

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS MEETING  
HELD TUESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2008  
COMMISSIONERS ROOM – POLICE HEADQUARTERS**

**1. ROLL CALL**

PRESENT: Carlton Giles, Melvin Eisenhandler, Alberta Jagoe, Carol Faruolo, Sharon Marrone, Jerry Wanosky and Thomas Zawislinski.

ALSO PRESENT: Police Chief Keith Mello; Deputy Chief Fournier; Aldermen Phil Vetro; L. Streit, Secretary

Comm. Giles called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

**2. CONSIDERATION OF APPOINTMENTS**

None.

**3. CITIZEN COMMENTS**

- B. Jason, 47 Governor's Avenue, stated that a petition has been submitted regarding the traffic on North Street. Comm. Giles stated that the report on this area is to be reviewed tonight. Ms. Jason stated that this is a high traffic area and is a tough situation; she does not let kids walk here. The corner of Governor's Avenue and North Street is a highly used corner; cars don't let you cross when walking and there needs to be a solution.
- William Lynch, 73 North Street, he has lived on this corner since 1956 and has watched the problem grow. This was a peaceful area; people used to use the park a lot and now it is a traffic problem. There are accidents on his front lawn, side of his house and the back yard. He referenced an article from the New Haven Register in 2002 when the speed limit was 25 MPH and police noted 9780 vehicles and only 6% were within the speed limit and with 31,942 vehicles and 41% within the speed limit. Drivers don't obey the rules and he suggested speed bumps be installed.
- Robbie Silver, 55 Governor's Avenue, has lived here for 12 years and has seen the traffic increase. This area is used as a cut through from the Post Road to downtown and even a car has difficulty to cross North Street. On Wednesday night a walker almost got hit. Kids don't have a safe way to get to Harborside Middle School. She asked for a solution.
- Trista Simoncek, 61 Governor's Avenue, stated that the volume of traffic has grown and increased growth in the area will exasperate the problem. There is no safe place to even stand and she is concerned now that her kids are at the age of riding bikes now. This is a wide road and even if there are no cars when you begin to cross, half way through cars come barreling down the road. She is concerned especially that this year Halloween is on a Friday night and there will be a lot of kids out.

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Chief Mello stated that the patrol is tripled on Halloween and the point is well taken that it is on a Friday night this year.

A motion was made by Comm. Zawislinski, seconded by Comm. Jagoe to add item 10. a. Traffic Study at Governor's Avenue as New Business to the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Comm. Zawislinski, seconded by Comm. Jagoe to reorder the agenda to hear item 10. a. next. The motion carried unanimously.

**10. New Business**

**a. Traffic Study at Governor's Avenue –**

- T. Simoncek stated that there is no speed limit sign off of the Post Road until after the Governor's Avenue intersection and she suggested there be one sooner.
- R. Silver suggested color coding the cross walk.
- W. Lynch stated that between 4:30-5:30 p.m. the traffic increases and the Post Road traffic follows the Post Road speed limit.

A motion was made by Comm. Zawislinski, seconded by Comm. Faruolo to adopt the Traffic Study Report.

The Chief reported that originally a letter was received regarding this area and a sign was put out immediately and that didn't work. A petition was submitted that had about 50 signatures. The study for this area was just completed tonight and it usually takes months. The study from 2002 was updated; the volume of traffic has increased since then. Comm. Eisenhandler suggested changing the one way on Governor's Avenue to be from the Cherry Street side. Chief Mello stated that that was not part of the study; this may reduce the volume but it is still used as a cross through. Comm. Zawislinski stated that Cherry Street is a state street and would require state approval as well as re-engineering. The Chief reported that the cross walk now is averaging 7 people per hour that cross the crosswalk. The 2002 study was reviewed and the numbers from Mr. Lynch are incorrect; there were not 31,000 cars. The 2002 study recommended a traffic signal be installed with a crosswalk and curb work for a total project cost of \$175,000.00. Stop signs are not the answer; an alternate would be a pedestrian signal/traffic post. Comm. Jagoe agrees and would endorse the study and stated that in the 1980's there was a problem here and this seems like the answer. Comm. Giles stated that this was a formal study done for this area that includes a sidewalk, curb cuts and a traffic light with a pedestrian control. Comm. Zawislinski stated that this was approved in 2002 by the Commission and funding was allocated but the funding was diverted.

The motion to adopt the Traffic Study Report carried unanimously.

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B. Jason asked about this being a historical district and if this would be an issue with a traffic light. The Chief stated that he was not sure of that process with a historical district but that stop signs were discussed and they do not offer a lot of safety for this area. Comm. Faruolo asked about the process from here. Chief Mello stated that the proposal goes to the Mayor for a possible Engineering Study and if he approves it; it then goes to the Board of Aldermen, if approved then it goes out to bid and then construction; approximately six months. B. Jason asked what would happen if it is not approved. The Chief stated that other options could be looked at and that there are 50 or 60 situations like this and speed bumps can not be the answer everywhere or no one would drive through Milford.

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

A motion was made by Comm. Wanosky, seconded by Comm. Faruolo to approve the minutes of the previous meeting as presented and carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Comm. Jagoe, seconded by Comm. Faruolo to add items 6. c. Meeting Date Change and item 12. c. Annual Review of Chief and terms of employment agreement. The motion carried unanimously.

**5. READING OF CORRESPONDENCE**

Chief Mello noted the following:

- A letter from Chief Lovello from the Darien Police Department thanking Lt. Gary Compare for his participation in the oral interview panel for the rank of Lt. for the Darien Police Department.
- A letter from Charles Sherwood, Director of the South Central Criminal Justice Administration thanking Chief Mello for allowing Det. Sgt. S. Wydra to serve on the oral board for the Detective position.
- A letter from the Trap Falls Kennel Club thanking Officer Patrick Taylor for his presentation at their event on 9/20/08.
- A letter from a New Haven resident apologizing for an incident at the Mall.
- A letter from the Officer Brian Aselton Memorial Fund thanking Officer Demirjian for his participation in their fund raising event. They granted 18 - \$1,000.00 scholarships.
- A letter from Frank Macko of AAA thanking the Police Department for their monthly car seat inspections. Surveys came back with positive comments regarding Officer Joanna Salotti.
- A Thank You letter from Dr. Jenkins and Staff regarding Kids Day America in Milford.
- A letter from Charles Sherwood, Director of the South Central Criminal Justice Administration thanking Chief Mello for allowing Officer Demirjian to serve on the oral board for the Recruit Police Officer position.

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- A thank you letter from Denise Morris-Curt thanking the Police Department for their participation in the Artisan's on the Green. They also wanted to change the requirement of social security numbers for vendors (these were required for background checks) as they were concerned with ID theft. These changes were made.
- A letter was received from Michael Bozzuto from HomeTown Foundation thanking the Police Department for their participation and support for their fundraiser Dream Ride. They raised \$100,000.00 for the Special Olympics.
- A letter was received from Mayor John DeStefano, City of New Haven thanking Milford Police Department for their assistance of shift coverage for services of Sgt. Dario Aponte (for New Haven officers so they could attend services).
- A letter was received from Jay Pinto, Chairman of the Oyster Festival Committee thanking the Police Department for their work with the Oyster Festival.

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

- a. **Donation of \$900.00 from Target** – last year Target donated \$1,200.00 and that was used for a digital camera. Portable surveillance cameras will be purchased with this year's donation. A motion was made by Comm. Faruolo, seconded by Comm. Jagoe to accept this donation. The motion carried unanimously.
- b. **Donation of \$6,000.00 from Stonebridge Restaurant** – Chief Mello reported that this donation will be used for a camera in the DUI vehicle. The department needs/should have 25. These are very expensive and have a short shelf life due to increasing technology. A motion was made by Comm. Jagoe, seconded by Comm. Wanosky to accept this donation. The Chief reported that it is anticipated to outfit all cars with drug seize funds. Comm. Giles asked how other business owners become aware of this process/need. The Chief stated that many donations are received that have funded the Citizens Academy, the CT Vest a Dog and many things. The motion carried unanimously.
- c. **Meeting Date Change** – it was noted that the regular November meeting date conflicts with the annual International Chief of Police Conference that the Chief attends. A motion was made by Comm. Jagoe, seconded by Comm. Marrone to change the next meeting date to 11/17/08. The motion carried unanimously. Zawislinski asked about the budget for next year and when it is to be completed. Chief Mello reported that the budget packets will be distributed on 10/16/08 and the next 2/3 weeks will be spent putting it together and it is due to the Mayor by 11/7/08. Zawislinski clarified that the Commission has the authority to accept, change or reject the budget. The Chief confirmed that. Zawislinski asked how the budget could be submitted before the next meeting. The Chief stated that for the last 3 years it just fell that way; that the board approved the budget before it was due. Comm. Giles stated that there would have to be a special meeting before 11/7/08 in order to review the budget. The Chief stated that he has a

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strong relationship with the Commission and both know what the goals and priorities are and there should not be any surprises. Comm. Wanosky stated that he discussed this with the Chief and feels that it is important to review the budget and understand the process; he is comfortable with this year but next year he would like more input. Comm. Giles agreed. Comm. Faruolo questioned if one more Officer was being requested. Chief Mello stated that he compared Milford to other towns; Milford 109 Officers verses West Haven 124 Officers and it was deemed that one Officer per year for 5 years would be requested. This plan is in its third year; two Officers have been added. Zawislinski stated that he feels Public Safety is better served with proper staffing and 112 Officers are needed per a prior study. In 2006 - 4 Officers were requested and 1 was received; in 2007 - 2 were requested and 1 was received and in 2008 - 2 will be requested. Chief Mello stated that requesting 2 in these times are appropriate. He thanked Comm. Zawislinski for his input and support. It was discussed that citizens are happy with the Police Department and proud.

**7. REPORT ON PLANNING AND ZONING REQUESTS**

None.

**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**

A motion to accept reports a-e was made by Comm. Zawislinski seconded by Comm. Eisenhandler. The motion carried unanimously.

**9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

**10. NEW BUSINESS**

None.

**11. COMMENDATIONS – None.**

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At 8:10 p.m. Comm. 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 MATTERS CONCERNING THE APPOINTMENT, EMPLOYMENT, PERFORMANCE, EVALUATION AND HEALTH OR DISMISSAL OF DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES.**

- a. Probationary Reviews: None.**
- b. Consideration of the performance of (3) employees.**
- c. Annual Review of Chief and terms of employment agreement.**

At 9:00 p.m. the Commission left Executive Session.

A motion was made by Comm. Jagoe, seconded by Comm. Faruolo to uphold the Chief's recommendations on discipline. The motion carried unanimously.

Comm. Zawislinski reviewed the Chief's accomplishments:

- **Morale**
- Re-organized Police Department
- Working relationship with community
- Community Policing (COPSS Unit, Citizens Police Academy)
- Bike Patrols
- Motorcycle Patrols (Traffic Enforcement, Special Response)
- Completed 4 year process of Accreditation.
- Policy system overhaul (General Orders similar to the Military)
- Dedicated Internal Affairs Unit
- Established Early Warning System (EWS) that tracks threshold behaviors – increased counseling and intervention to prevent behavior that could result in negative discipline.
- New Operational/Training Initiatives (active shooter strategy, long guns, Type III vests in cars)
- Established Crime Suppression Unit (CSU)
- Sub-Station at Westfield Mall
- Traffic Unit Recreated. (3-11 shift)
- 4-12 Detective Division
- Computer Forensics/Internet Investigations
- Created a Recruitment Team – increased recruit candidates by 200%
- Established a Regional Special Response Team (Milford, West Haven, Orange, Woodbridge)

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- Effective leadership and administration (Open door policy, created a team environment, productive relationship with unions)
- Awards/recognition programs
- Worked with Union to overhaul Extra Duty selection process
- Secured funding to replace/update departments computer systems (RFP phase)
- Excellent working relationship with the Police Commission
- Currently conducting a needs and space assessment for addition to the current police building

A motion was made by Comm. Jagoe, seconded by Comm. Zawislinski to approve the following amendment to the Chief's Working Agreement:

1. It was the position and the intention of the Police Commission, that Chief Mello receive the same benefits that prior exempt management employees received.  
  
Section 15, paragraph 1, line 3 of the Chief's working agreement should be amended to remove language, (up to a maximum of 240 hours). The removal of this language will make this section consistent with the past practice of previous exempt management employees of the Police Department. In addition, the removal of the language will make this section consistent with that of the Deputy Chief.
2. In light of the performance of the Chief of Police, the Police Commission has elected to increase the Chief's annual vacation leave by five (5) additional days beginning in 2008 and continuing for the remainder of the working agreement. The additional five (5) days vacation leave are consistent with the leave that had been originally negotiated between the Chief and the Police Commission prior to the Chief's appointment on April 15, 2004.

The motion carried unanimously.

Comm. Wanosky moved to adjourn at 9:05 p.m. The motion carried unanimously after a second by Comm. Jagoe.

**ATTEST:**

LISA STREIT, SECRETARY

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