

**OLD SAYBROOK POLICE COMMISSION**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**August 27, 2012**  
**MINUTES**

A regular meeting of the Old Saybrook Police Commission was held on Monday, August 27, 2012, at the Old Saybrook Town Hall.

**Present:** Chairman Burnham, Vice Chairman Metsack, Commissioners Winkler, Sparaco, Dunlap and Stuart were also present. Commissioner Finch participated via teleconference. Chief Spera and Lieutenant Roche was also present from the Department of Police Services.

**I. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Burnham called the meeting to order at 7:00PM and led the Police Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**II. Minutes**

A. July 23, 2012 Regular Meeting

Commissioner Stuart called the Police Commissions attention to Page 4, Section 5 and asked that the motion be amended to include a No Thru Truck sign at the intersection of Lynde Street and Main Street.

Chairman Burnham clarified that her comment in regards to the Chief's evaluation instrument was that the Commission "could" adopt a process comparable to the process that already exists within the Department, not that they "should".

**A motion was made by Commissioner Winkler to approve the July 23, 2012 Regular Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Metsack. The motion to approve the July 23, 2012 Regular Meeting Minutes passed with a vote of 7 in favor and 0 against.**

**III. Comments from the Public**

A citizen from the public thanked the Police Commission for the No Thru Trucks signs put up in her neighborhood. She also expressed her appreciation to the Commission and to Chief Spera for their interest and their hard work. This citizen also expressed that the majority of the citizens in the neighborhood were pleased with the addition of the signs.

Chairman Burnham expressed that she was pleased with the signs and asked the members of the neighborhood to be patient and allow truck drivers time to recognize the new signage.

**IV. Executive Reports**

A. Financial

1. 12-13 Operating / Contractual Budgets

Chief Spera informed the Commission that the town would be initiating a pre-buy for gasoline on behalf of the Police Department in the near future. He informed the Commission that the final negotiations were likely to cost the Department approximately \$80,000.

Commissioner Dunlap asked Chief Spera if the amount budgeted for Building and Ground Maintenance included snow removal.

Chief Spera responded that this line item does not cover snow removal but it does pay for snow removal equipment such as ice melt.

Chairman Burnham asked Chief Spera if the Computer Support and Upgrade line item was in any way connected to the recent transition of Sergeant Gardner as the head of Old Saybrook's Information Technology.

Chief Spera responded that Sergeant Gardner's new role was in no way connected with the Police Department's Expenses and Supplies budget.

## 2. Asset Forfeiture

**Account Balance is \$20,770.11**

Chief Spera was pleased to report back to the Commission that numerous vehicles that the Department had seized had been successfully traded in for a 2004 Ford Fusion. The Ford Fusion is being used as a replacement vehicle for a Detective Car and cost the Department \$0.00. Chief Spera added that this does not increase the overall size of the fleet, but simply replaces an older vehicle with a newer one at no cost to the town or the Department.

Commissioner Finch asked Chief Spera if this reported balance is the amount before or after the trade in.

Chief Spera replied that the value of the Asset Forfeiture account was not affected by the trade in and would be the same even if the Department had done nothing.

## 3. Capital Sinking Fund

**Account Balance is \$35,260.82**

## 4. Traffic Safety Fund

**Account Balance is \$44,557.04**

## 5. Law Enforcement Fund

**Account Balance is \$46,393.75**

Vice Chairman Metsack announced that the Law Enforcement Fund Committee had voted to use \$10,000.00 for the renovations of McMurray Field. Vice Chairman Metsack also announced that the next Committee meeting would be held on September 6, 2012 at 6:00PM in the small conference room in the library.

Chairman Burnham asked if \$10,000.00 would be enough to complete renovations on the field.

Vice Chairman Metsack replied that the money would complete a vast majority of the work at the very least.

Chief Spera commended the committee for finding a positive community project as the first expenditure from this account. Chief Spera also commended all the Department members and members of the community who have volunteered their time and their skills to the field's renovation.

Chairman Burnham asked if there was an expected completion date for the field's renovation.

Vice Chairman Metsack responded that the goal completion date is Labor Day weekend but the project could take a little more time than initially estimated.

6. Old Saybrook Police Fund

**Account Balance is \$320.00**

7. Police Explorer Fund

**Account Balance is \$4,770.27**

8. Police K-9 Fund

**Account Balance is \$1,170.00**

9. 11-12 Budget Status

Chief Spera announced that the 2011-2012 Budget Status remains unchanged and it is unknown when a resolution to the health care issue will be determined.

B. Administrative

1. Contract Negotiations Update –Dispatch Union

Chief Spera informed the Commission that the two sides are still trying to pick days to meet and there are no updates to report at this time. Chief Spera also noted that the Dispatchers have been working without a contract for two years and that he is doing everything he can to facilitate the negotiation process.

Commissioner Dunlap asked if there was a reason why the two sides were having trouble finding a time to meet or if the delay was due to some sort of strategic maneuvering.

Chief Spera responded that there was no known reason for the delay other than scheduling conflicts.

2. Employee Step 1 Grievance/Unemployment Compensation

Chief Spera announced that the Town had agreed to extend meeting time limits in the bargaining agreement because the Union's Attorney was on an extended vacation. Chief Spera added that he had successfully represented the Town in the first unemployment hearing with former Dispatcher Godutti.

3. New Vehicles – Update

Chief Spera reported that the new vehicles were still at Whelen waiting to be outfitted but that he is still hopeful that one new vehicle will be on the road by mid-September.

Commissioner Finch asked if we should expect better gas mileage from the new vehicles.

Chief Spera reminded the Commission that the new vehicles were not exactly the same as the prototype vehicles that the Department initially saw but that he did expect that the new vehicles would live up to the same standards and promises made on the prototype vehicles.

**V. Presentation – 2009-2014 Strategic Plan Status Report**

Chairman Burnham thanked Chief Spera for putting this presentation together and added that she believed an overview of the Department's Strategic Plan was a good introduction for the upcoming workshop series.

Chief Spera began his presentation with a timeline of significant events for the Department, beginning with his appointment to the position of Deputy Chief in 2008. Chief Spera explained that at this point in time, the Department was going through a considerable number of issues and transitions so he came up with a Department Philosophy for the year that he called, "The Reset Button".

Commissioner Dunlap asked Chief Spera if he would entertain questions throughout the presentation.

Chief Spera asked that all questions be held until the end of the presentation.

Chief Spera continued that with this Reset Button, then Deputy Chief Spera asked the Department to take a leap of faith and allow him to begin correcting the Department with a list of short term goals that they could achieve over the course of one year. With the end of 2008 came a great sense of achievement and satisfaction, as the Department had successfully completed the short term goals and reset the Department. Using the trust built from the reset, Chief Spera created the Department's first 5 year Strategic Plan beginning in 2009. As newly appointed Chief of Police, Chief Spera introduced the "212 degrees" philosophy that at 211 degrees water is very hot but at 212 degrees it boils and creates steam and steam can power a locomotive. In addition to the 212 philosophy, Chief Spera chose to create his five year strategic plan using only internal stakeholders, believing that the Department had the talent and expertise necessary to bring the group to where it wanted to be and where it needed to be. With this goal in mind, the Department was split into small microcosms, with each group having all facets of the Department represented. These groups were given a list of Executive Goals and Categories to be debated and discussed. From these discussions came 251 action items that the Department deemed as important and necessary areas of change. Chief Spera informed the Commission that he had recently tasked Lieutenant Roche, Master Sergeant van der Horst and Master Sergeant Rankin to review the action items created in 2009 and update the status of those items. With that Chief Spera invited Master Sergeant Rankin to speak more about the 251 action items.

Master Sergeant Rankin addressed the Commission saying that the amount of action items that have been completed in the last two and a half years was a real eye opener. Master Sergeant Rankin explained that policing has changed significantly over the last several years and the creation of this strategic plan has empowered personnel to learn more and perform their jobs at a much higher level than ever before. Master Sergeant Rankin continued that more is expected of the Department now but that he feels the entire Department has embraced the five year strategic plan, enabling them to achieve unparalleled levels of success. Master Sergeant Rankin concluded the Department is running better than it ever has and he believes that the Department will be able to complete the majority of the Strategic Plan's action items by the end of the five year mark in 2014.

Chief Spera resumed the presentation by quickly walking the Commission through each section of the Strategic Plan book. First Chief Spera reviewed the Department's Mission Statement and reminded the Commission that this statement had been created using only input that he received from Department members. The next section is a Message from the Chief that outlines where the Department started under his leadership and where they are currently at the half way point. Chief Spera took this opportunity to reveal the true purpose of the strategic plan, which is to give the Department direction no matter who leaves the Department or who is added. He expressed his belief that with a good Strategic Plan, anyone can be successfully added into the Department's culture. Chief Spera then moved to the 251 action items created by the Department in 2009. Chief Spera then announced that of the 251 items, 43 have been achieved, 123 are achieved and ongoing, 45 are in progress and 39 have not been started. Given these numbers, at the half way point in the five year Strategic Plan, 66% of the action items have been completed. The Chief continued his presentation by addressing some of the action items that had not yet been completed. He informed the Commission that several committees had been created to research and propose solutions to action items that had not yet been started. For example, a committee was created to research and create a proposal with regards to the Less Than Lethal Force and some of the options available to officers that the Department is not currently using. This includes but is not limited to tasers, bean bags, etc. Additionally, a Sergeant and Patrolman were designated for advanced EAP Training so that the

action item of providing better Employee Support could be addressed. The final section of the presentation was the review of an exercise called, "If You Could Just". In this exercise various facets of the Department were put up as topics of discussion and at the end of a set time period the rest of the Department addressed the area being discussed by saying, "If you could just" and then adding what they would like to see from that particular area. In addition to discussing all the different internal positions within the Department such as Patrolman, Sergeants, Records, School Resource Officers, etc., the Chief also explained that this exercise was conducted with regards to GA9, The Board of Selectman, The Board of Finance and The Police Commission as well. Chief Spera reported a summary of the various messages collected for the various municipal boards and expressed that these messages should be taken to heart when debating the upcoming budget and all decisions made for the Department. Finally, Chief Spera reminded the Commission that the action items and the responses to various exercises did not come from him but from the members of the Department. He added that he believes the completion of this strategic plan will be successful for the same reason its creation was successful, which is because members of the Department greatly value their jobs and the services they provide to the community. Chief Spera ended by saying that he is very proud of his Department and the work they have achieved over the last two and a half years. He also added that he looks forward to guiding the Department to the successful completion of the Strategic Plan in 2014.

Commissioner Dunlap asked Chief Spera if there was a specific description of the Executive Goals anywhere within the document.

Chief Spera responded that many of the goals were self-explanatory, such as Agency Image but the description for other areas could be found in the Executive Summary.

Commissioner Dunlap referred the Commission to the second page of Section 4, and expressed his concern that the action item "Civilianize all support functions" had not been completed. He cited the example when Chief Spera took over as Police Chief, civilian personnel were replaced in the budget with Police Officers.

Chief Spera explained that while it is true that administrative services were cut in favor of adding more officers to the payroll, no sworn officer had ever been asked to perform administrative duties. Chief Spera continued to clarify the action item in question by pointing to school traffic patrol. He explained that rather than dedicating a sworn officer to this function, Community Service Officers were given this responsibility, thereby saving sworn personnel from performing tasks that can be performed by civilians.

Referencing the "If you could just" portion of the presentation, Commissioner Dunlap asked Chief Spera to provide him with the data he has been asking for since the beginning of his term. He continued by asking for more information about the services the Department provides and how much those services cost. He concluded that he cannot support increasing a budget or increasing the number of sworn officers without the data to show an exact cost for every resource.

Chief Spera responded by saying that he went to extensive schooling to learn how to administrate a law enforcement agency. He continued that in addition to his schooling, his experience on the job has given him a perspective that is impossible to fully explain to the Police Commission in a moment during a meeting. Chief Spera acknowledged that the Commission wants as much black and white data as possible but that data is not yet available. Chief Spera also reminded Commissioner Dunlap that his constituents do not simply include those who call him when they are upset but every person who calls the Department of Police Services looking for help. Chief Spera added that the Department is borderline unsafe at the moment because of a lack of sworn officers and that this was a problem that needed to be remedied immediately because he is tired of pushing his officers beyond where they should be pushed.

Commissioner Stuart acknowledged the Chief's message that the Commission was not just responsible for the safety of the community but for the safety of the cops as well. He added, however, that the Commission could not simply take the Department's word when asking for new resources.

Commissioner Dunlap added that if the town is unwilling to spend more money, he wants to know what services the Department will no longer be able to provide.

Chairman Burnham interjected that the Commissioner cannot expect the Chief to be able to predict levels of activity from day to day and shift to shift. She also added that she resented the implication that previous Police Commissions had simply taken all recommendations from the Chief of Police without investigating matters themselves. She concluded that she believes the upcoming workshop series will be beneficial for the Commission and she hopes that other town Departments and members of the public will participate as well so that the information can be disseminated throughout the town before the beginning of the next budget season.

Commissioner Stuart replied that he did not mean to imply that past Commissions made uneducated decisions, but simply that members of the Commission did not have the working knowledge of a police officer.

Commissioner Finch added that he is also anxious to receive more data from the Department and that he is confident that it will come with the implementation of the CAD System. He asked that the other Commissioners be patient and wait for the implementation of this system.

Chairman Burnham agreed with Commissioner Finch's sentiment and added that she looks forward to the workshops.

## **VI. Discuss and Act on the Replacement of a Patrol Vehicle**

Chief Spera informed the Commission that Car 15 is a 2007 Ford Expedition that needs a new engine, costing approximately \$5,500.00. The vehicle is worth only the value of its scrap price without an engine and with a new engine about \$5000 - \$6000. Chief Spera added that this vehicle is one that has been in constant need of repair and he feels that the Department is pouring good money into a bad vehicle. As such, the Chief proposed to the Commission that they allow this matter to go before the Board of Finance and the Board of Selectman and ask them to take money out of the Municipal Reserve account to purchase a new vehicle this year and reduce the number of vehicles requested in next year's budget by one.

Chairman Burnham clarified that this vehicle would have been asked for in next year's budget but instead the request is to ask for it now.

Chief Spera reminded the Commission that their vote does not ensure that a new vehicle will be purchased but simply that the matter would be brought before the Board of Finance and Board of Selectman.

Chairman Burnham how long it would be for a new vehicle to be a usable asset.

Chief Spera responded that the turnaround would take approximately six weeks and the equipment for that vehicle would be readily available to outfit the car.

Commissioner Finch clarified that we are not asking for additional vehicles, we are simply asking to replace a vehicle earlier than was initially planned.

**Commissioner Stuart made a motion to authorize a request to the Board of Finance and Board of Selectman for a new Ford Explorer immediately rather than waiting until next fiscal year. Additionally, the Commission has empowered the Chief to purchase the aforementioned vehicle if the Board of Finance and Board of Selectman give the Police Commission approval for this purchase. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Winkler. The motion passed with a vote of 7 in favor and 0 against.**

## **VII. Legal Traffic Authority**

### **A. Maplewood/Oak/Elmwood/Pine Street Safety Enhancements**

Chief Spera noted that this project is currently "in progress" with three of the four signs currently posted. Chief Spera added that the curb painting should be finished in the coming days.

B. Saint John's Church Parking Issue

Chief Spera informed the Commission that the two parking spaces outside of Saint John's Church would be eliminated when re-stripping was done. In the meantime, the church has been authorized to place cones in these spaces during mass.

C. Max's Place – STC Approval

Chief Spera informed the Commission that he is working with the STC and the local developer to ensure that final adjustments to this development reflect the Town's traffic needs.

D. School Zone – Speed Limit – Posting/Enforcement

Chief Spera informed the Commission that the Montessori School was eligible for the same traffic regulations and benefits as the public schools within Old Saybrook. As such, the Chief requested that the Commission make a motion to delegate the Chief to make the speed limit outside the school a uniform 25MPH.

Vice Chairman Metsack made a motion to allow Chief Spera to change the speed limit from Floral Park Road to Essex Road and from Essex Road to Fairy Road to a uniform 25 MPH. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sparaco. The motion passed with a vote of 7 in favor and 0 against.

**VIII. Field Operations - Report**

A. Activity Report

1. June 21 – July 18, 2012

There were no comments on this area.

B. CAD System Implementation Update

Chief Spera announced that last week, developers from Florida came and began the process of testing and adjusting the CAD System to Department specifications. Chief Spera added that he and Fire Chief Dunn were vigorously testing the new system so that when the CAD System is rolled out it will be able to do everything that Old Saybrook needs it to do. Chief Spera reminded the Commission that this CAD System is going to be unique to the town of Old Saybrook as they are asking the developers to write programs and options that do not yet exist. Chief Spera concluded that he looks forward to a successful rollout and his ability to hand the Commission all the data they are asking for but that he wants to make sure the rollout is done the right way and not rushed to completion.

C. Training of New Per Diem Dispatchers

Still in training. 3 still in training. 2 coming to make it or break it point and 1 who has not yet started training.

**IX. Correspondence**

There was no discussion on Correspondence.

**X. Discussion of Ad Hoc Committee to Develop an Evaluation Instrument for the Chief of Police**

Commissioner Finch recommended to the Commission that the current Old Saybrook Police Evaluation Form be used as a template for the Chief's review, but modified to fit the Chief's contract and the specific nature of his position.

Chairman Burnham thanked the subcommittee for their hard work and informed the Commission that she will add discussion on this evaluation tool to a future Commission agenda after the conclusion of the workshop series and the upcoming budget season.

#### **XI. Comments from the Public**

There were no comments from the public.

#### **XII. Comments from the Chief of Police**

Chief Spera informed the Commission that he had recently created three committees to investigate action items from the Strategic Plan that had not yet been started. Those committees were a Less Than Deadly Force Committee, a motorcycle program committee and an EAP Committee. Chief Spera also noted that he had recently reviewed secure campus policies with staff from the local schools. At this meeting procedures for lockdown and evacuation were reviewed. Finally, the Chief gave Commissioner Stuart a preliminary list of the data that Commissioner Stuart had requested at the previous meeting. In the list were the names of everyone within the Department, their job title and their hourly pay rate. He told Commissioner Stuart that the rest of the requested information would be worked into the upcoming workshop series.

#### **XIII. Comments and/or Concerns from Commissioners**

Commissioner Stuart informed the Commission that he had recently read that former Police Chief Mosca had been named President Emeritus of the International Association of Chiefs of Police and it would be nice if the Commission could formally recognize the achievement.

The Chief commented on the significance of the IACP and that the organization is the preeminent law enforcement association in the world that provides sound guidance to police leaders in all facets of police administration.

It was discussed that this designation was present to former Chief Mosca at last year's IACP conference. Commissioner Stuart showed Commissioners an article from the Connecticut Police Chief Associations' online newsletter acknowledging the achievement.

Chairman Burnham agreed to write a letter that would formally pass on the Commission's congratulations.

Commissioner Dunlap asked Chief Spera about the benefits of having a motorcycle program.

Chief Spera responded that in addition to the fuel savings, a motorcycle is very useful during special community events because it can get places that a police car cannot.

#### **XIV. Adjournment**

**Vice Chairman Metsack made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Winkler. The motion to adjourn the meeting passed with a vote of 7 in favor and 0 against.**

*The next regular Police Commission meeting is scheduled for September 24, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in the First Floor Conference Room, Old Saybrook Town Hall.*

The meeting minutes for August 27, 2012 were prepared and respectfully submitted by:

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Trent Gerbers  
Records Clerk for the Old Saybrook Police Commission