

**SUFFIELD POLICE COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
JUNE 17, 2015**

The regular meeting of the Suffield Police Commission was held on June 17, 2015, at the Suffield High School, 1060 Sheldon Street, West 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 7:00 pm and asked the Recording Secretary to take a silent roll call.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Armata asked that all comments be limited to two minutes. *The following comments precede the April 15, 2015 Police Commission Meeting regarding the pending internal investigations involving a civilian dispatcher and disclosure of information to the news media.*

- Nancy Gegesky of 171 Jackson Drive spoke of her disappointment regarding the Commission still not hiring a third party investigator since the reports have been released, and concerns about multiple law suits now surfacing because of it.
- Amy Raye Town resident spoke of her disappointment with Chief Manzi, Captain Huntley and the Police Commission regarding their actions during these investigations.
- Jackie McHana of 50 Diane Lane spoke about 911 safety concerns. Spoke about her displeasure with the actions of Chief Manzi and Captain Huntley.
- Chris Rago of 22 Brookside Drive spoke in regards to a letter from the SVAA dated 12/17/2015 regarding dispatching procedures [*referenced letter was introduced [under New Business] at the December 17th Police Commission meeting*]. Her letter spoke of concerns/questions regarding the current Dispatching policy, whether it is in compliance with the State of Connecticut Statutes.
- Ginny Bromage of 576 No. Main Street read into the record a letter dated June 17, 2015 addressed to Police Chairman Armata [*this letter was submitted to each Commission member after the meeting and submitted into the record.*] Ms. Bromage asked for answers to many questions related to the investigation.
- Gordon Stagg of 1575 No. Stone Street read into the record a letter dated June 17, 2015 addressed to Police Chairman Armata [*this letter was submitted to each Commission member after the meeting and submitted into the record.*] Mr. Stagg spoke of his ongoing concerns regarding “critical” safety, management, issues regarding leadership, lack of trust and confidence in the Commission, and the lack of communication to the public. In favor of an independent investigation.

- Derek Donnelly of 6 Cheltenham Court wanted to voice his support for officers who put themselves on the line-of-duty every day, and supports those Commission members who want an independent investigation.
- Scott Guilmartin of 759 Hale Street suggested to the Commission that the investigative reports be made available for the public to read at the Police Department. Mr. Guilmartin stated that he supports the procedure that was taken by the Administration Department pertaining to the dispatcher.
- John Murphy of 18 Downy Way agreed with Mr. Guilmartin's statements, and then spoke on the dispatcher's privacy rights. He spoke in favor of an independent investigation on the prequel of who leaked the report to the public.
- Joe Adams of 333 Griffin Road spoke on his displeasure of Chief Manzi, Captain Huntley and the Commission regarding lack of leadership, and the outcome being no public support.
- Welby Szczpanik of 136 Jackson Drive spoke of her displeasure regarding procedure and protocol followed during the investigations.
- Ally Kuras of 1628 Ratley Road spoke of her displeasure regarding the lack of procedure and protocol from Administration and the Commission during the investigation.
- Kathy Muska of 55 Brandywine Lane spoke of her concerns regarding safety of the residents when a 911 call is being dispatched. Not in favor of how the investigation was handled.
- Sam Coatti of 948 Russell Avenue spoke of her displeasure of how the investigation was handled.
- Kerry O'Brien of 1080 Suffield Street spoke of her displeasure of how the investigation was handled.
- Tom Frenaye of 489 Warnertown Road stated that he has lost confidence within management of the Police Department, the Police Commission and the Board of Selectmen. To restore public confidence, Mr. Frenaye asked that Chief Manzi and Captain Huntley step down from their positions.
- Kathleen Mormino of 519 So. Stone Street spoke of her displeasure of the lack of leadership of the First Selectman and of the Chief of Police and Captain.
- Pamela Hardy of 63 Hydrangea Lane wanted to publicly thank Officer Reynolds for coming forward and bringing it to the attention of the public.
- Shannon Watson of Griffin Road spoke of her displeasure in leadership, how the investigation was handled, and on how her questions have been ignored.
- Melissa Mack of 321 No. Main Street asked the Commission and the Board of Selectman, how the public can regain trust and integrity within the police force leadership.
- Ben Rodriguez of 567 Thrall Avenue spoke of his concerns with the breakdown of structure and leadership. *[Mr. Rodriguez sent an email to the Town Clerk dated June 16th which was forwarded to the Admin. Assist., the Police Chief, then forwarded to the Commission. This document has been added to the record.]*
- Stuart Adams of 333 Griffin Road spoke of his displeasure on the example the Commission is setting for future generations, and the outcome of the investigation.
- *Inaudible [name]* of Ratley Road spoke of her displeasure on the outcome of the investigation, with Chief Manzi and Captain Huntley.
- Ashley Taylor of 8 Cain Street spoke of her displeasure of how the investigation was handled.

With no further comments, Chairman Armata closed public comment at 7:54 pm. The Chair then called for a ten minute recess at 7:55 pm. The Commission called the meeting back to order at 8:06 pm.

III. COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Thank you card from Officer John Lacic and family to the Police Department, Commission, Chief Manzi and Captain Huntley for the flowers and well wishes on the passing of Officer Lacic's mother.
- Thank you letter from the Emergency Aid Association to the Suffield Police Department for sponsoring the food drive held at Highland Park Market on Saturday, April 11, 2015, to benefit the food pantry. Officer Tom Kieselback spearheaded the event, and a special thank you was mentioned to him and his children who assisted him.
- Thank you card from Mary Kate Holmes to Officer Tom Kieselback for taking the time to visit her at the hospital and aiding her after her fall at the gorge.
- Thank you letter from Assistant Principle of South Hadley High School to K-9 Officer Peter Osowiecki for recent school and parking lot search.
- Thank you letter from the 2nd Chance Shop to Lieutenant Richard Brown for going into the business establishment and educate staff on prevention of shoplifting, and customer awareness.
- Thank you letter from the McAlister Intermediate School to thank everyone for a successful walk and bike to school day on June 5, 2015.

Chairman Armata made the announcement that on June 18, 2015 three reports regarding the internal investigations will be made available at the Police Department for anyone wishing to read them.

IV. PREVIOUS MINUTES

Chairman Armata asked if there were any changes to the prior minutes. With none Commissioner Quinn made the motion to accept the April 15, 2015 meeting minutes as presented, seconded by Clerk Stevenson. Motion carried unanimously.

V. DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Budget: The 2014/2015 June Police Budget was highlighted as follows:

- Discussed what was appropriated in payroll and what is remaining (\$80,000 remaining in payroll to cover one and a half weeks pay) and (\$40,000 remaining for employee benefits to cover one and a half weeks pay). Captain Huntley anticipates a balance of approximately \$7,500 remaining.
- Expense side: Over on a few line items, but the overall unexpended balance at the end of the fiscal year will be approximately 3%.

Activity Report: Targeted traffic enforcement has increased. Commissioner Joyal asked if there have been any reports from the public regarding the added speed bumps on South Stone Street. Chief Manzi stated that he has not received any comments/reports.

Detective: Captain Huntley reported that the old [13 year old] Detective vehicle is being replaced with a new vehicle by a state grant.
Chief Manzi reported on extensive robberies in Walgreens/Pharmaceutical.

K-9: K-9 "Z" is still in rehab and is still in therapy.

With nothing further Commissioner Quinn made the motion to accept the department reports as presented, seconded by Vice Chairman Pascoe. Motion carried unanimously.

VI. CHIEFS REPORT

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

- Anti-policing rage in America, which includes 52 police officers being shot and killed.
- Supposed suspicious vehicle in Suffield reported in May by Highway Department personnel, turned out not to be suspicious in nature.
- Bike/Walk to school day event.
- Motorcycle accident resulting in a fatality on East Street South near the Stoney Brook Bridge.
- Identity theft has increased in Suffield during this reporting period. All were attributed to fraudulent Income Tax returns. This stemmed from a breach of security with Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield, and one on-line purchase sale using a credit card.

With noting further, Commissioner Quinn made the motion to approve the Chiefs report as submitted, seconded by Clerk Stevenson. Motion carried unanimously.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

Commissioner Joyal asked if all the reports pertaining to the investigation complete. Chairman Armata responded, yes.

Commissioner Joyal stated that at the November Commission meeting, a motion was made and seconded to have a third party do a review of the investigations; Commissioner Joyal requested action on this mandated motion. *[Motion made in November: At the November 19, 2014 meeting the Commission made the motion for Chief Manzi to complete his investigation within three weeks, upon completion formally request from the Board of Selectman funds for a private third party review of the investigation.]*

Chairman Armata stated that the reports were reviewed by Town Council, and an outside attorney.

With that said...

Clerk Stevenson presented a motion *“for an additional investigation into the process that was followed to complete the five investigations to include: inaccuracies in the investigation documents, questions of facts raised by the parties referenced in the investigation, lapses in documentation from parties involved. This investigation will cover all five internal investigations to including: 14-04, 14-06, 15-6, 14-6A & 14-09, starting since August, 2014. Chief Manzi and Captain Huntley should be placed on administrative leave until the completion/evaluation of this investigation,”* seconded by Commissioner Joyal. Discussion followed how to proceed.

Commissioner Davis stated that he received his reports and that they appear complete. Clerk Stevenson stated that the reason she laid out the new motion was because of a letter by the Police Union, that voted “no confidence” in Chief Manzi and Captain Huntley, and also to the inaccuracy of the their submitted reports.

Commissioner Quinn agreed with the comments made by Commissioner Davis but added that he would like the Commission to have more time to absorb the reports. Not in favor of giving it to an independent investigation at this time.

Commissioner Joyal stated that just because a Town Attorney or an outside attorney looked at the investigative reports does not satisfy the fact that a vote was taken in November for a third party review. The way to rebuild the confidence in Chief Manzi, and Captain Huntley is to understand what is in the reports. He stated that having a third party review the submitted reports will conclude that they are a true validation of the data.

Vice Chairman Pascoe stated that he has read all but the last two reports. Looks for a planned approach to read all the reports.

Chairman Armata stated that he too would like a week or two to digest the submitted investigative reports, write down questions, then meet in executive session. While in the executive session create a “scope document”. The Chair recommended having the First Selectman involved to approve any spending. Chairman Armata proposed having a meeting ten days from this date to discuss the findings.

Discussion followed regarding who could be hired.

Chairman Armata made the motion to have a meeting within ten days in executive session, develop a set of questions to create a scope document, invite the First Selectman to approve funding, seconded by Clerk Stevenson. Motion carried unanimously.

Mary Ann Muska called for a Point of Order regarding the vote that is still on the table. After a brief discussion, Clerk Stevenson withdrew her earlier motion she had on the table.

For the record, Chairman Armata stated that the Dispatcher in question has been placed on Administrative Leave.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS – None

IX. AJOURNMENT

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the June 17, 2015 Police Commission meeting at 8:56 pm.

Chairman Armata