

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS MEETING
HELD MONDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2008
STAFF CONFERENCE ROOM – POLICE HEADQUARTERS**

In the absence of Chrmn. Giles, Vice Chrmn. Jagoe called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M.

1. ROLL CALL

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Melvin Eisenhandler; Alberta Jagoe; Sharon Marrone; Thomas Zawislinski; Jerold Wanosky

ALSO PRESENT: Police Chief Mello; Deputy Chief Fournier; L. Stock, Secty; P. Vetro, Alderman

2. CONSIDERATION OF APPOINTMENTS

None

3. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Ald. Vetro, 10 Carmen Road, stated he had just left the Senior Center after a meeting of the Council on Aging Committee. Several citizens spoke of the on-going parking problem at the center; cars parking on the sidewalks and ramps. Ald. Vetro reported this same issue several months ago and the police have been ticketing these vehicles. However, the vehicle owners feel that the \$5 fine is worth where they are parking. Ald. Vetro suggested that perhaps the fine be increased. He stated that the Aldermen would be willing to help in any way they can. He stressed that the officers are doing their job.

Chief Mello noted that they have the same problems with commuters downtown who are getting \$10 tickets. The Chief did make the Mayor aware of these parking problems. He explained that if the Commission chose to pursue this issue, it will mean a change in the ordinance through the Board of Aldermen. Another option would be to place these violations into different categories. Last year, they felt the fines should be increased in hopes it would be more of a deterrent. Vice Chrmn. Jagoe interjected that she recalled the downtown merchants were in opposition to the fine increase. Chief Mello responded there were some in favor, some against.

Addressing Ald. Vetro, Vice Chrmn. Jagoe asked if the violators were commuters or were they visitors to the Senior Center, to which Ald. Vetro responded, both.

Comm. Eisenhandler asked if these vehicles could get more than one ticket, to which the Chief noted that it cannot currently be done in that area; however, that also can change.

Ald. Vetro asked that he be given some information regarding how to increase the fines. Chief Mello stated he wrote something up last year which was brought to the Commission, which he will bring back to the Commission next month.

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At this time, Chief Mello commented on two articles that were recently in the New Haven Register regarding something that happened last month. The articles referred to actions of the Commission regarding allowing no cap on the Chief's sick time and his cashing in on same upon his retirement. He stated that action was never taken; that issue was in effect at the time he was hired. The Chief did speak to the reporter and explain the issue, to which the reporter stated he would print a correction. However, on November 11, the editorial page had a "Thumbs Down" for the same issue. The Chief again called the reporter regarding the erroneous and misleading information. The reporter informed the Chief that the articles came from both the news staff and the editorial staff. The Chief apologized to the Commission that the article appeared and reflected on the Commission and wished to state for the record that he did contact the reporter.

Chrmn. Zawislinski stated he also read the article and editorial and found it offensive. He suggested that if the New Haven Register is going to print something, they should at least attend the meeting.

Vice Chrmn. Jagoe thanked the Chief for discussing this matter. Chief Mello felt it was a total misunderstanding by the employees of the New Haven Register. He will be meeting with the reporter and his supervisor to make sure that type of problem does not arise in the future.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was moved by Comm. Eisenhandler and seconded by Comm. Marrone to approve the minutes of the October 14, 2008 meeting.

The motion carried unanimously.

5. READING OF CORRESPONDENCE

The following was noted by Chief Mello:

A letter was received from Bob Joy, noting that the area of East Broadway has been quiet, especially since the neighbors have been diligent about calling when there is a problem with kids on the beach. Mr. Joy also attached an article from the Bridgeport Post which noted that Bridgeport is having the same problems on their beaches.

Pastor Jay Ramirez of the Kingdom Life Church sent a letter thanking the department and especially Sgt. Jeffrey Matchett for their concern and effort to assist in their recent forum event between John Rankin of the Theological Education Institute of Hartford and Jeremiah Wright. The officers demonstrated excellent spirit throughout the event.

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The Chief received an e-mail from Kevin Liddy regarding the Citizens Police Academy. He noted he was part of the program and was pleased that a “ride along” was offered to the graduates. He rode for approximately three hours with Sgt. DellaMonica, whose professionalism was exemplary. The Chief noted that waivers were signed for these “ride alongs” and controls were thoroughly in place.

Phil Vetro sent a letter thanking the Chief and his staff for the tremendous job hosting the Citizens Police Academy. He learned about the duties and responsibilities of the Police Department that most people take for granted. He rode with Off. Joanna Salati, who was very professional and efficient.

Ginger Lehtimaki, also a graduate of the Citizens Police Academy, sent a card thanking Off. James O’Keefe for the “ride along.” She felt the academy was a great opportunity to get up close and personal into an officers work day. A similar card was sent to the Chief.

A card was send from the Sharohs, thanking the Department for their kindness and support after the passing of Mrs. Sharoh’s father.

Orange Police Chief Robert Gagne, sent a letter thanking Off. Lima and Canine Judge for participating in a canine demonstration at their country fair. Chief Mello explained that this is a reciprocal agreement with other departments. For instance, at the Annual Milford Oyster Festival, several cities attend with their canines for a demonstration for the public. This is unique about police departments; they serve everyone – those that work here, live here or travel through here.

A thank you letter was received thanking the department for monitoring traffic on Woodruff Road. It was comforting to see a patrol car parked on Woodruff Road observing the traffic.

Chief Richard C. Mulhall of the Town of Newington, thanked Off. Localzo and Sgt. Walsh for providing traffic safety during their annual Peter J. Lavery Memorial Motorcycle run.

Walter Kupson, sent a letter of thanks regarding the Citizens Police Academy and his ride along with Off. Kranyak. Mr. Kupson noted he has pride in the police department and gained a better understanding of its workings. He commended the officers for their professionalism.

A letter and poem was received from Lynne Connors. From time to time, Ms. Connors sends letters to the department thanking them for all they do. She is very appreciative.

Westfield Shopping Center sent a letter thanking the department for their continued support regarding youth disruptions at the mall. Chief Mello explained that the department has developed a plan with the mall; they have increased the hiring of police

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officers; reviewed bus schedules and bus stops, as there are a large number of people being dropped off and several fights have broken out in these areas. The first incident of this nature took place in 2006. The mall and police have worked well to deter these types of activities. The mall will implement the following:

- Hire 2 additional off duty Milford Police Officers (currently there are 7)
- Increase mall staff security 25%
- Enforce the mall's code of conduct
- Utilize hand-held video cameras at the bus drop off locations
- Continue to request the assistance of the Milford Police Department when necessary

Westfield also thanked the Milford Police Department for having their members attend meetings. Chief Mello noted that adding more officers has a favorable presence at the mall and this has been very effective the last three weeks.

Ald. Judith Toohey sent a letter noting that she completed her ride along with Off. John Kranyak. She noted the officer was a gentleman, patient and kind. She spoke with him about his decision to be a police officer to which he responded he first wanted to be a teacher. She believed that to be true, due to the clear and efficient way he explained things as well as his ability to keep her safe. He is a true professional. Ms. Toohey thanked the department for allowing this program to go forward.

Kevin Doyle, New Haven Prosecutor, sent a letter referring to a case in which Det. Robert Nash was the investigating officer. It was a computer case which was prosecuted on the state level in which they received convictions. Det. Nash was thanked for his work and commitment to the case.

Vice Chrmn. Jagoe noted that due to the letters regarding the Citizens Police Academy, this was a huge success and commended the Chief. Chief Mello explained that the second academy will begin on January 17th and they are currently taking applications. They originally were accepting on 25, however, they did take a few more into the last academy. They are trying to get a good cross section of the community.

6. CONSIDERATION OF REPORT OF CHIEF ON MATTERS OF ADMINISTRATION

a. 2009/2010 Fiscal Year Police Department Budget Request

It was moved and seconded by Comms. Zawislinski and Eisenhandler, respectively to accept the budget as presented.

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DISCUSSION

Chief Mello stated that it had once again been a difficult year; he has tried to keep costs to a minimum but is again asking for 2 additional personnel. He brought the following items to the Commission's attention.

- Overtime for the Oyster Festival came in on budget
- Wages reflect a 2½% increase, same as last year
- Gas - prices have come down
- Other parts of the budget are contractual
- Uniform budget - \$250 (costs have gone up and they do not have the money to buy uniforms for the 2nd half of the year). When officers work private duty, 20% of the fee goes toward uniforms. It is felt that they use the uniform and equipment of the department, so 20% of the fee comes back to the city. Vice Chrmn. Jagoe asked if this 20% comes out of the officers pay, to which the Chief responded that the vendor pays the city, who in turn pays the officer. The 20% is added in after the officer's pay amount.

Capitol Outlays

- Replacement of the police boat is not in the budget – it will cost \$40,000. They have a patrol boat and can work with the Fire Department until there is funding for the boat.
- Did not ask for cameras in all cars – they are \$6,200 each – looking to phase them in
- Items under “scuba equipment” – needed to maintain safety of the officers
- Referred to traffic safety in the middle of the Post Road – to protect the officers, they allow vehicles to be rented at \$25/hour (while the officer is on the side of the road) – these funds used to buy light bars – 3 or 4 are needed.
- Vests are needed – their life is a maximum of 5 years – need level 3SRT for the SWAT team – the cost is \$7,900. They get reimbursed for approximately ½ from the federal government.
- Juvenile areas needed for 16 and 17 year olds – mentioned throughout the budget. These youth need to be removed from sight and sound of other “adult” offenders. The Chief is lobbying for funding to reconfigure several areas in the building.
- There are currently 7 operational tasers. The Chief would prefer that each officer have one – they are trying to phase them in – they also have a shelf life. They are requesting 4 more.

Comm. Winosky asked what the change over figure of \$3,458 was for. The Chief explained that when their vehicles get taken off line, there is much equipment that has to be removed and rewired to a new vehicle. Although Public Works does a “great job maintaining these line cars,” they only get about 2 years. They are able to trade them in and get some money in return (this is due to them being kept up by Public Works). Chief Mello would like to see 10 new vehicles, but he is asking for 8. Two officers have

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been added to the department but there have been no extra cars. If there is not enough money for the change overs, they will do the work themselves, which would take approximately two weeks.

Computer Software Upgrades

- Traffic study software needs to be upgraded
- Several other traffic versions also need upgrades
- Accident reconstruction software is needed – they are currently doing it by hand. When they go to school to learn about accident reconstruction, the software they will purchase is what they will use in school.

Regarding the creation of a juvenile holding cell, a camera will be needed which costs \$5,000. It will be used for interviews and to keep watch of the holding cell. They may consider taking away the Crime Prevention Unit and utilize that space for the holding cell or perhaps they will find an off site space.

- Live scan finger prints are now utilized. An additional system is needed for juveniles - \$44,000. The Chief is lobbying the legislature for funding.
- Office furniture – booking desk area needs to be upgraded - \$20,500.

Vice Chrmn. Jagoe commended the Chief, noting that he had tried to come up with innovative ways to save money; she hoped that the Commission members would support the Chief when he goes before the Board of Aldermen at the budget hearings. She believes that the department has a true friend in Ald. Vetro and she appreciates his support.

Chief Mello stated it is their job to put their needs together as best they can.

He referred to the traffic reconstructive equipment and explained that they do not get funds from tickets. Ticket fines go to the State, and then come back to the city.

- Seasonal Temp - \$65,000 (should consider increasing).

The Chief is considering using a part time community service officer strictly to assist officers in writing parking tickets in the downtown area. Some of the visitors attending court in the center of town can get disruptive and this is where the officers should be rather than writing parking tickets. He noted that parking ticket writing has gone down lately and that revenue could be used to offset the cost of hiring a community service officer, who will supplement a police officer, whereby other problems can be alleviated. This community service officer could also assist with duties at headquarters. He would be trained and not involved in any other activities except parking tickets. Chief Mello spoke briefly with the Mayor regarding this subject. The Chief stated they have requested an additional \$9,800 from last year and \$14,820 from what was approved last year for these potential hirees. Vice Chrmn. Jagoe stated it sounded like a good idea and she hopes he gets the support necessary.

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Comm. Zawislinski interjected that the Chief and Deputy Chief did an excellent job on the budget and although he recognizes these economic times, he feels that the number of officers must be increased to meet the growth of the city. He has been lobbying this fact for the past few years. Comm. Zawislinski then questioned the shelf life of a sigsaur and its anticipated cost. The Chief stated he could only guess a response, but did note that the balance is replaced on a regular basis. He believes the cost to be approximately \$1,000 each. They are replaced while they can still get value for them. He believes they have them for approximately six years. They will probably come up for replacement in the next couple of years.

Chief Mello stressed that community service officers will not replace police officers. If they are allowed one additional police officer, they would still like community service officers included.

There being no further discussion on the budget, the motion to approve as presented carried unanimously.

Vice Chrmn. Jagoe thanked the Chief for the work put in on the budget.

b. Consideration of 2009 meeting dates for Police Commission meetings

Chief Mello noted that everyone received a copy of the meeting dates in their packets. Comm. Winosky moved to approve the submitted dates. The motion was seconded by Comm. Marrone.

DISCUSSION

Comm. Zawislinski questioned the February meeting date due to President's day. Chief Mello will review the dates and if necessary, they will modify that date.

The motion carried unanimously with no further discussion.

7. REPORT ON PLANNING AND ZONING REQUESTS

- a. Cornerstone Christian Center (proposed church) 701 North Street
- b. Connecticut Center for Child Development – 95 Wolf Harbor Road

Comm. Zawislinski moved to adopt Traffic's recommendations on items a and b. The motion carried unanimously after a second by Comm. Eisenhandler.

8. ACCEPTANCE OF REPORTS

- a. Uniform Crime Report
- b. Youth Bureau Report

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

It was moved by Comm. Zawislinski and seconded by Comm. Marrone to accept reports “a” through “e.”

DISCUSSION

Regarding the Uniform Crime Report, Comm. Winosky questioned the “property by type and value” area. Chief Mello stated they have to report these figures to both the State and Federal governments. Comm. Winosky specifically questioned the “miscellaneous” \$88,000 figure with a return of \$6,000+. Chief Mello explained that the figure includes any item that cannot be categorized, such as paintings (art), and GPS units (which are a “hot” ticket item). The items could be anything; the majority of items are listed under miscellaneous.

The motion carried unanimously with no further discussion.

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

10. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Crosswalk Request – Milford Point Road/3rd Avenue – Barbara Hernandez

A motion to adopt Traffic’s recommendation carried unanimously after being made by Comm. Zawislinski and seconded by Comm. Winosky.

11. COMMENDATIONS – 3

Deputy Chief Fournier noted that a Certificate of Commendation is recommended for Det. Huggins and Off. Lugo. On August 14, 2008, a call was received regarding a domestic on the east shore of town. A male who fled the scene was located by Off. Lugo on a nearby street. Off. Lugo discovered that the male was suicidal, upon which he commanded that the man drop the knife he was holding. Off. Lugo tased the male so that he would not hurt himself further. Det. Huggins was en route to a private duty job, but responded to assist Off. Lugo. They restrained the individual and provided medical care.

Deputy Chief Fournier explained that the Meritorious Service Medal would be bestowed upon Sgt. Daniel Sharoh and a unit citation for the following officers: Sgts. Kevin Walsh, Dan Bothwell, Doug Youd, William Cable; Offs. William Simpson; Gillian Gallagher; Christopher Doyle; Keith Ruggiero; Mark Freeman; Todd Richards; Scott

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Weymer; Peter Parks; Tyrone Dancy; Dennis Broderick; Dets. Arthur Huggins; Frank Zavaglia and Disp. Steve Harris. On May 12, 2007 a call from a distraught female was received at headquarters. She indicated there were serious problems at her home. Sgt. Sharoh arrived alone at the scene, at which time a female ran from the home, followed by a male with a gun pointed at her. Sgt. Sharoh ordered the male to drop the gun and tried to talk him out of the gun. However, the male pointed the gun at Sgt. Sharoh. Believing his life and the life of the female were in immediate danger, Sgt. Sharoh discharged his weapon, striking the male.

The Meritorious Service Medal is awarded for personal bravery.

Chief Mello explained that the reason this is now coming before the Commission is that when an officer is involved in a shooting, they have to wait for the case to clear and is no longer in litigation.

Vice Chrmn. Jagoe informed the Chief and Deputy Chief that the Commission wants these officers to know how much they are appreciated.

At 8:09 P.M., it was moved by Comm. Zawislinski, seconded by Comm. Marrone and carried by roll call vote, 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: 3rd quarter review for Officers David Chila, Antonia Moreno and Ereka Robinson
- b. Consideration of the performance of three employees.

At 8:21 P.M., the Commission left Executive Session, at which time Comm. Zawislinski moved to amend item 12b to read: "Consideration of the performance of 2 employees." The motion carried unanimously, after a second by Comm. Winosky.

Comm. Zawislinski moved to adjourn at 8:22 P.M. The motion was seconded by Comm. Winosky and carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Stock, Secretary