

**MINUTES OF THE POLICE COMMISSION MEETING**  
**of**  
**Thursday, February 8, 2018**

**Commissioners Present:** Charles Knoche, Chairman  
George Kain, Secretary  
Marianne Coffin  
Stephen Saloom

**Absent:** Joseph Savino

**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 7:05pm by Chairman Knoche.

**Agenda Review**

Chairman Knoche asked if there would be any changes to the Agenda; Commissioner Coffin stated that Agenda Item 5b) Officer of the Year would be moved to Executive Session for discussion.

**All in Favor**

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

**Agenda Item #2**

Chairman Knoche requested a motion to accept the minutes of the January 18, 2018 Police Commission meeting. Commissioner Coffin motioned to accept the minutes; Commissioner Saloom seconded the motion.

**Minutes of the January 18, 2018 Police Commission meeting accepted as written.**

**Agenda Item #3a Commission Voice Mail**

Commissioner Kain stated that Amy Dennis of East Ridge Road left a message on January 12<sup>th</sup> regarding her request for a crosswalk from her home on East Ridge Road to the East Ridge Middle School. Commissioner Kain stated that he made a return call and informed Mrs. Dennis that mid-block crosswalks are not approved and that they also are a safety issue as they offer a false sense of security. Commissioner Kain stated that Mrs. Dennis appreciated the clarification.

Commissioner Kain stated that on January 24<sup>th</sup>, a message was received from Don White of Cains Hill Road requesting some feedback on the procedure for installing a mirror by his driveway for safety issues. Commissioner Kain stated that he returned Mr. White's call and left a message informing Mr. White that the Department does not install mirrors and that if he was installing the mirror on his property, there would be no problem. If the install were to be on

another person's property, their consent would be needed. If the install were to be on State property, consent from the State Department of Transportation would need to be requested. If the install involved Town property, he would probably need to contact Highway Director, Peter Hill, and also the Planning & Zoning department. Commissioner Kain will try again to speak with Mr. White.

### **Agenda Item #3b Commission Correspondence**

Chairman Knoche signed off on several road closure applications for events planned for the coming year in Ridgefield. They will now be forwarded to the State DOT for their approval and include:

- a) Run Like a Mother on May 13<sup>th</sup>
- b) Memorial Day Parade on May 28<sup>th</sup>
- c) Tri-Ridgefield on June 3<sup>rd</sup>
- d) Wolfpit Half Marathon on September 30<sup>th</sup>
- e) Halloween Walk on October 27<sup>th</sup>
- f) Thanksgiving Day Turkey Trot on November 22<sup>nd</sup>
- g) Holiday Tree Lighting on November 23<sup>rd</sup>
- h) Holiday Stroll on November 30<sup>th</sup>

### **Agenda Item #4 Chief's Report**

#### Correspondence

A thank you letter was received from a resident for speeding enforcement detail on Main Street.

#### Main St Project

Chief Roche stated that he attended a meeting on February 5<sup>th</sup>, along with Commissioners Kain and Knoche, updating the status of the Main Street project, Concept 5a. Chief Roche stated that this plan will be presented at a Public Meeting in March for resident feedback and was positively reviewed by those in attendance at his meeting.

This plan will lose one parking space, realign Prospect Street/CVS, coordinate the three traffic lights on Main Street, make upgrades for pedestrian safety and remove some old/dead trees.

Commissioner Kain noted that throughout this Main Street project, the State has been receptive to criticisms and suggestions to those affected and have done their best to accommodate all.

#### POSTC Rehiring/Reinstatement Procedure

Chief Roche stated that he received notice from the State of Connecticut, General Notice 18-01, outlining the procedure for rehiring Police Officers:

1. Must not be ineligible from hire per C.G.S. 7-291c – it was an amicable separation;
2. Must be returning to the agency from which they separated;
3. Must be returning within three years of separation from service.

4. If rehire is within 180 days of separation, need a background investigation and fingerprint submission
5. If rehire is over 181 days, need the above (#4) and polygraph, psychological and medical testing.

Chief Roche noted that these are State guidelines but if the situation presented itself at the Ridgefield Police Department, the Commission could require additional procedures before rehiring.

#### Strategic Planning Process

Chief Roche reported that he attended a meeting with Ridgefield Library Director Brenda McKinley and Board Chair Dean Miller regarding their 'Strategic Planning Process' plan. He stated that this was an informational meeting and the staff wanted some feedback on anything they could do to assist the police department.

Chief Roche offered the services of the Department to evaluate and analyze security issues at the library and offer suggestions, if any. The library will be contacting Captain Kreitz to set up a meeting.

Chief Roche stated that this is an opportunity for both agencies to work together for the community.

#### Statistics

Chief Roche stated that the incident total for the month of January 2018 was 1,742.

During the month, the Department responded to 79 Alarms, 26 Medical Assists, 24 Check Well-Beings, 4 DUI arrests, 6 Controlled Substance violations, completed 11 radar details, issued 628 Motor Vehicle Enforcement violations, investigated 64 Motor Vehicle Accidents, initiated 39 Public Relation contacts. There were four (4) K-9 assists for the month of January.

#### Annual Statistics

Chief Roche distributed a copy of the Annual Statistics for the Department. Chief Roche noted that due to our personnel loss (resignation and one Officer temporarily assigned to the Detective Bureau) and not participating in the State's Click It or Ticket wave, our overall count decreased from last year. Chief Roche also stated that due to the nature of the incidents – many stolen motor vehicles – investigations are more time-consuming.

Commissioner Knoche stated that personnel have a direct connection to statistics – they make it happen.

Commissioner Saloom asked Chief Roche how often the Officers are called to overdose incidents. Chief Roche stated that it is not often but our Officers carry Narcan with them and will dispense one vial in each nostril if the need arises. Chief Roche explained that since our Officers are all trained as

Emergency Medical Responders, they are First Responders and are sent to a call before the fire department so they initiate any emergency care necessary. Once the fire department is on scene, the police will let them handle the call.

### Budget

Chief Roche stated that he had received notice from Finance Director Kevin Redmond, that there were several cuts in the police department's proposed budget in the line items of vehicles, maintenance agreements, traffic control (line painting, crosswalks, etc.), building maintenance.

Chief Roche stated that at the Board of Selectmen budget meeting on February 6<sup>th</sup>, he explained to the Board the necessity of the funds requested and asked that the Board reconsider his budget cuts as it would affect the operation of his Department.

On February 8<sup>th</sup>, Chief Roche received notice from Mr. Redmond that the Board had reviewed the proposed budget cuts for the police department and had voted to restore some funds.

Chief Roche stated that he is still hoping to receive a positive response on his request to restore one frozen Officer position. Chief Roche stated that he should receive a response after the February 21<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Board of Selectmen.

### **Agenda Item #5a Chief's Goals 2018 Approval**

Chairman Knoche stated that Commissioner Saloom and Commissioner Savino established a goals list for Chief Roche for the Commissioners to approve as they had all been sent a draft of the proposed goals. Commissioner Kain motioned to approve the goals as submitted; Commissioner Saloom seconded the motion. The Chief goals for 2018:

1) **Departmental Staffing**

Complete the hiring of the new police recruit. Continue to work with the Board of Selectmen to fill the open positions.

2) **Traffic and Roadway Safety**

Work with the Board of Selectmen on funding a new traffic study. Conduct a thorough analysis of data to determine areas of high accident rates and, through education and enforcement, focus the Department's efforts to improve safety. Be proactive and coordinate with the State agencies to improve traffic safety in Ridgefield.

3) **Department Training**

Continue to participate in current and emerging training programs, schools and conferences for all Police Department personnel to ensure continued high level of professionalism of the Department.

4) **Community Partnerships**

Maintain communication and partnerships with Town departments, Boards, Commissions, Committees, the RCCASA Group, local businesses

and schools. Develop a specific focus on improving substance abuse education and prevention across the community and in schools, including improving upon DARE program offerings.

5) **Central Dispatch**

Continue ongoing dialogue and meetings with Town Officials in order to maintain the goal of a Central Dispatch Center at Police Headquarters for the Town of Ridgefield.

6) **Police Headquarters Upgrade and Renovation**

Continue ongoing dialogue and meetings with Police Commission Sub-committee, Architect and the Town Building Committee to maintain project activity and preparation for Capital Budget proposal.

RPC Sub-Committee: Commissioner Kain, Retired Commissioner Lecher

7) **Professional Development**

Attend a minimum of one professional conference with law enforcement colleagues, approved by the Board of Police Commissioners.

8) **Police Officer Survey**

Continue the annual Officer feed-back survey process.

9) **Fair and Impartial Policing**

All members of the Police Department are to attend training involving fair and impartial policing; work with the Police Commission to better understand research and statistics and implement the best practices as relate to Ridgefield.

10) **Physical Fitness**

The Chief of Police shall continue to participate in the Department's Voluntary Fitness program.

**Chief's Goals for 2018 accepted as submitted.**

**Agenda Item #5b Officer of the Year**

This topic will be discussed in Executive Session.

**Agenda Item #6a St. Mary Crosswalk**

Chief Roche reported to the Commission that he, Commissioner Kain, Commissioner Saloom and Commissioner Knoche met with Mark Ferrandino (overseer of project for St Mary) to review the site and discuss changes for resubmission of the plan to install a crosswalk.

Chief Roche stated that it was determined that the crosswalk will be placed at the intersection of High Ridge Avenue and Catoonah Street, the hedges lining the sidewalk on High Ridge Avenue across from the Church will be moved and the existing utility pole (which is clipped on the top from tractor trailers) needs to be replaced. Chief Roche stated that the existing sidewalk will be continued from the South side to the North side on High Ridge Avenue so that those who use the new crosswalk from St. Mary will be able to walk either left or right.

Chief Roche also stated that there is a thought to close off the side stairs

exiting St. Mary Church, so parishioners will have to use the front stairs which will access the crosswalk to cross either Catoonah Street or High Ridge Avenue. The Commissioners agreed that the changes were positive and will wait for revised plans to be submitted to the State DOT.

Commissioner Kain motioned to adjourn Public Session to Executive Session with Chief Roche and Major Brown; Commissioner Coffin seconded the motion.

**All in Favor**

**Public Session of the Police Commission Meeting adjourned at 7:40pm.**

**Public Session opened at 8:23pm**

Commissioner Kain motioned to nominate P.O. Christopher DiFalco for the 2017 Police Officer of the Year; seconded by Commissioner Saloom.

**All in Favor**

**P.O. Christopher DiFalco – 2017 Police Officer of the Year.**

Commissioner Saloom motioned to adjourn Public Session; Commissioner Coffin seconded the motion.

**All in Favor**

**Public Session of the Police Commission Meeting adjourned at 8:25pm.**

Respectfully submitted,

---

George Kain  
Secretary

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

**Commissioners Present:** Charles Knoche, Chairman  
George Kain, Secretary  
Marianne Coffin  
Stephen Saloom

**Absent:** Joseph Savino

**Also Present:** Chief John Roche  
Major Stephen Brown

Executive Session called to order at 7:42pm.

Executive Session adjourned at 8:23pm.

Respectfully submitted,

---

George Kain  
Secretary