

OLD SAYBROOK POLICE COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
March 25, 2013
MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Old Saybrook Police Commission was held on Monday, March 25, 2013, at the Old Saybrook Middle School.

Present: Chairman Burnham, Vice Chairman Metsack, Commissioners Sparaco, Finch and Stuart were also present. Chief Spera and Lieutenant Roche were 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. January 11, 2013 Special Meeting

Commissioner Finch made a motion to approve the January 11, 2013 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sparaco. The motion passed with a vote of 4 in favor and 0 against.

B. February 25, 2013 Special Meeting

Vice Chairman Metsack made a motion to approve the February 25, 2013 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Finch. The motion passed with a vote of 4 in favor and 0 against.

III. Comments from the Public

There were no comments.

IV. Executive Reports

A. Financial

1. 12-13 Operating/Contractual Budgets

Chairman Burnham asked about the gasoline line item.

Chief Spera replied that the Department will likely have to buy 2 months of gasoline. Additionally, Chief Spear informed the Commission that the Department will likely run over in gasoline, office supplies and medical supplies because of a need to replace epinephrine and defibrillator batteries. Overall, however, the Department should still finish in the black with the Expenses and Supplies budget.

Commissioner Sparaco asked where the Department purchases defibrillator batteries.

Chief Spera responded that the Department purchases these batteries from Common Cents EMS Supply.

2. Asset Forfeiture

Balance: \$19,658.68

3. Capital Sinking Fund

Balance: \$37,688.10

4. Driver Safety Fund

Balance: \$22,215.73

Chairman Burnham asked if there will be any money left in this account for next fiscal year.

Chief Spera responded that the DUI Grant is helping to fund this account.

5. Law Enforcement Fund

Balance: \$39,128.70

Vice Chairman Metsack reported that he will have exact figures from this account for the next Police Commission meeting.

Chief Spera added that the Union determined that the Department was not interested in attaining Class A uniforms.

Chairman Burnham noted that a report on the MAC Fund needed to be filed with the Attorney General.

6. Old Saybrook Police Fund

Balance: \$320.00

7. Police Explorer Fund

Balance: \$4,770.27

8. Police K-9 Fund

Balance: \$4,913.00

9. 13-14 Budget Status

Chief Spera reported that the Board of Finance is scheduled to discuss the Department's budget on March 26 at 7:00PM.

Commissioner Finch asked the Chief if he could highlight some of the big money issues that will be discussed.

Chief Spera responded that the Board of Selectmen approved contractual raises, step raises, a small increase in expenses and supplies, restoration of half the budget for community events and funding for the part time School Resource Officers.

B. Administrative

1. Contract Negotiations Update – Dispatch Union

Chief Spera stated that a draft copy of the Dispatcher contract had been created and that he was working with the First Selectman to finalize it.

2. Activity Report

Chief Spera stated that Detective Sergeant Heiney has been very busy with investigations but he has been out this week due to a death in the family.

Commissioner Finch asked when the Commission will get involved with the Police Officer contract that expires in July.

Chief Spera stated that the First Selectman issued a letter to the Union saying that the Town would like to negotiate with the Union. He is currently waiting for a response.

V. Discuss and Act on revising the Patrolman Hiring List

Chief Spera reminded the Commission that on December 17, 2012, candidates were interviewed to fill two Patrolman vacancies. Eric Williams and Michael Mehrrens were hired and Andrew Brooks was placed at the top of the hiring list. Prior to beginning the Police Academy, Michael Mehrrens fell and broke his wrist, leaving him ineligible to participate. With that, Chief Spera informed the Commission that he has since offered the position to Andrew Brooks pending his final test results. Chief Spera asked that the Commission place Michael Mehrrens at the top of the hiring list and that the list be valid for one year.

Commissioner Finch agreed with the purpose of the list but disagreed that candidates from the list be automatically hired for vacancies when they arise.

Chief Spera stated that the people on the list have already gone through the process and represent an investment from the town. Any new person wishing to apply for a vacancy would have to begin the interview and testing process from the beginning. Chief Spera noted that seats at the Police Academy are difficult to come by and the Department can't afford to miss an opportunity to put someone in an open slot.

Chairman Burnham stated that the Commission has the authority to create hiring lists and not allow the Chief to automatically fill vacancies without first consulting the Police Commission.

Vice Chairman Metsack noted that there was an instance when someone from another town wanted to come in and become a police officer in Old Saybrook. This person was eventually found to not be a good fit for the town.

Commissioner Finch responded that he understands not every candidate will be a perfect fit. He simply doesn't want to miss out on an opportunity to hire the best person for the job.

Chief Spera – Reviewed the motion and pointed that Andrew Brooks was at the top of the hire list.

Commissioner Finch clarified that the Andrew Brooks will be hired to fill the vacancy and Michael Mehrrens will be placed at the top of the hiring list. Commissioner Finch stated that he would like to discuss this process more for future hiring.

Commissioner Sparaco stated that this is the first time he has sat on a Board where there were 3 worthy candidates. He concluded that many times there are no candidates deemed suitable to hire.

Chairman Burnham made a motion to reestablish a hiring list that will be valid for one year from the day of its creation and for Michael Mehrrens to be placed at the top of that list. Additionally, Chief Spera has the authority to fill a Patrolman vacancy from the hiring list if a vacancy should arise within the one year period. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Stuart. The motion passed with a vote of 5 in favor and 0 against.

Chief Spera stated that Michael Mehrrens will not be hired to fill one of the part time per diem vacancies created for the next fiscal year.

VI. Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

VII. Comments from the Public

Michael Mehrrens thanked the Police Commission for their decision.

Lieutenant McDonald stated that things are going well at the schools and he is enjoying his new role.

VIII. Comments from the Chief of Police

Chief Spera stated that Lieutenant McDonald is now a fully certified School Resource Officer and that his addition to the schools has been well received thus far. Chief Spera stated that they are not backfilling vacancies at the schools because of a lack of resources but the Police presence at the schools has increased.

IX. Comments and/or Concerns from Commissioners

Chairman Burnham reminded the Commission that the Police budget would be discussed the following evening at the Board of Finance meeting at 7:00PM.

X. Adjournment

Commissioner Finch made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sparaco. The motion to adjourn the meeting passed with a vote of 5 in favor and 0 against.

*The next regular Police Commission meeting is scheduled for April 22, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.
in the First Floor Conference Room, Old Saybrook Town Hall.*

The meeting minutes for March 25, 2013 were prepared and respectfully submitted by:

Trent Gerbers
Records Clerk for the Old Saybrook Police Commission