

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL POLICE COMMISSION MEETING
of
Thursday February 16, 2017

Commissioners Present: Joseph Savino, Chairman
Charles Knoche, Secretary
Thomas Reynolds

Absent: Marianne Coffin
George Kain

Also Present: Chief John Roche

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Chairman Savino.

Agenda Item #1

Chairman Savino stated that there would be changes to the agenda: 5b-Officer of the Year would be moved to Executive Session. Chairman Savino asked the Commissioners if they had any other changes; there were none. All Commissioners agreed to the changes to the agenda.

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

Agenda Item #2

Chairman Savino requested a motion to accept the minutes of the January 9, 2017 Police Commission meeting. Commissioner Reynolds motioned to accept the minutes; Commissioner Knoche seconded the motion.

Minutes of the January 9, 2017 Police Commission meeting accepted as written.

Agenda Item #3a Commission Voice Mail

Commissioner Knoche stated that a message was received requesting additional speed signs on Farmingville Road. Traffic Sign Officer Caswell was assigned to review the area and report back to the Commission. Officer Caswell reported that there are two 25mph speed limit signs, traveling East near Lee Road and New Road; there are four signs, traveling West near Saunders Lane, Walnut Grove Road, Limekiln Road and Lee Road.

Officer Caswell recommends that four additional 25mph speed limit signs be installed, eastbound and westbound, near Ligi's Way and midway on the straightaway of Farmingville Road. Officer Caswell was advised to install the recommended speed signs with the Commission's approval.

Agenda Item #3b Commission Correspondence

Chairman Savino signed off on several Use of State Highway Permit requests for Ridgefield, to include: Run Like a Mother on May 14, 2017, Memorial Day parade on May 29, 2017, Tri-Ridgefield on June 4, 2017, Wolfpit Half Marathon on October 1, 2017, Thanksgiving Day Turkey Trot on November 23, 2017, Holiday

Tree Lighting Ceremony on November 24, 2017 and Holiday Stroll on December 1, 2017. These will now be forwarded to the State DOT for approval.

Agenda Item #4 Chief's Report

ACLU Report:

Chief Roche stated that the ACLU published a report addressing the ease for public contacts with police departments and cited that in many instances, it was difficult for someone to contact a person (sent to voice mail) and, when questioned, agencies were unable to provide answers adequate to questions posed by the public (this survey was concerned with filing a complaint).

The Ridgefield Police Department was listed as one of the departments where the caller was transferred to voice mail. Chief Roche stated that our department takes this seriously and followed up with a call to the ACLU offices. The issue was discussed with their representatives and the department noted to them the fact that we are in compliance with the requirements for availability of the public to file a complaint – we have the form and policy posted on the Town website, ridgefieldct.org, (Police > Internal Affairs Procedures (Civilian Complaint Procedure) and it is also under Permits and Forms > Civilian Complaint Procedure. The form can be printed out and sent to the department, dropped off, faxed or emailed (anonymous also accepted). In addition to the website, the forms may be obtained at Human Resources in Town Hall or from the Ridgefield Police Department.

Chief Roche stated that the department is furthering its proactive measures by conducting an internal quiz to refresh everyone on the procedure for assisting someone with a complaint.

Chief Roche stated that the ACLU complimented Major Brown for his follow-up call and the level of response and concern exhibited by the department.

Correspondence

- A thank you letter was received from a resident for Sgt. Durling and P.O Caba for their assistance.
- A letter was received from a resident thanking P.O VanWattum for his assistance at a motor vehicle accident.
- A letter was received from a resident thanking P.O. Ryan for her assistance with an incident.

HQ Tour

Chief Roche reported to the Commissioners that First Selectman Marconi and Selectmen board members, Maureen Kozlark and Steve Zemo, participated in a tour of Headquarters on February 10th so that they could have a visual in preparation for the tri-board meeting (Board of Police Commissioners, Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance) to discuss the topic of HQ renovation/expansion. Chief Roche reported to the Commissioners that he explained to the board members where we were and the improvements we have made, the expenditures (\$800,000) since the inception of this project, and the planned improvements.

Chief Roche stated that the reporter for the Ridgefield Press was at this tour and will publish an article on the proposed project in a future edition of the paper.

Annual Statistics

Chief Roche distributed a copy of the Department's annual statistics to the Commissioners for their review. He noted an increase in motor vehicle activity and a decrease in other areas – Burglary, Larceny, Criminal Mischief and Assault. The Commissioners thanked Chief Roche for the breakdown of major incidents.

Statistics

Chief Roche stated that the incident total for the month of January was 1,908. During the month, the Department responded to 67 Alarms, 23 Medical Assists, 48 Motor Vehicle Accidents, 707 Motor Vehicle Enforcement violations, 7 DUI arrests, 5 Controlled Substance violations, and 13 Pistol Permit applicants. There was 1 K-9 assist for the month of January.

State of CT DOT – Speed on Main St

In July of 2016, Chief Roche, on behalf of the Commission, submitted an application to the State DOT for a reduction in the speed limit from Main Street/Route 33 to Route 33/Wilton Road East (approximately two-tenths of a mile) from 35mph to 25mph, both North and South. This change was prompted by a resident who lives on this section of Route 33 and felt that the 35mph speed was too high.

The DOT sent a reply on January 2, 2017 stating that they have studied this area and the request and believes that the existing speed limit is appropriate and no changes are warranted.

Community Policing/Public Relations Report

- P.O. Caba conducted a tour of HQ.
- SRO's Giglio, Luis and Daly participated in the Kids and Cops Program in conjunction with the Boys and Girls Club of Ridgefield.

January - A total of 3 (three) car seats were inspected/installed.

Training Report

- Department attended CPR/AED Training which included an EMR update. Held at HQ and instructed by Lt. Smith.
- Lt. Gates, Sgt. Durling, P.O. Romero, P.O. DiFalco and P.O. Shimko attended Re-Certification at WCSU.
- Sgt. Durling attended Methods of Instruction at POSTC.
- Capt. Kreitz, Dispatcher Admin Browning attended Viper 911 Administrator Training at Meriden.
- P.O. Shimko attended High Visibility Traffic Enforcement at POSTC.

Viper 911

Chief Roche reported to the Commissioners that AT&T personnel and State of Connecticut personnel were at Headquarters today to implement the changeover to the new State Viper 911 system which replaced the two year old NG-911 system. All Officers and Dispatchers will be trained on the new program and it seems to be working well.

Radio System Update

Chief Roche stated that concentration is focused on the last part of the radio system – Moses Mountain tower. There will be a test of the new system in March and, if all is well, it will be launched.

Phone System

Chief Roche reported to the Commissioners that the Town is in the process of implementing a new phone system (VOIP) which was supposed to go live on Wednesday. Due to some glitches, the new target date is February 22nd. Chief Roche noted that he has the Viper 911 system separate from the Town phone system so that there will be no conflicts or interruptions with the 911 system.

Blue Plan

Chief Roche stated that the Fairfield County Chiefs have implemented a program – Blue Plan – that will ensure adequate coverage of any serious event that may occur. There will be three levels of response and if an event occurs, area departments will respond with officers in accordance with the level indicated which will provide structure in any given circumstance and avoid depleting any one department's resources.

Agenda Item #5a Chief's Goals 2017

Approval of Chief's Goals will be deferred to the March meeting due to the absence of Commissioner Kain who is one of the sub-committee members.

Agenda Item #5b Choice of Officer of the Year

Moved to Executive Session.

Agenda Item #5c Building Expansion/Renovation

Chief Roche stated that he would like to set up a special meeting with the Commissioners and former Commissioner Lecher (original member of building sub-committee) to discuss and review the HQ project. The Commissioners will decide on a date for that meeting.

Agenda Item #6a Cedar Lane at West Lane

Traffic Sign Officer Caswell was requested to survey this intersection. Officer Caswell suggests reconfiguration of the median at the entrance to Cedar Lane and change in the traffic flow. The proposal by Officer Caswell would make the

right side of the median (exiting onto West Lane) handle eastbound traffic and the left side of the median handle westbound traffic (entering Cedar Lane). Officer Caswell feels that with this setup, traffic exiting Cedar Lane has a better line of sight looking north on West Lane. This change would involve the reconfiguration of the median to make traffic flow easily and new signage to alert motorists.

Cedar Lane at Danbury Road

This is the Route 35 end of Cedar Lane which has also been under review by the State for safety improvements. A resident requested a traffic light which the State has rejected.

Commissioner Knoche stated that as you come out of Cedar Lane and make a left into New York, there is a plot with dirt and he suggested the possibility of implementing this area as a turning area for left hand turns.

Chief Roche will forward this idea to Erika Lindeberg (State DOT) for consideration.

Agenda Item #6b West Lane (Cedar Lane)

Chief Roche stated that he had communication from Erika of the State DOT who is personally overseeing this request. In response to a resident's safety concerns involving the "S" curve on West Lane, the State will be improving signage and installing high-visibility posts to alert drivers of the curvatures in the road at this location.

Agenda Item #6c Depot Road

No further updates at this time.

Agenda Item #6d Old Quarry Road

Chief Roche reported that he received the minutes of the meeting on The Solara of Ridgefield, 55 Old Quarry Road, which will be an assisted living/memory care facility. Chief Roche stated that with the proposed turn lane and by-pass lane, this development will have no impact on traffic.

Agenda Item #6e Main Street Renovation

At the January 28th meeting on the Main Street Project, Concept 5 was viewed and discussed. Chief Roche noted how the DOT is taking into consideration the historical background of Ridgefield, the concerns of the community and are trying their best to accommodate the needs of Ridgefield with this project.

DOT will submit a revised plan at a meeting on February 28th, 5:30pm, at Town Hall.

Agenda Item #6f Uniform Update

This item will be tabled to the March meeting.

Agenda Item #6g Horizontal Curve Project

Chief Roche reported that he received notification from the State identifying seventeen (17) curves in Ridgefield to be included with the horizontal curve project to improve horizontal curve safety on eligible roads that will be updated with high visibility signs, approved by the Commissioners. The roads involved in this upgrade in Ridgefield are Neds Mountain Road and Old Stagecoach Road.

Commissioner Knoche motioned to adjourn to Executive Session and request Chief Roche to join; Commissioner Reynolds seconded the motion.

All in Favor

Public Meeting adjourned to Executive Session at 8:12pm.

Public Meeting opened at 8:35pm by Chairman Savino

Motion by Commissioner Knoche to nominate P.O. Shawn Murray as the 2016 Police Officer of the Year; seconded by Commissioner Reynolds.

All in Favor

P.O. Murray chosen as the 2016 Officer of the Year.

Commissioner Reynolds motioned to adjourn Public Session at 8:42pm; Commissioner Knoche seconded the motion.

All in Favor

Public Meeting adjourned at 8:42pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles Knoche
Secretary

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

Commissioners Present: Joseph Savino, Chairman
Charles Knoche, Secretary
Thomas Reynolds

Absent: Marianne Coffin
George Kain

Also Present: Chief John Roche

Executive Session commenced at 8:12pm.

Executive Session adjourned at 8:35 pm to Public Session.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles Knoche
Secretary