

**MINUTES OF THE POLICE COMMISSION MEETING  
of  
Thursday, November 10, 2016**

**Commissioners Present:** George Kain, Chairman  
Joseph Savino, Secretary  
Thomas Reynolds

Marianne Coffin

**Absent:** Charles Knoche

**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 7:02pm by Chairman Kain.

**Agenda Review**

Chairman Kain requested a motion to change the order of the Agenda to accommodate attendees at the meeting. Items to be moved to the beginning of the Agenda:

- 5a) Captain Kreitz (Division of Professional Standards)
- 5d) Discussion on Bailey Avenue
- 5e) Discussion of additional crosswalk at 77 Sunset Lane

Commissioner Reynolds motioned to approve the move; Commissioner Savino seconded the move.

**All in Favor**

**Agenda items moved to the beginning of the agenda.**

Chairman Kain stated that there would not be an Executive Session after the Public Session tonight.

**Agenda Item #2**

Chairman Kain requested a motion to accept the minutes of the October 12, 2016 Special Police Commission meeting. Commissioner Coffin motioned to accept the minutes; Commissioner Savino seconded the motion.

**All in Favor**

**Minutes of October 12, 2016 accepted.**

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

Commissioner Savino stated that he received a message from a resident on Rockwell Road concerned about the speed of vehicles on Branchville Road. When walking, vehicles travel very fast around a blind curve. Chief Roche is having the Uniform Division monitor this area.

A resident of Peaceable Street complained of vehicles passing the school bus and speed as this road is used as a cut-thru to Route 35 in New York.

Commissioner Kain thanked Commissioner Savino for a good job in keeping up with the Commission's voice mail over the year. Commissioner Savino thanked him and asked about cancelling out any old voice mails on the server. Commissioner Kain agreed.

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

There was one letter from First Selectman Marconi in response to the Commission's request to change the name of Ligi's Way. First Selectman Marconi stated that the Board of Selectmen discussed the request and voted unanimously to erect a sign designating the road as *Chief Richard Ligi Memorial Highway*, keeping the name of the road unchanged.

**Agenda Item #3c Division of Professional Standards Annual Report:**

Captain Kreitz greeted the Commissioners and thanked them for moving his report to the beginning of the agenda. Captain Kreitz stated that he has broken down his job description into different categories that he will review with the Commissioners and began by stating that his areas of responsibility cover: Training, Media Relations, Public Relations/Crime Prevention/Community Policing, the DARE Program, the School Resource Officer Program, the Accreditation Program and the FTO Program.

**Training**

Captain Kreitz stated that the State mandates that over a three year period, Officers need to accumulate a minimum of 60 hours of training and that all of our Officers exceed that mandate through in-house and in-service training. Captain Kreitz stated that in-house training consists of Firearms, Narcan, Taser, Emergency Medical Response (EMR), Legal Updates, Alcohol Test. At Squad level, Officers are refreshed in local business maps and tours, Noise Ordinance review, Exposure Control and any policies deemed priority for review such as Domestic Violence and our Pursuit Policy.

Outside of HQ, the Department has participated in classes/schools, seminars, and conferences, to include: Motorcycle Accident Reconstruction, Interview and Interrogation, Basic SWAT School, FTO School, High Visibility Traffic Enforcement.

Captain Kreitz stated that the Department has seven Post-Certified Police instructors in the fields of EMR, OC, Handcuffing, Firearms, Decision Shooting, Use of Force, Taser, Arrest and Control, Impaired Driving, Building Search, Personal Protective Equipment, Blood Borne Pathogens, Patrol Rifle and Less than Lethal Force. The Department also utilizes and appreciates the assistance of Post-Certified civilian instructors in the fields of emergency medical response, and human behavior/communication.

Media Relations

Captain Kreitz stated that on a daily basis, he reviews the Department's press logs and speaks with local media outlets (Ridgefield Press, New Times, Hamlet Hub). He also is responsible to research/respond to any reporter's inquiries, oversees the Department's Facebook/Twitter pages and completes releases for any major incidents.

Public Relations / Crime Prevention / Community Policing

Captain Kreitz stated that he is responsible for setting up requested tours of HQ, schedules school safety talks (for both students and staff) in local nursery schools and day care centers, and makes himself available for interviews with students who may call for assistance/information.

Also included under this topic are Department programs such as:

Halloween Party (great success – ran out of candy), Senior Positive Initiative Forum (Det. Knoche represents the Department in this joint effort with the FD and RVNA.), SMART Trailer, Safe Rides (primarily managed by SRO Luis at the high school), DARE Program (taught by SRO Luis, SRO Giglio, SRO Daly and P.O. Samoskevich), Junior Police Academy (the SRO's all participate in this program for 10–14 year olds and it is a well-received, fun program), Prescription Drug Take-Back Program (approximately 50 to 80 pounds of drugs are taken in at the RPD each month. RPD has partnered with Bissell's Pharmacy for two events and will continue this in 2017), GRADD (drug awareness program for high school Seniors which is prepared by SRO Luis), Memorial Gravesite Ceremony, and participation in local fairs (Boehringer Ingelheim, RVNA Health Fair and Chamber of Commerce Health Fair), Kids and Cops (Officers join youths from the Ridgefield Boys and Girls Club for sport participation), Citizen Police Academy (Law Enforcement basics for interested residents taught by the Officers), Cops and Cones (program initiated by Officer DiFalco where Officers mix and mingle with residents at Deborah Ann's Ice Cream Shop), Rides to School.

School Resource Officer Program (SRO)

Captain Kreitz stated that SRO Luis covers Ridgefield High, SRO Giglio covers East Ridge (main school), Branchville, Veterans Park and Farmingville schools. SRO Daly covers Scotts Ridge (main school), Ridgebury, Barlow Mountain and Scotland schools. Captain Kreitz stated that the duties of the SRO include:

- Daily campus security checks.
- Planning, training and drills for lock-downs for both students and staff.
- Advisor to the schools.
- Attend faculty and administration meetings.
- Coordinate Police activities.
- Investigate crimes and incidents at the schools.
- Assist with the school emergency plan.
- Conduct a variety of classes to include DARE, Forensics, Government and Politics classes.
- Part of All Hazards Committee

Captain Kreitz commented to the Commissioners that the best outcome of the SRO Program that he sees is the strong bond and relationship established between the Officers and the student body/teachers.

#### FTO Program

Captain Kreitz stated that the Department has 16 POST-Certified Field Training Instructors (FTO) to assist with this program; new Officers are required by the State to complete 400 hours of training before they can go solo; sample reports and tests must be completed (tests updated this past year by Sgt. Knoche). Captain Kreitz stated the P.O. Boulware and P.O. Geller successfully completed field training this past summer and P.O. Hartling is currently going through the program and is scheduled to complete the program by the end of this year.

#### Accreditation

Captain Kreitz stated that Sgt. Clarke is the Department's Accreditation Officer and he is responsible to keep the Department's accreditation current. To maintain our standing, the Department must comply with State standards and are audited every three years. Captain Kreitz stated that Sgt. Clarke is self-sufficient and does a great job of keeping us up-to-date. Captain Kreitz stated that the auditor's quotes were: "outstanding", "phenomenal – he likes what he does and it shows".

Captain Kreitz concluded his report and asked if there were any questions. Commissioner Coffin asked Captain Kreitz if he had enough resources for the correct training needed. Captain Kreitz stated that he had.

Commissioner Reynolds asked about the training and who initiates it. Captain Kreitz stated that he posts a list of classes or Officers can go online and if they see something, they can request the class. A Supervisor may see a class that he feels would be suitable for someone in his/her squad. The Chief, Major or Captains could also request training for an individual.

Commissioner Kain asked if an Officer is certified can they come back and teach other Officers. Captain Kreitz stated yes - he is doing that now. Lt. Smith has conducted EMR training and we have held a re-cert class at HQ where we invited other departments to attend; it is a great cost savings.

Commissioner Reynolds spoke about the amount of drugs taken in on a monthly basis at HQ. Captain Kreitz agreed that it is amazing but stated that he also likes to join in events outside of HQ due to the fact that some people do not like to go to a police department so it gives them the opportunity to dispose of their unused drugs.

The Commissioners thanked Captain Kreitz for his presentation and for a job well done.

**Agenda Item #4 Chief's Report****P.O Gjodesen**

Officer Gjodesen received a Letter from the Chief as recommended by the Commendation Board for an incident that occurred on September 29<sup>th</sup> when P.O. Gjodesen discovered face masks, a loaded pistol and marijuana on a driver during a routine traffic stop. Officer Gjodesen's professional skills and quick action took into custody an individual with a criminal background and potential of violent behavior. A copy of Officer Gjodesen's letter was included in his personnel file.

**Department Statistics**

Chief Roche stated that the Department responded to 2,212 service calls in October to include 84 alarms, 31 medical assists, 14 disabled vehicles; 23 fingerprint applicants, 14 radar details, 6 traffic details, 45 motor vehicle accidents, 645 motor vehicle enforcements, 3 Controlled Substance violations, 1 Narcotic arrest, 3 DUI arrests and 6 pistol permit applicants (135 to date, 87 in 2015). There were five (5) K-9 assists in October.

**Sign Report - October**

- A new *Stop* sign and painted *Stop* bar were installed at Farmingville Road traveling East at Ligi's Way. A temporary *Stop* sign and cones were also placed at the site for a period of two weeks to alert motorists and have since been removed. A *Stop Sign Ahead* sign was also installed and the Adopt a Street sign was moved to the same post to improve the visibility of the *Stop* sign. Reflective posts and flashing red lights were installed on the *Stop* sign and posts to further improve visibility.
- Installed 4 *Way Stop* signs and reflective posts at East Ridge Road and Governor Street.
- Installed a *Traffic from the Right Does Not Stop* sign and reflective posts at Grove Street and Old Quarry Road.
- Removed the *Stop Ahead* sign on Fairview Avenue.
- Straightened the *Stop* sign at Regan Road and Ridgebury Road.
- Replaced the *25mph* speed limit sign on Oscaleta Road.
- Installed *School Bus Stop Ahead* signs on Ledges Road.
- Replaced all three *Stop* signs and a *3-Way Stop* sign at Peaceable Street and Old South Salem Road.

**Correspondence**

- A letter was received from a resident thanking Sgt. Brown and P.O. Geller for doing a great job.
- A letter was received from a resident thanking P.O. Ryan for the installation of a car set and the Car Seat Program.
- A letter was received from a resident thanking P.O. Capozzi for his presence and aid during a medical call.

Training:

- P.O. Romero attended Basic SWAT School held in various locations throughout the State.
- Lt. Fowler assisted with the instruction at the Basic SWAT School.
- P.O. Boulware, P.O. Geller and P.O. Hartling attended Emotional Survival for Law Enforcement at the Leir Estate.
- P.O. Boulware, P.O. Geller and P.O. Hartling attended Telecommunications training in Meriden.
- Dispatcher Browning attended the TAC Officer update.
- P.O. Hartling attended High Risk Motor Vehicle Stops at POSTC (make-up).

Public Relations:

- Tour of Headquarters given by P.O. Gjodesen for the Mom's Club of Ridgefield.
- Captain Kreitz participated in a Prescription Drug Take-Back event held in partnership with Bissell's Pharmacy – 52.9 pounds of unwanted/unused medications were collected.
- Lt. Smith and P.O. Caba conducted a Car Seat Clinic at Fairfield County Bank in Wilton (15 seats checked/installed).
- P.O. Caba and P.O. DiFalco conducted a Car Seat Clinic at The Lounsbury House as part of their Family Day (8 seats checked/installed).
- Captain Kreitz and SRO Luis presented a safety talk and showed the cruiser at Apple Blossom Day School (Boehringer Ingelheim).
- Captain Kreitz and Det. DuBord offered an Identity Theft/Scam Presentation at the Ridgefield Library in partnership with Edward Jones Investments.
- The Annual Halloween Party was held at The Lounsbury House.
- A total of 10 (ten) car seats were checked/installed in the month of October (in addition to the car seat clinic installs).

Main Street

Chief Roche stated that the DOT responded to the Commission's request 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 request was not supported by the Connecticut DOT after their review and observations – there is ample visibility in this area. They will keep the speed limit at 35mph. Chief Roche will update the requestor of this item.

**Agenda Item #5a Division of Professional Standards Report**

Moved to beginning of agenda.

**Agenda Item #5b Election of Commission Officers**

Commissioner Coffin motioned to nominate Commissioner Savino as the next Chairman of the Commission; seconded by Commissioner Reynolds.

**All in Favor**

Commissioner Coffin motioned to nominate Commissioner Knoche as the next Secretary of the Commission; seconded by Commissioner Savino.

**All in Favor**

**Commissioner Savino elected as Chairman of the Police Commission and Commissioner Knoche elected as Secretary of the Police Commission.**

**Agenda Item #5c Operating Budget Drafts**

Chief Roche requested an extension from the Commissioners on the 2017-2018 Budget drafts as he has not received the numbers from Town Hall. He will forward them the draft before the next Commission meeting if he receives the numbers in time.

**Agenda Item #5d Main Street/Bailey Avenue**

First Selectman Marconi and members of the committee regarding the downtown Ridgefield transportation study were present to discuss the possible concepts for this area. First Selectman Marconi stated that the committee has viewed three concepts and were leaning toward Concept 3 at this time. Mr. Marconi stated that they have begun to address the possibility of closing part of Bailey Avenue to traffic and returning the remaining roadway to two-way traffic. Mr. Marconi stated that in light of this potential approach, a traffic counter was placed on Bailey Avenue to ascertain the amount of vehicular traffic on the road (very high) and he would like some feedback from the Commissioners on the proposed closing.

Ursula of Interiors by Ursula on Main Street stated that their goal is to improve downtown Ridgefield, make it pedestrian-friendly and give it more of a village feeling. She stated that Bailey Avenue could be closed from Main Street and then by Ridgefield Press or Bailey's Backyard, turn it a two-way road. By closing off the top of the street, it would allow for something like a farmer's market to open which would bring foot traffic to the area.

The goal is to keep Ridgefield's beautiful Main Street and tree-lined streets while working with the State traffic planners to improve traffic flow and prevent gridlock.

Mr. Marconi stated that the State is reviewing the current alleyways along Main Street and their contribution to traffic interruptions when a car enters onto Main Street.

The Commissioners agreed that they feel any closure of Bailey Avenue would encourage drivers to find an alternate route which would be the parking lot

between Governor Street/Bailey Avenue. Commissioner Coffin stated that this would not be a good option and when all the tenants fill the shops there, bringing in additional traffic to the lot, it will become a safety issue.

Chief Roche stated that the traffic count was very high. He suggested taking other counts in the Spring and Summer and place a counter at Main Street and another one at the point of the proposed two-way traffic. Chief Roche stated that he feels that two-way traffic on this road could only occur if the road was redesigned – there is too much of a curve there now.

Mr. Mulvaney, who owns a business on Bailey Avenue, agreed with Chief Roche on the redesign of the current roadway due to the hairpin turn existing now. Mr. Mulvaney is opposed to two-way traffic on this road.

Mr. Marconi stated that the State is willing to work with the Town on any ideas submitted and they will propose a Concept 4 at a meeting on December 8<sup>th</sup> for the Town's review. Mr. Marconi stated that there is no definite plan in place but did say that the loading zone on Main Street will be eliminated, the realignment of the shopping center driveway by CVS to be directly across from Prospect Street will occur followed by synchronization of Main Street traffic signals, and the possible introduction of an electronic crossing signal at 440 Main Street which would coordinate with the traffic lights.

Commissioner Kain stated that he would like to see what is proposed in Concept 4 and will discuss it at the January Police Commission meeting. He stated that the Commission is reluctant to close Bailey Avenue – he would rather wait to see how the realignment and signalization improvements help. He would also like the additional traffic counts performed as outlined by Chief Roche. Commissioner Kain stated that the Commission would address this topic again in January after reviewing the Concept 4 proposal.

#### **Agenda Item #5e Coach Homes Crosswalk**

Martin Handshy, representing Charter Group Partners (Coach Homes project, 77 Sunset Lane) appeared before the Commission to request the addition of a crosswalk to their proposal to allow for the preservation of the existing trees. This additional crosswalk would give the twelve residents in this section the ability to get to development's clubhouse. The objective would be to avoid pedestrian traffic along the existing tree line which would have occurred with the installation of a sidewalk in front of the trees as proposed in the original submission – it was determined that the sidewalk would encroach on the root system of the trees.

Commissioner Kain stated that they are proposing the creation of two walking points to access something on the same side of the road.



Chief Roche asked Mr. Handsby if they could create internal pathways to the clubhouse rather than the crosswalk. Mr. Handsby stated that they could easily do this and that will eliminate the second crosswalk and save the trees.

In a related matter, Mr. Handsby stated that at the outset of this project, he had come to the Commission and they had spoken about the access driveway off of Sunset Lane. The Commission had sent a letter to Planning and Zoning stipulating that the access driveway off of Sunset Lane be exclusively used for the proposed development and the access road to the back of the Schlumberger property be used only for emergency vehicles. Mr. Handsby stated that he has not done anything permanent to close this area off and suggested installing a breakaway gate to preserve access.

**Agenda Item #6a – Cedar Lane**

Under review by State DOT – nothing to report at this time.

**Agenda Item #6b – West Lane 'S' Curve Improvements**

Under review by State DOT – nothing to report at this time.

**Agenda Item #6c – Depot Road**

Under review by Metropolitan North and State DOT – no update to report.

**Agenda Item #6d Officer Survey Response Discussion**

Chief Roche stated that since the Commissioners have had a chance to review the Officer Annual Survey responses, they can review some items:

- Commissioner Savino inquired as to what plated cruiser safety meant. Chief Roche explained that Officers wear bullet-proof vests but in the event of a high impact call, he is requesting a high-velocity vest be placed in each cruiser – these can be worn over the Officer's clothing for protection.
- Uniforms – Chief Roche stated that when he was at the IACP meeting, he met with several vendors and looked at the different options available for uniforms. He stated that he must report that there are not many that are producing dark grey items.

In response to the Commissioners, Chief Roche stated that over the years, the Department has changed the uniform hats, ties, collar brass, fabric in uniforms and introduced winter and summer weight pants.

In response to Commissioner Coffin, Chief Roche stated that the Department operates on a Quartermaster program and we are budgeted a certain amount of money for uniforms each fiscal year. The Quartermaster (Captain Terzian) posts an order form twice a year and reviews the submissions before ordering. Equipment is replaced as needed and all Officers just received new winter jackets.

In response to Commissioner Coffin's question, Chief Roche stated that it would be approximately \$80,000 to \$90,000 to change the uniforms.

Officer Daly was in attendance and he stated that per the Officers' surveys, 70% are requesting uniform changes. He offered to come to the next meeting with samples of what is available and would be more modern than what we have now.

Commissioner Savino asked Officer Daly if he was looking at a style change or a material change. Officer Daly stated that it is functionality – today's Officer has so much more to carry on him/her and with him/her to do his/her job.

Commissioner Kain stated that since the Chief has some ideas from IACP, they should meet, discuss the possibilities and present their ideas at the January Police Commission meeting.

- Two Week Flexibility – Chief Roche stated that in the Spring and Fall, there will be a two week flexibility with uniform changes as the weather is unpredictable. When long sleeves are scheduled to be worn and it is still very warm out, the Shift Supervisor can permit his squad to remain in short sleeves and vice-versa for short sleeves when long sleeves are scheduled to be worn.
- Female Prisoner Policy – Chief Roche stated that the Department's policy was that a male Officer could not monitor a female prisoner. Research revealed that other Towns do allow male monitoring of females and a check with Town Counsel confirmed same. Our policy was updated to allow male Officers to monitor female prisoners with guidelines for bathroom use.
- Double Shift – Chief Roche stated that Officers are not allowed to work back-to-back shifts – unless circumstances warrant (manpower issue, major event, etc.)

Officer Daly stated that he doesn't see why you may get stuck working overtime for 15 hours and it is okay but you cannot work 16 hours straight (unless an emergency).

### **Agenda Item #6e Capital Budget**

Chief Roche reviewed the items in the Capital Budget request for 2017-2022: Architectural / Engineering review update for Headquarters, renovation of HQ/Central Dispatch, another license plate reader for 2019-20, training/target system for 2020-21, ballistic vests for 2017-18 and a Town traffic study for 2017-18.

Chief Roche stated that the IT equipment request includes continuation of a program to replace the in-house and mobile computers, program to replace Department servers starting in 2017-18, one in 2019-20 and one in 2021-22. Backup software for the Department was included for 2017-18.

Chief Roche stated that there were no capital item requests for the Animal Control budget.

Commissioner Coffin motioned to accept the proposed Capital Budgets (Police and IT) as presented; Commissioner Reynolds seconded the motion.

**All in Favor**

**Capital Budgets (Police and IT) for 2017 – 2022 accepted.**

Commissioner Reynolds motioned to adjourn Public Session; Commissioner Savino seconded the motion.

**All in Favor**

**Public Session of the Police Commission Meeting adjourned at 8:53pm.**

Respectfully submitted,

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Joseph Savino  
Secretary