



TOWN OF NEWTOWN
BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS

MINUTES FROM THE BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING HELD TUESDAY, JULY 6, 2013
IN THE DEPARTMENT OF POLICE SERVICES MEETING ROOM
3 MAIN STREET, NEWTOWN

**These minutes are not finalized until approved
At the next regularly scheduled meeting.*

Chairman Paul Mangiafico called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

PRESENT: Brian Budd, Andrew Sachs, Joel Faxon, and Paul Mangiafico.

ABSENT: James Viadero

ALSO PRESENT: Police Chief Michael Kehoe, Police Captain Jose Rios, Police Union President Scott Ruszczuk, 1 member of the press, and 9 members of the public were in attendance.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Lisa Floros, 32 Queen Street, read Police Commissioner the letter she had written expressing her concerns. Concerns about certain individuals honking their horns as they drive across the five new permanent speed tables installed on Queen Street. (See attached letter to the evening's minutes.)

Mrs. Floros stressed that residents need the Board's leadership and stated that Queen Street was being made a scapegoat. She added that there was a person in and they all knew who it was town trying rile people up.

In regards to the individuals honking their horns at all hours of the day and night, Mrs. Floros said it was unkind.

She concluded by thanking the Board and asking the Police Commissioners to let the people know those speed tables are there to stay.

Jill B. Beaudry, 36 Queen Street, said she has been coming before the Board with Lisa since 1997 concerned about the traffic on Queen Street. She stated that the issue regarding the traffic on Queen Street has been a Merry-Go-Round for the past 12-years.

Mrs. Beaudry told Commissioners that originally she didn't want speed bumps but indicated that once they were installed she noticed how quiet they were and that they worked. She added that she was glad to see the permanent ones came in.

Mrs. Beaudry stated that she is perplexed about the inflammatory letters regarding Queen Street. She said she is not sure why people can write whatever they want and continue to be able to do so. She noted that one particular person seems to have a vendetta against a particular neighbor and has encouraged a group of horn honkers. Mrs. Beaudry added that the horn honkers weren't all teens – they were mostly adult men.

Mrs. Beaudry said she lives in a spot between two bumps and informed the Board that this individual is specifically targeting a neighbor of hers who is a senior citizen.

Mrs. Beaudry said that from a teacher's perspective there are students who live and walk on that street who are afraid.

She requested that the Police Commissioners please help them with this situation. She said they have a long history there and appreciated the Board's help.

John Boccuzzi, 61 Queen Street, told Police Commissioners that the speed tables do work and added that they can now start looking at the broader view of traffic problems. He stated that people are driving too fast and that there needs to be some kind of coordination between State and local law enforcement to improve the situations around town.

Mr. Boccuzzi concluded by stating that they need to divert their energy into making things better.

Michael Floros, 32 Queen Street, said he walks twice a day. He suggested that the speed tables have tremendously slowed down traffic.

In regards to Safe Routes to Town, Mr. Floros stated that Queen Street would be a perfect area for connecting multiple areas of Town. He added that he sees kids walking, it's out of control and he believes extending the sidewalks would be a great benefit to Newtown.

Chairman Mangiafico informed those in attendance that he normally doesn't comment on what the public says, but indicated that evening was an exception.

- 1) Chairman Mangiafico said he is very, very happy that they are there tonight not speaking about safety on Queen Street. He indicated that the Board committed itself to taking care of this one way or another – that's why there are speed tables there. The Chairman indicated that he is aware there are still people questioning why, but said he is glad they are talking about a problem of people beeping their horns rather than speeding.
- 2) Chairman Mangiafico stated that one resident turned in the plate number of a person beeping a horn. He indicated that a police officer went to that driver's house and talked to them.
- 3) Chairman Mangiafico said he doesn't know of a way to convince people to behave properly, but suggests that over time the activity of horn honking will cease.

The Chairman thanked the residents for speaking. He concluded by dispelling the rumor that the 5 new permanent speed tables cost \$100,000. He stated that the permanent speed tables cost \$2,500 each and were actually less expensive than the temporary ones.

Relative to Safe Routes to school, Commissioner Faxon informed residents that the Board had addressed the matter about a year and a half ago and put in for a grant. He said the Board thought it was in the running for the grant but that disappeared.

Commissioner Faxon said he thinks sidewalks are an excellent thing but the Town would have to pay for them somehow by getting a grant or by paying for it. He suggested that they could declare eminent domain, pay the people for it and get the money through taxes; but added that whatever they do, it will need to be paid for.

Commissioner Faxon recalled that the original map that was drawn up for the Safe Routes project had different colored roadways and sidewalks. He said some of it would have been covered by the grant but that money was all used up. He stressed that the difficulty was funding the project. Commissioner Budd agreed with Commissioner Faxon that the difficulty was in the funding.

Chief Kehoe agreed that the money did disappear, but reassured commissioners they had a plan in place. He added that they could certainly apply for it again.

POLICE UNION PARTICIPATION: Union President Ruszczyk stated that there was nothing new to report and that things were heading in the right direction.

**CONSIDERATION AND ACTION OF THE MINUTES FOR: REGULAR MEETING
June 4, 2013 - Commissioner Faxon moved to accept the minutes of the regular meeting of June 4, 2013 as corrected. Commissioner Budd seconded and motion was unanimously approved.**

Corrections:

Page 2, under Letters of Gratitude, "CPCA will be giving Officer Smith a Motorola grant.", not Officer Grant.

Page 1, under Chief's Report, Fleet, 2nd sentence, the word "manor should be "manner".

Page 1, under Chief's Report, Budget, 1st sentence, the word "re-coop" should be "recoup".

CHIEF'S REPORT: Personnel Report – A) Hiring - Chief Kehoe reported that they had given the test, and out of 115 applicants, 102 showed for the test. He told the Board that they were in a hiring holding pattern for new officers, but applied for POST positions at the academy in Meriden. **B) COPS Grant** – The Chief explained that the department had applied for 2 positions under the SRO Program but that they haven't heard back yet. **Budget – A) FY 2012 – 2013** – Chief Kehoe stated that he doesn't have a report right now because they are still trying to reconcile, but said he was hopeful to have a full report in September. **B) FY 2013 – 2014** – The Chief informed the Board he did not have the FY 2013-2014 report because the department was transitioning to a new accounting software, but said that once it was up and running they would generate the report. **C) GL Funds** – Chief Kehoe indicated that the GL Funds were all in order, but that the department may have to reconcile some.

Commissioner Faxon questioned the dollar amount of the OT for the month of July and asked if it was complete. The Chief said yes that was all of their OT from July. Commissioner Faxon noted that the overall number was a significant reduction and asked if it was due to the schools being out. Chief Kehoe said yes and added that a reduction in OT was typical of the summer.

Commissioner Faxon asked if the extreme OT in months such as January 2013 was a consequence of having officers in the schools and the Chief replied yes. Commissioner Faxon asked what his expectation was for the OT in September and the Chief said significantly less. **Fleet** – Chief Kehoe reported that the department finally has the three new vehicles on the road that it purchased with last year's money. He added that the spare vehicles have been taken off the front line and will be used for other jobs, such as for the SROs and side jobs.

Chairman Mangiafico asked Union President Ruszczyk what he thought of the new Chevys. The Union President said they were good vehicles but he likes the Fords better. The Chairman asked why and the Union President said because he has been driving Fords for the last 20 years. He said the Chevys are fine - not super but not terrible. Chairman Mangiafico asked him what he thought of the new black and white color; and Union President Ruszczyk said he liked it and it was more visible.

Training Report - The Chief indicated the Training Report was in the meeting packets. **Letters of Gratitude** – none. **Correspondences** – Chief Kehoe reported he had received two correspondences: 1) From the DOT detailing the conditions for the issuance of a certificate from the State for the Village at Lexington Gardens in order to obtain a building/foundation permit from the Town. 2) From OPM approving the PVET Grant. **K-9 Baro** – Chief Kehoe reported that the departments beloved K-9 Baro passed away. He indicated that Baro had been having some medical issues but his passing caught them off guard. The Chief said their group is working hard and hopes to have a replacement by the end of December. He stated that they have a dog in training now and have received a lot of donations for the program as well as for Baro. **School Security Update – Summer Sessions/New Year** – Chief Kehoe reported that the First Selectman Pat Llodra had put up a blog regarding what the best steps were for the next school year. The Chief added that something will be implemented for school security.

Commissioner Faxon asked if the Town of Monroe provided the security for the Sandy Hook children going to school there and Chief Kehoe said yes. Commissioner Faxon asked if they

intended to do it again for this year. The Chief said yes and added that Monroe was applying for an assistance grant. **Public Hearing** – Chief Kehoe informed Police Commissioners that there was a public hearing the following night, Wednesday, August 7, regarding the amended Fire Arms Ordinance and the Light Ordinance. **Proposed Alarm Ordinance Revision** – Chief Kehoe reported that the last time the alarm ordinance was revised was in 2003 or 2004 and that revision reduced the alarms by 20% to 25%. He suggested that the department could do better if they beef up the ordinance again. The Chief indicated that alarm management takes up a lot of the department's time between servicing the calls to the civilian staff putting out invoices. He added that the department also needs to go through the alarms in their data base to determine which ones are still current. Chief Kehoe suggested that the department turn over a piece of the alarm management to a vendor and have revenue sharing a part of it to cover the cost.

CAPTAIN'S REPORT: Incident Analysis Report – May through July 2013 - Captain Rios reported that the traffic stops have gone up as well as the number of contacts. He noted that they were down a bit in June but almost doubled that amount in July. The captain noted that the number of stops in July was 659. **Monthly Traffic Enforcement Unit Report for June & July 2013 - Written Report by Sgt. Bahamonde** - Captain Rios stated that the report was in their packets. The Captain noted that in addition to their traffic duties, the officers were involved in a number of other aspects of the department. **Monthly Detective Division Report for June & July 2013 - Written Report - Lt. Robinson** - Captain Rios indicated that a copy of the report was in the Commissioner's packets regarding the warrants and cases that are open. **DUI Checkpoint – Grant update** – The Captain reported that the department had a DUI Checkpoint in the area of South Main Street in July and made 3 DUI arrests as well as numerous traffic stops. He advised the Board that the current grant is about to expire after Labor Day, but reassured commissioners that Sgt Cole would be applying for another grant for the department to include DUI Checkpoints and Roving Patrols for 2013/2014.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: none

NEW BUSINESS: Newtown Bikeways – Chairman and President of Newtown Trails Association Scott Coleman made a presentation to the Board of Police Commissioners regarding his proposal for designated bikeways in Newtown.

He explained that he has been trying to get hiking and biking trails established in Newtown but has been met with resistance by neighbors in the proposed areas.

Mr. Coleman indicated that he decided to take a new approach and would like to have two Bikeways created on town roads creating a bike friendly Newtown. The first Bikeway would go around Dickenson Park and the second Bikeway would be around Treadwell Park

He informed the Board that he met with Parks and Recreation and got their blessing and met with Pat Llodra and got her blessing. He added that both said to meet with the Board of Police Commissioners.

Mr. Coleman handed out pictures to the Board of proposed signage and roadway markings for the proposed Bikeways and suggested that not to many would be needed.

He indicated that he would love to extend to Bikeway to Monroe as well as to Southbury, linking the towns.

Mr. Coleman said they were planning a Newtown Bike Ride in September and he hopes to get this done by then. He asked if there was anything they needed to do to get the routes approved. Chairman Mangiafico stated that bicycle riding was a wonderful activity but said he had some concerns as to whether the roads in the proposal were wide enough to safely allow for the Bikeways.

Mr. Coleman noted that people ride bikes on these roads already and he suggested that putting signs up would raise awareness.

Chairman Mangiafico indicated that he walks on some of the town roads and he is really, really cautious about doing that. He said by approving this he is concerned they will be creating an unsafe situation.

Mr. Coleman said that is why they want to raise awareness. He added that everyone says it's a great idea.

Commissioner Faxon suggested that the number of people riding bikes has increased over the past 5 years. He said he wants the opinion of someone in the department regarding these routes. Commissioner Faxon said he thinks the concept is a good one but he is not too sure of those particular roads.

Commissioner Budd said he was in favor of the concept but noted that the width of the proposed roads barely allowed for two cars to pass each other without colliding. He said he would like the opinion of the Town Attorney if they put signage out and paint the road. Commissioner Budd added that road markings and signage aren't going to convince people to drive safer.

Mr. Coleman noted that there are bike lanes in NYC and Chairman Mangiafico replied that they are designated lanes.

Chief Kehoe called the Boards attention to the road ordinance. To make every road wide enough to what it should be is very costly he said. So the Town brought them up to the minimum of what they should be. He suggested that it's a slippery slope when you start to designate a bikeway or anything additional to those roads.

The Chief said they needed to address the three E's when entertaining such proposals: Enforcement, Engineering, and Education. He indicated that the most difficult will be engineering – will the roads be safe enough to meet their liability needs.

Chief Kehoe suggests they look at the road ways, take a video and get specs from the Highway Department.

Captain Rios told Mr. Coleman that he thought it was great idea, but said that he doesn't know what the bike lanes safety standard is here and suggests they speak to the Town Attorney and an engineer.

Commissioner Faxon questioned whether any road met the minimal safety standards for that. Chief Kehoe asked Mr. Coleman why he chose those particular roads; and Mr. Coleman said there was no real reason other than there is activity there already. The Chief said he could think of better areas and roadways in Town.

Chief Kehoe said he thought Mr. Coleman should not give up on the concept but maybe the location. The Chief said he would work with him looking at routes he can use. He suggested state roads only because they have fog lanes which would support sharing the road safely with motor vehicles.

Chief Kehoe told Mr. Coleman that he would talk to their traffic guy to give him a call.

Chairman Mangiafico stated that the Board would shelve this for now.

Police Commission Performance Feedback - Chairman Mangiafico suggested that the Board invite members of the community to its next meeting to give them feedback on how the Board of Police Commissioners can be more effective in the community. The Chairman said the Board believes they do a good job but suggests commissioners have an open discussion about what others think they should do.

Police Commissioners agreed and said they were in favor of the idea.

Union President Ruszcyk suggested that they allow residents who can't attend to communicate by email.

Chairman Mangiafico agreed and suggested that people send their comments or suggestions to him at pjm215@aol.com . He asked that the suggestions please be constructive, concise, to the

point and signed. The Chairman added that the feedback session will be added to the agenda of their next meeting schedule Tuesday, September 3, 2013.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: none

COMMISSIONERS PARTICIPATION: none

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Commissioner Faxon made a motion to move into executive session at 9:05 pm under General Statutes 1-210-B3 to discuss an ongoing police investigation and General Statute 1-210-B8 to discuss strategy and negotiation of personnel matters and collective bargaining. He invited Chief Kehoe and Captain Rios to attend. Commissioner Budd seconded and motion was unanimously approved.

At this time the clerk left the meeting.

Police commissioners exited the executive session at 10:18 pm and a motion was made to adjourn by Commissioner Budd. Commissioner Sachs seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Ted Swigart, Clerk

Gentlemen:

I am planning to be at tonight's meeting, but just in case I don't make it, I would like you to share this email with the commission members. Thanks.

Over the past month or so, one of your former police commissioners, has been all over social media and the Bee in a negative and divisive way, trying to stir up controversy regarding the speed tables on Queen St., and I would like to clear up a few misrepresentations.

I have lived on Queen St. for nearly 20 years. Queen St. is unique in Newtown, as it is a main thoroughfare into our commercial area, the middle school, and Reed School. It has no sidewalks, however, many middle school age children walk to school. Several children have been hit by cars on Queen St.

I, along with my many of my neighbors, have been coming to the Police Commission on and off for over 15 years, asking for help to make Queen St. safer. We did not demand speed tables, stop signs or anything else. It was your job to decide how to address the problem.

Over the years, previous police commissions ordered traffic studies and it was determined several years ago that speed tables were the least expensive, most effective option.

We had our reservations. We weren't sure if they would be noisy or effective. And they are certainly not attractive.

But, they have worked.

Traffic has not lessened, but it has slowed. Most drivers continue at a placid 25 mph over the speed tables with nary a concern. Also, from my vantage point on the corner of Queen and Elizabeth Streets, I can tell you that traffic in general has not been diverted to the sidestreets as once feared.

Vehicles, including all of the school buses have just slowed down. It has helped.

However, a few displeased drivers have recently decided that to express their dislike of going the speed limit and traversing the tables that they will honk their horns. I'm not sure what they are trying to accomplish, aside from being unneighborly and unkind. And in light of what this community experienced here on December 14, I think they should take a step back and get some perspective.

So, there are several things I think the police commission needs to do:

1. Communicate better with the public. Speed tables are now in use on Key Rock Rd. and Queen St. Do you have plans to use them elsewhere? Publish your plans. Communicate with residents.

2. Publish your approach to traffic calming throughout town. Do you have a process in place? Do you have a list of trouble areas? Do you have plans for improvements? What are they?

3. Enforce the law. Those repeatedly honking their horns over the speed tables are creating a nuisance, and should be ticketed as such. Enforce the law.

All in all, Newtown has grown exponentially over the past 20 years and our ways of handling traffic have to catch up with reality. The traffic is not going away, and we look to you to find the best ways to manage the flow of traffic, keep the public safe, and keep things nicer in Newtown.

Lisa Floros
32 Queen St.