



**TOWN OF NEWTOWN**  
**BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS**

**MINUTES FROM THE BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS**  
**REGULAR MEETING HELD TUESDAY, April 7, 2015**  
**TOWN HALL SOUTH CONFERENCE ROOM**  
**3 MAIN STREET, NEWTOWN**

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

Chairman Mangiafico called the regular meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Brian Budd, Joel Faxon, Andy Sachs, Virgil Procaccini, and Paul Mangiafico

**ABSENT:** none

**ALSO PRESENT:** Chief Michael Kehoe, Union President Scott Ruszczyk, CT State Rep District 106 Mitch Bolinsky, 1 member of the press, and 11 members of the public.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** Joanne Monte, Clapboard Ridge Road, Sandy Hook, presented the Board of Police Commissioners with a petition signed by 435 residents in the area of Bennett's Bridge and Route 34 urging the State to install a traffic light at the intersection of Bennett's Bridge and Route 34. She said the residents want a traffic light installed in the intersection due to the heavy volume and speed of traffic on Route 34 and the poor sightline exiting Bennett's Bridge onto 34.

Po Murray, 38 Charter Ridge Drive, Sandy Hook, said she came that evening in support of the Bennett's Bridge residents. She told the Board she has four kids – 3 of whom are driving now and she is scared about them driving. Ms. Murray said she has a friend who takes a left out of Bennett's Bridge onto Route 34 regularly and she has expressed concerns at how dangerous that intersection is. Ms. Murray urged the Board to support the residents.

Rich Stein, 14 Yogananda Street, Sandy Hook, told the Board that he has lived in the area for 18 years and urged the Board to remember that the accident statistics don't take into account how many close calls there have been. He added that the sightlines are terrible and that a lot of the drivers on Route 34 go in excess of the speed limit because there is no light.

Rhonda Cullens, 9 Founders Lane, Sandy Hook, said she has witnessed an increase in traffic in that intersection when she is trying to cross over Route 34 from Grey's Plains to Bennett's Bridge. She stressed that it is a dangerous intersection.

Rep. Bolinsky introduced himself and indicated that he represents the 435 residents that signed the petition. He informed the Board he was there for a few reasons:

- 1) To support the residents' request
- 2) Concurred with all the fear and in trepidation of Ms. Murray, as he works part time as a driving instructor and taught two of her children how to drive
- 3) Offered his services as State Representative to enlist in the help of the State DOT to get a traffic signal and/or re-grade the curve and said he will support the Board in any way he can.

Bill Monaco, 1 Becket Village, Sandy Hook, told the Board that the sightline is horrible and is like Death Race 2000. He said he won't stop until light is installed.

**CONSIDERATION AND ACTION ON THE MINUTES: Regular Meeting February 3, 2015 and Special Meeting March 24, 2015 - Commissioner Faxon moved to accept the minutes from the Regular Meeting February 3, 2015 and the Special Meeting March 24, 2015 as prepared. Commissioner Budd seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.**

So as not to keep the traffic engineer and residents in attendance waiting, Chairman Mangiafico recommended that the Board move up the items on the agenda pertaining to Riverwalk and the Bennett's Bridge/ Rte 34 intersection.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Review and Discussion on Riverwalk, Sandy Hook Village, 10-22 Washington Avenue –** Michael Galante an engineer and VP of Frederick P. Clarke Associates presented a sight plan and aerial view of the property depicting the location of the 74 units and two access driveways that were being proposed. He indicated that 14 of those units will be townhouses and 60 will be low rise apartments.

Commissioner Sachs recused himself from the discussion and the vote indicating he had an intimate knowledge of the property.

According to Mr. Galante, the utilized data from a 2008 traffic study as recommended by the State DOT which uses traffic counts higher than what the rate actually is now.

He suggested that the units will generate an average of 40 trips a day and add 15 cars to the Washington Avenue/Church Hill/ Glen Road intersection during peak hours causing an additional delay of 35 seconds.

Mr. Galante pointed out that there are already delays and they can't change the intersection. He added that although the project adds a delay, it's not significant.

Mr. Galante informed the Board that the driveway closest to the intersection with Church Hill will be an entrance only and the other driveway, closest to the I-84 over-pass will be an entrance only.

According to the property owner Michael Burton, they will be extending the streetscape project to allow people to walk from the property to business in the center of Sandy Hook.

Commissioner Faxon moved to accept the proposal of the Riverwalk, Sandy Hook Village, 10-22 Washington Avenue as presented. Commissioner Budd seconded and motion carried. Chairman Mangiafico and Commissioners Faxon, Budd and Procaccini voted in favor and Commissioner Sachs abstained.

Chairman Mangiafico complimented Mr. Galante and his organization for always doing an excellent job.

**Review and Discussion on Bennett's Bridge and Route 34 –** Chairman Mangiafico reported he had made observations that day entering and exiting the intersection from all directions and reassured the residents their concerns were solidified. He said it was an awkward situation especially with the poor sightlines. The Chairman said he appreciates that some people say a traffic light isn't necessary and if you really, really look and are really, really careful you will be ok; but he noted that many of those people avoid the intersection themselves.

Chief Kehoe stated that the idea of putting up a traffic light at the intersection came up 10 years ago but the state indicated a traffic signal was not justified.

Commissioner Faxon stated that he drives the road all the time as he works in New Haven. He remarked on two comments in the states report dated September 15, 2005 that justified their decision not to approve a traffic signal for that intersection – limited stopping when traveling

westbound on Route 34 approach and the absence of collisions. The Commissioner asked Chief Kehoe what improvements had been made to the intersection and the Chief said none other than the removal of vegetation.

Commissioner Faxon suggested that it was odd that the state commend the Town make sightline improvements on a State road. He stated that it was the State's responsibility to improve the westbound sightline approach as well as signalize the intersection.

Commissioner Budd said that upon review of their data looking back 3 years from 2005 there were 3 accidents but the newest data looking back 5 years from now indicates there were 22 accidents over that period – roughly 4.4 per year. He stressed that it was a much larger problem now than then and suggested that they appeal the State's prior decision.

Chairman Mangiafico recommended to fellow Police Commissioners that they need to request that the State look at it and they need to do it with some insistence. He added that the accident rate and physical aspects of it make it a requirement.

Commissioner Procaccini stated he is proactive and suggests changes are made before someone pays with their life.

Rep. Bolinsky noted that the neighborhood has expressed concerns regarding the traffic now and he noted that with the 2018 start of improvements to the exit 11 area there will be a greater flow of traffic exasperating the situation. The Representative stated that if they don't act on it now they will regret it later possibly with the sacrifice of a life.

Commissioner Sachs said he couldn't echo enough everyone's concerns and said they need to do something.

Chairman Mangiafico called for a motion.

Commissioner Faxon moved to request the State DOT to investigate the intersection and take action; and authorize Chief Kehoe to write a letter to the State Representative and attach spreadsheet with the names of the residents who expressed concerns. Commissioner Sachs seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

#### **POLICE UNION PARTICIPATION:**

Union President Ruszczyk reported that they should have a 3-year contract by the end of the month. He said they are holding a ratification vote on April 24 and he is confident it will pass.

**CHIEF'S REPORT: Personnel Report** – New Hires – Chief Kehoe reported that the two cadets in the academy graduated March 19 and both are in Phase 1 of the training; and Officer Caramadrie is in Phase 4 of the training. **Budget** – The Chief informed Commissioners that a copy of the Budget update and summary were in their packets and added that the 2015/2016 Budget was in front of the Legislative Council awaiting referendum. **Fleet** – Chief Kehoe said the fleet report was in their packets. **Training Report** – The Chief reminded Police Commissioners they had received a copy of the training report that evening. **Letters of Gratitude** – Chief Kehoe stated he received two letters of gratitude – one for Officer Pisani and the other for Sgt. Wood. **Correspondences** – the Chief reported that they had received the following correspondences: one from the DOT/MMUCC regarding PR-1 certification, a second from the DOT regarding the replacement of overhead sign supports, and a third regarding the DOT Grant E- Printers. **Glen Road - No Parking Sign** - Chief Kehoe reported that the No Parking sign on Glen Road went in. **Silver Bridge** – The Chief stated that the Silver Bridge will be rehabilitated over the next year and a half and the DOT will put up alternating traffic lights. According to Chief Kehoe, the State indicated the Bridge will only be closed to traffic for 7 days probably around the end of the summer. **UCR Report 2014** – The Chief indicated the 2014 UCR Report was finalized. **Accreditation** – Chief Kehoe announced that the department had received accreditation on March 12, 2015 and said there was a nice report in the newspaper about it that past week. **Statewide Racial Profiling Coalition Report** – The Chief reported that Newtown

had the highest number of contacts in the State. Commissioner Faxon asked if there was any conclusion drawn from that and the Chief said no it was just data. Chief Kehoe said that their number one call they get is people feeling unsafe on the road ways due to speeding and distracted drivers. He added that part of their Community Policing Policy is to make their roads safer. The Chief stated that there was a lot to be said for the report and the things that came out of it. He indicated that they were trying to do the best they can without regard to race or ethnic background. Chief Kehoe stated that there was nothing in the report that suggested further investigation of racial profiling.

**CAPTAIN'S REPORT: Calls for Service Reports February 1, 2015 to February 28, 2015 :**

Captain Rios reported that there were 690 motor vehicle stops, two DUI arrests, and 36 cell phone violations – 16 infractions and 30 written warnings. **Traffic Unit Report for March 2015 - Written Report Sgt. Aaron Bahamonde:** The Captain stated that the Sergeant's report for the traffic unit's enforcement for the month of March regarding the enforcement efforts on various roads was in their packets. **Detective Division Report for March – Written report by Lt. Robinson:** Captain Rios stated that for the month of March there were 3 burglaries and 5 larcenies. In addition, he noted that there was a K-9 Sniff at the High School that resulted in arrests. He noted that it was a joint effort with the Superintendent and the Board of Education and he thanked all those involved. **National Distracted Driving Awareness Month – April 2015:** Captain Rios announced that April is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month and said that the officers would be out in force using education and enforcement. He added that there are way too many distracted drivers out there.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Review and Discussion on Speed Limit – Wasserman Way** – Chief Kehoe produced a map and aerial photo depicting Wasserman Way.

Chairman Mangiafico asked the Chief what his opinion was and Chief Kehoe stated that increasing the speed limit on Wasserman Way won't have the desired effect people want. The Chief indicated that only part of the road would be affected from Trades Lane to Route 34. He suggested that if you increase the speed limit from 30 mph than you increase the 85th percentile speed resulting in more accidents.

Commissioner Procaccini indicated that Wasserman Way was an exceptionally wide road and said he thought 30 mph was an unreasonable speed when comparing it to narrower roads such as Route 25 with speed limits of 40 and 45 mph.

Commissioner Budd agreed and suggested increasing the speed limit on Wasserman Way from 30 mph to 40 mph from Trades Lane to I- 84.

Commissioner Faxon also agreed stating that he thought 40 mph is what it should be adding that 30 mph is unreasonably slow.

Chairman Mangiafico believed the current speed limit is reasonable,

Commissioner Budd suggested that if the speed limit was raised it might change how the GPS devices are sending people which would lead drivers to take Wasserman Way as intended rather than cutting through the center of town on Route 25.

Commissioner Sachs said he didn't think the speed limit should be raised as it would cause people to drive faster.

Chief Kehoe reminded the Board that the Town has a long term plan to make connections of sidewalks and suggested there would be a sidewalk on that end of Wasserman Way.

Commissioner Faxon said he was in favor of a study by the State.

Chairman Mangiafico called for a motion.

Commissioner Faxon moved to have Chief Kehoe contact the DOT and inquire whether to increase the speed limit on Wasserman Way between Trades Lane and Route 34. Commissioner

Procaccini seconded and the motion carried 4-1. Commissioners Budd, Faxon, Sachs and Procaccini voted in favor of the motion and Chairman Mangiafico voted against.

**Review and Discussion on Construction of Water Pumping Station – Church Hill Road –** Chairman Mangiafico questioned why they were being asked to pass judgment on a pumping station as its not traffic related at all.

He called for a motion to table the matter.

Commissioner Budd moved to table the request relative to the special exception being that it is not within the Board's jurisdiction. Commissioner Sachs seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

**Discussion on Main Street and Church Hill Road –** Chairman Mangiafico stated that the Board had a lot of comments about the Flag Pole. He said the Board feels there is a problem. He recalled the HVCEO had done a comprehensive study in August 2008 addressing a traffic improvement plan for Queen Street and the impact on traffic on surrounding streets.

Commissioner Faxon indicated he had done the math after the last meeting and determined that the accident rate was quite low considering the heavy volume of traffic.

Chairman Mangiafico stated that the study had reported it was the site of many accidents over the years and included fatalities. However, he was quick to add that he didn't think they were ready to discuss it yet.

Captain Rios said Sgt Vanghele is working on that top 10 problem traffic areas in Town and said they have very new data but have to go through a lot of information.

Commissioner Budd stated that there have been a number of accidents but it was import to link the numbers in totality.

#### **NEW BUSINESS (continued):**

**Discussion on Secondary Employment Requests -** Chief Kehoe informed the Board that every three years the policy requires renewing and reviewing secondary employment requests.

Commissioner Budd said he didn't see any major concerns.

Commissioner Faxon asked for a little more specificity rather than just a three word description.

Chief Kehoe informed Police Commissioners that they are reviewing all the policies in the agency and reassured the Board the department can articulate within the policy a little more.

Chairman Mangiafico asked the Chief to resubmit the requests with a little more information and suggested they table the matter until the next meeting.

**COMMISSIONERS PARTICIPATION:** None

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** None

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Commissioner Faxon moved to go into executive session at 8:25 pm under General Statute 1-201 to discuss employment matters and invited Chief Kehoe and Captain Rios to attend.

Commissioner Budd seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

At this time the clerk left the meeting.

Police Commissioner exited executive session at 9:12 pm and the meeting was adjourned.

*Ted Swigart, Clerk*