**MINUTES OF BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS MEETING MONDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2023 7:00 P.M. , ZOOM MEETING**

Chrmn. Smith called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

**Roll Call**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Alberta Jagoe, John Mager, Sharon Marrone, David Rubenstein, Richard Smith

ALSO PRESENT: Police Chief Mello, Deputy Chief Rojee, Capt. DelMonte, Lt. Holder, Sgt, Kranyak, Ald. Smith, D. Candido, Secty.

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

**CONSIDERATION OF APPOINTMENTS** – none

**CITIZENS COMMENTS -** none

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

It was moved by Comm. Mager and seconded by Comm. Marrone to approve the minutes of the Police Commission Meeting of November 14, 2023.

Chrmn. Smith referred to Chief Mello’s comments in the newspaper regarding the cost of the building plan and it was noted by Chief Mello the minutes have been posted and therefore the comments will remain as stated.

Motion carried noting abstention of Comm. Rubenstein and Chrmn. Smith who were not present at the meeting.

**CONSIDERATION OF CHIEF ON MATTERS OF ADMNIISTRATION**

1. Chief’s General comments – Chief Mello reminded members of the upcoming Police Academy graduation scheduled for 12/21/2023 at 6 p.m. at Parsons at which time 28 recruits will be presented, 9 of which are going to be in Milford. He also noted that today, 12/11/2023, another class was started and it was decided to begin this one at this time because it would be helpful to get those officers in this new class graduated by summer 2024. He noted that summer months require a lot of resource and also hold-overs of staff but with this class beginning now, it will put the Department at full strength.

With regard to the 2024-25 budget, Chief Mello noted the budget has been sent to Mayor Giannattasio and the commissioners have also received a copy.

Chrmn. Smith questioned if there will be adequate space with the two academies overlapping and Chief Mello stated there would be.

Comm. Mager asked if Chief Mello had some sense as to the openness of the new administration with regard to the budget submitted.

Chief Mello stated the Mayor seemed understanding of the new budget which includes 2 social workers adding they had been originally hired with American Rescue Plan Act funds which will expire and now those 2 positions will be included in this proposed budget. He also noted that the request for additional police officers (4) had been submitted for a number of years and Mayor Blake offered 2 for last year and 2 in the current budget.

Chief Mello referred to the recent street take-overs in our city and the impact on our officers. He believes that previous requests have articulated the need for additional staff. As well there are some categories that have been funded in the past and are included again in the proposed budget.

Chief Mello stated he will wait to see if the requests submitted are included in the Mayor’s Proposed Budget.

**REPORT ON PLANNING AND ZONING REQUESTS**

Chief Mello explained the commission had discussed this traffic plan in September but there had never been a formal approval of the plan. He explained the Commission’s concern regarding the pedestrian walk way and the request for additional safety measures for the pedestrians. He stated he gave tentative approval for the construction to move forward including the request for additional measures and that is what is included in the Addendum (item b)

a. 44-64 River St. Metro Center (Maintenance and Protection Traffic Plan)

b. 44-64 River St. Metro Center (Maintenance and Protection Traffic Plan) – Addendum – motion was made by Comm. Mager and seconded by Comm. Rubenstein to approve the 44-64 River St. Metro Center (Maintenance and Protection Traffic Plan – Addendum.

Comm. Mager noted this change did come about on a very emergent basis but he thanked the contractor who took good efforts in putting it in place. He noted he is able to see the site from his office and saw that people had been walking in the path of traffic but now there is a safe passage which will avoid possible disastrous results.

Chrmn. Smith questioned whether it was necessary to include both a and b in the motion and Comm. Mager stated the only traffic study that exists which requires our approval was on the addendum.

Motion carried unanimously to approve 44-64 River St. Metro Center (Maintenance and Protection Traffic Plan) – Addendum.

**ACCEPTANCE OF REPORTS –**Special Investigations Unit Report

Motion made by Comm. Rubenstein and seconded by Comm. Mager to accept reports as presented.

a. Special Investigations Unit Report

b. Detective Bureau Report

c. Crime Prevention Unit Report

d. Traffic Division and Licensing Unit Report

Motion carried unanimously.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS** - none.

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. Discussion of Traffic conditions Pond Point/Yale Ave Chief Mello stated this matter has been taken up by our Traffic Division and the Commission in the past and there has been no request for an additional study but due to the most recent accident, it was felt it was time to take another look at this with the Commission’s direction. He added there is no action required at this time unless the Commission wants to move in a different direction.

Chrmn. Smith noted the 2018 report was in response to the 3rd accident involved at that location and he noted in the past there were cars parked on the property which prevented an oncoming car from hitting the house but with this most recent accident there were no cars parked on the property. He added the report stated guard rails are needed to deflect an oncoming car; however it was recommended we put up some additional signage. He stated the recent accident was the 4th and it is a recurring situation involved at this property. He asked do we protect the people who reside there from further accidents. Chrmn. Smith felt this is certainly worthy of discussion.

Chief Mello noted the signage and warning markers were implemented following the original study and that was approved by the Commission. He added some of the existing issues w would be impacted by the warning signs.

Chrmn. Smith felt it would be prudent to get those signs in place and he suggested reaching out to Public Works Director to get this on that department’s schedule.

Comm. Mager asked if there was any consistency that has occurred with the prior accidents.

Sgt. Kranyak explained the incident this past November was a DUI. He added no other accidents included hitting the house. Past accidents (2019, 2018 and 2011) occurred for a variety of reasons such as distracted driving and loss of control.

Comm. Mager asked if the direction of the traffic was the same in each accident and he was told they were.

Comm. Mager added we are dealing with a situation that goes back to the engineering of the street and expressed concern as to how the decision of this Commission would react in similar issues on other streets that fall into the same concerns. He agreed the signage should be implemented but he was concerned as to how much more of this type of issue will occur from other areas.

Chrmn. Smith stated putting up additional signage is a reasonable response and would follow the study done in 2018 which was not implemented and we may have the responsibility to put up signage in other areas with similar situations if needed.

Comm. Mager expressed his concern that the Commission needs to stay within our purview.

Sgt. Kranyak noted he had put in a work order for this signage today.

**COMMENDATIONS**

Deputy Chief Rojee was pleased to present this Certificate of Commendation to Officer Caitlin Pierce, one of our new officers, who was working the midnight shift in September when she stopped a vehicle which was found to be unregistered and uninsured. While waiting for the tow truck she conducted an inventory search of the vehicle and found a loaded revolver which was removed from the car. He stated he was pleased to commend her for her efforts and the outcome of taking another loaded weapon off the streets.

Chrmn. Smith added it is always nice to hear of the good work of our new officers.

Chief Mello added with this class going in today, we will have 29 female officers and have come a long way addressing diversity issues in the Department.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Consideration of Report of Chief of Police on matters concerning the appointment, employment, performance, evaluation, health or dismissal of department employee.

It was moved by Comm. Rubenstein and seconded by Comm. Mager to adjourn to Executive Session at 7:24 p.m. regarding the following.

1. Consideration of sick time benefits and Chief’s employment agreement.

Motion carried unanimously (Commissioners present and Chief Mello remained for Executive Session.)

It was moved by Comm. Rubenstein and seconded by Comm. Jagoe to reconvene in public session at 7:55 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion was made by Comm. Mager and seconded by Comm. Rubenstein to restore to the Chief’s current Employment Agreement with the language from the Chief’s original Employment Agreement in 2004 with regard to sick time accrual benefits in Section 7 Other Benefits and Section 15 Severance Benefits.

The Chief’s sick time accrual benefits shall be consistent with the sick time accrual benefits for all other department members (Appendix A - Working Agreement with the City of Milford and the Milford Police Union).

Motion carried unanimously.

Being no further business to discuss, it was moved by Comm. Jagoe and seconded by Comm. Marrone to adjourn at 7:57 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Recorded by Diane Candido

Submitted to City Clerk: December 13, 2023