

SUFFIELD POLICE COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING, JANUARY 21, 2015

The regular meeting of the Suffield Police Commission was held on January 21, 2015, at 911 Mountain Road, Suffield CT.

Present: Chairman Kevin Armata, Vice Chairman Kenneth Pascoe.

Commissioners: Matt Joyal, Jeff Davis, and Jack Quinn, and Clerk Linda Stevenson

Also Present: Chief Michael Manzi, Captain Craig Huntley, and Recording Secretary Karen Doyon

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ATTENDANCE

Chairman Armata called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm and asked the Recording Secretary to take a silent roll call.

Chairman Armata asked for a motion to amend the Agenda; to move item number eight [Communication and Announcements] to item number three. Vice Chairman Pascoe made the motion to amend the agenda, seconded by Commissioner Quinn. Motion carried unanimously.

I. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Armata opened up the floor to public comment.

The following comments precede the November 19, 2014, and the December 17, 2014 Police Commission meetings: Pending internal investigations involving a civilian dispatcher and disclosure of information to the news media.

- Gordon Stagg of 1575 North Stone Street read into the record a statement [copies of his statement were available to the Commission] which appealed for a [independent] third party investigation.
- Nancy Gegesky of Jackson Drive spoke in favor of a [independent] third party investigation.
- Scott Guilmartin of Hale Street thanked the Commission for their service during this controversial and challenging time.
- Virginia Bromage 576 North Main Street asked for clarification regarding the statues of the two pending internal investigations.
- Shannon Watson of Griffin Road also expressed concerns.
- Ally Kuras of Ratley Road spoke in favor of a [independent] third party investigation.
- Amy Raye, Town resident spoke in favor of a [independent] third party investigation, and spoke of similar investigation regarding a Hartford Fire Fighter.

Chairman Armata closed public comment at 7:19 p.m.

II. COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS - Discussion with Town Attorney [possible Executive Session].

Attorney Joe Flynn, Town Counsel from the law office of Alfano & Flynn, Suffield CT read into the record public statements based on the November 19, 2014 Police Commission meeting which unanimously voted to have Chief Manzi complete an overall investigation of two interrelated scenarios. *Copies of his statements were made available to the public and Police Commission.* Attorney Flynn broke down the scenarios as follows:

- The first scenario relates to accusations made by Police Department members, in regards to the physical condition of a Department employee while that employee was on duty.
- The second scenario relates to a leak to the media portions of the Departments pending investigation connected to those accusations.

Attorney Flynn reported that the investigation involving the first scenario has been completed; subject to minor revisions as a result of the whole investigation being completed [this being the second scenario]. He stated, *"Based upon this sworn testimony the report concludes that the accusation of intoxication of the employee is not substantiated"*. In support of the conclusion; according to transcripts, computer generated reports, interviews, and dispatch logs the accused employee was found fit for duty on October 5th.

Attorney Flynn stated, *"That the second scenario concerning the leaking of the internal investigation to the press remains pending. The report is estimated to be completed within a couple of weeks. In short, the overall authorized investigation is only partially completed"*. In addition, *"Statements and depositions in relative issues became evident; in violation of General Orders and Statues by certain Police Officers, but are not being pursued at this time"*.

Attorney Flynn stated that in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2.10 [subsections], the written report regarding the first scenario cannot be released until the full investigation is complete. He stated that the First Selectmen and the Police Commission will deliberate on the appropriate action needed for the submission of the second portion of the overall investigation once completed. For the record, Attorney Flynn's written statements will be read into the minutes at tonight's Selectmen's meeting.

Discussion followed between the Police Commission and Attorney Flynn regarding estimated completion time of the overall investigation. Chairman Armata asked the opinion of each Commissioner member, lengthy discussion followed.

Commissioner Joyal asked Police Union President, Detective Justin Fuller for verbal clarification on whether or not a 'No confidence vote' was taken by the Union body towards Chief Manzi. Union President Detective Justin Fuller replied, 'No'.

With nothing further Chairman Armata asked for a five minute recess at 8:02 pm.

The meeting was called back to order at 8:16 pm.

III. PREVIOUS MINUTES

Chairman Armata asked if there were any changes to the December 17, 2014 meeting minutes. Commissioner Davis reported that there was one typo on page four, in that "Armata" was incorrectly spelled. Clerk Stevenson made the motion to accept the minutes with the discussed change, seconded by Commissioner Davis. Motion carried unanimously.

IV. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Budget: *Captain Huntley at the beginning of the meeting handed out the January 21, 2015 Police Budget. Highlighted were the following:*

- Salary cost savings of \$12,000.00.
- After year end, payroll has an increase of \$4,445.60 for non-union personal.
- Entering budget season.
- R & M Communication line item will show a decrease of \$1,334.00 for two new dispatch chairs.
- Service Contract for Interaction 24/7 with a cost savings.
- Non union is 52% for salaries, which matches up with total.
- Analysis on Road Job line item account: there is a potential to purchase a third cruiser this fiscal year [requires negotiations with the First Selectmen].
- R & M Vehicles have increased substantially but has been offset by deposit from a fleet vehicle sold in 2014.

Discussion followed regarding accessories for the two newly ordered SUV cruisers.

- Third Phase radio project.
- ACCE project for new lap top radio's.

Activity:

Commissioner Joyal noted good results of traffic detail.

Chairman Armata asked for Chief Manzi to provide a report which includes response times for Police Officers to medical calls. Chief stated that sometimes the numbers are skewed because two ambulances are called to a scene. Brief discussion followed.

Detectives Report:

Clerk Stevenson commented that adding 'Ongoing Investigation' is helpful in reading the report.

K9 Report:

No comments.

Commissioner Quinn made the motion to accept the reports as submitted, seconded by Clerk Stevenson. Motion carried unanimously.

V. CHIEFS REPORT

Items offered in Chief Manzi's report and items added to his report were as follows:

- Passing of Edwin "Buddy" Sheldon, prior Lieutenant for the Suffield Police Department; with the Department for twenty-six years. Buddy Sheldon is also remembered as the first original K9 unit officer.
- Car break-in[s] at Congamond Lake area is being investigated by Officer Mark Sargent.
- General Order 1-5B for "Conducted Electric Weapons" has been revised.
- Cruelty to animal case [North Stone Street] being investigated by the Department of Agriculture.

Commissioner Quinn made the motion to accept Chief Manzi's report as submitted, seconded by Commissioner Davis. Motion carried unanimously.

VI. CORRESPONDENCE

- Thank you letter from Webster Bank to Chief Manzi dated September 26, 2014, in apprehension in apprehending a bank robber. On behalf of Webster Bank and the center

staff and the Corporate Security Department of Webster Bank the letter thanked Lieutenant Richard Brown and Detective Justin Fuller for their dedication and service.

- Thank you note from Chris Parakilas for flowers sent in memory of the passing of his mother Mrs. Madine Parakilas [Hollenbeck].
- Letter dated December 17, 2014 to Chairman Armata and the Suffield Police Commission, from Board of Director Andy Wakefield of the Suffield Volunteer Ambulance Association, in regards to EMS/Fire dispatch services in 'Emergency Mode' [lights and sirens]. After lengthy discussion, Chairman Armata stated he would respond to Chief Groux with a letter to possibly set up a meeting between Chief Manzi, Chief Groux and fire Chief Flynn.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

Commissioner Joyal asked the status regarding a candidate that was interviewed for a Police Officer position. Chief Manzi stated that the candidate has gone through four processes and needs to go through two more, and the Commission can realistically expect to see the new candidate on the roster in three to four months.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Joyal asked for a fleet update on mileage and annual planning. Captain Huntley responded. Chairman Armata stated that because of the time constraint, this will be discussed at the February regular meeting.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the January 21, 2015 meeting at 8:56 pm.

Chairman Kevin Armata