

OLD SAYBROOK POLICE COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
October 22, 2012
MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Old Saybrook Police Commission was held on Monday, October 22, 2012, at the Old Saybrook Town Hall.

Present: Chairman Burnham, Vice Chairman Metsack, Commissioners Sparaco, Dunlap, Finch and Stuart were also present. Chief Spera and Lieutenant Roche were 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. August 27, 2012 Regular Meeting

In the fifth paragraph on page five, Commissioner Dunlap wished to add an addendum to the statement, "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." Commissioner Dunlap expressed that he understood that there are no exact costs available during the budget season and he simply meant to express that he was interested in seeing all of the cost information available for each Department resource.

Commissioner Dunlap made mention of the phrase, "failure to protect," allegedly used by Chief Spera during his presentation. Commissioner Dunlap expressed his desire to have this phrase added in some capacity to the public record.

Commissioner Stuart agreed that the "failure to protect" warning seemed significant and should be reflected in the public record.

Chief Spera asked if either Commissioner Dunlap or Commissioner Stuart could provide the Commission with the exact quote used with regards to the "failure to protect" phrase.

Vice Chairman Metsack added that this proposed amendment was like throwing up a red flag to the public and he felt that what was written already accurately captured the sentiment of the conversation.

Commissioner Finch proposed that the Commission give the Commission Clerk more direction with regards to what they would like to see from the meeting minutes.

Commissioner Dunlap concluded that the "failure to protect" warning seemed like a point of law that the Chief was trying to make at the time and therefore, was a significant thought that needed to be captured.

Commissioner Stuart made a motion to amend the sixth paragraph on page five to add the Chief's warning that, "The Town of Old Saybrook could be liable in a failure to protect lawsuit." The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dunlap. The motion failed with a vote of 2 in favor and 4 against.

Commissioner Stuart made a motion to add that his statement made on page six, paragraph 3 was directed at wording used specifically by Chief Spera during his presentation. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dunlap. The motion failed with a vote of 3 in favor and 3 against.

A motion was made by Vice Chairman Metsack to approve the August 27, 2012 Regular Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dunlap. The motion to approve the August 27, 2012 Regular Meeting Minutes passed with a vote of 4 in favor and 1 against, with 1 abstention.

B. September 17, 2012 Special Meeting

A motion was made by Commissioner Sparaco to approve the September 17, 2012 Special Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Metsack. The motion to approve the September 17, 2012 Special Meeting Minutes passed with a vote of 4 in favor and 0 against, with 2 abstentions.

C. September 24, 2012 Regular Meeting

A motion was made by Commissioner Stuart to add his question, "Will Sergeant Gardner's reassignment impact the SRO program in any way," and the response from Chief Spera, "Sergeant Gardner's reassignment will not impact the SRO program because Sergeants have specific Sergeant duties within the Department." The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dunlap. The motion passed with a vote of 3 in favor and 2 against, with 1 abstention.

Commissioner Dunlap pointed to the third paragraph on page three and stated that his recollection of what the principals from each school had said was that they would like a more reliable schedule, not they the program should either be funded correctly or abandoned.

Chairman Burnham added that one principal had come the conclusion that the program should be funded correctly or it should not be continued but that the overall point was that the SRO's were not just visitors in the school.

Commissioner Finch agreed saying that the principals wanted to see more hours in the school and a more consistent schedule.

Commissioner Dunlap agreed with this assessment.

A motion was made by Commissioner Finch to approve the September 24, 2012 Regular Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Metsack. The motion to approve the September 24, 2012 Regular Meeting Minutes passed with a vote of 6 in favor and 0 against.

D. October 8, 2012 Special Meeting

A motion was made by Vice Chairman Metsack to approve the October 8, 2012 Special Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sparaco. The motion to approve the October 8, 2012 Special Meeting Minutes passed with a vote of 5 in favor and 0 against, with 1 abstention.

III. Comments from the Public

There were no comments from the public.

IV. Executive Reports

A. Financial

1. 12-13 Operating / Contractual Budgets

Chief Spera noted that the total for gasoline is slightly higher than estimated. He explained that this is largely because of purchases made before the negotiated pre-purchase. Chief Spera also made mention of the Small Misc. Equipment line item being 94% expended. This was attributed to several costs being front loaded at the beginning of the fiscal year such as radar unit calibration.

2. Asset Forfeiture

Account Balance is \$21,394.69

3. Capital Sinking Fund

Account Balance is \$35,260.82

4. Traffic Safety Fund

Account Balance is \$43,790.00

5. Law Enforcement Fund

Account Balance is \$44,048.75

Vice Chairman Metsack informed the Commission that funds have been spent on the renovation of the baseball field with \$2,500.00 recently approved for any future expenditure the field might require. Vice Chairman Metsack added that the next meeting is scheduled for November, 8 at 6:00PM in the Public Library.

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 \$ 1,098.00

9. 11-12 Budget Status

Chief Spera reported that the final budget numbers have been determined and that the Police Department Operational Budget was overrun by \$12,634.00. Chief Spera reminded the Commission that this number included raises that were never budgeted for and overtime needed to replace sick or injured staff members. Chief Spera concluded that the final number was approximately what he was expecting and that this number would be used in the town report.

Vice Chairman Metsack asked if the overrun included the expenditures incurred in the legal line item from the former First Selectman.

Chief Spera responded that the legal line item overrun was included in the final operational budget total.

B. Administrative

1. Contract Negotiations Update –Dispatch Union

Chief Spera reported that there have been two sessions and that the Dispatchers were currently in possession of the town's latest offer. Chief Spera said that he is hopeful the two sides are close to settling a contract.

2. Employee Step 1 Grievance/Unemployment Compensation

Chief Spera reported that he represented the Town of Old Saybrook in both the grievance process and in former Dispatcher Godutti's unemployment application. In both instances, former Dispatcher Godutti was denied further recourse. At present former Dispatcher Godutti is filing for retirement with the Town of Old Saybrook and the matter is currently in the hands of the Selectman's Office.

3. New Vehicles – Update

Chief Spera reported that two of the sedans are outfitted and ready to go. Before the vehicles can be used the entire Department will first undergo training for the new camera system. The third Sedan is at Whalen being outfitted. With regards to the two utility vehicles, one is at Computer Signs being striped and the other is in the process of being painted. After this process is completed, both vehicles will be sent to Whalen for outfitting.

Commissioner Finch asked about the status of the 2007 Explorer with engine problems.

Chief Spera responded that a plan is currently being developed and that there are attractive leasing options available to the Department. Once a plan is in place, a proposal will be made to the Police Commission and then to the Board of Selectman for approval. Chief Spera concluded that until this matter is resolved, the Department will be down one car.

4. Activity Report

Chief Spera referred the Commission to the Activity Report included in the Commission Meeting packet. Chief Spera asked if there were any questions with regards to the Activity Report and there were none.

V. **Workshop – Information Technology**

Sergeant Gardner introduced himself to the Police Commission and thanked everyone for their attention. Sergeant Gardner began by outlining his presentation as a look at the technology used by the Department on a daily basis and the responsibilities of his position.

For more information on Information Technology please see the attached presentation.

The following questions were asked during the presentations:

Commissioner Dunlap asked if the Department had any offsite data backup.

Sergeant Gardner responded that there is no offsite backup storage being utilized at this time but there are data redundancies in place so that information can be safely retrieved in the case of an emergency.

Commissioner Dunlap asked what the Town of Old Saybrook was asking for from the CAD System that was unique to the town.

Sergeant Gardner responded that the CAD company, Enroute, provides the town with a template and that it is up to the town to fill in the blanks with their needs. In addition to

filling in residential areas, commercials, hydrant locations, etc., there have been other addendums made to the provided template. For example, Department has requested that the CAD System link directly to the NCIC Collect Interface so that an officer will have this system immediately available to them instead of having to log onto a new system. Additionally, the new CAD System will also capture unit activity. When the system is fully operational, every unit on duty will be able to track his or her hours so that each function is accurately recorded during the course of a shift. At any given time a report can be generated that provides data on how much time is being spent performing various activities.

Commissioner Stuart asked how the different activities will be specifically tracked.

Sergeant Gardner replied that everything will be linked to a specific case number so you can see how long a particular case takes to bring to completion and how long each facet of the case takes to complete.

Commissioner Dunlap commented that it seems the greatest challenge will be sorting through all of the collected data.

Chief Spera responded that the system also has a custom reporting feature, meaning that at any given point the Chief can search specific criteria within the system and print out a report with results that only meet the search criteria. This will make data sorting and reporting much less labor intensive.

Commissioner Dunlap asked who is currently doing data entry for collected evidence.

Sergeant Gardner replied that the Criminal Investigation team does all the evidence logging for the Department.

Commissioner Finch asked if vehicle cameras were on at all times.

Sergeant Gardner replied that currently the camera is only on when an officer turns it on so if an officer forgets to turn on the camera, a significant incident might not be captured. Sergeant Gardner added that the new system will record all the time up to 20 hours.

Vice Chairman Metsack asked if Sergeant Gardner's Information Technology responsibilities could be done by a civilian.

Chief Spera responded that the job could be done by a civilian but there are advantages to having a sworn officer in the role. For example, a sworn officer has a working knowledge of how the technology at the Department is used on a day to day basis. Additionally, Sergeant Gardner is bound by the salary of a top step Sergeant, which means that he will not be compensated more in his salary for the IT work that he performs. Hiring a civilian would likely be more expensive than the amount currently being paid to Sergeant Gardner. Finally, because Sergeant Gardner has been performing the IT work for the Department for so long, the Union has a right to that work and might not be willing to concede this role to a civilian.

Commissioner Stuart asked if a plan existed to replace Sergeant Gardner if he left the Department.

Chief Spera responded that no such plan currently exists. Chief Spera added that there are third party vendors that could be called to perform various tasks if Sergeant Gardner were suddenly unavailable but there would be a huge learning curve for someone new to learn all the mission critical functions of the position.

Commissioner Stuart asked if there was any way to outsource Sergeant Gardner's role.

Sergeant Gardner acknowledged that there were other people who could do his job but that generally, no one individual or company covers the breadth and depth of what he provides to the Department. He added that it would likely take several vendors focused on individual

tasks to run the Department's IT and these vendors would not be on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week like he is.

Commissioner Finch asked if the Department could charge a fee to attorneys requesting video from an incident.

Chief Spera responded that he could institute a fee and that the Department is currently charging \$8.00 for a records search and \$5.00 for a DVD but if a lawyer subpoenas the information then the Department can't charge for it.

Chairman Burnham asked how the Department determines what video is kept for more than 30 days.

Sergeant Gardner replied that the Department archives all arrests and anything else that needs to be saved can be marked and archived separately before it is overwritten after the 30 day period.

At this time Chief Spera asked Patrolman Mike Mulvihill, IT Director at Pfizer, Inc., and Phil Coco, Quality Assurance Director for the Old Saybrook Department of Police Services, to speak about the work being done by Sergeant Gardner.

Both Patrolman Mulvihill and Director Coco echoed the sentiment that Sergeant Gardner's work not only spanned across multiple technological platforms but also provided a huge cost savings to the Town of Old Saybrook in the hundreds of the thousands of dollars. They agreed that the complexity of his job is generally handled by several different teams at most organizations and it is unlikely that one individual would be able to quickly and seamlessly step into his role if he were to suddenly become unavailable.

Chief Spera added that the Department of Police Services has a complex IT platform that is becoming more complex all the time with new technology. He concluded that the Commission will discuss in great length, whether it would make sense for a civilian to step into the role of IT Manger but the Commission needs to be prepared for the likelihood that a civilian will cost more money. Chief Spera concluded by thanking Sergeant Gardner for a thorough presentation

Vice Chairman Metsack asked if all the presentations could be put together into one book so that Commissioners could take the information to the public and educate them on the role of the Police Department.

Chief Spera said that he has no issues releasing the slides, he simply worries that without the presentation to accompany the slides, some messages might be interpreted incorrectly.

Commissioner Dunlap commented that despite the low turnout for the workshops, the information being passed along to the Commissioners helps them become better ambassadors for the Police Department to the public.

Vice Chairman Metsack agreed saying that it's going to take a campaign to push this year's budget through but it is up to those who have the information to correctly pass it along to those who need the information. Vice Chairman Metsack commented that he was tired of trying to get away with less and that it was finally time to present the budget that is necessary for the Department to do their jobs at a high level.

Commissioner Finch stated that the Commission needs to take a look at the possibility of transitioning some responsibilities to civilian personnel.

Chief Spera agreed with that sentiment but added that staff members would have to be added to perform those duties and a civilian employee is not necessarily going to be cheaper than a sworn employee.

VI. Correspondence

Chief Spera reported that there was one letter that was not included with the other Correspondence. Chief Spera informed the Commission that this letter was in regards to a labor issue and he is hoping that a follow up letter from the Department will clear up an confusion before further action would have to be taken. If this does not settle the matter then legal council would have to get involved. Chief Spera concluded that he would keep the Commission informed on the issue.

VII. Comments from the Public

A member of the public suggested the future workshop presentations and meetings be videotaped and put on the town's website.

Chief Spera agreed that this could be a good idea for future meetings but doing so would take additional personnel and equipment.

Another member of the public commented that a digital recorder could be purchased for \$60.00. The citizen also asked if the new CAD System would be able to track calls for service to CL&P.

Chief Spera responded that Master Sergeant Rankin would give an update to the street light situation in the near future.

VIII. Comments from the Chief of Police

Chief Spera ceded the floor to Lieutenant Roche for an update on the recruitment process.

Lieutenant Roche informed the Commission that the Department had recently increased their recruiting efforts by attending job fairs at Central Connecticut State University, the Department of Labor and University of New Haven. In addition, the Department has advertised in The Day and Shoreline newspapers. Job postings have also gone up on Monster.com, craigslist.com and through direct email. Currently, there are 77 people signed up to take the test with approximately three or four additional people signing up each day. Lieutenant Roche concluded that there have been many face to face conversations with potential recruits and that everyone is being encouraged to take the test so that a hiring list can be created for future vacancies.

Chairman Burnham asked if there had been any success recruiting already certified officers.

Lieutenant Roche replied that there have been some inquiries from certified officers but those officers are careful about the information they divulge because they are already employed elsewhere.

Chief Spera asked the Commission to clarify what they would like to see for future Police Commission minutes. Chief Spera insisted that the Commission should not be trying to re-write history and that constant amendments would only lead to endless debate.

Commissioner Finch commented that every clerk has their own way of doing the minutes and that the current format should be accepted if no one has a problem with the product.

Chairman Burnham agreed saying that the Commission should continue with the more detailed minutes and that everyone should remember that the minutes are not word for word accounts of what was said. Chairman Burnham also reminded the Commission that amendments are not retroactively added to previous minutes but are simply recorded in the minutes of the present meeting

Commissioner Dunlap commented that he felt the minutes were professionally done and he did not that a change in style was necessary. Commissioner Dunlap added that he did not feel that one or two minor corrections in a six or seven page document constituted a trend of dissention or disagreement.

Chief Spera informed the Commission that the next regular meeting in November would include a workshop on the Patrol Division. Chief Spera added that subsequent workshops would include Professional Development, Emergency Communications, Records and manpower allocation.

Chairman Burnham commented that she thinks it is very important that the Commission received the same level of detailed presentation about Emergency Communications that they have been given on every other aspect of the Department. She continued that Dispatchers are the face of the Department to the public and the Commission should know exactly what they do, how they do it and what their needs are.

Chief Spera concluded his comments by informing the Commission that the Department will be interviewing potential candidates for the vacant Patrolman position in December.

IX. Comments and/or Concerns from Commissioners

Commissioner Dunlap asked how he could acquire hardcopies of the presentations he missed.

Chief Spera responded that he would look into creating a comprehensive book or PDF that can be handed out before the final manpower allocation presentation.

Commissioner Finch commented that such a document would be a valuable tool so new Commissioners could familiarize themselves with the various roles and responsibilities of the Department.

X. Adjournment

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

The next regular Police Commission meeting is scheduled for November 26, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in the First Floor Conference Room, Old Saybrook Town Hall.

The meeting minutes for October 22, 2012 were prepared and respectfully submitted by:

Trent Gerbers
Records Clerk for the Old Saybrook Police Commission