

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 11, 2019 7:00 P.M.
STAFF CONFERENCE ROOM, POLICE HEADQUARTERS**

Chairman Smith called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

1. ROLL CALL

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Bill Bevan, Alberta Jagoe, John Mager, Sharon Marrone, D. Rubenstein, Richard Smith

COMMISSIONER NOT PRESENT: Sam Bergami

ALSO PRESENT: Police Chief Mello; Deputy Chief Rahn, Ald. Vetro, Sgt. Kranyak, D. Candido, Secty.

A quorum was present to conduct the business of the meeting.

2. CONSIDERATION OF APPOINTMENTS - none

3. CITIZEN COMMENTS - none

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

It was moved by Comm. Rubenstein and seconded by Comm. Marrone to approve the minutes of the February 11, 2019 meeting as presented. Motion carried with Comm. Jagoe abstaining as she was not present at the February meeting.

5. READING OF CORRESPONDENCE –

- So. Central Criminal Justice Admiin. – letter of appreciation for allowing Officer Jock to serve as panelist at oral board examination for position of Recruit Officer.
- Ingrid Newkirk, President of PETA – letter of appreciation on behalf of ethical treatment of animals. Thanked officers for coming to the aid of dog and guardian who fell through the ice on February 12, 2019 at Eisenhower Park. Further noting the compassionate team rescued both dog and guardian from a situation that could have proofed fatal.
- Valita Lockett of the Walter Lockett Foundation – heartfelt appreciation for the support of the department in the “Walking While Black: Love is the answer program” on 2/10/19. Noted that 100% of the 6 police departments invited accepted the invitation where 250 people who were present to bring attention to the diverse population.

6. CONSIDERATION OF REPORT OF CHIEF ON MATTERS OF ADMINISTRATION

- a. Safe Driving Award to Officer Cameron Luth - informational
- b. Donation from Car Seat Inspection clinic – motion made by Comm. Rubenstein and seconded by Comm. Jagoe to approve the recommendation of Chief Mello to accept the \$20 donation from Linda D’Onofrio from car seat inspection and those monies be placed in the Officer Wellness Fund. Motion carried unanimously.
- c. Chief’s General comments – Chief Mello reported he recently attended the Board of Finance Budget hearings regarding the Department’s Proposed 2019-20 Budget. He stated he appreciated the Mayor’s increased budget allocation for police cruisers from 190 to 220 which will allow the purchase of one half the amount of cars purchased approximately 9 years ago. He also explained cruisers have gone up significantly and are approaching \$40,000 each due

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to the sophistication of the vehicles. He stated he will be able to get 6 cars which is short of the number purchased in the past. Chief Mello stressed when he first became chief, the focus was on replacement cycles but over the past number of years, that cycle got pushed out and that was a matter of concern for him. He stated when he first became chief the replacement cycle was every 7 years and he thought that was reasonable.

Also a number of desk top computers have been cut from this budget. Chief Mello expressed concern that the department is now at 7 year replacement cycle on this equipment and that will become extremely problematic. As well the budget includes an upgrade to the TeleStaff system and that upgrade is at a cost of \$80,000.

Further Chief Mello noted currently the department is underfunded by \$70,000 in the vacation relief fund. With regard to overtime, the request was \$650,000 and that number is more like \$950,000. He explained that account is still underfunded and often it is necessary to go to other accounts to draw from. He also stated there will not be a strong surplus this year in the wage account and that is where we have drawn from in recent years for overtime. He explained that overtime is a contract provision that must be followed and this year we took on 5 additional officers and made them SRO's. Further, those officers are funded by the city and the Board of Education but we did not have overtime for those officers. Each officer gets 13 holidays, 4 hours from each of those holidays comes out of the overtime budget so that is a drain on that line item. He added that is the same scenario with the combined dispatch.

Further, he noted there are less and less officers on the road and if we don't fund training at an appropriate level, those numbers will continue to get reduced. He added it has been suggested we train too much and we are well beyond the minimum having reached a level of skill that keeps our officers safe. Chief Mello stated he values the staff he has which has built a level of expertise.

He asked commission members to consider what they would like the Chief to do regarding training, do they feel we are too sophisticated and to please let him know their opinion.

With regard to the building, Chief explained the Building Committee met with the Mayor and after 5 studies on this facility. He felt confident in the analysis that the Building Committee has done in the past 2 ½ years and based on the work of 4 architects since 1989, he was confident a good package was presented. He was disappointed that unfortunately an agreement could not be reached and the agreement with the architect and the builder has been canceled.

Comm. Jagoe stated she is proud of this department because of the Chief's leadership and because of the excellent training. She suggested that the SRO's be funded more, perhaps 100%, by the Board of Education noting they had a million dollar surplus which could have helped fund those positions.

Chief Mello stated when the additional SRO's were proposed, they did not realize how much the over time would cost and at this time they are working on numbers for cost sharing with the Board of Education.

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Comm. Mager added he is 100% behind the Chief when it comes to training and felt the commission would give him full support.

7. REPORT ON PLANNING & ZONING REQUESTS

a. Industrial Development – 64 Old Gate Lane – it was moved by Comm. Jagoe and seconded by Comm. Rubenstein to accept Traffic Division recommendation regarding Industrial Development at 64 Old Gate Lane.

Chairman Smith reminded members that the Police Commission has not authority over parking spaces and that is something P & Z oversees. He stated this body oversees the site lines and he suggested requesting P & Z, from this point forward, do not request the Police Commission to oversee parking spaces.

Chief Mello explained a good number of traffic studies are requested and as explained we do not have authority over many issues regarding parking spaces. He added taking those issues regarding parking spaces out of our purview would be a big help.

b. Mixed Use Office-Residential Building – 41-43 Cherry St.- it was moved by Comm. Mager and seconded by Comm. Rubenstein to reject Traffic Division recommendation to deny mixed use office-residential building at 41-43 Cherry Street based on the fact that this body does not consider parking compliance issues. Motion carried unanimously.

c. Housing Development – 25 Meadowside Road – it was moved by Comm. Jagoe and seconded by Comm. Rubenstein to accept Traffic Division recommendation regarding Housing Development at 25 Meadowside Road. Motion carried unanimously.

d. 283 Cherry St/16 Ross St – Carwash Expansion/Lot Consolidation – it was moved by Comm. Rubenstein and seconded by Comm. Marrone to approve Traffic Division recommendation regarding 283 Cherry Street/16 Ross Street-Carwash Expansion/Lot Consolidation. Motion carried unanimously.

e. 15-23 River Street – Mixed Use Building – it was moved by Comm. Mager and seconded by Comm. Marrone to reject the recommendation of Traffic Division to deny 15-23 River Street-Mixed Used Building. Motion carried with Comm. Jagoe abstaining as she owns the adjacent building and the owner of this property is her tenant.

8. ACCEPTANCE OF REPORTS

It was moved by Comm. Rubenstein and seconded by Comm. Jagoe to approve the following reports:

- a. Special Investigations Unit Report
- b. Detective Bureau Report
- c. Crime Prevention Unit Report
- d. Traffic Division and Licensing Unit Report

Motion carried unanimously.

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9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - none

10. NEW BUSINESS

a. Eisenhower Park/ North St – New Driveway and entrance to Eisenhower Park and Foote field – Traffic Study– it was moved by Comm. Rubenstein and seconded by Comm. Mager to approve Traffic Division recommendation regarding Eisenhower Park/North Street- new driveway and entrance to Eisenhower Park and Foote Field. Motion carried unanimously.

b. Gulf Street – Mini Roundabout Project – Traffic Study – Chief Mello acknowledged and credited Ald. Fortunati for the research she compiled on this matter. He explained to the members this discussion was brought to this commission last year.

It was explained when a road is made wider traffic speed increases and residents are concerned about the matter.

Chief stated the concept for the mini roundabouts are they are slightly raised with soft curves and are used for traffic calming not used for right of way; they are aesthetically pleasing. It was explained the only areas appropriate for this project would be Gulf and Elton and Gulf and Dock. Chief Mello suggested a pilot study, perhaps putting in one round about and see how that works and if it is felt it is not working, the pavers can be removed and the area restored. He added the project will improve pedestrian safety and it was noted emergency vehicles or cars can drive over the raised area without damage to that vehicle.

Sgt. Kranyak added those two locations are the recommended areas for Gulf Street. He explained an intersection in New Haven was visited where a similar round about was and he noted the traffic did slow down, as well many vehicles drove over them but most maneuvered fine around the area. He felt there is enough data to support this proposal.

Comm. Rubenstein questioned how this would impact snow plowing and Chief Mello explained the Public Works Director was consulted and the area can be plowed over with no problem.

Comm. Jagoe asked of this department would be responsible for hiring the engineers and Chief Mello stated that would be up to the city and whether they want to pay for that service.

Chairman Smith asked if this would be installed after the road expansion and it was explained it can be done at this time but would have to change after the expansion.

Chief Mello stated it is hopeful that the roundabout can be done in such a way that if it is decided they are not working, they can be pulled up with no problem.

Comm. Jagoe asked how many blocks apart are the two streets mentioned and Sgt. Kranyak stated they are fairly far apart.

Comm. Bevan asked if Gulf Street is a city or state road and he was told city.

Comm. Mager asked if this would impact motorcycle traffic and Sgt. Kranyak stated a motorcycle would hit it as they would a speed bump.

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Comm. Mager asked if there was any advantage to speed tables over this and Sgt. Kranyak explained speed tables slow down larger vehicles.

Comm. Smith stated he was not clear about the wording of the proposal and Chief Mello explained this commission will have to support the installation of these or not act on it. Further, he noted If the concept is approved it does not mean it will happen. He suggested voting to approve the concept of both roundabouts but the city will make the decision if they want to do both.

It was moved by Comm. Mager and seconded by Comm. Rubenstein to approve the traffic study that the city accept the recommendation of the Traffic Division to install 2 mini roundabouts, one at Gulf/Elton and the other at Gulf/Dock and this is in concert with the widening project of Gulf Street. Motion carried unanimously.

c. Electric Bird Scooter request – Chairman Smith explained he recently had a request from the Economic Development Director asking for additional time to gather further data to support this program. Based on that request he suggested the matter be tabled at this time. Motion was made by Comm. Rubenstein and seconded by Comm. Marrone to table the Electric Bird Scooter request per Chairman Smith's recommendation. Motion carried unanimously.

11. COMMENDATIONS

Deputy Chief Rahn shared the following:

a. Certificate of Commendation for Officer Cameron Luth – case #6703-18.- relative to an incident occurring on 12/26/18 when Officer Luth was dispatched to residence on Welches Point Road regarding potential suicide of young female. When he arrived at the residence, the female was locked in the bathroom, officer forced entry and found the female attempting to seriously harm herself. Officer Luth was able to take away the body harming item and while trying to restrain her she took off. Other officers had to chase her but were able to catch her and get her into the emergency vehicle where she was transported to the hospital to get medical attention.

b. Certificate of Commendation for Officers Christopher Deida and Matthew Joy – case #586-19.- during midnight shift in the Devon area officer saw a suspicious vehicle at the intersection of Naugatuck Ave/Milford Point Rd. Driver of the vehicle sat through numerous traffic light changes which prompted officer to follow driver. When pulled over, it was found the operator of vehicle had a suspended license and was told to call someone to come to get the vehicle, Within a short time a male came running up the street and took custody of the car. Officer Deida followed the vehicle to make sure they were leaving the area. One hour later Officer Joy went back down Naugatuck Avenue area and found a broken glass window at the convenience/gas station at the corner of Naugatuck Ave/Milford Point Rd. At that time he saw the vehicle which had been stopped earlier, traveling toward Bridgeport Avenue. Vehicle was pulled over at which time a trash bag filled with stolen cigarettes was found. It was learned through the investigation that when Officer Deida stopped the vehicle the first time, the male who committed the burglary had stashed the stolen goods in the area and then ran to the scene of the car stop and subsequently returned to the scene to retrieve the stolen goods. Goods were recovered and both parties arrested.

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Chief Mello reported that recently Officer Bailey went to a medical emergency and performed CPR which saved a person's life. He stated this is a result of the good work of the combined dispatch center adding the details of this incident would be shared at a future meeting.

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Consideration of Report of Chief of Police on matters concerning the Appointment, Employment, Performance, Evaluation, Health or Dismissal of Department Employees.

It was moved Comm. Rubenstein and seconded by Comm. Jagoe to adjourn to Executive Session at 7:53 p.m. for the following matters:

- a. Consideration of the performance of two employees

Motion carried unanimously.

Chief Mello, Deputy Chief Rahn and commissioners present remained for Executive Session.

It was moved by Comm. Rubenstein and seconded by Comm. Jagoe to reconvene in public session at p.m.8:35 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

- a. Consideration of the performance of two employees

It was moved by Comm. Rubenstein and seconded by Comm. Jagoe to support Chief Mello's decision regarding performance of one employee. Motion carried with Comm. Mager abstaining from voting due to his legal representation of one employee.

Being no further business, it was moved by Comm. Rubenstein and seconded by Jagoe to adjourn at 8:35 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Recorded by Diane Candido
Submitted to City Clerk March 14, 2019