Chairman Smith called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**1. ROLL CALL**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Sam Bergami, Bill Bevan, Alberta Jagoe, John Mager, Sharon Marrone, David Rubenstein, Richard Smith

ALSO PRESENT:Police Chief Mello; Deputy Chief Rojee, 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 Vice Chrmn. Bergami and seconded by Comm. Rubenstein to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 10, 2022 as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

**5. Consideration of Chief on Matters of Administration**

1. Donation to K9 Unit – Darlene Hultgren – Chief Mello recommended acceptance of the $100 donation from Darlene Hultgren and place said donation into K-9 Unit account.

Motion was made by Comm. Rubenstein and seconded by Vice Chrmn. Bergami to accept the $100 donation from Darlene Hultgren and place said donation into K-9 Unit account.

Motion carried unanimously.

1. Informational: Year End Report for Police Sick & Relief Fund
2. Chief’s General comments- included in the Chief’s comments was informational report on Safe Driving Awards to the following officers: Ofc. Bailey, Ofc Luth, Ofc. Napolitano and Ofc. Norowski.

Chief Mello reported although a class of officers recently graduated, another police academy will begin on 10/21/2022 and that is due to the fact there are 12 openings in the department at this time with more anticipated in the coming months. He added this is the case with all departments in the state and the country, as there is difficulty in recruiting individuals who qualify as well as the numbers needed to fill the vacancies. He noted that he had been told that 95% of the people who are going through the process fail the polygraph tests. His concern went further in that there is a lack of interest and all departments are competing against each other for qualified candidates.

Chief Mello noted that in our department officers are often being held over for extra shifts and that is affecting their morale. He added that he anticipates this holding over on shifts will continue throughout the summer and with that in mind he has included in his proposed 2022-23 budget a request for an additional 4 officers. Further, if those 4 officers could be hired it would put the department at full strength.

Chrmn. Smith clarified that there are 12 openings at this time and another 4-5 are anticipated by October 2022 which would mean 17 openings by then. He questioned how much of this issue stems from the employment pressures that every company/business/municipality is feeling.

Chief Mello posed the question of where are the people who really want to take on the role of an officer.

Chrmn. Smith noted there is the possibility that we can be filling vacancies with less than ideal candidates and Chief Mello explained that could be a possibility but this department will have a renewed effort into training to ensure the best outcome.

Chief Mello emphasized the fact that our officers are doing very good work and at this time there is a lot going on in Milford, especially on the route 1 corridor and many of the incidents involve youth.

Comm. Rubenstein noted that in the past the Chief has not been in favor of lateral transfers and is that something he might consider now.

Chief Mello stated after this upcoming class, it might be time to start to look at that. He added there are a lot of police officers leaving departments and looking to move to another department but he was not in favor of looking for someone else’s disciplinary problems. He also noted there are officers who have reached the age/number of years to collect a pension but want to continue their career and are looking to other departments where their earnings could be greater.

**6. Report on Planning and Zoning Requests**

.a. Special Permit – Axe Throwing Entertainment & Lounge – 975 Bridgeport Ave – motion was

made by Comm. Mager and seconded by Comm. Rubenstein to approve Traffic Dept.

recommendation regarding a Special Permit – Axe Throwing Entertainment & Lounge at 975 Bridgeport Ave. Motion carried unanimously.

b. Offiste Parking Lot(Addendum) – 352 Wheelers Farms Rd.- motion was made by Vice Chrmn. Bergami and seconded by Comm. Bevan to approve Traffic Dept. recommendation regarding Offiste Parking Lot(Addendum) – 352 Wheelers Farms Rd.

Comm. Mager noted he read the report and agree with the conclusions but also looking at the plan to create a parking lot down the road from the applicant (church) and bus parishioners to the church. He noted the sidewalk in front of the church is contiguous with the sidewalk across the street. His concern was the people will walk to the end of the sidewalk, cross a very busy street to get to the other side and he felt he would rather see a different offering.

Vice Chrmn. Bergami noted he has seen people cut across the street to get to the other side

where there is another parking lot.

Chief Mello stated if it was the Commission’s choice, this matter could be referred back to

Traffic to take another look and further review.

Chrmn. Smith asked if the members would like to entertain a crosswalk at this location and if so there is the possibility that would open up many more similar requests.

Comm. Mager felt this plan would be creating a magnet for people to walk across this busy street and he felt the plan should be to eliminate the sidewalk and compel them to use the transportation offered them to get to and from the church from the additional parking lot or is there another offering that can be considered.

Comm. Rubenstein expressed his concern regarding if this was approved as presented and an unfortunate tragedy was to occur, would it come back to this body who approved the request.

Chrmn. Smith stated that is not a street you want to cross adding there is fast moving traffic on that road.

Vice Chrmn. Bergami emphasized it is dangerous street to attempt to cross and cars travel at a fast speed.

Comm. Mager stated his concern is the sidewalk along the length of the parking lot and we would be funneling people to the street and they will want to cross. He stated his choice would be to table it and send it back to Traffic with our concerns to see if there is something more that can be done.

Motion was made by Comm. Mager and seconded by Vice Chrmn. Bergami to amend the original motion to resend this request back to Traffic Dept. to address the concerns that have been raised in this discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

**7. ACCEPTANCE OF REPORTS**

It was moved by Vice Chrmn. Bergami and seconded by Comm. Marrone 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.

**8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS** - none

**9. NEW BUSINESS** - none

**10. COMMENDATIONS** – none to report

**11. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Consideration of Report of Chief of Police on matters concerning the Appointment,**

**Employment, Performance, Evaluation, Health, or Dismissal of Department**

**Employees**

Motion was made by Vice Chrmn. Bergami and seconded by Comm. Rubenstein to adjourn to Executive Session at 7:53 p.m. regarding the following matters:

1. Consideration of the performance of one (1) employee – tabled from January 2022

meeting.

(Commissioners present, Chief Mello and Deputy Chief Rojee remained for Executive Session)

Motion was made by Vice Chrmn. Bergami and seconded by Comm. Rubenstein to reconvene in public session at 7:53 p.m., Motion carried unanimously.

Motion was made by Vice Chrmn. Bergami and seconded by Comm. Rubenstein to remove from the table consideration of the performance of one employee, tabled 1/10/2022. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion was made by Vice Chrmn. Bergami and seconded by Comm. Jagoe to uphold Chief Mello’s recommendation regarding the disciplinary action of a 2-day suspension for Officer Kyle Magnan. Motion carried 5 yes (Vice Chrmn. Bergami, Comm. Bevan, Comm. Jagoe, Comm. Marrone, Chrmn. Smith and 2 no (Comm. Mager and Comm. Rubenstein) .

Being no further business to discuss, it was moved by Vice Chrmn. Bergami and seconded by Comm. Rubenstein to adjourn at 7:55 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Recorded by Diane Candido

Submitted to City Clerk February 15, 2022