

**Newtown CT Board of Police Commissioners  
Open Dialogue Proposal**

Fellow Commissioners:

As Chairman, I would like to propose to you for consideration a methodology of attempting to improve the dialogue between ourselves and those whom we represent. Elected bodies, such as ours, are not mandated to have, at our meetings, "public participation" segments such as we have at all of our meetings. Some bodies will not even allow the general public to speak on items which are not on the agenda. However, even though we do allow the public to address us I have never had the feeling that what we allow in the public comment segment is sufficient primarily because of two reasons: The first is that we generally do not have a sufficient back and forth discussion on comments made by the public and the second reason is that the public comments are delaying our addressing the items on our agenda which really must be addressed. As Chairman, I am acutely aware of the potential for back and forth comments between the general public and the Board to have a significant delaying action on our ability to finish up our regular business in a timely manner. Nevertheless, in my judgment, the general public's need, at times, to engage the Board in a "discussion" should not be limited but rather facilitated. I would like to propose to the Board a solution to this nagging concern.

I propose to you that we, the Board, in addition to having public comment at our regular meetings schedule a special meeting every three or four months with nothing on the agenda other than a discussion with the general public on any issue they would like us to hear and/or respond to or discuss with them. No subject would be off limits as long as it is one that the board has responsibility for or jurisdiction over. Questions may be asked or comments may be made and Board members can respond as appropriate. The subjects brought to our attention may not even be a current "problem" but rather something that an individual would like us to explain our general feelings or inclination on. In other words we can and should act to encourage having a real "discussion" without the need to move on to our other agenda items simply because there are none.

I truly believe that there is a need for government to listen and speak to those we represent on a more informal and comprehensive basis. I make this proposal fully recognizing that in the worst case no one will show up. I suspect that this will not be so but even if it is we have given the general public the opportunity to have a conversation with us about matters that concern them and we have lost nothing in the process.

I encourage my fellow Commissioners to agree to this proposal in principle and step forward to creating a more transparent, conversive and meaningful relationship between ourselves and those we represent.

Respectfully,

Paul Mangiafico  
8/4/15