

SUFFIELD POLICE COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING, SEPTEMBER 23, 2015

The regular meeting of the Suffield Police Commission was held on September 23, 2015, at Police Headquarters, 911 Mountain Road, Suffield CT.,

Present: Chairman, Kevin Armata, Vice Chairman, Kenneth Pascoe.

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

Also Present: Chief Anthony Riello, and Recording Secretary Karen Doyon

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ATTENDANCE

Chairman Armada called the September 23rd regular meeting to order at 7:00 pm, and asked the Recording Secretary to take a silent roll.

II. COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Clerk Stevenson read into the minute's thank you notes and emails as follows:

- Thank you note from Mr. & Mrs. Harrison Griffin of Copper Hill Road to Animal Control Officer Angelo DiMauro who rescued there dog that broke through the properties electric fence and wondered off.
- Thank you letter from Alan Baer of Lakeview Drive to Officer's of the Suffield Police Department, and Officer Reynolds for his response to a complaint.
- Thank you letter from Suffield Recreation Supervisor of the Parks and Recreation Cindy Fisher to Chief Riello and Captain Huntley dated 09/18/2015 in recognition for providing Police and Explorer assistance during the 2015 Road Race(s).
- Thank you note from Valeri to Officer Tom Kieselback for his assistance and professionalism during a difficult situation.
- Recognition email from Board of Education Chairperson, Jeanne Gee to Chief Riello congratulating Officer Kieselback for his new role as School Resource Officer. Chief Riello gave accolades the Officer Kieselback on the article written by the Journal Inquirer.

III. PREVIOUS MINUTES

Chairman Armata asked if there were any changes.

Regular meeting of August 26, 2015. Clerk Stevenson requested that verbiage be added to Chief Riello's comment from the August 26, 2015 meeting; under Chief's Reports [page 3], regarding the review of the internal affairs and the investigation being over. Vice Chairman Pascoe requested the correction to Mr. Lowell's name [page 1]. Corrected minutes will be presented at the next regularly scheduled meeting for approval.

Special meeting minutes of September 4, 2015. Commissioner Quinn made the motion to accept the September 7, 2015 minutes as presented, seconded by Clerk Stevenson. Motion carried unanimously.

IV. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Budget: Chief Riello requested that Chairman Armata approve to incorporate the Budget Report into the Chiefs Report when presented. Chairman Armata approved.

Detective Report: Detective Fuller presented his report from 09/07/2015 through 09/18/2015.

School Resource Officer: Officer Kieselback presented his report from 09/01/2015 through 09/18/2015. **Operations Report:** Lieutenant Brown presented his report dated 09/22/2015.

K-9 Report: K-9 Officer Osowiecki presented his report for August, 2015.

[Department reports are available upon request at fifty cents per page.]

Commissioner Quinn made the motion to accept the reports as submitted. Discussion followed:

Based on recent spikes in vehicle thefts and burglaries, Commissioner Joyal suggested that the Department write an article for the Suffield Observer for residents to be more aware and proactive on crime prevention.

Commissioner Joyal stated that he wants zero tolerance and a proactive approach in removing drugs from our schools; he asked the Superintendent of schools, K-9 Officer Osowiecki / K-9 "Z", along with SRO Kieselback to help in this endeavor. Chief Riello confirmed that he too is being proactive and a steps are being taken.

Commissioner Joyal recommended that the Commission take a closer look at the budget to make sure money is available for the Officers to provide them with the proper equipment and training necessary to keep them and the public safe.

Commissioner Joyal strongly recommended increasing the line item for the K-9 budget.

With nothing further Clerk Stevenson seconded Commissioner Quinn's motion to accept the reports submitted. Motion carried unanimously.

V. CHIEF'S REPORT AND UPDATE ON CHIEFS SELECTION

Chief Riello in his report stressed that because crimes of breaking and entering have increased, the word needs to get out that personal articles should not be left in vehicles; in addition vehicles should always be locked along with securing apartments and/or homes when leaving.

Budget Report: Chief Riello did not offer a printed budget, but reported approximately eighty-four percent remains, and things look good. The Chief told the Board to expect an analysis on a printed budget at the next regular scheduled meeting.

Strategic Plan: Chief Riello stated that although there is a long list of goals that were set at the strategic planning event; some will be long term and some short. Not everything will come to realization; the objective of the session(s) was for the members to reach their highest goal, and then accomplish what is absolutely necessary. Groups are meeting and projects are moving forward in a positive direction.

Internal Reports: Chief reiterated from the August 26th meeting, that the internal investigations are closed and will not be reopened. However, during his review of the investigations he learned that Department members experienced tactics and behaviors that were unprofessional, questionable, and personally disturbing. Chief Riello reported what he learned to Chairman Armata. Chairman Armata asked the Chief to look into it, do what needs to be done, and give a report at the next regular scheduled meeting. [The Chief communicated that this new review will not be made part of the past internal investigations, because they have been closed.]

Records Bureau Position: Chief reported that prior to his arrival a Dispatcher fulfilled the role of a records person, but now the Department is without. With a Department of this size and a community of this size it is inadequate not having a records person. Meanwhile the

Administrative Assistant has been keeping up with some of the work, on an overtime basis. Comparison research is being conducted said Chief Riello to present an analysis to the Commission and the Towns folks to help push for funds to fill the needed position.

Dispatch: All the background checks have been completed for the applicant who was chosen to fill the full time position. The training should begin in the next couple of weeks.

Staff Meeting: Chief Riello reported that successful individual staff meetings take place on a weekly basis with Operations, Administration, and the Union President to continually keep the communication open.

Open Door: Chief Riello reported that his door is always open for people to visit, to discuss issues, complaints, or accolades for Department members. He encourages people to come in to visit.

Reorganization Update: Discussed at the special meeting dated 09/07/2015 was the proposed update to the Suffield Police Department organization chart. This included a second Captain to fulfill the Operation side, while an existing Captain would focus on Administrations. Although this rank/promotion did not actively happen, Chief Riello reported that the reorganization aspect was accomplished.

Chief Selection Process: During the 08/26/2015 regular meeting the Commission voted to sign a contract with Consultant Wayne Sampson to assist in finding a new Chief for Suffield. Chief Riello reported that the consultant has sent an advertisement through The New England Chiefs of Police Association [advertised throughout the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police and the Connecticut Chiefs of Police Association] versus advertising nationally. Because the CT Chiefs of Police Association advertisement did not publish until after two days of its submission, the Commission decided to extend the deadline period a full week.

After hearing people's concerns / confusion regarding the hiring process for a New Chief of Police, Chief Riello explained in detail the entire method.

Chief Riello shared a faux pas that occurred while sending out initial invitations for proposals to three consultants on 08/19/2015 by email and mail. Consultant Wayne Sampson was the first to respond with a proposal within one week's time, but no response was received from the other two solicited consultants until 09/19/2015. Those consultants called and inquired about the response date, and where to send their proposal. The third consultant sent an email inquiring about the response date. This questioning from the consultants caused concern and a closer look at the correspondence/invitation "date" was ensued. The response date was typed on the letter read, Tuesday September 25, 2015, but should have read Tuesday, August 25, 2015. Chief Riello admitted he made an error, and it's the pleasure of the Commission resubmit an invitation extending the date or not.

With nothing further Commissioner Quinn made the motion to accept the Chiefs report as submitted, seconded by Clerk Stevenson. Motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Armata opened up discussion between the Commission members regarding the error made in the correspondence sent to the three consultants. A very lengthy discussion followed which resulted in a vote.

Chairman Armata made the motion to resubmit an invitation to the three consultants extending the date to September 30, 2015; ask Wayne Sampson of Public Safety Consultant, LLC to stop work [but not send an invoice], if proposals are received a special meeting will be called, if no proposals are received then the current consultant will continue, Commissioner Quinn seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

Commissioner Joyal asked the Chief to look into Supervisor staffing on a geographic level to see if the Department is adequately staffed, and adequately trained. Discussion followed.

Commissioner Joyal, along with Commissioner Quinn inquired as to when the Commission should meet to discuss the results after September 30th closing date if additional proposals are received. Chairman Armata stated that phone calls will be made on Wednesday [09/30/2015] evening to look at availability to possibly set up a meeting in the early morning hours.

VII. NEW BUSINESS - None

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

- Ginny Bromage 576 North Main Street read into the record a letter in regards to the closed internal investigations, ongoing issues with Captain Craig Huntley and his attacks against Commissioner Linda Stevenson, the vote of no confidence from the Police Union and wanted to know what the Commission plans to do to address these issues.
- Nancy Gegesky of 171 Jackson Drive read aloud a message left by Ally Kuras, a Town Resident [who had to leave the meeting early] in regards to having the Officers become national certified in Mental Health First Aid; expressed her pleasure in Chief Riello's actions in opening a new review regarding Captain Huntley.
A couple of concerns Ms. Gegesky offered were: 1.) unsuccessful email communications between the Police Commission and the public. Clerk Stevenson responded that this is the first she heard of a trouble, and that she would look into the resolving the problem. 2.) Her observation on decisions made by the Commission regarding legal liability and legal obligations.
- Rick Stromoski of 569 North Main Street spoke of his concerns regarding the Commissions exclusionary involvement among them in the process of decision making. Lengthy discussion followed.
- Amy Raye Suffield resident expressed her concerns regarding why the internal investigation reports are still on the Town website when they should have been removed, and asked who was responsible for putting them there. Discussion followed. [Tom Frenaye checked on his personal laptop and confirmed that they were not on the website.] Ms. Raye asked for a public apology from the First Selectman and the Commission to Commissioner Stevenson and Officer Reynolds.
- Shannon Watson Griffin Road, expressed her concerns regarding staffing and lack of training and equipment for the Officers. Asked about the status of Captain Huntley, if he is actively in his duties within the Department.
- Kathy Mormino of 519 South Stone Street spoke of her concerns regarding legal liabilities resulting from actions at these meetings made by the Commission.
- Gordon Stagg of 1575 North Stone Street has concerns regarding the time constraints/pressure the Commission puts on themselves when making decisions. Discussion followed.
- Kathy Muska of Brandywine asked about the selection process when hiring Interim Chief Riello. Asked if anyone apologized to Commissioner Stevenson. [Clerk Stevenson replied that she just wants to move forward.] Ms. Muska expressed her concerns of K-9

Officer Osowiecki not having enough money in his budget to supply food for his K-9 animals. Lengthy discussion followed regarding the K-9 budget.

- Jason Trombly of 11 Ellison Street thanked the Commission for their work as Commissioners and recognized their time and efforts, in addition thanked the Officers for their service. He also spoke on his concerns about Consultant Wayne Sampson and the recent advertisement placed for the new Chief. Chief Riello responded.
- Shannon Watson again spoke of her disappointment that no apology has been made to Commissioner Stevenson, and that the Commission has lost the public's trust. Clerk Stevenson responded.
- Gordon Stagg asked who authorized the internal investigations to be put on the Town website. Commissioner Joyal and Chairman Armata responded. Discussion followed.
- Kathy Muska had additional comments regarding open communications between the public and the Commission. Chairman Armata responded.
- Officer Mark Sargent read into the record a letter addressed to the Suffield Board of Police Commissioners dated September 23, 2015 that spoke on behalf of the entire Police Department in regards to the Future of the Suffield Police Department. Officer Sargent read this letter in its entirety which unified the Department's request for the Suffield Board of Police Commission to "...utilize any and all authority derived from the Connecticut General Statute, town charter and/or ordinance or from any other applicable source to facilitate the departure of Captain Huntley from this Department". *[A copy of this letter is available upon request at fifty cents per page.]*
- Kathy Mormino asked the Commission for a reaction from the letter read by Officer Sargent. The Commission had no response at this time.

IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Commissioner Quinn made the motion to go into Executive Session to discuss grievances and structure changes, seconded by Commissioner Davis at 9:37 p.m.

The Commission came out of executive session, and then Commissioner Quinn made the motion to accept the grievance, seconded by Ken Pascoe. Motion carried unanimously.

X. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the September 23, 2015 meeting at 10:10 pm. The motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Kevin Armata