

MINUTES OF THE POLICE COMMISSION MEETING
of
Thursday March 10, 2016

Commissioners Present: George Kain, Chairman
Joseph Savino, Secretary
Thomas Reynolds
Charles Knoche
Marianne Coffin

Also Present: Chief John Roche
Major Stephen Brown

These minutes are an overview of the meeting; not a verbatim text.

The meeting was called to order at 7:04pm by Chairman Kain.

Agenda Item #1

Chairman Kain requested a motion to change the Agenda by moving Agenda Item 5a (Unit Citation Awards) to the top of the agenda in order to accommodate Officers in attendance.

Chairman Kain asked if there would be any other changes to the agenda and there were none.

Commissioner Savino motioned to change the Agenda; seconded by Commissioner Knoche.

Vote: In Favor – All

Agenda changes approved.

Chairman Kain stated that there would be an Executive Session following the Public Session tonight for personnel matters.

Agenda Item #5a – Unit Citation Awards

Chairman Kain stated that the Department's Commendation Board met and recommended that Officers involved in an incident in January be awarded the Department's Unit Citation Bar for their excellent police work; concurred by Chief Roche. Chairman Kain stated that it was an honor to present this award to all of the Officers who worked as a team on this incident.

Chairman Kain continued to state that on January 3, 2016 at 1400 hours, HQ started receiving calls about a motor vehicle that was traveling on Route 35 at high speeds and passing/crashing into vehicles (investigation revealed that this vehicle was stolen). The following Officers handled this incident:

Officer Shimko: The Desk Officer handled the numerous calls to HQ about a hazardous vehicle and he calmly transmitted the information to the Officers on patrol.

Officer Romero spotted the vehicle traveling at a high rate of speed near Copps Hill Plaza and since it had crashed into one vehicle already, he made the decision not to pursue the vehicle but communicated a description and direction of travel to other Officers on patrol.

Lt. Platt and **Officer Gjodesen** responded to the area and witnessed several vehicles that had been damaged by this vehicle. After the last crash, the driver fled on foot and was tracked by these Officers. Although the suspect attacked Lt. Platt, he and Officer Gjodesen were able to gain control of the subject.

Officer Caba and **Officer Samoskevich** assisted the motorists who had been struck by the stolen vehicle (several vehicles had been hit). All occupants were checked for injuries and the Officers assisted with the paperwork and towing.

All Officers worked together, remained calm and communicated with each other to keep the public safe.

Chairman Kain distributed the blue and white bar to the Officers and encouraged them to have one of their family members pin the bar to their uniform. It was a heartwarming sight to see the Officer's wife or children attach the bar. In addition to the receiving Officers and members of their families, fellow Officers, to include Captain Kreitz, Lt. Raines, Officer Seibert, Officer Ladue, Officer Hawaux, were in attendance to acknowledge these Officers. The Commissioners congratulated the Officers and thanked them for a job well done.

Major Brown noted that this Unit Citation is a new addition to the Department awards – it is presented to acknowledge team effort which this incident displayed. Major Brown continued to state that he was privileged to listen to the incredible amount of incoming calls that night and Officer Shimko handled each one, transmitted the information and kept in control. The Officers' unity and professionalism protected the public – a good job.

Agenda Item #2 Commission Minutes

Chairman Kain requested a motion to accept the minutes of the February 11, 2016 Police Commission meeting. Commissioner Reynolds motioned to accept the minutes; Commissioner Knoche seconded the motion.

All in Favor

Minutes of the February 11, 2016 Police Commission meeting accepted as written.

All in Favor

Agenda Item #3a Commission Voice Mail

Commissioner Savino stated that one message was referred to Chief Roche, a message was received for Commissioner Kain and a message was from Mr. Larson regarding the Schlumberger property and he met with the Chief.

Agenda Item #3b Commission Correspondence

Commissioner Kain stated that a letter was received from the Ridgefield Public Schools' Transportation Coordinator requesting "School Bus Stop Ahead" signs on both sides of 49 Peaceable Street which is a blind curve with extremely poor sight lines from both directions.

Chief Roche stated that he will have Traffic Sign Officer Caswell review and report on this request.

Agenda Item #4 Chief's Report

Statistics

Chief Roche stated that the incident total for the month of February was 1,654 with four (4) K-9 assists.

During the month, the Department responded to 94 Alarms, 28 Medical Assists, investigated 64 Motor Vehicle Accidents, assisted with 35 Disabled Vehicles, fingerprinted 25 applicants, issued 505 Motor Vehicle Enforcement violations, performed 3 traffic details/10 radar details, processed three DUI arrests, conducted 30 Public Relations events (visiting businesses, etc.) and processed 13 Pistol Permit applicants.

PBA Food Drive

Chief Roche stated that the PBA initiated this food drive, held on March 6th, to fill up the shelves of the Town's food pantry. Commissioner Kain attended the food drive and related that he was there from 1pm to 6pm and the food drive was a tremendous success. The Officers received awesome response from the public who could not have been more generous. The Officers' efforts were well rewarded and the amount of food donated was staggering. It was a wonderful event the PBA performed for their community.

Accreditation

Chief Roche reported that the Department passed the Accreditation review; awards will be distributed in May.

The Commendation Board recommended that Sgt. Clarke, Accreditation Officer, be cited for his hard work and diligence in preparing and completing the documentation for this Accreditation inspection and review. Sgt. Clarke was complimented by the assessors on his "phenomenal and precise job". Chief Roche stated that he concurred with the Board's recommendation to recognize Sgt. Clarke and also awarded him two personal days off for his outstanding work.

Chief Roche noted that the timeframe for Accreditation review has been changed from every three years to four years.

Schlumberger Property

Chief Roche stated that he met with Mr. Larson of the Schlumberger Citizens Committee on February 24th to discuss this property and the result of the public survey. Chief Roche stated that Mr. Larson noted that the public survey disclosed that the responses were not in favor of a municipal option for this property and was favorable toward a 'cultural concept' to include an outdoor amphitheater and stage. Chief Roche handed out a conceptual plan of cultural concept for the Commissioners to review.

Chief Roche stated that included with the concept is a trail that would connect to the Town trail and then to the Town's Park and Recreation site; parking would be

established at South Street/Old Quarry Road and the entrance/exit would be the existing venue located on Old Quarry Road.

Commissioner Knoche wondered if this would create too much traffic for Old Quarry Road and Commissioner Savino reminded the Commission about the proposed Coach development for Sunset Lane and the stipulation that the Commission requested an easement permanence for that project – how would this concept affect that caveat. Commissioner Savino stated that we have to look at this proposal carefully.

Commissioner Kain stated that this is not a proposed project at this time – it is just a conceptual plan that would need to be tweaked.

Mr. Larson will attend the April Police Commission meeting to discuss this property with the Commissioners.

Agenda Item #5b – Route 35

Chief Roche stated that he and Commissioner Kain met with Town Officials and CT DOT to discuss the Main Street Renovation project. This project is slated to start in the Spring of 2018 with preliminary plans of widening Main Street, realigning Prospect Street by CVS shopping area, establishing turn lanes at each intersection, timing all three traffic lights (Governor St – Prospect Street).

In response to Commissioner Coffin's question, Chief Roche said the merchants in the area are in favor of the changes.

Chief Roche stated that this is in the conceptual stages and discussion will continue.

Officer of the Year Presentation

This award will be presented to Officer Caswell on April 21, 2016 at 1600 hours at the Leir Estate. All are invited to attend.

St Mary School Zone

At the February meeting, a request was received for signage to alert drivers that children are in the area. It was noted that there were two signs already installed by the school on school property. The Commissioners requested that this area be reviewed again to see if additional signage is necessary.

Chief Roche stated that Traffic Sign Officer Caswell re-visited this area and has recommended that additional 'School Ahead' signage be installed both North and South of the school property to increase visibility and give drivers additional time to react to the school zone in the area. Commissioner Savino will update the requestor as to the outcome of her concern.

Community Policing/Public Relations Report:

- Captain Kreitz participated in a drug take-back event held for the staff, residents and their families at Ridgefield Crossings. A total of 41 pounds was collected.
- Lt. Platt was a judge for the Ridgefield Boys and Girls Club Youth of the Year award.

- P.O. Romero presented two safety talks to the youths at the Jesse Lee Day School.
- Capt. Comstock, Captain Kreitz, Sgt. Durling, P.O. Shimko, in partnership with Dichello Distributors and the CT Liquor Control Division, conducted an Alcohol Awareness and Education class at the Lounsbury House for liquor permittees in Town. The class covered Connecticut liquor laws and fake I.D. identification. Approximately twenty (20) people were in attendance.
- Captain Kreitz presented an Identity Theft/Scam talk to Seniors at Ridgefield Crossings.
- P.O. Seibert conducted a Cub Scout tour of Headquarters.
- A total of five (5) child passenger restraint systems were checked/installed.

Upcoming Events:

March 29 Citizen Police Academy begins.

March 30 Drug Take-Back event planned with a local pharmacy for National Drug Take-Back Day.

Training Report:

- Captain Comstock, Lt. Smith, Lt. Fowler, Det. Papstein, P.O. Luis, P.O. Caswell, P.O. Ryan, P.O. Ladue and P.O. VanWattum attended Police Officer Recertification at WCSU.
- Det. Papstein attended Recruit Shotgun Training at POSTC as an instructor.
- P.O. Seibert completed a reclamation period with an FTO and completed all update training.

Resignation of Officer Baron

Chief Roche stated that he received a letter from Officer Baron giving formal notification of her resignation from the Ridgefield Police Department, effective March 6, 2016.

Commissioner Knoche motioned to accept Officer Baron's resignation;
Commissioner Coffin seconded the motion.

All in Favor

Officer Rachel Baron's resignation effective March 6, 2016.

Consolidation of PSAP

Chief Roche stated that he attended a hearing, in Hartford, on HB5544 recommending the consolidation of PSAP points. Chief Roche stated that this bill is opposed by the Connecticut Chiefs of Police Association – 12 Chiefs appeared to speak at this hearing to express their views and opposition to this idea. Chief Roche pointed out the fact that this suggestion has come up several times over the years and there are still no figures in place as to any cost savings this would provide.

Wilton Rd signage

Chief Roche stated that he spoke with Gina of the State DOT due to the fact that a resident of Ridgefield is upset that a *School Bus Stop Ahead* sign is scheduled

to be installed by his property. This sign is considered necessary and the State will work with the homeowner to make this as less intrusive as possible.

Budget Meeting

Chief Roche stated that at the Budget Meeting there was discussion about the renovation of HQ and the fact that the current plans need to be updated and brought up to code. There were no cuts from the Department budget although it was mentioned that we had requested two Officers and that request was denied.

Agenda Item #5a – Unit Citations

Covered at the beginning of the meeting.

Agenda Item #5b – Route 35

Covered under Chief's Report above.

Agenda Item #6 – Rules & Regulations

Chief Roche will meet with Chairman Kain to discuss the wording of an update to Section 305.23. This will be discussed at the April meeting.

Commissioner Reynolds motioned to adjourn to Executive Session at 7:55pm;
Commissioner Knoche seconded the motion.

All in Favor

Public Meeting adjourned at 7:55pm.

Public Meeting opened at 8:52pm.

Commissioner Savino motioned to extend the Eligibility List for Probationary Police Officer for a period of six (6) months and to authorize the Chief to immediately begin the process to fill the current open Police Officer position. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Knoche.

All in Favor

Eligibility List extended for six months and open Police Officer position to be filled.

Commissioner Savino motioned to adjourn Public Session at 8:54pm;
Commissioner Knoche seconded the motion.

All in Favor

Public Meeting adjourned at 8:54pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph Savino
Secretary

**MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE SESSION OF THE
POLICE COMMISSION MEETING**

Commissioners Present: George Kain, Chairman
Joseph Savino, Secretary
Thomas Reynolds
Charles Knoche
Marianne Coffin

Also Present: Chief John Roche
Major Stephen Brown

Executive Session commenced at 7:55pm.

Executive Session adjourned at 8:52pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph Savino
Secretary