

OLD SAYBROOK POLICE COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
June 23, 2014
MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Old Saybrook Police Commission was held on Monday, June 23, 2014, at the Old Saybrook Town Hall.

Present: Vice Chairman Savino, Commissioners Burnham, Dunlap, Maselli, Sparaco 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

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

II. Minutes

A. May 19, 2014 Regular Meeting

Commissioner Maselli made a motion to approve the May 19, 2014 Regular Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sparaco. The motion to approve the May 19, 2014 Regular Meeting Minutes passed with a vote of 4 in favor and 0 against. Commissioners Dunlap and Stuart abstained from the vote.

Vice Chairman Savino stressed that the need for increased parking fees was for the benefit of the townspeople because most of the parking violators were from other towns.

Commissioner Dunlap asked for clarification with regards to a statement Chief Spera made about no longer fluxing line items.

Vice Chairman Savino stated that as the Police Commission begins to budget toward actuals, it is no longer prudent for the Department to freeze line items to help compensate for others.

III. Comments from the Public

There were no comments from the public.

IV. Executive Reports

A. Financial

1. 13-14 Operating/Contractual Budgets

Chief Spera explained that he is working to process the remainder of the bills for the 2103-2014 Fiscal Year and that he expects most of the line items from Expenses and Supplies to be completely depleted. Chief Spera elaborated that the gas line item is over expended because the pre-buy rate for gasoline was not set until October and the rental cost for the temporary fueling tank has also been deducted from this line item. Chief Spera stated that a more detailed account of the Department's budget will be given at the July meeting when the final actuals have been determined. He estimated that the Department will be approximately \$80,000 - \$90,000 over budget, which is largely due to the retirement of Sergeant Hull, the retirement of Patrolman Souriyamath, Patrolman Ziolkovski's extended illness and maternity leave for Dispatcher Olszewski. Higher than anticipated retroactive costs incurred, some of which are still being calculated from the new contract, also contributed to the Department's overrun.

2. Asset Forfeiture

Balance: \$20,427.88

3. Police Administrative Fund

Balance: \$16,664.15

4. Traffic Safety Fund

Balance: \$28,904.16

5. Law Enforcement Fund

Balance: \$17,207.53

6. Old Saybrook Police Fund

Balance: \$320.00

7. Police Explorer Fund

Balance: \$4,970.27

Chief Spera informed the Commission that the first meeting for the new Explorers was held this evening. There are nine new Explorers and funds will be used from this account to pay for their training.

Vice Chairman Savino asked about the age range of the new Explorers.

Chief Spera stated that the age range is from recent 8th grade graduates to 21 years of age.

8. Police K-9 Fund

Balance: \$1,479.24

B. Administrative

1. Contract Settlement Overview – Police Union

Chief Spera asked for acknowledgement to information he sends out to the Commission.

Vice Chairman Savino replied that he does not want internet conversations to be misinterpreted as an improper meeting.

Commissioner Maselli replied that if a Commissioner simply acknowledges that information has been received by the Chief then it would be difficult to argue that the exchange counts as a discussion.

Chief Spera stated that the Commission could invite a Freedom of Information Act expert to a committee meeting to clarify issues that stem from online communication.

Chief Spera reviewed the tentative new contract agreement for the Police Union. Chief Spera explained that the contract had been ratified by the bargaining unit but had not yet been signed. Chief Spera noted that both the town and the union benefited from the new labor agreement. Chief Spera also praised the First Selectman's involvement in the negotiating process and stated that it was clear that the First Selectman cared about the Police Operation. Chief Spera also praised Department personnel for negotiating important issues of the contract and for continuing to perform their duties as the highest level during the bargaining process.

Chief Spera reviewed the highlights of the new Police Union Contract. They are as follows:

- **Holidays** – Any bargaining unit members hired after January 1, 2014, will no longer receive thirteen floating holidays. Those union members will now be compensated for their holidays twice

a year at their straight time rate. \$45,000.00 was added to the budget to pay out holidays and backfill holiday related absences. This line item is not fully funded in the 2014-2015 Fiscal Year.

- **Sick Leave** – New regulations allow municipal employees to use five of their accrued sick days to take care of a sick family member.
- **Retirement** – Retiring members of the Police Department can cash out up to eighty-one accumulated sick days, which will be paid out at the rate of pay held by the officer at the time of his/her retirement.
- **Military Service** – The Department will adhere to all federal and state laws regarding military leave.
- **Personal Days** – Union members will no longer receive three floating personal days each year.
- **Schedule** – Equitability was brought to the schedule by mandating that officers who work a 4/2 schedule perform twelve additional eight hour Administrative shifts, which can be used to write warrants, conduct background investigations, attend professional development, etc. Scheduling and use of these days will be made by agreement by the employee and the Chief of Police. Vacation days are permitted to be used in place of the Administrative shift.
- **Overtime Pay** – Bargaining Unit members will earn their overtime rate after forty hours of work each week. Administrative shifts are not included in the calculation for determining overtime compensation.
- **Town Events** – Town events were previously worked at a straight time rate, despite the number of weekly hours accrued by an officer. The new contract will pay for working town events at an officer's overtime rate if they have accrued more than forty hours for the week.

Vice Chairman Savino asked if the town could fund some of the personnel costs for events.

Chief Spera explained that there is no separate line item in event budgets for police personnel at this time.

- **Insurance** – The Union has migrated completely to a high deductible health plan. Each employee has a health care savings account. In the first year the town contributes 75% of the employee's deductible and 50% in year two. These plans cost much less and result in less money coming out of the weekly paycheck.

Chief Spera also explained that both the Town and Union expressed a desire for the new contract to extend an additional year but the new Affordable Health Care Act, which takes effect in 2018 will create a \$28,000.00 liability that neither side wants to be responsible for.

Commissioner Stuart asked to receive Appendix A and Appendix B of the new Health Care plan.

Chief Spera agreed to email the details of the new health care plan to Commissioner Stuart.

- **Life Insurance** – Life insurance is two times an officer's base rate of pay.

Vice Chairman Savino asked if there was a process in place so to ensure that retiring members of the Department are notified of Health Care and Life Insurance changes.

Chief Spera replied that the town lacks a Human Resources Department, which puts the burden of gathering and disseminating information mostly on him. Chief Spera added that the town is currently notifying retirees of any benefit changes and that he is working with current employees. He believes that the new Finance Director has things well under control with respect to retiree health insurance.

- **Rates of Pay** – Between the period of July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014, bargaining unit members were given a 3% retroactive raise. The budget for the current fiscal year includes \$47,000.00 to assist with salary adjustments in the new Dispatch and Police contracts. The total for salary adjustments came out to \$55,404.62. Starting on July 1, 2014, all salaries will be in line with the

new contract and properly budgeted. Additionally, the Department has consolidated steps at the Patrolman level, giving a Patrolman the opportunity to achieve the top step at a faster rate.

Commissioner Maselli asked if an officer advances one step per year.

Chief Spera responded that an officer advances one step per year. A Patrolman Trainee does not advance to Step 1 until the completion of Field Training.

- **Vacation** – Officers will only be able to carry over a maximum of ten unused vacation days under extenuating circumstances. Vacation carry over is a budgetary liability for the Department. Also, officers will be able to cash out up to ten vacation days at any time during the fiscal year.
- **Pension** – A study group was established to study various pension plans in an effort to make the Department’s pension plan current and more lucrative.

Chief Spera stated that he would present the full, signed contract to the Commission as soon as possible. He also thanked the First Selectmen and the Police Union for working with him during the negotiations. He concluded that the new contract is beneficial to both sides.

2. Activity Report

There were no comments.

3. Grievance Conclusion – Dispatcher Union

Chief Spera explained that he attempted to initiate a Step 1 grievance hearing but it was rejected by the Dispatch Union. A settlement offer was then made, which was also rejected. The Police Commission then scheduled a meeting to hear grievances, which was rejected by the Dispatch Union. The First Selectman then heard and rejected the six grievances. Eventually, the town offered a memorandum of agreement, which becomes an addendum to the current union contract. None of the new items listed in the memorandum of agreement change current scheduling practices or contractual language. All six grievances were withdrawn with prejudice.

V. Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

VI. Comments from the Public

There were no comments.

VII. Comments from the Chief of Police

Chief Spera informed the Commission that he is pursuing the parking ticket situation but that it will take some time to develop a solution. Chief Spera outlined that the process may require a town ordinance change. He also stated that the town does not generate enough tickets to justify bringing in a third party vendor. Chief Spera concluded that he would like to see a new ticket form that is similar to the state infraction form, with no fees listed so they are viable forever.

Commissioner Dunlap asked if it would be worth putting a thermal printer in squad cars for the purpose of giving out tickets.

Chief Spera replied that thermal paper doesn’t always hold up over time and could be difficult for record retention. Additionally, it would be another piece of equipment in the cars that would require regular maintenance.

VIII. Comments and/or Concerns from Commissioners

Commissioner Maselli asked for an update on the new Police Building.

Chief Spera replied that the main floor has been poured and that framing will begin soon. Chief Spera added that the Police Building Subcommittee meets every two weeks on Wednesday mornings to discuss outstanding issues and review project progress.

Commissioner Dunlap asked for an update on the CAD system.

Chief Spera replied that he is still working with the vendor to narrow down the information that he wants the CAD to be able to report. Staff is still working on operational issues which are prioritized. The Chief stated that he will not be dedicating time to this issue over the summer months. Chief Spera estimated that reports may start being generated in the late fall/early winter but that he cannot guarantee that information will be available before the start of the next budget planning season.

IX. Adjournment

Commissioner Maselli made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Stuart. 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 July 28, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.
in the First Floor Conference Room, Old Saybrook Town Hall.*

The meeting minutes for June 23, 2014 were prepared and respectfully submitted by:

Trent Gerbers
Records Clerk for the Old Saybrook Police Commission