

OLD SAYBROOK POLICE COMMISSION
Special Meeting
January 23, 2012
MINUTES

A special meeting of the Old Saybrook Police Commission was held on Monday, January 23, 2012, at the Old Saybrook Town Hall.

Present: Chairman Burnham, Vice Chairman Metsack, Secretary Winkler, Commissioners Sparaco, Dunn and Finch. First Selectman Carl Fortuna was present from the Board of Selectmen. Chief Spera and Lieutenant Roche were also present from the Department of Police Services.

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:03pm by Chairman Burnham.

II. Minutes

A. December 19, 2011 Special Meeting

Chairman Burnham asked members of the Commission for comments related to the Special Meeting minutes for December 19, 2011.

Commissioner Dunlap referenced Section VII, B1 (The New Vehicle Purchase Update) on pages 4 and 5. He commented that there were some spacing issues and a couple minor typos in the paragraph itself.

Commissioner Dunlap also commented that Chief Spera had promised not to expend the Explorer line item out of the current budget proposal and his statement was not referenced in the meeting minutes.

Chief Spera responded that this statement was reflected in the current budget proposal for 2012-2013.

Chairman Burnham stated that she did not remember Chief Spera making this comment at that meeting; however, it could be added as an amendment if he wished.

In Section VIII, B1 (Activity Report) Commissioner Dunlap asked that his statement with regards to the new CAD System be amended to, "I look forward to the new system being installed."

Commissioner Dunlap inquired as to the status of letters that were to be written by Chairman Burnham to the First Selectman about who should pay for the Contractual overrun in the current budget and another letter in regards to the intentions of the First Selectman and the new Building Committee. Chairman Burnham responded that the letters have not yet been written but conversations with the First Selectman had taken place with respect to the topics in question. More specifically Chairman Burnham stated that the First Selectman was still getting acclimated and he had not yet established his intentions for the Building Committee.

Secretary Winkler followed up with the question of the Contractual overrun by asking Chairman Burnham if there had been an update from their attorney. Chairman Burnham responded that the attorney had promised a draft letter of his opinion but the letter had not yet been received.

There were no other comments from any other Police Commissioner.

Chief Spera informed Commissioner Dunlap that any adjustments made to the meeting minutes would not be added to the minutes in question but rather, would become part of the minutes currently being taken.

Commissioner Dunlap thanked Chief Spera for the clarification.

A motion was made by Vice Chairman Metsack to approve the December 19, 2011 minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sparaco. The motion passed with a vote of 6 in favor and 0 against.

B. January 11, 2012 Special Meeting

Chairman Burnham asked members of the Commission for comments related to the Special Meeting minutes for January 11, 2012.

Commissioner Dunlap referenced Section I and asked that his comment on the bottom of page 1 in regards to his meetings with the First Selectman be amended to say, "I will continue to meet with the First Selectman and other town officials as necessary."

There were no other comments from any other Police Commissioner.

A motion was made by Commissioner Winkler to approve the January 11, 2012 minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sparaco. The motion passed with a vote of 6 in favor and 0 against.

III. Comments from the Public

First Selectman Fortuna commented that Commissioner Dunlap has every legal right to meet with him as a citizen and as a commissioner. First Selectman Fortuna also asserted that it is inappropriate for anyone to challenge that right. He also claimed that there was no set agenda for the meeting between himself and Commissioner Dunlap and he agreed that setting goals for the Police Department was the prerogative of the Police Commission. First Selectman Fortuna asked that these comments be passed along to Commissioner Zemienieski who was absent from the meeting.

IV. Executive Reports

A. Financial

1. 11-12 Operating / Contractual Budgets

Chief Spera referred the Commissioners to the Expenses and Supplies and Contractual Account Summary Sheets. Commissioner Dunlap asked if there had been any significant changes. Chief Spera responded that there had not been any

significant changes to these accounts. He also ensured that pay adjustments had been made to employees who were affected by the decision to calculate salary and step raises based on town hire dates and promotion dates, rather than having everyone uniformly take their steps on July 1 of the new fiscal year.

2. Asset Forfeiture

Account Balance is \$20,396.51

This balance only reflects the monetary amount. The Department also owns five vehicles with the intent of trading them in for a used car that will be used for a detective at a \$0.00 balance trade. This will help the Department retire an older car with no expense to the Old Saybrook tax payer.

3. Capital Sinking Fund

Account Balance is \$56,840.82

Chief Spera reported that the new vehicles should be arriving shortly. He added that Digital Cameras would be purchased from this account and installed in the new vehicles.

4. Traffic Safety Fund

Account Balance is \$38,069.76

5. Law Enforcement Fund

Account Balance is \$46,393.75

There has been no meeting held yet. First Selectman Fortuna informed the Commission that either Selectman Giegerich or Selectman Gernhardt would be appointed to this council on Tuesday, January 24, 2012.

6. Old Saybrook Police Fund

Account Balance is \$245.00

Chief Spera reported that this balance would be going up slightly through donation checks that have been received would eventually be deposited into this fund.

B. Administrative

1. Contract Negotiations Update --Dispatch Union

The first negotiations begin on Wednesday, January 25, 2012. Chief Spera reported that he had spoken to the new labor council and the two were in the process of getting to know each other and familiarizing the new attorney with the Department. Chief Spera noted that the Dispatchers had been working without a contract since June 30, 2010. First Selectman Fortuna invited members of the Police Commission to attend the negotiations. Chairman Burnham took a moment to recognize the dispatchers as making a positive step with the decision to form their own union. Chief Spera also noted that the town had initially objected to the Dispatchers having their own union but eventually the Chief was able to convince the town of the many positives that would come from this decision.

2. Employee Discipline

Chief Spera reported the following, "In accordance with Department Regulations it is my responsibility as Chief of Police to report discipline imposed on a member of the police department. A probationary patrolman was suspended for ten (10) days without pay, placed on additional six months of probation, and issued a final warning for violating department rules and regulations. Specifically Section 1 of the Uniform Standards of Conduct, Exercising Common Sense and Affirmatively Promoting our Values. The suspension has been served, was accepted by the employee, and was not subject to grievance."

3. Traffic Planning Issues

a. North Main Street

Chief Spera reported that the parking on North Main Street has become an issue as people drive less and commute more. Chief Spera has appointed Master Sergeant van der Horst to work with town hall, the town planner and zoning officials to determine how to properly handle the situation. He added that as locations begin charging money to park people are looking for more free parking on the street. Chief Spera also noted that North Main Street was widened but the shoulder created for cars to park on was never paved and therefore not marked. The town intended vehicles to parallel park but because there were no markings painted, people continued to park diagonally. To prevent vehicles from sticking out into the street Chief Spera recommended that the centerline of North Main Street be shifted over slightly so people can continue to park diagonally and not be a danger to vehicles on the road. Chief Spera noted, however, that this recommendation would not be a permanent fix and that Old Saybrook town officials should figure out a new way to safely house the commuter population. Chief Spera concluded that the Shoreline East Parking lot is maxed out every day and is used for more than Shoreline East commuters. Chairman Burnham inquired about a plan to repaint the lines in the Shoreline East parking lot to create more parking spaces. Chief Spera responded that he had heard a similar proposal but no action had been taken. Chief Spera reported that Lieutenant Roche received information from the State Department of Transportation that 20,000 cars travel on North Main Street every day.

V. Field Operations - Reports

A. Activity Report

1. December 15, 2011 – January 18, 2012

There were 2,365 Incidents

There were 527 Citations

Chief Spera commented that the Department has been busy with sensitive and detailed investigations. Chief Spera talked specifically about the prisoner that was transported to hospital and held overnight. He reported that two officers were assigned to the prisoner while he was in the hospital and that they were also responsible for transporting him to the court house.

VI. Support Operations - Reports

A. Emergency Communication Division

1. Quality Control / Quality Assurance

Chief Spera reported that the Department will be applying for accreditation in Emergency Medical Dispatching at the end of this month or the beginning of next month. Once Accreditation is received, quality control and quality assurance can begin in other phases of Dispatching.

VII. Correspondence

No formal communications to report.

VIII. Old Business

Discussion and possible action regarding a proposal to amend the Police Commission By-Laws, specifically the authority of the "Executive Committee"

Chairman Burnham reviewed the proposal put forward by Vice Chairman Metsack and then opened the proposal for discussion. Vice Chairman Metsack read the originally stated proposal and asked for any amendments. Commissioner Finch felt that it was necessary to add verbiage that included a Police Commission vote on any proposals brought forward by the Executive Committee. He expressed that his greatest concern was preventing the Chief from being able to take immediate action in the event of an Emergency. Chief Spera assured Commissioner Finch that this proposal did not pertain to his role during a time of emergency. Chief Spera stated that it seemed that the intent of the proposed amendment was simply to ensure that the Executive Committee could not take action or finalize a situation without first consulting the entire Police Commission. The final amendment reads as follows, "The Executive Board under extraordinary or emergency situations may meet on behalf of the Police Commission and shall meet as often as necessary to effectively discuss and propose a resolution to the situation before them. Once the Executive Board has agreed upon a proposal, they will present it at the next regularly scheduled Police Commission meeting or special Police Commission meeting. No action will be taken until the Executive Board proposal is discussed and voted on by the Commission." Chief Spera reminded the Commission that the final verbiage of the amendment must be tabled for 30 days before it could be voted on, therefore the amendment will be added to the agenda of the next regular meeting to be held on February 27, 2012.

Chairman Burnham made a motion to table the proposed amendment until the next regular meeting on February 27, 2012.

IX. Appointment of Ad Hoc Committee to Develop an Evaluation Instrument for the Chief of Police

Chairman Burnham remarked that it is important to have a formal evaluation instrument for the Chief of Police. She added that she would appointment a committee to come back to the Commission with a recommendation of what evaluation tool should be used. Once the recommendation is given the entire Commission will discuss the proposal and future goals for the Police Department and the Chief. Chairman Burnham appointed Commissioners Zemienieski, Sparaco and Finch to be on the Committee. Vice Chairman Metsack asked Chief Spera if current accreditation guidelines provided any goals or evaluation suggestions for the Department and the Chief respectively. Chief Spera responded that there is language that talks about having an evaluation procedure but does not detail the procedure. He added that he has always conducted a self-evaluation and shared the results of

that evaluation with the Commission. Chief Spera concluded that he looks forward to the results of this process as he has always preached the importance of raising the bar for every member of the Department, including himself.

X. Comments from the Public

There were no comments from the public.

XI. Comments from the Chief of Police

Chief Spera commented that the Department has been busy over the last couple of weeks. He added that through the Department's investigations many officers have been seen on television but it is important to remember that every investigation is a team effort. The officers on television are not the only ones involved in arrests and it takes the cooperation of the entire Department, both sworn and civilian staff, for the team to have success. Chief Spera specially mentioned a few of the highly publicized cases such as the gun incident at The Monkey Farm, the capture of the Police Officer impersonator and the seizure of animals who are now being found new homes. The Chief ended his comments by saying, "I commend what we have accomplished together over the last month."

Vice Chairman Metsack asked Chief Spera how often the Department falls short on staffing to respond to calls for service. Chief Spera responded that he goes out on calls more often than the average Police Chief and often responds when there is no one else available. Chief Spera continued that the Department attempts to maintain 4 officers on the day shift, 4 officers on the evening shift and 3 officers on the midnight shift. Chief Spera added that the Department has gone to 0 level staffing anywhere from 6 to 8 times in the past week. Chairman Burnham asked for clarification on the term "0 level staffing". Chief Spera responded that the term means that there is no one available to respond to a call for service.

XII. Comments and/or Concerns from Commissioners

Commissioner Dunlap expressed that as a "department of public service" the Police Department needs to be able to describe to the public what services they are receiving for the money spent within the Department. He added that he looks forward to the data from the new CAD System, which will go a long way in helping the Department justify the money that is spent and also will provide evidence if more money needs to be spent than initially budgeted. He made the point that the Police Department accounts for 25% of the non-education budget in the town and therefore he concluded, "Let's quantify the best we can, what the town is receiving for their investment."

Chief Spera responded that the Police Department is the only local government agency that is open every hour of the day, 365 days a year, which therefore naturally costs the tax payer more money than any other municipal department that is only open Monday through Friday for 8 hours a day.

Commissioner Dunlap responded that general statements and phrases don't help the cause of the Department because people want to know exactly how we are tuned for the town. Commissioner Dunlap added that citizens want to be able to see if the Police Department is spending too much money or if the Department is not spending enough and the data needs to be able to back up whatever we are spending. He

concluded in saying that quantitative goals are much more valuable than qualitative goals.

Chairman Burnham reminded Commissioner Dunlap that the Ad Hoc Committee created was not given the role of creating goals for the Police Department but rather, coming up with an evaluation tool for various areas of the Department. She stated that the entire Police Commission will set goals for the Department.

Chairman Burnham asked Chief Spera who was responsible for replacing road signs on town roads.'

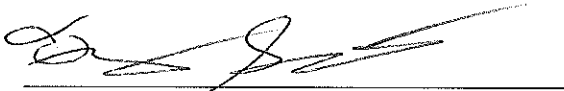
Chief Spera responded that the Police Department notifies the town crew when a road sign needs to be replaced but it is Public Works responsibility to replace them.

XIII. Adjournment

A motion was made by Vice Chairman Metsack to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sparaco. The motion passed with a vote of 6 in favor and 0 against.

The next regular Police Commission meeting is scheduled for February 27, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in the First Floor Conference Room, Old Saybrook Town Hall.

The meeting minutes for January 23, 2012 were prepared and respectfully submitted by:



Trent Gerbers
Records Clerk for the Old Saybrook Police Commission