

MINUTES OF THE POLICE COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING

Thursday, June 11, 2020 at 5:00pm via Zoom

Commissioners Present: Marianne Coffin, Chairperson
Via Zoom Nicholas Perna, Secretary
George Kain
Joseph Savino
Issy Caporale

Also Present: Chief Jeff Kreitz
Via Zoom Major Stephen Brown

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

The meeting was called to order at 5:00pm by Chairperson Coffin.

AGENDA ITEM #1 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairperson Coffin requested a motion to accept the minutes of May 18, 2020. Commissioner Kain motioned to accept the minutes; Commissioner Savino seconded the motion.

All in Favor

Minutes of the May 18, 2020 Police Commission Meeting accepted as written.

AGENDA ITEM #2 COMMISSION CORRESPONDENCE

A. Voicemail

Commissioner Perna reported there were two voicemails. One was from a resident concerned about the speed on Tackora Trail. She requested police monitor the speed and possibly put in speed bumps. Commissioner Perna explained that the Commission is not in favor of speed bumps. The department will monitor the road for violations.

The other voicemail raised concern about motorists driving on Copps Hill Road and cutting through the cemetery. The caller found this frightening. Capt. Terzian will follow up with this.

B. Written Correspondence

Chairperson Coffin stated she received email from a resident inquiring about department policies as part of the Eight Can't Wait Campaign. Major Brown stated that this campaign has been around for about 5 years. The purpose of this campaign is to improve police interactions and accountability. Chief Kreitz stated that the department has received numerous inquiries and responds to them all. The responses are:

Eight Can't Wait Campaign

- Our use of force policy prohibits chokeholds and strangleholds, unless there is an imminent threat of death to a citizen or an officer and there is no other option. We are trained to avoid hog-tying because of the restriction to one's breathing.
- The Ridgefield Police Department's policies include de-escalation. We train in de-escalation techniques and have an in-house instructor who has had specialized training in the topic.
- Our policy and Connecticut law require a verbal warning by police before using deadly physical force, if feasible.
- Our policy includes several means of handling force incidents and gives officers options.
- We are obligated to intervene when another officer is breaking the law, engaging in unethical conduct, or violating civil rights.
- Our policy and CT law require that shooting at moving vehicles is prohibited unless such officer has a reasonable belief that there is an imminent threat of death to such officer or another person posed by the fleeing motor vehicle or an occupant of such motor vehicle.
- A force continuum describes an escalating series of actions an officer may take to resolve a situation. This continuum generally has many levels, and officers are instructed to respond with a level of force appropriate to the situation at hand, acknowledging that the officer may move from one part of the continuum to another in a matter of seconds. We include several options for officers in dealing with use of force situations and how to avoid them if possible. Included in our

policy and training is the language from the CT law that proscribes police use of force and Supreme Court cases and guidance on the subject.

- Use of force reporting is comprehensive. When officers use force, they are required to complete reports. Supervisors investigate all uses of force and report on their findings through the chain of command. Commanders review uses of force and recommend discipline of necessary.

Recording of incidents of use of physical force, discharge of a firearm or engagement of a pursuit. Reporting (a) Each law enforcement unit, as defined in section 7-294a, shall create and maintain a record detailing any incident during which a police officer, as defined in section 7-294a, (1) uses physical force that is likely to cause serious physical injury, as defined in section 53a-3, to another person or the death of another person, including, but not limited to, striking another person with an open or closed hand, club or baton, kicking another person, using pepper spray or an electroshock weapon on another person or using a chokehold or other method of restraint applied to the neck area of another person, (2) discharges a firearm, except during a training exercise or in the course of dispatching an animal, or (3) engages in a pursuit, as defined in subsection (a) of section 14-283a. Such record shall include, but not limited to: The name of the police officer, the time and place of the incident, a description of what occurred during the incident and to the extent known, the names of the victims and witnesses present at such incident.

(b) Not later than February 1, 2020 and annually thereafter, each law enforcement unit shall prepare and submit a report concerning incidents described in subsection (a) of this section during the preceding calendar year to the Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division within the Office of Policy and Management. Such report shall include (1) the records described in subsection (a) of this section, (2) summarized data compiled from such records, and (3) statistics on each use of force incident, including, but not limited to, (A) the race and gender of such person upon whom force was used, provided the identification of such characteristics shall be based on the observation and perception of the police officer, (B) the number of times force was used on such person, and (C) any injury suffered by such person against whom force was

used. Each law enforcement unit shall, prior to submission of any such report pursuant to this subsection, redact any information from such report that may identify a minor, witness or victim.

- The Ridgefield Police Department trains officers in conflict mediation and resolution through crisis negotiation training. We send all of our officers to specialized crisis intervention training.
- We have a comprehensive hiring practice which includes a thorough background investigation into a candidate's history with crime, racism, discrimination, homophobia, xenophobia and transphobia.
- We do not have an early intervention system to examine complaints. We utilize psychologists in this process when necessary. We do not have a specific number of complaints that would trigger a reprimand or termination. Some complaints may involve minor transgressions, while others are more serious.
- We collect data on every use of force incident. Thankfully, our department has a minimal number of use of force incidents. We have not had any in-custody deaths.

AGENDA ITEM #3 CHIEF'S REPORT

A. Monthly Statistics

Chief Kreitz reported the stats are down for the month of May. This is due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Accidents are up and there were seven cars reported stolen. He stressed the importance of locking your car.

B. Traffic/Sign Report

Reported to the Police Commission by Traffic Sign Officer Caswell:

Regarding: West Mountain Road/Oscaleta Road

On May 28, 2020 Captain Terzian requested that I survey the area of West Mountain Road (Route 822)/ Oscaleta Road (West Entrance) intersection. Captain Terzian received a request from a town resident, Mr. Carl Forcheski, to investigate the possibility improving the sight lines at that intersection. Mr. Forcheski stated that he is concerned with the increase of foliage along the east side of Oscaleta Road the sight lines to exit are reduced.

I surveyed the area to investigate, and observed a sight line looking east from Oscaleta Road are extremely limited. I concur with Mr. Forcheski's calculations that a driver has approximately one second to determine whether it is safe or not to enter the intersection.

I contacted by email the CT Department of Transportation office representative Natasha Fatu to survey the area as it is a state road. I advised her of the situation and forwarded the enclosed photos.

I inquired about solutions ranging from brush trimming and signage to installing a flashing yellow and sign similar to the light at the intersection of Route 102 Branchville Road and Rockwell Road. At this time I am waiting a response from the DOT office.

I spoke with Mr. Forcheski and advised him the matter was being looked into. He was very happy with the quick response.

Chief Kreitz stated the State is coming out to look at the intersection in question. Chief Kreitz presented a letter to the Police Commissioners from the Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT) proposing to install new **Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon** (RRFBs) located at the Route 33 near Rockwell Road midblock crosswalk. This is to increase the visibility and safety for pedestrians and motorists. Federal guidance and data from national research was used to determine which crosswalk locations posed a higher risk of accidents. Posted speed limits, traffic volume and visibility were some of the criteria taken into consideration for this project. Chairperson Coffin requested a motion to accept that the town will check into the beacons. Commissioner Perna made the motion and Commissioner Caporale seconded the motion.

All in Favor

C. Training/PR Report

The following report was submitted by Capt. Platt Division of Public Standards

**RIDGEFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT
TRAINING & COMMUNITY POLICING/PUBLIC RELATIONS REPORT
May 2020**

Since the start of the Covid-19 Pandemic in early March, the town had ceased all non-essential travel and training for town employees. This resulted in postponement and/or cancellation of the following Training and

Public Relations Programs:

Postponed Training:

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| March 23-25 | Accreditation Audit – Sgt. Knoche |
| May 1 | Taser Instructor Recertification – Lt. Raines and Sgt. Knoche |
| May 11-13 | Colt Armorers School – Lt. Fowler |

Cancelled Public Relations:

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| March 21 | Coffee with a Cop at Steve’s Bagels |
| April 18 | Police Officer Applicant Training |
| May 5 | Officer of the Year presentation at the Leir Retreat Center |
| May 21 | Police Memorial Ceremony |
| May 25 | Drug Take-Back event at ERMS |

Virtual Training attended:

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| May 19 | Sgt. Clarke and Sgt. Knoche attend an 8 hour live Stream training on Supervisory Liability presented by Eric Daigle from Daigle Law Group |
|---------------|---|

Public Relations Completed:

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| May 1-31 | Push-ups for the Pantry fund drive for the Food Pantry in Ridgefield |
| May 18 | Mobile Police Memorial Ceremony completed with Video Presentation |
| March 20-May 20 | Facebook Story Time with the Police M-W-F for 8 Weeks |
| March 20-May 31 | Multiple Birthday Party/Graduation Party drive by police parades |

A total of 20 Public Relations were performed during the month to include:

- Multiple Social Media posts of police activities
- Various talks with downtown shop owners and community members

D. **Policy Review**

Chief Kreitz stated that Eric Daigle of Daigle Law Group, who is nationally recognized, will help consolidate and enhance the policies

of the police department. These will eventually be posted on the police website.

AGENDA ITEM #4 NEW BUSINESS

A. Body Camera Discussion

Chief Kreitz stated that he has been researching body cameras for the police department along with Major Brown and Captain Terzian. Chief Kreitz stated it is expensive but so worth it. The Police Commissioners were all in favor of this. Commissioner Savino made a motion to continue the effort to purchase body worn cameras. Commissioner Caporale second the motion.

All in Favor

AGENDA ITEM #5 OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business reported for the month of May.

AGENDA ITEM #6 UNION PARTICIPATION

There was no Union participation for the month of May.

AGENDA ITEM #7 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation for the Zoom meeting.

Chairperson Coffin requested a motion to adjourn the Police Commission Meeting at 5:50 pm. Commissioner Kain made the motion and Commissioner Perna seconded the motion.

All in favor

Respectfully Submitted,

Nick Perna
Police Commission Secretary