

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS MEETING  
HELD MONDAY, JULY 12, 2010  
STAFF CONFERENCE ROOM – POLICE HEADQUARTERS**

Chrmn. Giles called the meeting to order at 7:02 P.M.

**1. ROLL CALL**

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

ALSO PRESENT: Police Chief Mello; Deputy Chief Fournier; P. Vetro, Board of Aldermen; D. Candido, Secty.

**2. CONSIDERATION OF APPOINTMENTS - none**

**3. CITIZEN COMMENTS**

Attny. Joseph Tramuta (Moynahan & Minnella Law Office) and Chris Christofakis (owner of Greg's Auto Body, 500 New Haven Avenue, Milford) – Attny. Tramuta explained he was representing Mr. Christofakis, owner of Greg's Auto Body for consideration of request to be on Milford Police Dept. Rotational Tow List. Attny. Tramuta stated Greg's Auto Body, located at 500 New Haven Avenue, Milford, has been on the state police towing list for the past three years. The shop has four employees, provides flat-bed and tow truck service. Attny Tramuta distributed letters of recommendation from C. Stango, Senior Assistant State's Attorney; Dr. Quintner, local dentist; Owner of Montessi Volkswagen and Robert Wardle of Woodbridge. He further noted that Mr. Christofakis is conscientious and takes his business and responsibilities seriously.

Ald. P. Vetro – 10 Carmen Rd. – thanked the Department for handling the concerns and issues raised regarding Watrous Lane expeditiously.

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

It was moved by Vice Chrmn. Jagoe and seconded by Comm. Wanosky to approve the minutes of the June 14, 2010 meeting as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

**5. READING OF CORRESPONDENCE**

Chief Mello shared the following correspondence:

Linda Stock, Milford City Clerk – stated that it had come to her attention that the City Clerk office had never had a safety check adding the office maintains and houses important documents and records as well as collects fees in the form of cash on a daily basis. She explained that Officer Nielsen conducted the check and shared his suggestions and concerns which they began to implement immediately. Mrs. Stock expressed her gratitude for Officer Nielsen's professionalism and ability to provide direction to correct and improve the business of the office.

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS MEETING  
HELD MONDAY, JULY 12, 2010  
STAFF CONFERENCE ROOM – POLICE HEADQUARTERS**

Beirne Family (parent of student at Calf Pen Meadow School – thanked Officer O'Keefe for his DARE Program presentation at Calf Pen Meadow School adding parents and students appreciate and value Officer O'Keefe's time and expertise in his guidance for keeping children safe.

Amy Thompson & Carmen Hufcut, Co-Chair, Junior Women Club – thanked the Department for their participation in the recent Touch-a-Truck Program.

Milford Resident – expressed her appreciation for the way the department had handled domestic issues at her home. Added the Milford Police Department has been wonderful to her and her children, specifically Officer Robinson who was helpful and considerate of the situation.

Robbin Cabelus, Governor's Highway Safety Rep, State Dept. of Transportation – thanked the Milford Police Department for their ongoing support of the Child Passenger Safety Seat Program, noting the contribution of time and staff has attributed to the success of the 82 fitting stations across the state and the inspection of approximately 8,000 safety seats in 2009.

Kate Candido & Mary Ann Locke, staff of Orange Avenue School – thanked Officer Lugo for being a special guest reader at Orange Avenue School.

Tony Giampo, Leader and troop members of Pack 925 – expressed their appreciation for the opportunity for their Tiger Cup Pack to tour the Milford Police Dept. and enforce ways the officers keep people safe.

Debbie Horne, Director of Development, Special Olympics – expressed appreciation for the 6/11/10 participation in the Law Enforcement Torch Run and acknowledgement of the following officers participation: Officers Broderick, Gall, Lennon, Nielsen, Kranyak and Salas.

Debbie Horne, Director of Development, Special Olympics – expressed appreciation for officers' participation in the Southwest Regional Games to benefit Special Olympics and acknowledged the following officers: Officer Knablin, Sopchak, Kiely, Lennon, and Nielsen.

[Note: Ald. Vetro left at 7:15 for another meeting]

**6. CONSIDERATION OF REPORT OF CHIEF ON MATTERS OF ADMINISTRATION**

- a. Greg's Auto Body – Discussion regarding request to be on Rotational Tow List – Deputy Chief Fournier explained that Mr. Christofakis, owner of the auto body shop, had requested to be considered for the department's tow list. He added that he personally has had numerous conversations with Mr. Christofakis concerning his past criminal history and he went on to provide the commissioners

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS MEETING  
HELD MONDAY, JULY 12, 2010  
STAFF CONFERENCE ROOM – POLICE HEADQUARTERS**

with the following information. It was noted that on 4/15/08 Mr. Christofakis wrote to Chief Mello asking to come before the Police Commissioners with regard to his request to be considered for the tow list. The letter sent to Chief Mello explained Mr. Christofakis' past criminal record and his willingness to do the right thing in the future. Deputy Chief Fournier explained his request was denied in 7/08 and he is once again applying for the same consideration. He added that in recent time, the Milford Police Dept. has responded to many calls at that address for various matters (civil problems, breaches and workplace misconduct). Also, it was noted there are ongoing 2009 and 2010 complaints filed with DMV as well as similar DMV complaints in 2006 and 2008. A list of Mr. Christofakis' extensive criminal history was distributed to the commissioners and Deputy Chief Fournier expressed the concern of the department adding they had also learned of an additional arrest (Greenwich, CT) which is still pending as well as a standing protective order against Mr. Christofakis. It was further noted that recently Mr. Christofakis had been warned twice on the same day regarding a seat belt violation and when stopped a third time on the same date he was cited. Also, on 5/26/10 Mr. Christofakis made arrangements for a tow of an over-sized boat which was not properly sealed and towed through the center of Milford.

Chief Mello interjected that the commissioners should remember that towing companies represent the Milford Police Dept. in their towing responsibility.

Vice Chrmn. Jagoe asked how this towing shop could be on the State Police tow list and it was explained that perhaps the Milford Police Dept. standards are higher than that of the state police.

Attny. Tramuta addressed the past extensive record of arrests adding that Mr. Christofakis has made a difference in his life and he referred to the letter from Mr. Stango of the State Attorney's office who noted that Mr. Christofakis has learned a lesson and takes pride in the recovery he has made in his life. Attny. Tramuta felt the fact that he has been on the state police towing list should be a strong consideration. He also added that he hoped other companies that are on the Milford Police Dept. towing list have been scrutinized in the same manner as Mr. Christofakis. With regard to the restraining order, Attny. Tramuta explained this was a family estate matter. Attny. Tramuta requested a copy of the list of complaints so he would have the opportunity to review the list with his client.

Comm. Wanosky questioned the number of calls that the Milford Police Dept. has responded to at the business and Attny. Tramuta stated he has not seen or reviewed that list but he did not feel that Mr. Christofakis was the individual arrested with regard to the calls to the business address.

Chief Mello referred to the recent seat belt violation noting the officer saw him three times in one day and Mr. Christofakis disregard to the officer's warning displayed disrespect and lack of compliance.

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS MEETING  
HELD MONDAY, JULY 12, 2010  
STAFF CONFERENCE ROOM – POLICE HEADQUARTERS**

Mr. Christofakis explained he was driving a small car and the seat belt was too confining and he had told the officer that.

Comm. Faruolo asked how many towing companies does the Department currently use and she was told 9.

Comm. Faruolo asked if complaints are received regarding the other companies and she was told on occasion there has been reason to suspend towing companies because of complaints or other issues.

Attny. Tramuta interjected he felt there should be consideration of an individual who is a resident, a taxpayer and someone who contributes to fundraising events in the city.

Chrmn. Giles felt that since Attny. Tramuta had not had the opportunity to review the information provided by Deputy Chief Fournier, he felt it would be fair to provide him a copy for his review and invite Attny. Tramuta to the August meeting for further discussion.

It was moved by Vice Chrmn. Jagoe and seconded by Comm. Bergami to table the request for Greg's Auto Body to be on the Rotational Towing List in order for Attny. Tramuta, representing Mr. Christofakis, to review the information provided by Deputy Chief Fournier and meet with the Police Commission at their August 2010 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

b. Donation of \$150 from St. Gabriel's School to K-9 fund – Chief Mello explained he had been notified by Anne Vascillio of St. Gabriel's School of \$150 in funds raised from a bottle and can drive. The letter stated the children at the school were interested in the department's canine division and officers and their K-9 partner visited the school and met with the children. Based on the specific interest of the children, Chief Mello requested the \$150 donation be applied to the Canine Unit.

It was moved by Vice Chrmn. Jagoe and seconded by Comm. Eisenhandler to apply the \$150 donation from St. Gabriel's School to the Canine Unit as recommended by Chief Mello. Motion carried unanimously.

c. Accident free mileage award to Officer William Lugo – It was moved by Vice Chrmn. Jagoe and seconded by Comm. Faruolo to award eight hours of comp time for accident free mileage to Officer Lugo. Motion carried unanimously.

**7. REPORT ON PLANNING AND ZONING REQUESTS – no requests**

Comm. Faruolo inquired about the status of the issue tabled last month with regard to the sight survey for Lawrence Avenue and Welches Point Rd.

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS MEETING  
HELD MONDAY, JULY 12, 2010  
STAFF CONFERENCE ROOM – POLICE HEADQUARTERS**

Chief Mello explained the fence has been removed but the issue with the tree is still pending as the Tree Commission does not want the tree removed.

**8. ACCEPTANCE OF REPORTS**

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

Chrmn. Giles noted these reports were included in the Commissioners packets.

It was moved by Comm. Faruolo and seconded by Comm. Marrone to accept reports A through E as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

**9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - none**

**10. NEW BUSINESS**

- a. High hedge complaint – Cedarhurst/Orange Avenue – Chief Mello stated this matter has been rectified.

**11. COMMENDATIONS - none**

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

Chief Mello reported that item a. Grievance #4-2010 at Step #3 has been settled and should be removed from the agenda. As well he stated the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Review listed under item b is only for Officer Mahoney and should not included Officer Lennon.

It was moved by seconded by Vice Chrmn. Jagoe and seconded by Comm. Wanosky to remove item 12.a. Grievance #4-2010 at Step #3 as the grievance has been settled. Motion carried unanimously.

It was moved by seconded by Vice Chrmn. Jagoe and seconded by Comm. Wanosky to adjourn to Executive session at 7:38 p.m. for the following:

- b. 4th Quarter Review for Officer Richard Mahoney.

Motion carried unanimously.

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS MEETING  
HELD MONDAY, JULY 12, 2010  
STAFF CONFERENCE ROOM – POLICE HEADQUARTERS**

In attendance in executive session were the Commissioners, Chief Mello and Deputy Chief Fournier and Officer Mahoney.

Officer Mahoney left Executive Session at 7:44 p.m.

Chrmn. Giles reconvened the meeting in public session at 8:03 p.m.

It was moved by Comm. Wanosky and seconded by Vice Chrmn. Jagoe to adjourn at 8:03 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

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Diane Candido, Secretary