

Linda M. Hodge



First Selectman

**Board of Selectmen Special Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, March 25, 2009  
Colchester Town Hall  
Meeting Rooms 2-3 at 7:00 p.m.**

HANCOY A. BRAY  
TOWN CLERK

2009 MAR 27 PM 3:23

RECEIVED  
COLCHESTER, CT

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** First Selectman Linda Hodge, Stan Soby, Greg Cordova, Rosemary Coyle, John Malsbenden

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Mike Caplet, Adam Benson, Steven Coyle, George White, James Stavola, Susan Dema, Gregg Schuster, Rob Labonte, J. Passacantando, Dan Henderson, James McNair, Brian Owens, Shannon Dumigan, David Dander, Shane Hassett, Bill Otfinoski, Jean Otfinoski, Glenn Morron, Ryan Blessing, Pam Scheibelein, Dorothy Mrowka, and other citizens

1. **Call to Order:** First Selectman L. Hodge called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and reconvened the public meeting from March 19, 2009 to address the possible removal of Police Commissioner James Stavola.

J. Malsbenden noted for the record that he had reviewed the minutes and audio recording from the previous session of the public hearing.

2. **Public Hearing Regarding Possible Removal of Police Commissioner James Stavola:**

- a. **Statement of Cause (First Selectman Linda Hodge):** First Selectman L. Hodge read the statement of cause into the record as (1) issuing statements to the press without informing the First Selectmen's office prior to, (2) speaking on behalf of the Police Commission without approval of commissioners, (3) speaking on behalf of the Police Commission in violation of their procedures approved 11/24/08.

- b. **Citizen's Comments (limit of three minutes per citizen with requirement that all comments be confined to the cause as stated):**

Glenn Morron spoke regarding his opinion that the Board of Selectmen was not an impartial board, his opinion on the process for the investigation into the reasons for removal of James Stavola, his opinion regarding the lack of a motion of approval for the "Board of Police Commissioners" authority summary discussed at the November 24, 2008 Police Commission meeting, and his opinion that the removal of James Stavola from the Police Commission was a mistake.

Rob Labonte spoke regarding his respect for James Stavola, his opinion that James Stavola took the mission of the Police Commission very seriously, and on behalf of the Colchester Police Union, that the Board of Selectmen should reconsider the removal of James Stavola.

Dave Dander spoke regarding a request for information that he made to the First Selectman's office, the response to the request from the First Selectman, his opinion based on the response he received to the request for information that there doesn't appear to be a policy that covers press releases as it pertains to boards and commissions.

James McNair spoke regarding his respect for the Colchester Police and the Police Commission, his recollection of the clear line of communication through the Chairman of the Board of Education while he was a member, his concern about the lack of any evidence that would suggest that a press release policy has been approved.

George White spoke regarding his previous tenure on the Colchester Police Commission, his disappointment with the occurrence of this situation with the Police Commission, and his opinion that the Police Commission needs to operate with professionalism.

Dave Dander spoke regarding the Police Commission minutes of August 28, 2008, specifically that a motion had been made that James Stavola had moved to implement news releases in the best interest of the Town of Colchester. Mr. Dander noted that he did not believe that anyone here thought Mr. Stavola did not have the best interest of the Colchester Police or the Police Commission in mind.

Detective Rob Derone of the Whethersfield Police Department read four letters into the record (attachments 1-4). The Board of Selectmen agreed by unanimous consent that they would allow an excess of three minutes for Detective Rob Derone since he was reading three statements into the record.

Dorothy Mrowka yielded her three minutes of citizen's comments to Glen Moron.

Glenn Morron spoke regarding his opinion on the untruthfulness of the statement that James Stavola released the statement without informing other members of the Police Commission, his recollection that all other Police Commissioners acknowledged at a previous Police Commission meeting that they were aware of the press release, his opinion that at the time of the submission of the press release, Art Standish was the Acting Chair of the Police Commission.

Brian Owens yielded his three minutes of citizen's comments to Glenn Morron.

Glenn Morron spoke regarding his high opinion of the members of the Police Commission. The Board of Selectmen discussed whether they would allow Glenn Morron to discuss the Ethics Commission decision during this hearing. First Selectman L. Hodge reminded Glen Moron that he should focus his comments to the three issues at hand.

Glenn Morron spoke regarding cause (3) and his opinion that the procedures in question were not approved, regarding cause (2) and his opinion that other commissioners were in fact aware of the press release in question before it was release, his opinion regarding the awareness of then-Acting Police Commission Chairman Art Standish, his opinion that the Board of Selectmen is acting as a partial board, and his recollection that he was never asked about this situation by First Selectman Linda Hodge.

Dan Henderson yielded his three minutes of citizen's comments to James McNair.

James McNair spoke regarding his confusion about the lack of communication on this issue on behalf of members of the Commission and his previous experience with a process for discipline that might include a compromise made up of an agreed upon process for communication.

- c. **Presentation of Cause (First Selectman Linda Hodge):** First Selectman L. Hodge presented on the cause for removal of Police Commissioner James Stavola, including:
- i. The discussion regarding the implementation of a Town-wide communication plan and the awareness of Department Heads through department head meetings and the Police Commission through conversation at Police Commission meetings on the procedure for the submission of press releases. To her knowledge, press information had not, since that time, been released by any department head.
  - ii. Copies of emails showing practice of James Stavola knowing about the press release procedure. In this emails, he has clearly emailed copies of the release to the First Selectman's office for approval, which did not occur in this instance.
  - iii. A press release has never been held up by the First Selectman – they are only reviewed for accuracy. First Selectman L. Hodge believes it to be her responsibility as First Selectman to review the press releases prior to their submission to the press.
  - iv. First Selectman L. Hodge reviewed the Police Commission minutes of February 25, 2008, July 28, 2008, August 25, 2008, September 20, 2008, October 27, 2008, and November 24, 2008.

R. Coyle asked a question regarding the annotation on the bottom, November 24<sup>th</sup> approval. She noted that there was no motion that the document was approved and accepted as Police Commission policy.

S. Soby noted that he was at the meeting and that there was a consensus at the meeting that this was acceptable by all Commissioners. He noted that it wasn't reflected in the minutes, but that it was agreed upon by consensus.

- d. **Mr. Stavola's Comments to the Board of Selectmen (James Stavola):** J. Stavola identified himself and noted that if it was acceptable, he would read his statement and then address the questions that had been raised so far in the hearing. J. Stavola read his statement into the record (attachment 4).

The Board of Selectmen members asked clarifying questions of J. Stavola, and J. Stavola responded to their questions.

Following this discussion, First Selectman L. Hodge called for a five minute recess at 8:27 p.m. by unanimous consent.

First Selectman L. Hodge reconvened the meeting at 8:34 p.m.

- e. **Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Possible Removal of Police Commissioner James Stavola:** The Board of Selectmen deliberated on the possible removal of Police Commissioner James Stavola and commented on several points made during citizen's comments that they believed to be incorrect.

R. Coyle moved to reinstate James Stavola to the Police Commission, seconded by J. Malsbenden. Following discussion, J. Malsbenden and R. Coyle voted in favor. G. Cordova, S. Soby, and First Selectman L. Hodge voted against.  
MOTION FAILED.

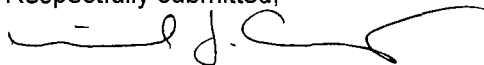
3. **Adjourn:** J. Malsbenden moved to adjourn at 9:18 p.m., seconded by S. Soby. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.

**Attachments**

1. Letter dated 03/23/09, from Chief James Cetran of the Wethersfield Police Department to Whom it May Concern, regarding James Stavola
2. Letter dated 03/23/09, from Chief Mark Hafner of the Keller Police Department to Whom it May Concern, regarding James Stavola
3. Letter dated 03/22/09, from Lt. Kevin Dillon of KFD Training and Consultation LLC to Members of the Colchester Board of Selectmen, regarding James Stavola
4. Letter dated 03/23/09, from Chief John Salvatore of the Monroe Police Department to Whom it May Concern, regarding James Stavola
5. Written comments dated 03/25/09, from James Stavola to the Board of Selectmen, as read into the record
6. Memorandum dated 09/09/06, from First Selectman Jenny Contois to All Town Employees, regarding "Conflict of Interest"
7. Memorandum dated 01/09/09, from First Selectman Linda Hodge to Bill Otfinoski and Police Commission, regarding "Special Meeting"
8. Copy of Norwich Bulletin article dated 02/15/09, headlined "Police commission chairman cleared"
9. Document labeled "Board of Police Commissioners"
10. Copy of email dated 02/17/09, from Ryan Blessing to Mike Caplet, regarding "RE: story"
11. Copy of email dated 02/17/09, from First Selectman Linda Hodge to Mike Caplet, regarding "FW: Press Release"
12. Letter dated 03/20/09, from John Jones to Colchester Board of Selectmen, regarding "James Stavola's article in the newspaper"
13. Copy of email dated 03/23/09, from Art Standish to First Selectman Linda Hodge, regarding "Reinstatement Hearing"
14. Memorandum dated 03/24/09, from Bill Otfinoski to Colchester Board of Selectmen, regarding "Jim Stavola Press Release Printed February 15, 2009 Norwich Bulletin"
15. Copy of email dated 02/17/09 from William Otfinoski to First Selectman Linda Hodge, regarding "Re: Press Release"

*\*Clerk's Note: This Special Board of Selectmen meeting was recorded via a digital audio recording system and is available through the Colchester First Selectman's office in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.*

Respectfully submitted,



Michael J. Caplet  
Executive Assistant to the First Selectman



*Wethersfield Police  
Department*  
250 Silas Deane Highway  
Wethersfield, CT 06109



James Cetran  
Chief of Police

Tel 860 721-2900  
Fax 860 721-2995

March 23, 2009

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing this letter in response to the dismissal action taken against James Stavola, a Police Commissioner for the Town of Colchester. I have known Jim Stavola for over thirty years. He was one of the veteran police officers who broke me in as a rookie officer in the mid 1970s. Through that time and since, I have learned that Jim is honest, loyal, trustworthy, and a very ethical individual.

Typically, towns like Wethersfield and Colchester have very limited budgets and in slow economic times like these it is very challenging for Administrators to provide public safety services that taxpayers have grown accustomed to. Jim Stavola understands the needs of the Town of Colchester and its officers.

While a member of the Wethersfield Police Department, Jim Stavola volunteered to become an instructor in various mandated areas of law enforcement to defray costs to the department and ultimately the town. As a Community Police Officer Jim was in touch with the residents of Wethersfield and believed that he served them and their needs first and foremost.

I was not surprised to learn that James Stavola volunteered to become a member of the Colchester Police Commission many months ago. I was surprised to learn that the Board of Selectmen was seeking his removal. In my opinion, James Stavola's significant experience as a police officer and his understanding of public safety operating costs, policies, and procedures as well as his loyalty to the residents of Colchester not only make him a good candidate for the commission but possibly the best candidate.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James Cetran".

James Cetran  
Chief of Police  
Wethersfield Police Department  
250 Silas Deane Highway  
Wethersfield, CT 06109



March 23, 2009

To whom it may concern:

I have been asked by Mr. James Stavola to write this letter in his behalf regarding the upcoming public hearing of his removal from the Colchester Police Commission.

I have known Mr. Stavola for twenty-eight years and during twenty of those years I had the distinct pleasure of working beside him as a peer and later as his direct supervisor and bureau commander at the Wethersfield, Connecticut Police Department.

I have always known Retired Officer Stavola to care about the duties assigned to him and his professional ethics were sound. He always cared very much about the reputation of the town he worked for and even more important he displayed empathy and compassion towards his peers and supervisors. Officer Stavola understood the tenements of community policing and forged long lasting relationships with the community he served. His professional communication style with the public was open and friendly. When he made mistakes he would be the first to take responsibility and accept the consequences for his actions.

Progressive government is much different today than it has been in the past. Citizen taxpayers demand unlimited access to government and transparency is paramount. Any attempts to stifle citizen's speech are frowned upon unless of course it is detrimental to the safety and security of our residents.

I hope the Town of Colchester and Mr. Stavola can reach a mutual understanding in this matter so the public is best served.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark R. Hafner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Mark R. Hafner  
Chief of Police

March 22, 2009

Board of Selectmen  
Town of Colchester, CT  
127 Norwich Ave.  
Colchester, CT 06415

Dear Members of the Colchester Board of Selectmen,

Re: Mr. James Stavola

I am writing to you on behalf of Mr. James Stavola, resident of the Town of Colchester and member of the Colchester Police Commission. I have known Mr. Stavola professionally and personally since December 1980. I was employed at the Wethersfield Police Department for 26 years and worked directly with Mr. Stavola for 20 of those years both as a peer and supervisor.

I respect Mr. Stavola for I have always witnessed his high level of professionalism as a Wethersfield Police Officer as well as his treatment of the people he served. His commitment to the citizens of Wethersfield and sense of ownership to the town of Wethersfield was obvious. He truly cared about his peers, citizens and level of performance as an officer.

Since Mr. Stavola joined the Colchester Police Commission, we have had several conversations regarding police services, technology and training. He is always striving to improve the service of your police department.

I give Mr. Stavola my highest level of endorsement for his professional values, ethics and commitment to excellence.

I am retired Police Lieutenant and now own a professional police training company and train and consult police departments across the United States and internationally.

Sincerely,

Kevin F. Dillon

Lt. Kevin Dillon (Ret)  
KFD Training and Consultation LLC  
L.O.C.K.U.P. @ Police Combat Systems  
P.O. Box 290931  
Wethersfield, CT 06129-0931  
860.436.6975 Office  
kfd@policecombat.com

# Monroe Police Department



**John L. Salvatore**  
*Chief of Police*

**7 Fan Hill Road**  
**Monroe, Connecticut 06468**  
**Telephone: 203-452-2830**  
**Fax: 203-261-4769**

March 23, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

It has recently been brought to my attention that James Stavola has been removed from the Town of Colchester Police Commission due to conduct alleged to be "antithetical to the best interests of the Town of Colchester ..." I don't know what facts would lead a reasonable person to believe that he could behave in any fashion contrary to the best interests of the majority of residents or otherwise act in a manner harmful to the community while performing the business of the town.

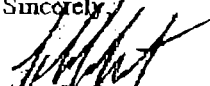
I have known Jim for more than three decades. We served together as Wethersfield police officers for over 20 of those years. When I first started as a probationary officer, Jim was already a veteran of the force. I would later become one of his sergeants and then his division commander for several years. In that time, no one seriously questioned Officer Stavola's professional integrity. His reputation in town was of an officer who was compassionate to those he served, firm when necessary and both proud and loyal to the department he represented. His fellow officers knew they could depend on him when involved in a high-risk incident. He was recognized for his performance, including more than one confrontation with armed suspects, which he resolved without injury to arrestee or innocent person.

The Jim Stavola I know volunteered and assisted with community programs and fundraisers to help less fortunate and people in need of various types of assistance. He was a community service police officer before the term "Community Policing" was coined.

I urge the individuals responsible for determining James Stavola's appointment to seriously review his record as a commissioner and weigh accordingly that record against the information presented, which constitutes the charges at the basis of his removal from office.

If I can be of further assistance or answer any questions, do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

  
John L. Salvatore  
Chief of Police

cc: James Stavola



Public Hearing - Possible Reinstatement of James Stavola  
To the Colchester Police Commission

March 25, 2009

Ladies and gentleman of the Board thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak. I would first like to thank all of those who have spoken on my behalf. It is greatly appreciated.

The letter I received from the First Selectman of February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009 outlines the grounds of my removal. The first item I would like to address is she states my actions were "antithetical to the best interest of Colchester". This statement is very disappointing and hurtful. From the testimonials you heard this evening I and many take exception to that statement.

During the passed 10 months that I have been on the police commission I have initiated and completed several projects that clearly benefit the citizens of Colchester and our police officers.

1. I created a **"Police Applicant Interview Assessment Process and Form"** where all applicants are asked the same interview questions and receive a numerical scoring in various categories. This process and form standardized our interview process and greatly reduced the town's liability should an applicant choose to challenge our hiring process.

2. **I was able to locate money in the Emergency Equipment Fund to have our cruisers repaired.** As you know our cruisers were unable to be turned-off due to poor wiring which drained the battery. Prior to these repairs the vehicles were always running at a cost of \$4.00 per gallon only to waste taxpayers' money and place additional wear and tear on our vehicles.

3. **I created a Fund Raising Process** which was acceptable and approved by the Board of Selectmen to allow the Police Commission to raise money through citizen donation.

4. **I have designed a draft document recommending police web site enhancements.** This would be an excellent resource for the Colchester citizens to become aware of our available safety programs such as bicycle safety, child safety, Internet safety and DARE program availability. Additional links to have citizens view police code of ethics, town stats, photo gallery, press releases, and career opportunities are suggestions to be also included.

5. **I have created a Colchester Police Youth Program,** waiting to be presented to the Police Commission and Board of Selectmen, with the intention of conducting simulated law enforcement programs for students who have completed their junior year in high school and express a desire to enter into a law enforcement career.

6. I have created a **“Police Inventory Supply Process and Form”** to eliminate shortages and overstocking of supplies to avoid wasteful spending. This procedure assists the resident trooper supervisor in knowing what equipment is needed.
7. I have created a **“Police Commission Project Log”** to assist our commissioners in tracking the status of all its projects. This report is updated monthly to insure police commissioner accountability and project progress when reporting to the police officers and citizens as to the status of ongoing projects.
8. I have on a monthly basis continually been active **in researching and contacting area Chiefs of Police to determine what state and federal grants** may be available to our officers for Board of Selectmen and Police Commission approval for the good of our town.

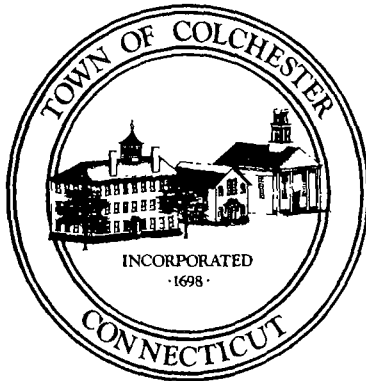
As you can see every step I have taken since becoming a police commissioner clearly indicates that I have the best interest of our citizens and officers in mind. For anyone to suggest otherwise is simply wrong.

With regards to the press releases that appeared in the paper concerning the Ethics Board Decision. Let me just say this - the press release in question was on behalf of the entire Police Commission. On February 8<sup>th</sup> - February 14<sup>th</sup> no commissioner contacted me to the contents of the release. Subsequently, the release was printed in the paper on February 15<sup>th</sup>.

With respect to informing the First Selectman of the press release that responsibility fell on the Chairman of the Police Commission and in this case the acting Chairman was Art Standish. On March 20<sup>th</sup> I emailed Mr. Standish to appear tonight which he never responded to my email. To this date I have not seen or heard from Art Standish.

In closing, as a Police Commissioner volunteer, you can see I only have the best interest of the citizens and our police officers in mind. As residents of Colchester it is important that we all cultivate our neighborhood spirit and work together to create the kind of community that we want our children to thrive in. When you volunteer, you give part of yourself, your time, energy, skills and feelings. You give to your family and friends, to your neighbors, to your community. I look forward to your decision to reinstatement me and allow me to continue to serve my community.

Jenny Contois



First Selectman

September 9, 2006

To: All Town Employees

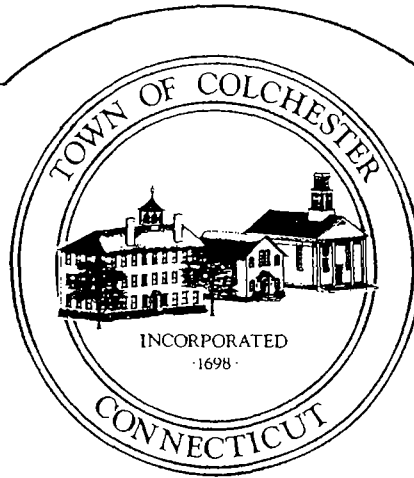
From: Jenny Contois

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jenny Contois", is written over the "From:" line.

SUBJECT: CONFLICT OF INTEREST

This is a reminder. A town employee cannot go before a Town board or commission to present testimony and utilize their knowledge and experience working for the Town as a platform. A Town employee cannot go before a board or commission and speak on behalf of the Town unless it is part of their job responsibilities to provide such information or it is requested and approved by the First Selectman or Board of Selectmen. Doing so, places the Town in a compromising situation and it is also a conflict of interest.

An employee of the Town may go before a board or commission and present testimony as a private citizen, but again, cannot refer to the fact that they are a Town employee and cannot present testimony that relates to their knowledge and experience as an employee of the Town.



DATE: January 9, 2009  
TO: Linda Hodge, First Selectman  
FROM: Bill Otfinoski, Police Commission  
SUBJECT: Special Meeting

A motion was made at the January 8, 2009 Special Meeting of the Colchester Police Commission that I voluntarily step down as chairman until a ruling can be made by the Ethics Commission on possible violations to our By-laws and Rules of Procedure. I agreed to do that.

Art Standish will be acting chairman. It was indicated that I would resume as chair if the Ethics Commission finds there were no violations.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Otfinoski".

Bill Otfinoski, Police Commission

COLCHESTER

# Police commission chairman cleared

## Otfinoski investigated over contract negotiations

By RYAN BLESSING

rblessing@norwichbulletin.com  
(860) 425-4205

The Ethics Commission has cleared Police Commission Chairman William Otfinoski of accusations he violated rules during contract negotiations with the police union.

After a 30-minute executive session Feb. 3, the commission found that the complaint

against Otfinoski, brought by members of the police commission, "lacks sufficient probable cause to support a finding of a violation of the code of ethics."

Otfinoski stepped down as chairman Jan. 8 after the police commission voted for an investigation into the matter. Two police commissioners made the accusations in December. Otfinoski has been reinstated as chairman.

"I felt from the beginning there was no ethics violation and that the allegations were unfounded," Otfinoski said. "I am happy to have this resolved."

The police commission released a statement through public relations officer James Stavola, indicating it is "very

disappointed" with the decision. Stavola and member Glenn Morron claimed Otfinoski kept the commission in the dark about contract negotiations.

"The Ethics Commission was supplied with enough facts and circumstances that would have supported a finding of probable cause and justified further investigation," the commissioners said.

"The decision is a grave injustice to the town's police officers and citizens and has severely damaged the very foundation and concept of having a commission."

The town's 11 officers are working without a contract. A four-year contract expired in

June 2007. The town entered arbitration in August.

Stavola said Otfinoski had "damaged" talks and the town spent \$50,000 in negotiating fees at taxpayers' expense without the commission's knowledge.

Otfinoski contends there had been a "hiatus" in talks since March 2007, and there had been no progress on 64 unresolved issues that went to arbitration.

Police union president Tim Edwards said in December the union believed an ethics complaint was warranted. He said the union passed a unanimous "no confidence" vote in Otfinoski Sept. 4 and demanded he resign.

## HOME SHOW

FROM B1

Mortgages and plentiful supply of houses has created excellent buying opportunities, said Patricia Kontouras, mortgage officer at Liberty Bank's Norwich branch and a former board member of the Elders Association of East-Connecticut. The economic stimulus package passed

## ISRAEL

FROM B1

even opened the possibility of having a unity government with Livni.

"Bibi is a hardliner, but he's a pragmatic hardliner," Rabbi Charles Arian of Norwich's Beth Jacob Synagogue said.

A recent war in Hamas-

given energy to the Israeli right. Avigdor Lieberman's Yisrael Beitenu Party, thought to be the most hawkish toward international relations, received 15 seats, the third highest total.

A January visit to Israel gave Linda Simons, president of Congregation B'nai Shalom of Danielson/Putnam, a greater appreciation for the precarious security situation.

pulsory military service for Israeli Jews, and frequent trips to bomb shelters, Simons said "It's a hell of a way to have to live."

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**CARD OF THANKS**  
From The Family of

**ROBERT L. JOHNSON**

We wish to express our heartfelt thanks to our family and friends who sent cards of condolences, flower donations and Mass Cards in his memory.

A very special thank you to Mrs. Jolene Ruffo, the teachers, cafeteria personnel, and students of Middle School. A special thanks to the Norwich Fire Department and those individuals who attended memorial.

The support and love shown to us in our time of sorrow is greatly appreciated.

Caroline A. Johnson & Family

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## **Board of Police Commissioners**

The Board of Police Commissioners has the authority and responsibility for the general supervision and management of the Town of Colchester Police to work toward providing quality police services that maximize public safety. There are five members of the Police Commission who are appointed by the Board of Selectmen for three-year terms. The Board of Police Commissioners is directly governed by State Statutes, the Town Charter (Code), and the contracts with the Connecticut Department of Public Safety, Division of State Police and Local 26393T, Connecticut Council of Police Unions No. 15 AFSCME.

A Police Commissioner in Colchester is thus charged with the following duties and responsibilities:

- Provide general management and supervision of the Colchester Police and of the Town property and equipment used with the operation of the department.
- Exercise sole powers to hire, promote, discipline and remove for cause Colchester officers.
- Establish all needful rules and regulations for the department and implement suitable penalties for their violation.
- Develop, present to the First Selectman and monitor yearly budgets voted by the Town for the operation of the department.
- Represent Colchester, through the Chairman, with the First Selectman and Town Counsel in union negotiations.
- Set expectations that Colchester Police Officers work cooperatively with the State Police to provide Colchester the best police services possible.
- Understand that the Chairman shall be the spokesman for the Board of Police Commissioners, representing the views of commission consensus.
- Provide recommendations for enforcement strategies to the Colchester Resident Trooper Supervisor when the commission decides it is in the best interest of the Town.

The above was approved at the November 24, 2008 meeting.

## Mike Caplet

**From:** Blessing, Ryan [rblessing@norwichbulletin.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 17, 2009 3:38 PM  
**To:** Mike Caplet  
**Subject:** Re: Story

"The Police Commission, having 60 years of police experience, is very disappointed with the decision of the Ethics Commission. The Ethics Commission was supplied with enough facts and circumstances that would have supported a finding of probable cause and justified further investigation. The decision is a grave injustice to the town's police officers and citizens and has severely damaged the very foundation and concept of having a commission."

On 2/17/09 3:07 PM, "Mike Caplet" <mcaplet@colchesterct.gov> wrote:

Hi Ryan,

Could you send me a copy of the statement released by the Police Commission?

Thanks again,

Mike

---

Mike Caplet  
Executive Assistant to the First Selectman

Town of Colchester  
127 Norwich Avenue  
Colchester, CT 06415  
860-537-7220  
www.colchesterct.gov

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Blessing, Ryan [<mailto:rblessing@norwichbulletin.com>]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 17, 2009 11:27 AM  
**To:** Mike Caplet  
**Subject:** Story

Here you go:

The Ethics Commission has cleared Police Commission Chairman William Otfinoski of accusations he violated rules during contract negotiations with the police union.

After a 30-minute executive session Feb. 3, the commission found that the complaint against Otfinoski, brought by members of the police commission, "lacks sufficient probable cause to support a finding of a violation of the code of ethics."

Otfinoski stepped down as chairman Jan. 8 after the police commission voted for an investigation into the matter. Two police commissioners made the accusations in December. Otfinoski has been reinstated as chairman.

"I felt from the beginning there was no ethics violation and that the allegations were unfounded," Otfinoski said. "I am happy to have this resolved."

## Mike Caplet

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**From:** Linda Hodge  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 17, 2009 10:39 PM  
**To:** Mike Caplet  
**Subject:** FW: Press Release

Please print for BoS packets.

-----Original Message-----

**From:** William Otfinoski [mailto:billyot@sbcglobal.net]  
**Sent:** Tue 2/17/2009 4:58 PM  
**To:** Linda Hodge  
**Subject:** Re: Press Release

Linda- As you know that was an article that was probably supplied by Jim. Maybe it hasn't even been printed yet. I don't know. I'm sure it will also be in the Thursday Colchester Bulletin.

At any rate, since the Ethics Commission decision the only meeting the Police Commission had was a budget workshop (the one Stan attended). Nothing was brought up about the Ethics Commission decision. The minutes of the Budget Workshop just said the budget was discussed.

I also talked to Art and he said Jim called him after he heard about the Ethics Commission decision. Jim told Art he couldn't believe the results and carried on and on about it. Art did not reply. So Jim did not get the "pulse" of the commission on the phone. It appears he did it on his own.

Art and I will be at the BOS meeting Thursday evening (2/19). We should be there between 7:30 and 8:00. Let me know if you need anything else.  
Bill O.

--- On Tue, 2/17/09, Linda Hodge <lhodge@colchesterct.gov> wrote:

**From:** Linda Hodge <lhodge@colchesterct.gov>  
**Subject:** Press Release  
**To:** "External - William Otfinoski" <billyot@sbcglobal.net>, standisha@yahoo.com  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 17, 2009, 10:13 AM

Please provide me with a copy of the statement released to the Norwich Bulletin and printed in that paper on Sunday (or Monday?) regarding the Ethics Commission decision. Please also provide me with the minutes and agenda of the meeting where the statement was developed. I need it today by 3:00 p.m. please as it's going on the BoS agenda.

Thanks much,  
Linda

\*\*\*\*\*  
Linda Hodge  
First Selectman  
Town of Colchester  
127 Norwich Avenue  
Colchester, CT 06415

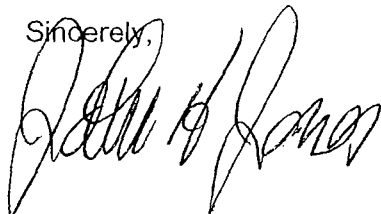


March 20, 2009

Dear Colchester Board of Selectmen,

In regards to James Stavola's article in the newspaper, I did not receive information before it being put into the paper as I do not have email and he did not discuss it with me. I received a copy of the email from Art Standish on the day that the article appeared in the newspaper.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John H. Jones". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "J".

John H. Jones

## Linda Hodge

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**From:** Art Standish [standisha@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 23, 2009 11:37 AM  
**To:** Linda Hodge  
**Cc:** Mike Caplet  
**Subject:** Reinstatement Hearing

March 23, 2009

To: Colchester Board of Selectmen

Re: Reinstatement Hearing

Due to a commitment that I can not change, I will not be able to attend the hearing on the 25<sup>th</sup> of March. I am therefore submitting this statement.

Sometime around February 8, 2009 I received a call from James Stavola stating that he had received a request from Ryan Blessing, reporter for the Norwich Bulletin, for a comment on the Ethics Commission's decision regarding the issue with Chairman Otfinoski. After hearing his comment, I asked him if the reply should be run by the selectmen first. It was his opinion that it was a request for a comment and not a press release therefore that wasn't necessary. I asked how the other members felt about the statement and he said they were fine with it. I said I don't like the idea but I would go with what the rest of the commission wanted. At that point I was not sure what the extent of my authority was because of the Ethics Commission Decision clearing Chairman Otfinoski.

Respectfully submitted: Arthur Standish

TO: Colchester Board of Selectmen

FROM: Bill Otfinoski  
Police Commission Chair

DATE: March 24, 2009

RE: Jim Stavola Press Release  
Printed February 15, 2009  
Norwich Bulletin

As a result of the Ethics Commission decision and agreement by the Police Commission at their meeting of January 8, 2009, I was reinstated as Commission Chair on February 3, 2009.

Mr. Stavola neither discussed the statement made by him on behalf of the Police Commission in the February 15, 2009 "Norwich Bulletin" with me prior nor did he copy me on the email he sent to Mr. Morron and Mr. Standish regarding the same.

 3/24/09  
W.F. Otfinoski

**Linda Hodge**

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**From:** William Otfinoski [billyot@sbcglobal.net]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 17, 2009 4:58 PM  
**To:** Linda Hodge  
**Subject:** Re: Press Release

Linda- As you know that was an article that was probably supplied by Jim. Maybe it hasn't even been printed yet. I don't know. I'm sure it will also be in the Thursday Colchester Bulletin.

At any rate, since the Ethics Commission decision the only meeting the Police Commission had was a budget workshop (the one Stan attended). Nothing was brought up about the Ethics Commission decision. The minutes of the Budget Workshop just said the budget was discussed.

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**Linda Hodge**

First Selectman