

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS MEETING
HELD MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2008
STAFF CONFERENCE ROOM – POLICE HEADQUARTERS**

Chrmn. Giles called the meeting to order at 7:00P.M.

1. ROLL CALL

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Melvin Eisenhandler; Carol Faruolo; Carlton Giles; Sharon Marrone; Thomas Zawislinski; Jerold Wanosky

ALSO PRESENT: Police Chief Mello; Deputy Chief Fournier; L. Stock, Secty; K. Patterson, Planning & Zoning Board Liaison

2. CONSIDERATION OF APPOINTMENTS

None

3. CITIZEN COMMENTS

George Ganim, 57 Melba Street, stated he sent a letter regarding the speed of traffic on Melba Street. He has lived there since 1993 and he believes there is much more traffic in the area. He, along with all the neighbors, is concerned.

Chrmn. Giles interjected that the Commissioners received a copy of his letter and they will be discussing same later on in the meeting. However, Chrmn. Giles encouraged Mr. Ganim to continue speaking if he wished. Mr. Ganim thanked the Chairman and waited for the discussion.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was moved by Comm. Eisenhandler and seconded by Comm. Wanosky to approve the minutes of the August 11, 2008 meeting.

The motion carried unanimously.

5. READING OF CORRESPONDENCE

The following was noted by Chief Mello:

A card was received, thanking the officer who helped a citizen when their vehicle overheated.

A thank you card was received from the Oyster Festival Committee, for the Department's assistance with safety and security at the canoe race.

Diana Morton sent a letter regarding problems the neighbors have been having on High Street. She stated that the police have been very helpful and the neighbors are

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grateful. They have formalized a crime watch. They will also communicate with the person causing the problems in their area, and will continue to do so when problems arise. They feel that the neighbor is not concerned over their issues. In addition, she read an article in the newspaper about the "West Haven Quality of Life Unit" which is their department's outreach program. Chief Mello stated Milford has a similar operation which is their Community Orientated Substation.

A letter was received from Nora Dannehy, Acting U.S. Attorney from the U.S. Department of Justice, District of Connecticut commending Sgt. Henry Chacon, who worked closely with their office on an investigation. With his assistance, the investigation culminated with the indictment of 8 individuals, including a violent New Haven drug dealer. Sgt. Chacon was instrumental in the investigation and his work ethics and professionalism were very much appreciated.

Fleet Auto Supply sent a letter thanking Lt. Pietrafesa for his professionalism in building communication between both the Police Department and Fleet. They wished him well in his retirement.

A letter dated August 27th, was received from Mr. Ganim regarding speeding on Melba Street, as well as a copy of a letter dated July 7th. The Chief explained that after the July 7th letter was received, a traffic study was initiated, which will be discussed later in the meeting.

A note of appreciation was received from Tracy Gigliotti, thanking and praising Sgt. Vitti. When Mrs. Gigliotti's husband passed away, Sgt. Vitti came to the assistance of the family and organized a police escort. Mrs. Gigliotti's husband was a Juvenile Probation Officer and many were in attendance at his funeral. She felt Sgt. Vitti was a competent leader, caring person and dedicated Police officer.

The Milford Fire Dept. sent a letter thanking the Police Department for their participation in a hazmat training exercise.

A satisfied citizen of Milford thanked Det. Nash for being very helpful regarding a case he was working on for this citizen. Det. Nash kept him fully apprised of his progress in the case. He stated that the Milford Police Department should be proud of the fine police officer they have in Det. Nash.

6. CONSIDERATION OF REPORT OF CHIEF ON MATTERS OF ADMINISTRATION

- a. Lt. Joseph Pietrafesa will retire effective November 7, 2008

Chief Mello stated that currently Lt. Pietrafesa is on vacation. He is moving to Florida. He was the executive officer under Capt. Mooney and was a tremendous asset to the Department for the last 22 years.

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Comm. Winosky asked if someone is replaced immediately when they retire. Chief Mello responded that if there is an existing list, they go to the next person on the list. This person also has to go through a battery of tests which takes a minimum of 3 months. If the person is acceptable, they are hired. After that, they are trained for approximately one year. The Department currently has a list that they can choose from.

In the case of a promotion, Chrmn. Giles questioned if that is done immediately after a retirement, to which the Chief responded it is done within 45 days.

- b. Accident free mileage awards to: Officers R. Anderson, C. Dunn, T. Dancy and M. Lima

Chief Mello stated these four officers have been awarded 8 hours compensation time as their accident free mileage award.

7. REPORT ON PLANNING AND ZONING REQUESTS

- a. Gustos Restaurant expansion – 255 Boston Post Road

It was moved and seconded by Comms. Zawislinski and Faruolo, respectively, to adopt Traffic's recommendation. The motion carried unanimously.

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

It was moved by Comm. Zawislinski, seconded by Comm. Faruolo and unanimously carried to accept reports "a" through "e."

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

10. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Broadway/Ocean Ave. – Crosswalk Request/speeding Complaint

Chrmn. Giles noted that the voluminous report was included in the Commissioner's packets.

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

- b. 57 Melba St. – speed bump request/speeding complaint

Comm. Zawislinski moved to adopt Traffic's recommendations. The motion was seconded by Comm. Winosky.

DISCUSSION

By way of explanation, Chief Mello noted that the first letter received regarding this item was July 7th, whereupon a traffic study was commissioned. They do not inform anyone that a traffic study will be done for obvious reasons. The study was performed from July 22nd to July 30th. Traffic counters were installed which measure the amount of traffic and how fast they are going. They also reviewed a traffic study from 1998, which was performed in front of #54 Melba Street. The recent study was performed in front of #57. The volume was greater in 1998 with average speeds of 33 miles per hour. There were approximately 556 vehicles per day. The speed in the current study decreased by 5 miles per hour, being 28 miles per hour. The Chief also noted that usually those impacted do not realize that they are speeding. When they reviewed the study, there did not appear to be a significant problem.

Regarding speed bumps, historically, they are not approved. Discussions with several departments including the Mayor, City Attorney, Public Works and Engineering felt there would be too many problems, including damage to emergency vehicles. Speed bumps also create back ups in areas of heavy traffic flow. The Chief mentioned that Trumbull had installed speed bumps but had them removed because there were too many problems. Speed bumps also create liability issues.

They also reviewed the stop sign request. Stop signs are not to be used for speed control. They are used to control rights of way. Placing a stop sign in the middle of a road causes accidents as people are not expecting them in the middle of the road.

The Department's recommendation is to continue enforcement and the use of the radar trailer. They believe the traffic slows down after the summer months.

Comm. Zawislinski commended the Chief and the Traffic Division for a "well put together document." He questioned how many hours were put into this study as well as the study previously mentioned in item 10a. Chief Mello responded that it is difficult to specify numbers. There are two sets of traffic counters and two studies being done at once. It takes approximately 8 hours to gather the data, which speaks for itself. This data helps the Department determine its course of action.

There being no further discussion, the motion to adopt Traffic's recommendations carried unanimously.

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11. COMMENDATIONS

None

At 7:26 P.M., it was moved by Comm. Zawislinski and seconded by Comm. Winosky to enter into Executive Session to discuss items 12a and b. 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 one (1) employee

Noting that several citizens had entered the room during the course of the meeting, Chrmn. Giles asked if they were present to speak on a particular item. He explained that the Citizen Comments portion of the meeting had been closed but he would allow them the opportunity to address the Commission prior to taking a vote regarding entering into Executive Session.

Rita Canas, 59 Melba Street, stated traffic had not subsided as they now have the “children from the school,” speeding up and down the street; however, the worst offenders are the City buses. She felt something has to be done. She asked why they don’t install sidewalks. Chrmn. Giles noted that was not under the purview of this Board. Ms. Canas stated it would be for the safety of the walkers.

Continuing, Ms. Canas stated she called the department last year with a complaint and an officer was sent to her home. She had gotten the license plate number of the person who was speeding. She claimed that the officer asked her what she wanted him to do. She felt that was an inappropriate comment.

Chief Mello interjected, stating that regarding motor vehicle violations, the officer has to see the violation; there has to be evidence that it occurred. This is a statutory issue. It is different from an officer taking a statement down when a crime has been committed and they are gathering evidence.

Chrmn. Giles reiterated that the Department is committed to continued enforcement.

Bob Colum, 61 Melba Street, spoke regarding the City buses, asking how they can bring their speeding to the City’s attention. Chief Mello suggested they write him a letter and he will refer it to both the Mayor and Transit.

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Chief Mello also stated that he has spoken to an alderman regarding speeding issues within the City and if he had 50 officers, he would place them in these areas when complaints come in; however, he only has 6 officers. He assured those present that their concerns “did not fall on deaf ears.”

At this point, those citizens present left the room and by roll call vote, the Commission entered into Executive Session.

At 7:52 P.M., the Commission left Executive Session, at which time Comm. Zawislinski moved to uphold the Chief’s recommendation for discipline for one employee. The motion carried unanimously, after a second by Comm. Marrone.

Comm. Eisenhandler moved to adjourn at 7:53 P.M. The motion was seconded by Comm. Faruolo and carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Stock, Secretary