.

Chief Mello continued that prior to budget deliberations, he met with several Aldermen to let them know where he could cut back. He was far under on nearly every category and there was no room to cut any further. His budget was \$117,000+ less than last year. The good news is that training and safety equipment is funded. The Department will manage with the budget that they were given. They are going to have to do a better job so that when an officer is needed, an officer will be there. He believes they will have to cut back, for instance, a bicycle officer in the center of town.

Vice Chrmn. Jagoe asked if the Chief knew anything regarding the layoffs. Chief Mello responded that he would assume they would be made known on July 1. They now have two openings which will be through attrition.

Chief Mello explained that the department returned a surplus of funds which was a result of injuries. Last year 18 officers were injured and 66% of their salaries was paid by worker's comp. They also have officers on military leave. They have to keep a surplus for items such as missing persons or major crimes.

7. REPORT ON PLANNING AND ZONING REQUESTS

- a. 26 Higgins Drive – Bark Avenue Pet House

It was noted by the Chief that this was a re-submission and all concerns have been addressed.

It was moved by Comm. Faruolo, seconded by Comm. Marrone and unanimously carried to adopt Traffic's recommendations.

8. ACCEPTANCE OF REPORTS

Chrmn. Giles noted that all reports were in their packets and called for a blanket motion.

- a. Uniform Crime Report
- b. Youth Bureau Report
- c. Crime Prevention Services Report
- d. Detective Bureau Cases Report
- e. General Highway Safety Summary

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS MEETING
HELD MONDAY, JUNE 15, 2009
STAFF CONFERENCE ROOM – POLICE HEADQUARTERS**

Vice Chrmn. Jagoe moved to accept reports “a” through “e.” The motion carried unanimously after a second by Comm. Wanosky.

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

10. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Donation of \$1,000.00 from Lions Club

A motion to accept this donation was made by Vice Chrmn. Jagoe, seconded by Comm. Faruolo and unanimously carried.

Chief Mello suggested that this donation be used as the first deposit toward the camera system previously discussed. It was so moved by Vice Chrmn. Jagoe that these funds be placed in an account for the purchase of cameras. The motion was seconded by Comm. Marrone.

DISCUSSION

It was noted that these cameras will focus on public areas only. They are not allowed to go into private areas.

The motion carried unanimously with no further discussion.

11. COMMENDATIONS

- a. Letter of Recognition – Officer James O’Keefe

Deputy Chief Fournier noted that there had been a rash of thefts from vehicles along the Boston Post Road. Off. O’Keefe was checking the Cracker Barrel area where thefts had previously occurred. He detained a male who was in the parking lot, who was later identified as the person who had committed a theft at Models Sporting Goods. Several pocketbooks were recovered. Due to his proactive actions, Off. O’Keefe will receive a letter of recognition.

- b. Unit Citation

Eight officers, a dispatcher and a canine, will receive a unit citation. In March, they responded to a violent domestic situation. Dispatch kept a woman and her sister along with two young children on the phone while the officers responded. The woman’s husband had a shotgun in the basement of their home. The husband began to go up the stairway where the women and children were hiding. At that point, the officers

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS MEETING
HELD MONDAY, JUNE 15, 2009
STAFF CONFERENCE ROOM – POLICE HEADQUARTERS**

broke into the home and subdued the man with a taser. Fortunately he did not retrieve the shotgun prior to the officers' arrival.

These officers and the canine will receive a unit citation for their professional tactical efforts.

Comm. Faruolo congratulated Chief Mello on his award from the state. Chief Mello thanked all those who attended the ceremony.

Comm. Bergami informed members that if they go onto the following website, past events, they can see pictures of the ceremony – www.pcact.org.

Chrmn. Giles noted that the Chief received the "Distinguished Chief Award" and he was very proud to be in attendance. Comm. Bergami felt that both the presenter and recipient were "the best."

At 8:12 P.M., Vice Chrmn. Jagoe moved to enter into Executive Session to discuss the following items. The motion was seconded by Comm. Marrone and carried unanimously by roll call vote. Chief Mello and Deputy Chief Fournier were asked to remain.

12. CONSIDERATION OF REPORT OF CHIEF OF POLICE ON MATTERS CONCERNING THE APPOINTMENT, EMPLOYMENT, PERFORMANCE, EVALUATION AND HEALTH OR DISMISSAL OF DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES

- a. Probationary Reviews – None
- b. Consideration of the performance of 2 employees.

The Commission left Executive Session at 8:28 P.M., at which time Vice Chrmn. Jagoe moved to accept the recommendation of the Chief of Police regarding item 12b. The motion carried unanimously after a second by Comm. Wanosky.

Comm. Bergami moved to adjourn at 8:28 P.M. The motion carried unanimously after a second by Comm. Eisenhandler.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Stock, Secretary

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS MEETING
HELD MONDAY, JUNE 15, 2009
STAFF CONFERENCE ROOM – POLICE HEADQUARTERS**