

Board of Police Commission
Regular Meeting
Chairman Paul D. Abercrombie Police Commission and Training Room 2nd Floor
October 28, 2014
7:30 p.m.

Present: Chairman Joseph F. D'Errico, Commissioners David Monz, Larry Lazaroff, and Marc Calafiore.

Also present: Chief Thomas McLoughlin, Deputy Chief Jonathan Mulhern, several residents from Buell Street and the Whitney Ridge neighborhood.

Absent: Commissioner Walt Spader

Chairman D'Errico called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

The first order of business was to approve the minutes from the September 23, 2014 meeting regular and executive sessions.

Chairman D'Errico asked for a motion to approve the minutes. The motion to approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Monz. The motion was seconded by commissioner Lazaroff. All were in favor. No further discussion.

The next order of business was to approve the monthly reports for September 2014.

Chairman D'Errico asked for a motion to approve the monthly reports. Commissioner Monz made the motion to approve the reports for September. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lazaroff. All were in favor. No further discussion.

Chairman D'Errico commended the patrol division and the work they did with the distracted driver grant.

Correspondence

A letter was received from Charles Sherwood, Director of the South Central Criminal Justice thanking Sergeant John Scarpa for his help recently with oral boards.

A letter was received from Wendy Marinelli of Buell Street regarding crosswalk signs on Buell Street.

Chairman's Report:

Chairman D'Errico asked Chief if he had heard anything from the schools regarding the supernumerary position. Chief said he had sent a letter to finance, and the town attorney but still has not heard anything back from them. Chief said he also sent a reminder email last week and forwarded a copy of the pension to the town attorney at his request, but has not heard anything as of this time.

Chairman D'Errico asked Chief if he had heard back from the finance department regarding the Board of Police Commission's request to remove the line painting from the Police budget and put it back to the Public Works budget. Chief said he did send a letter to the Finance Director and First Selectman on the Boards behalf requesting the line painting be taken out of the Police Budget however he has not heard back from either the Finance Department or the Selectman's office.

Chairman D'Errico asked about the town ordinance regarding door to door soliciting. Chief explained that Hawkers and Solicitors must have a valid permit issued by the Police department before they can conduct any soliciting or selling of their wares. If they are soliciting for future sales such as magazines, windows, siding or anything that promises a service or product, they must be registered with the Police Department. Chief explained that currently there is a group in town called Connecticut Citizens Campaign for the Environment registered with the Police Department. They are out in the evenings door to door giving an environmental push. Chief further explained that some groups are exempt such as Jehovah witnesses', Girl Scouts etc.

Old Business:

Chairman D'Errico asked Chief if he has heard anything back from the gas company regarding the exuberant bills from last winter. Chief stated that he has not received any word back from the gas company. Chairman D'Errico said he hopes someone at the gas company can come to headquarters to assess the building and recommend some type of cost savings plan.

Chairman D'Errico asked if the repairs have been completed to the traffic light at Upper State Street and Hartford Turnpike. Chief said the light has been repaired and is fully functional as well as the traffic light on Skiff Street.

Chief said the light on Maple Avenue fronting the sports complex at the old high school is still not functional because the lighting repair company is waiting for parts. Chief said the department had to pay up front for the repairs but some money will be returned to the department from the insurance carrier. The pole was damaged due to a motor vehicle accident months ago.

Chairman D'Errico asked if any of the board members had anything to add or discuss.

Commissioner Lazaroff asked Chief about the status of the DARE program. He stated he knew the program was abbreviated last year, but stated that businesses are collecting money for DARE and questioned the current status of the program.

Chief McLoughlin answered by referring to the minutes from the December 2013 and January 2014 Police Commission meetings in which Chief suggested then to the Board, that they form some kind of subcommittee with the schools. Chief said he would supply the committee with one of his best officers to sit on the panel, and he suggested that the committee consist of a practitioner, an educator from the school preferably someone in the 7th or 8th grade level, and someone from the Board of Police Commissioners. Chief said the program is dormant right now, and he has not heard back from the Board of Education or the Superintendent of the schools as of yet.

Chief said from what he has read; DARE is basically a flat tire. The US Education Department will not fund it, and there is no matrix in place to make a determination if it is a successful program or not. Chief said that some towns in CT have moved to create a program better fit for their particular town and its own problems as opposed to a program for fifth graders in Los Angeles, which is what the program was originally created for.

Chief suggested we study our local problems, and tailor a program for North Haven, whether it is about bullying, texting, drugs or drinking.

Commissioner Monz asked Chief why he thought the superintendent is disinterested in engaging on this. Chief said that there are several other issues that are more pressing at this time.

Chief said that he and Deputy Mulhern both met with Phil Piazza back in May of 2013 to discuss the program and potential for forming a subcommittee however neither he nor Deputy has heard back from any one from the school or the Board of Education.

Chief again, welcomed the board to form the subcommittee and assured them that he will give the subcommittee the best qualified officer to sit on the panel. Commissioner Monz said he would be willing to sit on the subcommittee.

Kristen Cohen from Buell Street commented that if businesses in town have been collecting money for two years, perhaps that sum of money can be used in forming a new program.

Chief McLoughlin said the Police Department is not and does not collect any money for DARE. Chief said they did buy some items for the kids during the abbreviated program last year.

Chairman D'Errico explained that local merchants have the DARE boxes in their establishments.

Chief said the Police Department is not soliciting in any way for DARE. Commissioner Lazaroff said that the Money collected as his establishment is being turned over to a DARE officer. Chief asked Commissioner Lazaroff, who he was giving the money to, and Commissioner Lazaroff said they would discuss it further in executive session. Deputy Chief Mulhern said he informed all the DARE officers and the Sergeant involved that the program it currently ceased and in a holding pattern. Further, Chief said if there were any issue over funds, it would be turned over to Professional Standards for investigation and discipline if needed.

Jenn Fox of Buell Street commented that she thinks the DARE program would be better suited for 3, 4 and 5th graders, said she felt the program should be introduced to the children before they get in to the Middle School. She also suggested getting the community involved to educate parents as well.

Chiefs Report:

Commissioner Calafiore asked Chief how long will the bridge construction on Spring road be in effect. Chief said the project will probably end near the end of February, but upcoming winter weather could play a part in delaying the completion of the project.

PSA:

Reminder to everyone that Halloween is this coming Friday, and asks that everyone drive carefully and be mindful that there are kids out and about and it should be night of enjoyment for all.

Regarding the budget, Chief said all things considered, the numbers are still within the expectations for this time of the year. He said come springtime we may have to do some work on it, but he is confident that he and Deputy will make it happen, and they are doing their best to stay in line.

Chief said he has received the Budget Making Schedule for the 2015-2016 fiscal year.

November 14th the Budget Guidance Forms are due. Also any budget requests to the Finance Office are due on/about 12/03/14. This will be followed by delivery of Request to the Board of Finance and then to the Board of Selectman. The final step will be the Budget Workshop on Wednesday February 18, 2015 at 8:30pm.

Chief asked the Board if they have any items they like to add or subtract from current budget, to please form a letter with justification and he will look into it for discussion and any necessary vote at our next meeting for the Police Commission on November 25, 2014.

Support Services/Traffic

Line Painting of Streets has been completed, with the exception of the added Temple Street centerline, the Universal North Bridge and the Hartford Turnpike bridge over RT #15. The vendor has been contacted and this painting should be completed soon. We will exceed the dollar amount in the budget by about \$600.

The two new cruisers have been delivered. They are currently being prepped for patrol. These vehicles are 2015 Ford Utility Interceptors.

Request for Traffic Signage

The stop sign that was approved last month has been installed at Clark & Moulthrop streets.

Traffic control was provided for the Columbus Day Parade.

Training

Officers whose certification is due to expire in June will be going to training in January and February of 2015.

Officer Artaiz is progressing well through his Field Training.

Officer Dalhstrom is doing well at the academy and is scheduled to graduate in December.

Chief said that the department has been training to meet Connecticut's change in the PR1 or Accident Reports. Effective January 1, 2015 statewide accident reports are changing to increase or capture more data for the Federal Highway Administration. Chief said, unfortunately this new reporting system will increase the officers report writing time. Chief said that North Haven is one of the first departments to be testing this new reporting system. Chief said he and Deputy were opposed to this, as were most Chief Officers in Connecticut, as the requirements will tie up the officers and some of the information being captured in the new reports seems non sensible.

Patrol

The officers made an arrest last evening regarding vehicles being entered in the Whitney Ridge area. A resident called and alerted the department and we were able to make an arrest. Hopefully we can tie this arrest into some of the larcenies that have been happening in the area. The majority of the vehicles were unlocked. Chief advised residents again, to keep your cars and house doors locked and he encourages residents to call the Police if they see something out of the ordinary.

Investigative Services Division:

Detectives have been busy working cases and are now working on the recent fatality from the house fire yesterday.

Miscellaneous

Congratulations to Sergeant Antonio DePascale who was recently acknowledged by the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence, or the LAP program or the "Lethality Assessment Program". This program is utilized by Police Departments to evaluate potential persons at risk during certain family domestic type violence incidents. Chief said the department has been involved with this program for almost three years. North Haven was one of the first 14 towns in the state to get involved with this program. There are now 34 towns involved including the Connecticut State Police.

The town Trunk or Treat was last weekend and Chief said traffic safety was provided. The Police Union and the PBA provided candy. The clerical staff gave out candy on behalf of the Police Department which helped with patrol staffing as they did not have to pull an officer out of patrol for the detail.

On Sept 27th the department posted an officer at the "Prescription Take Back" at the Fire Department which is a valuable program to rid households of unwanted or unnecessary medicine and prescriptions.

Chief reports there was one accident on the job and will discuss it in Executive Session.

There were no grievances this month.

There were no Berniere Scholarship requests this month.

The updates to the Communication center have been completed and the center is now up and running. Modifications were made to accommodate the three new part time dispatchers that will be starting training next week.

Roof update:

The roof installation is almost complete. The edges are being installed now. The interior ceiling tiles will be installed next week. The insurance company for the roofers is paying for the ceiling tiles that are being replaced. Chief said there have been a couple rain storms and the roof has not leaked. The key card system which was also damaged from water is being repaired.

Public Comment:

Wendy Marinelli of 132 Buell Street sent a letter to Chairman D'Errico asking for the removal of the crosswalk stanchions that were put in the street directly in front of her home. She felt it was important to express her concerns about the stanchions. Ms. Marinelli said it is difficult to manipulate her driveway, and also felt that the signs ruin the integrity of neighborhood. Ms. Marinelli also stated that she feels all the signage and line painting in the street looks like urban graffiti. Ms. Marinelli asked that the stanchions be removed from the road fronting her home. She also asked the Board for a count of traffic accidents in the last 15 years on Buell street. Chairman D'Errico commented "zero." Ms. Marinelli also said that in her prospective, the stanchions have done nothing to deter the speed upon her observation.

Chief said he would get a report together for her. Chief said accidents that have occurred in this area were mainly cars backing out of a driveway and hitting other parked vehicles. He further mentioned an incident where a school bus swung a corner incorrectly and hit a parked car.

Chairman D'Errico said the Board did not approve placement of the stanchions. Chief said that he was the one who authorized the placement of the stanchions. Ms. Marinelli said she felt the amount of traffic and pedestrians on Buell Street does not warrant the need for these stanchions. Chairman D'Errico stated that he had the stanchions removed as soon as he received her letter.

Commissioner Calafiore asked the residents who were present at the meeting if they were all in agreement with Ms. Marinelli.

Kristen Cohen of 118 Buell Street said she and several people present at the meeting and in the neighborhood respectfully disagree with Ms. Marinelli. She explained that there are over 88 children who walk to school from this neighborhood. Thirty four of these children are in elementary school.

Commissioner Monz asked if pedestrians use the crosswalk. Ms. Cohen commented that they asked for the stanchions not so much for people to safely cross the street, but mainly for another step to figure out a way to make people safer on Buell Street

Kevin Tosta of 35 Buell Street said that he agrees the stanchions do make vehicles slow down.

Kristen Cohen said she thinks the street lines are misleading and give drivers the false sense that they are on a busier street. Further, she said that she actually requested to have the centerlines removed. But was told they had to be there.

Alan Sturtz of Hartley Street said he has noticed a rampant disregard for stop signs, speed limit signs and traffic lights all over town, not just in the Buell Street area. He stated he likes crosswalks and thinks they are needed on Garfield Street as well.

Kristen Cohen suggested rather than remove the stanchions completely, would it be possible to move them farther down the road towards Bayard Avenue. Ms. Marinelli stated she does not care where they are placed, as long as they are not placed fronting her house. Kristen Cohen asked, what is more important, safety or aesthetics?

Jenn Russo of 120 Buell Street said that the town needs to be proactive before a terrible accident occurs.

Chief McLoughlin suggested that perhaps the town could fund a traffic engineer to come and evaluate the area and make a recommendation. Deputy Mulhern said that we follow the traffic manual, but it is best if a professional advises us what needs to be done.

Further options and potential solutions were discussed between the residents and the Board. Chief said it is up to the board to make any final decisions.

Commissioner Monz asked Ms. Marinelli if she could live with the stanchions for one more month. She commented that she does not want the stanchions put back in front of her home.

Commissioner Monz said that if the stanchions do not create safety issues, he would be inclined to leave them up for a month until the Board can sort it out.

Commissioner Calafiore said that the majority of the residents present say the stanchions help, and being the Traffic Authority for North Haven, although he empathizes with Ms. Marinelli, he recommends leaving the stanchions up for one month and the Board can revisit the issue in a month.

Commissioner Calafiore made the motion to put the stanchions back, let them remain for one month and then the Board can make the motion to keep them in place permanently, remove them or place them somewhere else. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Monz. All were in favor. There was no further discussion.

Kate Esposito of Potter Road voiced her concerns about the increased traffic on Potter Road due to the bridge renovations on Spring Road. She asked for more radar in the afternoon. Chief said he will put up the radar traffic counter for one week to find out when the problems occur. Chief said that the speed sign will be put in stealth mode, rather than have a blinking speed limit. The stealth mode collects better data and gives the best results.

Ms. Esposito also had concerns about the bus stop on Potter and Rock Roads. Cars do not have to stop on Potter Road for the bus, and she has concerns about the children crossing over Potter Road from Rock Road. Chief said he will reach out to the bus company.

Ms. Esposito told the Chief that the new school crossing guard at the middle school is doing a wonderful job.

Chairman D'Errico asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Calafiore. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Monz. All were in favor.

No further discussion.

The time was 9:12 p.m.

Minutes by M. Clafin

Board of Police Commission
Executive Session
Minutes
October 28, 2014

Present: Chairman Joseph F. D'Errico, Commissioners David Monz, Larry Lazaroff, and Marc Calafiore.

Also present: Chief Thomas McLoughlin, Deputy Chief Jonathan Mulhern

Absent: Commissioner Walt Spader

Chairman D'Errico called the meeting to order at 9:20 p.m.

Personnel matters were discussed.

Chairman D'Errico asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Monz. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lazaroff.
All were in favor

The time was 10:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Larry Lazaroff, Secretary