

OLD SAYBROOK POLICE COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
October 28, 2013
MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Old Saybrook Police Commission was held on Monday, October 28, 2013, at the Old Saybrook Town Hall.

Present: Chairman Burnham, Vice Chairman Metsack, Commissioners Sparaco, Winkler and Finch were 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. September 23, 2013 Regular Meeting

Commissioner Finch made a motion to approve the September 23, 2013 Regular Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Metsack. The motion to approve the September 23, 2013 Regular Meeting Minutes passed with a vote of 5 in favor and 0 against.

III. Comments from the Public

Commissioner Burnham suggested that the topic, "Executive Session on Contract Negotiations" be added to the agenda so that First Selectman Fortuna could participate in the discussion.

Commissioner Sparaco moved that "Executive Session on Contract Negotiations" be added to the Administrative Reports. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Finch. The motion passed with a vote of 5 in favor and 0 against.

IV. Executive Reports

A. Financial

1. 13-14 Budget Status

Chief Spera informed the Commission that First Selectman Fortuna has entered into a contract to purchase fuel at a locked in price for the remainder of the fiscal year.

First Selectman Fortuna stated that he was pleased with the price that he was able to lock in for the town as it had come down significantly from gas prices in July.

Chief Spera concluded that the Department will be approximately \$20,000 over budget in the gasoline line item with the current agreement. He informed the Commission that the Department will make adjustments within the budget to try and compensate. Chief Spera also reminded the Commission that most of the heavily expended line items are front loaded.

2. Asset Forfeiture

Account Balance: \$20,473.15

3. Capital Sinking Fund

Account Balance: \$40,278.25

4. Traffic Safety Fund

Account Balance: \$35,792.62

5. Law Enforcement Fund

Account Balance: \$22,280.53

Vice Chairman Metsack stated that there have not been any recent meetings and that the group will wait until after elections to commence business.

6. Old Saybrook Police Fund

Account Balance: \$320.00

7. Police Explorer Fund

Account Balance: \$4,970.27

8. Police K-9 Fund

Account Balance: \$4,361.71

Chief Spera informed the Commission that Kendo has received the dental care he needed with the extraction of two molars and the implementation of a titanium tooth.

Chief Spera also informed the Commission that he has been receiving questions from the Board of Finance with regards to the Department's off budget accounts and how the money from those accounts is spent.

First Selectman Fortuna added that the town has many off budget accounts but that each account has specific rules about where and how the money can be spent. He concluded that many people don't understand the rules attached to the off budget accounts and assume incorrectly about the town's available finances.

B. Administrative

1. Executive Session: Contract Negotiations Update – Police Union

Chairman Burnham made a motion to enter into Executive Session. Commissioner Finch seconded the motion. The motion passed with a vote of 5 in favor and 0 against.

The Commission invited Chief Spera and First Selectman Fortuna to participate in the Executive Session.

The Commission entered into Executive Session at 7:12PM.

The Commission ended Executive Session at 7:38PM.

2. Fleet Lease/Purchase Program Update

Chief Spera informed the Commission that the vehicles have been ordered and that they will be painted and outfitted once they are in the Department's possession. Chief Spera added that once the cars arrive, the Department will purchase the equipment needed to outfit the vehicles with one bulk purchase order.

Commissioner Winkler asked if any of the vehicles had come in yet.

Chief Spera responded that one vehicle had arrived.

Commissioner Finch asked if any of the old vehicles have been traded in.

Chief Spera responded that the current fleet is being maintained until all the new vehicles are ready for use.

3. New Police Facility Update

Chief Spera thanked the Commission for their efforts in helping the new Police Building pass through referendum. He expressed his confidence in Brian Humes and the Downes Construction Company and stated that the new building will meet the Department's needs for the foreseeable future.

V. A Celebration of Service

Chairman Burnham announced that after thirty-five years on the Police Commission, Commissioner Winkler would be retiring at the conclusion of the meeting. With that, Chairman Burnham expressed her thanks for Commissioner Winkler's service and presented her with the gift of an orchid from all the members of the Police Commission. Chairman Burnham stated, "What you have added over the years with your good judgment has been invaluable."

Commissioner Winkler replied that she will miss the meetings and working with the other Commissioners. She added that she misses Old Saybrook and that she hopes to stay involved in some way.

First Selectman Fortuna added that many people do not realize that the town's government is made up almost entirely of volunteers. He stated that thirty-five years of volunteer service to the town is remarkable and he thanked Commissioner Winkler for her many years of service.

Chief Spera thanked Commissioner Winkler for her service on behalf of the entire Police Department. He added, "You have touched so many people doing all the good things you've done. We miss you as a citizen and we will miss you more as a Commissioner." With that, Chief Spera asked Commissioner Winkler if she had any advice to share with future Police Commissioners or any interesting anecdotes she wanted to share with the group.

Commissioner Winkler replied that the Police Commission originally had 5 members and that she took the place of Ted Dawson. She stated that she initially tried to fill the position with several other local politicians but that no one was interested in the job. After she agreed to fill the role, Commissioner Winkler asked Commissioner Dawson if he had any advice for her and he replied that when it came to the budget, the Commission should allow the Police Department to take care of it because they are trained and know what they are doing.

Chief Spera stated that he assumes she was the first female Commissioner.

Commissioner Winkler confirmed that she was the first female Commissioner. She added that during her thirty-five year tenure, she only saw 2 Police Chiefs.

Chief Spera asked Commissioner Winkler what the biggest change is she saw while serving as a Police Commissioner.

Commissioner Winkler responded that the biggest change she saw was when the Commission went from 5 members to 7. She also stated that the original Commission used to hold their meetings in the Police Chief's office but that the meeting location was changed due to the public perception that the meetings were being held in secret.

Commissioner Winkler concluded that she is happy with the current condition of the Police Department and that she feels Chief Spera and all the members of the Department have done an excellent job protecting the citizens of Old Saybrook. She wished the Department and the Police Commission luck and stated that she has confidence in both groups' abilities going forward.

Chief Spera again thanked Commission Winkler for her many years of service.

VI. Workshop – Pistol Permit Application Process

Chief Spera stated that in light of the confusion brought about by new pistol permit regulations and procedures, the Commission should be given a workshop that explains how the new system works.

Lieutenant Roche presented the new Pistol Permit Regulations to the Police Commission. He stated that the Department wanted to streamline the Pistol Permit process and make it more efficient. He added that the new process gives Patrolmen an opportunity to gain investigative experience as they perform the necessary background checks and interviews.

Lieutenant Roche explained that the process consists of several steps which include:

- Finger printing and verifying that the proper safety classes have been taken by the applicant.
- Processing the application and sending the fingerprints to the state.
- Conduct an applicant interview
- Conduct an applicant background investigation/neighborhood canvas
- Write a recommendation based on the results of the background investigation

The following questions were asked and answered:

Commissioner Finch asked if the applicant interview is required by the state.

Lieutenant Roche replied that the interview is not required by the state but is part of the background check, which is required.

Chief Spera added that interviews were added to the background investigation so that the Department could get a better sense of who the applicant is.

Lieutenant Roche also stated that one of the reasons an applicant can be denied a pistol permit is if the Department deems the applicant as “not a suitable person”. The information needed to label someone as unsuitable typically comes out during the interview process. However, when a person is denied a permit, the ruling can be appealed by the state and overruled.

Chairman Burnham asked about the pistol permit renewal process.

Chief Spera responded that the applicant just has to send a check to the state. The Department has to apply to have a pistol permit revoked if they feel that someone should not have a pistol permit.

Vice Chairman Metsack asked if you have to have a pistol permit to buy ammunition.

Chief Spera replied that you must have a gun permit to buy ammunition.

Chief Spera concluded that the number of pistol permit applications received by the Department has been increasing from year to year and that he is surprised by the number of Old Saybrook residents that have pistol permits.

VII. Comments from the Public

A member of the public asked if you can only receive a gun permit from the town in which you are a resident.

Lieutenant Roche replied the town issues a temporary permit, which is good for 60 days but the state issues the final pistol permit.

A member of the public asked if a follow up investigation is done before a pistol permit can be renewed.

Chief Spera replied that once someone receives a pistol permit the municipality is no longer involved in the process. Currently, to renew a pistol permit the applicant only needs to submit a check to the state. No follow up investigation is performed.

VIII. Comments from the Chief of Police

Chief Spera again thanked Commissioner Winkler for her service to the Police Commission and to the town of Old Saybrook. Chief Spera also wished good luck to the incumbent Commissioners seeking re-

election. He stated that there is always a period of education for new Commissioners and that he looks forward to working with the new Police Commission.

Chief Spera asked Commissioner Finch if the Police Commissioner Briefing Materials book was helpful to him when he was initially elected.

Commissioner Finch replied that the book was helpful for background on the Commission but that you learn more as you go.

IX. Comments and/or Concerns from Commissioners

Commissioner Winkler thanked everyone and wished the Police Department and Commission good luck in the future.

X. Adjournment

Commissioner Winkler made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Metsack. 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 November 25, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. in the First Floor Conference Room, Old Saybrook Town Hall.

The meeting minutes for October 28, 2013 were prepared and respectfully submitted by:

Trent Gerbers
Records Clerk for the Old Saybrook Police Commission