

OLD SAYBROOK POLICE COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
July 22, 2013
MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Old Saybrook Police Commission was held on Monday, July 22, 2013, at the Old Saybrook Town Hall.

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

*Commissioner Finch entered Executive Session at 8:20PM.

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. June 3, 2013 Special Joint Meeting

Commissioner Sparaco made a motion to approve the June 3, 2013 Special Joint Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Winkler. The motion to approve the June 3, 2013 Special Joint Meeting Minutes passed with a vote of 6 in favor and 0 against.

Commissioner Dunlap asked that he be added to the list of Commissioners present at the June 3, 2013 Special Joint Meeting.

III. Comments from the Public

There were no comments from the public.

IV. Executive Reports

Chief Spera began by offering his public congratulations to Lieutenant Roche and Master Sergeant Rankin for achieving twenty-five years of police service in the town of Old Saybrook. He commended their dedication to the Department.

A. Financial

1. 12-13 Operating/Contractual Budgets - Status

Chief Spera stated that the town was in the final stages of determining end of year numbers but that he is confident the Department will finish the 2012-2013 Fiscal Year in the black.

2. 13-14 Budget Status

Chief Spera notified the Commission that he is encouraging the First Selectman to settle on a pre-buy price for gasoline as the Department is currently paying the municipal "at the pump" price offered by the Town's vendor. The Chief is eager to lock in a number so he can properly manage the gasoline line item.

B. Administrative

1. Contract Negotiations Update – Dispatch Union

Chief Spera informed the Commission that the Dispatch contract has been settled and signed. Additionally, retroactive checks have been issued.

Committee Chairman Burnham asked how long the contract is viable.

Chief Spera responded that the contract is good until 2015.

2. Contract Negotiations Update – Police Union

Chief Spera stated that there has been one formal meeting thus far, with each side exchanging proposals. The next meeting is scheduled for August 1st.

3. Traffic Planning Updates/Requests

Committee Chairman Burnham informed the Commission of a request from the residents of Knollwood to look into the stop signs and determined if any need to be moved or if more needed to be added.

Chief Spera agreed to look into it and report back to the Commission next month.

Chief Spera reported that he reviewed the traffic and pedestrian plans for Max's Place and has asked for exclusive pedestrian phasing to be added to the plans as a requirement. He added that the developer was not in favor of exclusive pedestrian phasing. The State DOT ruled that exclusive pedestrian phasing is not a requirement but the Police Department is continuing to push for this option to be added to the plans.

Chief Spera also informed the Commission that he recommended the developer for 138 affordable housing units present plans to the Police Commission for review.

4. CAD "Go Live" Update

Chief Spera announced that the CAD System has officially gone live as of Thursday. The original go live date was Wednesday but the vendor had not met expectations for one critical deliverable so the release was postponed. Chief Spera noted that all Departmental staff has gone through classroom and practical training on the new system. After the system has been in place for a few months, the vendor will return to conduct and administrative class with the staff.

5. Fleet Lease Purchase Program Update

Chief Spera presented a financing option for replacement fleet vehicles. Chief Spera began by stating that the current fleet has 17 vehicles and 1 pickup truck. He added that many vehicles are beyond a point where it would be wise to invest more money for maintenance. The replacement plan calls for a 4 year financing program, with this fiscal year being year 1 of the program. First Niagara Bank has offered the Department at 1.694% financing rate, compared to Ford's 4.20% financing rate. Chief Spera announced that the low rate from First Niagara makes flipping the fleet financially sound and will allow the Department to obtain 10 new vehicles, with an 11th vehicle being purchased through the Justice Assistance Grant (JAG). The purchase of the vehicle through the JAG Grant program must be approved at Town Meeting. Additionally, this financing option will allow the Department to flat fund the Capital Budget at \$93,818.29 each year of the program. After the four year period, the town will own the cars and can determine if another leasing program would be appropriate to flip the vehicles that need replacement in the 2017-2018 Fiscal Year. Chief Spera concluded that by entering into this agreement, vehicle maintenance costs will be significantly reduced as all the leased vehicles will be under warranty during the leasing period. Additionally, all new vehicles will be part of the "tires for life" program.

Commissioner Dunlap asked how much the Department has spent on vehicle maintenance over the last 10 years.

Chief Spera replied that he did not have an exact number but that the Department exceeds the Vehicle Maintenance budget every year. Chief Spera iterated that there is no clean data to represent how much vehicle maintenance has cost the Department over the past ten years. This is because various accounts have been used to expend costs related to vehicle maintenance and the outfitting of new vehicles.

Commissioner Dunlap replied that he could not support the financing plan without a detailed analysis of the fleet over the last several years.

Chairman Burnham asked if the Chief could provide budget information for the Vehicle Maintenance line item.

Chief Spera replied that over the years the Department has spent between \$30,000 and \$40,000 annually on Vehicle Maintenance and/or the outfitting of new vehicles from the Department's operating budget.

Vice Chairman Metsack stated that having the warranties for each vehicle is like having an insurance policy for the cars.

Chief Spera added that he will be reducing the Vehicle Maintenance line item by 25%-30% if the plan is approved. Initially, this line item was going to be cut by 50% but a change was made at the recommendation of the First Selectman.

Vice Chairman Metsack stated that he believes this option is worth the risks associated with it. He emphasized that the Department cannot afford to have vehicles fail on the way to emergency calls for service.

Commissioner Dunlap agreed that vehicles needed to be replaced but that the Commission does not have enough data to determine if the proposed financing option is more cost effective than the current replacement method. He concluded that a ten year history of what the Department has spent in Capital funds and Vehicle Maintenance would give him the information he needs to make an informed decision.

Commissioner Stuart expressed concern that if the Department is not appropriated enough money to pay for the vehicles then the Department could potentially lose all the new cars.

Chief Spera responded that the proposed plan has been researched and endorsed by the First Selectman and the Finance Director for the town. He added that if the town had continually purchased three cars each year, for the past 10 years then there wouldn't be a problem today but unfortunately that is not the case. The current proposal allows the Department to reset the fleet entirely and does so in a smart way both fiscally and operationally. He concluded that this plan will allow the Department and Town to conduct long term financial capital planning and that he doubts the First Selectman or Board of Finance would willingly and knowingly put the town into a safety crisis by underfunding the capital line item.

Commissioner Stuart asked if capital appropriation goes down, can the Department keep some of the vehicles.

Chief Spera responded that he would imagine that the bank does not have any interest in owning police cars and would hope that it would never come to that. Additionally, the project's contingency fund will be derived from vehicle trade-ins. Any monies left over from the program could be used to help supplement a capital payment in the next fiscal year.

Commissioner Sparaco stated he over time he has seen the Department go from purchasing three cars a year, to two cars a year, to one car a year, and in some years there were no vehicle purchase, which has drastically increased vehicle maintenance costs and created a fleet where several vehicles have over 200,000 miles. He added that he understands the desire for vehicle data but because of all the variables that go into the cars, the exact number is hard to find. He concluded that if the town had continued to purchase three vehicles a year, he would not even consider this plan but given the current state of the fleet and the information presented, the financing proposal seems like a good idea.

Chairman Burnham noted that the Department is not adding to the size of the fleet. Given the annual costs associated with purchasing new cars and maintaining old cars, this plan makes good financial sense.

6. Discuss and Take Possible Action to recommend that the Board of Selectmen enter into a lease purchase agreement that supports the Department's fleet purchase plan for the 2013-2014 fiscal year in accordance with the approved budget.

A motion was made by Vice Chairman Metsack to endorse the Police Fleet Purchase Program and recommend that the financing proposal be forwarded to the Board of Selectmen. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Winkler. The vote passed with a vote of 5 in favor and 1 against.

V. Executive Session

A motion was made by Commissioner Winkler to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of interviewing and discussing candidates for a per diem Patrolman position, a vacant Patrol Sergeant position and a full time Patrolman position. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Metsack. The motion passed with a vote of 6 in favor and 0 against.

Chairman Burnham asked Chief Spera and Lieutenant Roche to stay and participate in the interview and discussion process.

- A. Interview and Discuss candidate for the position of per diem Patrolman to primarily serve as a School Resource Officer

Per diem Patrolman Candidate Allyson Tanner was invited into Executive Session at 7:58PM.
Per diem Patrolman Candidate Allyson Tanner exited Executive Session at 8:10PM.

- B. Interview and Discuss Candidate for the position of Patrol Sergeant

Patrol Sergeant Candidate Walsh was invited into Executive Session at 8:24PM.
Patrol Sergeant Candidate Walsh exited Executive Session at 8:41PM.

- C. Interview and Discuss Candidate for the position of full time Patrolman

Patrolman candidate Brian Andronaco Jr. was invited into Executive Session at 9:05PM.
Patrolman candidate Brian Andronaco Jr. exited Executive Session at 9:28PM.

Patrolman candidate Andrew Cole-Hatchard was invited into Executive Session at 9:31PM.
Patrolman candidate Andrew Cole-Hatchard exited Executive Session at 9:46PM.

Patrolman candidate James Forte was invited into Executive Session at 9:48PM.
Patrolman candidate James Forte exited Executive Session at 10:02 PM.

The Executive Session ended at 10:35PM.

VI. Discuss and Act on the Appointment of a per diem Patrolman Position (School Resource Officer)

A motion was made by Commissioner Stuart to hire Allyson Tanner for the per diem Patrolman position pending the successful completion of a physical and designated for assignment at Chief Spera's direction. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dunlap. The motion passed with a vote of 6 in favor and 0 against. Commissioner Finch abstained.

Commissioner Finch asked why this position was designated as primarily a School Resource Officer instead of exclusively as a School Resource Officer.

Chief Spera responded that she is eligible to take patrol shifts and it is cheaper for the Department if she does.

VII. Discuss and Act on the Appointment of a Patrol Sergeant (Filling a vacancy)

Commissioner Winkler made to hire Ryan Walsh for the Patrol Sergeant position, which will be designated for assignment at Chief Spera's direction. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Metsack. The motion passed with a vote of 7 in favor and 0 against.

VIII. Discuss and Act on the Appointment of a full time Patrolman

Chairman Burnham made a motion to hire James Forte for the full time Patrolman position pending the successful completion of a physical and drug screen. The position will be designated for assignment at Chief Spera's direction. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Winkler. The motion passed with a vote of 7 in favor and 0 against.

IX. Discuss and Act on the establishment of a Patrolman Hiring Eligibility List

Vice Chairman Metsack made a motion to establish a hiring list with one year viability for new Police Department recruits and to place Andrew Cole-Hatchard at the top of the hiring list and Brian Andronaco Jr. in the second position. The motion also authorizes the Chief to hire from the list if first candidate does not successfully complete the physical or drug screen. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Winkler. The motion passed with a vote of 6 in favor and 1 against.

Commissioner Stuart asked if James Forte and Andrew Cole-Hatchard both drop from the process if Brian Androanco Jr. would automatically be hired.

Commissioner Dunlap stated that it was his understanding that the person at the top of the hiring list would automatically fill a vacancy created by the inability of Patrolman Forte to accept immediate appointment to the Police Academy. The Commission would have to reconvene and discuss any further action.

Chief Spera agreed and stated that the two remaining applicants have been thoroughly vetted and he would feel confident hiring either of the Patrolman candidates from the hiring list if there was a vacant position.

X. Discuss and Act on Authorizing the Chief of Police to conduct a Promotional Process for the Position of Patrol Sergeant

This topic was discussed and resolved in Item VII.

XI. Comments from the Chief of Police

There were no comments.

XII. Comments and/or Concerns from Commissioners

There were no comments.

XIII. Adjournment

Vice Chairman Metsack made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Stuart . 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 August 26, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.
in the First Floor Conference Room, Old Saybrook Town Hall.*

The meeting minutes for July 22, 2013 were prepared and respectfully submitted by:

Trent Gerbers
Records Clerk for the Old Saybrook Police Commission