

OLD SAYBROOK POLICE COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
August 26, 2013
MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Old Saybrook Police Commission was held on Monday, August 26, 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.

I. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

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

II. Minutes

A. July 22, 2013 Regular Meeting

Commissioner Dunlap made a motion to approve the July 22, 2013 Regular Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Stuart. The motion to approve the July 22, 2013 Regular Meeting Minutes passed with a vote of 7 in favor and 0 against.

Commissioner Stuart stated that he would like his request for Patrolman Souriyamath's exit interview, for the Police Commission's review, to be added to the July 22, 2013 Regular Meeting Minutes.

III. Comments from the Public

A Member of the Public stated that she had noticed some dangerous bike riding behavior around town, including several near accidents.

Chief Spera acknowledged the concern and stated that he would pass the information on to the School Resource Officers.

IV. Executive Reports

A. Financial

1. 13-14 Budget Status

Chief Spera referenced the Miscellaneous Small Equipment line item and stated that the reason the line item is 68% expended is due to ammunition purchases for new recruits. Chief Spera also pointed to the gasoline line item and stated that the Department is still paying the "at the pump price". He has urged the First Selectman to lock in a gas price for the remainder of the fiscal year so that the Department can stabilize this account.

Chief Spera also stated the Department finished the last fiscal year in the black by \$1,029.00.

B. Administrative

1. Contract Negotiations Update – Police Union

Chief Spera informed the Commission that the third and final preliminary meeting was rescheduled for September 13. At this meeting, both sides will exchange final proposals and then negotiations can begin. Chief Spera recommended that the Police Commission invite

First Selectman Fortuna to the next Commission meeting so that he could brief the group on the Town's position regarding the new police contract.

2. Employee Discipline

Chief Spera read the following to the Police Commission:

"In accordance with Department Regulation 55.14 it is my responsibility as Chief of Police to report discipline imposed on a member of the Police Department. A Dispatcher was suspended for one day without pay and received a three month probation extension for violating The Department of Police Services System of Directives and Professional Standards. **Specifically, Section 1 of the Uniform Standards of Conduct, Exercising Common Sense and Affirmatively Promoting Our Values.** The suspension will be served at a time that best fits the business needs of the Department and was accepted by the employee without grievance."

Chief Spera continued by saying that a Dispatcher had falsely initiated a pre-recorded message which indicated that that the town was in the midst of a terrorist attack. Chief Spera explained that the Dispatcher's actions consisted of several misjudgments and the Department is reviewing CAD Procedures to prevent this incident from happening in the future. He added that the First Selectman has been advised of the situation and the results of the internal investigation and that he was satisfied with the outcome.

3. Traffic Planning Updates/Request

a. Knollwood Beach Association

Chief Spera stated that he scheduled a Beach Association meeting for September 3. At the meeting he will discuss traffic planning ideas with the Association and bring ideas back to the Police Commission.

b. North Main Street Affordable Housing

Chief Spera stated that he received a general schematic for the affordable housing area but that it did not satisfy his requirements to provide an extension of the STC traffic permit. He recommended that the Police Commission review a brief presentation from the group building the affordable housing so that pertinent information can be reviewed before granting concurrence on the traffic permit extension.

Chairman Burnham asked what the presentation would consist of.

Chief Spera responded that the presentation would give an overview of the development's size, demographic, traffic flow, etc.

Commissioner Winkler asked if the buildings were going to be three stories.

Chief Spera responded that there are plans for three story buildings within the complex.

Chairman Burnham, Vice Chairman Metsack and Commissioner Stuart all agreed that it would be beneficial to review the presentation.

Commissioner Dunlap asked what the Commission plans to do with the information from the presentation.

Chairman Burnham replied that the information from the presentation could give the Commission an idea of the types of resources that the new housing development might need from the Police Department.

Chief Spera stated that he would schedule the presentation for the September Police Commission meeting.

c. Upper Ingham Hill Road – No Parking Signs

Chief Spera informed the Commission that the last house on Upper Ingham Hill Road has a driveway that is also part of a town right of way. As such, the residents of this house are having a problem with people parking in their driveway. Chief Spera recommended that a “No Parking” sign be put at this location because residential private property rights take precedent over the use of the road as a right of way.

Commissioner Finch asked about the width of the road.

Chief Spera replied that the road is about 14 to 16 feet wide.

Commissioner Stuart made a motion to post a “No Parking” sign at the town right of way on Upper Ingham Hill Road. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sparaco. The motion passed with a vote of 7 in favor and 0 against.

4. Fleet Lease Purchase Program Update

Chief Spera stated that First Niagara Bank approved Old Saybrook’s financing application and that the Board of Selectmen unanimously endorsed and authorized First Selectman Fortuna to sign the contract.

5. Discuss and Act on the Recommendation of the Chief of Police to select a vendor for the purchase of Police Vehicles in concert with the Police Fleet Purchase Program.

Chief Spera informed the Commission that one bid for the new police vehicles had been received. The bid came from Saybrook Ford. Chief Spera indicated that he was pleased with the prices that were included in the bid as they are slightly below what was projected in the loan application. Chief Spera formally asked the Commission to endorse Saybrook Ford as the vendor for the financed police vehicles.

Commissioner Finch asked how many new vehicles the Department would be receiving.

Chief Spera answered that there would be 4 Fusions, 6 Interceptors and 1 Truck.

Vice Chairman Metsack asked about the specific uses for each vehicle.

Chief Spera stated that the Fusions will be used primarily as administrative vehicles. The Interceptors will be used as patrol vehicles.

Commissioner Dunlap asked if there were any reasons why Saybrook Ford was the only company that submitted a bid.

Chief Spera pointed to a new town bidding ordinance that gives preference to local bidders by awarding a contract to the local bidder if that company matches the lowest bid price.

Commissioner Finch made a motion to endorse Saybrook Ford as the vendor for the vehicle leasing program. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Metsack. The motion passed with a vote of 7 in favor and 0 against.

Commissioner Finch asked how long it will be before the new vehicles are in the Department’s possession.

Chief Spera replied that he is hoping to get the first batch of vehicles in 6 to 8 weeks but the vehicles will need to be outfitted by Whalen before they can be utilized. Chief Spera estimated that total fleet turnover will not be complete until the end of the fiscal year.

V. **Workshop – New Police Facility**

Downes Construction Group made a presentation to the Old Saybrook Police Commission with regards to construction of the new Old Saybrook Police Building. The following questions were asked and answered during the presentation:

Commissioner Finch asked if the 9.925 million dollar total for the project includes FF&E.

Downes replied that FF&E will be funded through other means.

Commissioner Dunlap asked about the status of the outbuilding.

Chief Spera emphasized the need for the outbuilding storage. He stated that the First Selectman has confirmed in writing that he understands the Department's need for storage and that a storage facility will be built on the site by the time the new Department is built.

Commissioner Dunlap asked which items needed storage.

Chief Spera responded that the light tower, temperature sensitive equipment, the Mobile Command Truck and Emergency Management equipment needed storage space.

Commissioner Sparaco asked how many parking spaces were in the front of the building.

Downes responded that there were 10 spots in the front of the building and 3 overflow spaces.

Commissioner Sparaco stated that he did not believe 10 spaces would be enough to accommodate the public need on busy days.

Downes responded that they had conducted a traffic analysis and the results indicated that they had allowed for enough public parking in the front of the building. Additionally, many of the spots being occupied by the Department at the current Police Station will be moved to the Employee Parking Lot behind the building.

Commissioner Sparaco stated that the traffic analysis was inaccurate because it was conducted after school had been closed for the year.

Downes – Hired a traffic engineer. He did 1 weekday and 1 weekend day. We're not anywhere near the triggers that would require changes to the roadways. His recommendation was that the Department would not significantly add traffic to the area.

Commissioner Finch asked if it would make sense to add additional overflow parking spaces along the side of the building. He added that providing extra spaces could be done at a minimal cost and would ensure sufficient parking.

Downes replied that adding more overflow spaces is possible and that they would look into the matter further.

Vice Chairman Metsack asked about the cost of building a firing range on the site.

Downes replied that the current estimate is \$977,000 for a 4 lane facility. Downes explained that the Police Building Committee chose not to move forward with a firing range at this time.

Chief Spera added that the Department has an operational need for fire arms training. Chief Spera also noted that weapons proficiency is important for officer safety and is important for protecting the town in terms of fire arms use and liability. He stated that the price is too large for the town to take on at this time but that a solution for fire arms training needed to be developed because of the lack of range availability throughout the state.

Commissioner Finch asked how long a firing range lane is.

Mr. Humes replied that a lane is 75 feet long.

A member of the public asked if there was any way to reconfigure the inside of the Department to accommodate a firing range.

Chief Spera responded that even if some rooms were made smaller, there is no way to gain the amount of space needed for an indoor range. Additionally, the cost would still exceed the project's budget.

Mr. Humes explained that the firing range was designed as a separate building for acoustic reasons and that space for the range will be reserved on the site so that a range can be built at the Department at some point in the future.

Commissioner Finch asked if a basement could be put in for a firing range.

Mr. Humes stated that it would be cheaper to build a separate building than to add a basement. Additionally, a basement would require both stair and elevator access.

Commissioner Finch asked if the new construction area could be extended in any way to give the Department some storage space now and then have that area converted to a firing range once the outbuilding was built.

Mr. Humes stated that any additions to the current plans would add cost to the project that would go beyond what the Building Committee approved.

Chief Spera stated that the Building Committee did not want to go to the public with a project that cost more than 10 million dollars. He stated that he believes the current building design is responsible and even though it does not have everything the Department wants, it is an efficient design that will enhance Department performance.

A member of the public asked about the difference between the old Police Building and the proposed Police Building.

Chief Spera stated that the old building lacked many things the Department needed. He added that the day of the flood, proposals were due on way to expand and enhance the building by going through the same process that the proposed building has gone through. Chief Spera concluded that he believes the Old Saybrook tax payer will support this project.

Mr. Humes added that most of the things the Department has asked for in the new building are now considered industry standards in law enforcement.

A member of the public expressed concerns that the raised roof design over the courtyard would lead to leaking along the windows and that there would be no pedestrian walkway between Lynde Street and Main Street.

Mr. Humes explained that a pedestrian walkway has been planned as a 20 foot easement from Lynde Street to Main Street. Additionally, there will be a privacy fence along the walkway that serves as a barrier between the Department and the residential buildings in the neighborhood. Mr. Humes also stated that the vertical windows used for the raised roof will provide better protection from leaks than a flat skylight.

Chief Spera stated that he had requested a pitched roof to match the architectural design of the firehouse and the library but the facility would not support that style of roof. Chief Spera then stated that he believes Mr. Humes has designed an attractive building and that it would aesthetically blend in with the rest of the neighborhood.

Commissioner Winkler stated that she liked the brick and asked if the color would be changed.

Mr. Humes stated that the brick will be painted to change the color of the exterior.

Chief Spera stated that he hopes the Commission will formally endorse the design of the building. He concluded that it is important for the public to see unanimous support from the various Boards and Commissions with regards to the project.

VI. Discuss and Possibly make recommendations to the Board of Selectman regarding the new Police Facility

Commissioner Winkler made a motion to endorse the proposed design of the new Police Building. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Metsack. The motion passed with a vote of 6 in favor and 0 against. Commissioner Dunlap abstained from the vote.

Commissioner Stuart clarified that this is the same project design that has been endorsed by the Building Committee.

Chief Spera confirmed that the plans presented to the Police Commission were the same plans endorsed by the Building Committee.

VII. Comments from the Public

There were no comments from the public.

VIII. Comments from the Chief of Police

Chief Spera stated that Commissioner Stuart had asked about reviewing Patrolman Souriyamath's exit interview. Chief Spera stated that he would provide the exit interview for the Commission but that it would have to be reviewed in an executive session and that the former employee would need to be notified.

Commissioner Finch asked if Patrolman Souriyamath has a right to participate in the executive session if he chooses.

Chief Spera stated that he has not right to be included in the executive session but he can request that the review of his exit interview be held at a public session. Additionally, Chief Spera stated that no one could leave with a copy of the interview.

Chairman Burnham asked Chief Spera to arrange a review of the exit interview for the next Police Commission meeting.

IX. Comments and/or Concerns from Commissioners

Commissioner Finch asked about the grant that was written for a new police boat.

Chief Spera stated that there grant was not chosen for funding at this time but that the Department will apply again at the next opportunity.

Commissioner Finch asked about rumors he had heard about a new apartment complex being built near Benny's.

Chief Spera stated that he had heard no such rumor.

Chief Spera also stated that it might be a good idea to study how new developments in town affect municipal resources.

X. 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 23, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. in the First Floor Conference Room, Old Saybrook Town Hall.

The meeting minutes for August 26, 2013 were prepared and respectfully submitted by:

Trent Gerbers
Records Clerk for the Old Saybrook Police Commission