

**STONINGTON BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING
THURSDAY, October 13th, 2022 at 5:00p.m.
STONINGTON POLICE HEADQUARTERS
173 SOUTH BROAD STREET
PAWCATUCK, CT 06379**

Meeting Minutes

Present: Chairman Robert O'Shaughnessy & Vice Chairman Robert Elmer
Commissioner Bill Turner
Chief Jay DelGrosso & Captain Todd Olson

1. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman O'Shaughnessy called the meeting to order at 5:00pm. Chairman O'Shaughnessy led a moment of silence for the tragic event that took place in Bristol where two officers (Sgt. Dustin Demonte and Officer Alex Hamzy) lost their lives responding to a complaint and a third officer (Officer Alex Iarato) was wounded.

2. Remarks of the Public

None.

3. Correspondence

a. E-Mail Re: Downtown Pawcatuck Crosswalks

Julie Holland from the Stonington Beautification Committee addressed the Commission to bring attention to safety concerns in Downtown Pawcatuck. Julie shared concerns she has observed. Patrons have been observed leaving Hoofs and jaywalking into the street creating some close calls. Julie presented several solutions regarding signage and lighting. A few of the ideas presented included; a cross walk placed in front of Hoofs to Jewett City Bank, a pedestrian crossing sign on a fixed base at the center of the crosswalk by Mel's, cross walks repainted or installation of one slightly raised crosswalk, and better lighting in the area. Julie did not request an immediate answer or solution and instead asked the board to consider the situation and solutions provided to come to the best solution before the next busy season. Chairman O'Shaughnessy shared his appreciation of the work done by Julie and that the board can make suggestions to the state. Chief DelGrosso shared that the department would be interested in assisting with lighting similar to what exists under the Amtrak bridge if contact can be made with Amtrak to discover who is responsible for the cost of that lighting. Julie expressed difficulty with finding an Amtrak contact to ask about the lighting, and Chief DelGrosso offered to help find a contact. Chairman O'Shaughnessy mentioned the state would have a problem with some of the flashing light signs suggested. Chief DelGrosso stated he would look at all the suggestions and see what the board can and cannot do. Painting is considered normal maintenance and should be something doable. Chairman O'Shaughnessy shared that if the proposed apartments in the area do work out the crosswalks could be changed and the board will look into it. Commissioner Turner spoke to agree with the concerns Julie brought forth. Captain Olson shared that in the past Mel's Creamery used to man a sign in the road that was signed off on by the previous Chief Stewart, but believes it fell off in the last year. He also expressed a potential risk for local business that they could lose parking spots around crosswalks in an attempt to make the crosswalks more visible. Chairman O'Shaughnessy requested a couple months to work on it.

Chairman O'Shaughnessy acknowledged the presence of former Commissioner Gourd.

4. Mystic Apple Festival*VOTE NEEDED*

Eric Meyer called in at 5:15pm. Chairman O'Shaughnessy shared that they met to discuss the issue with traffic and to solve problems that arose during the Garlic Festival. Eric provided a map of the upcoming event. He explained that at the last event fire lanes were being blocked so barriers were purchased to place in areas of concern. Chief DelGrosso shared that Route 27 and the on/off ramps for the highway are areas of concern and historically resulted in ordering in officers to deal with the emergency caused by the event. Because of that, he is requiring the event to hire two officer and one state trooper to work the event. Eric inquired about the cost of services to which Chief DelGrosso offered to speak with him about outside of the meeting. Chief DelGrosso also shared that the requirements can be changed for the next event, but currently two officers and one state trooper are needed.

Vice Chairman Elmer made a motion to approve the Mystic Apple Festival if requirements presented by chief and insurance requirements are met. Seconded by Commissioner Turner. All in favor, motion approved.

5. Pup Fest Reschedule *VOTE NEEDED*

Chairman O'Shaughnessy opened up Pup Fest Reschedule discussion by stating that the event had already been approved and they were requesting a rain date change.

Vice Chairman Elmer made a motion to approve the Pup Fest Reschedule date of October 22nd as previously submitted. Seconded by Commissioner Turner. All in favor, motion approved.

6.Cystic Fibrosis Fundraiser 4 Mile Fun Run/Walk *VOTE NEEDED*

Daniel Farrar spoke to get approval to hold a Cystic Fibrosis Fundraiser on behalf of his daughter Lucy who is a kindergartener at Dean's Mill School. All proceeds would go to the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. Daniel presented a map that showcased the roads that would be used and shared that Stonington Public Schools agreed to cover the cost of police services for the event. Chairman O'Shaughnessy stated it would be difficult to approve something so far in advance and advised he return for the February meeting to gain approval. Approval will be tabled until then. Chief DelGrosso provided his phone number to connect with Daniel about logistics and to go through the course ahead of time. Captain Olson stated it needs to be made clear to participants that it will be an open course. No vote.

7. St. Michael School 5k Run/Walk *VOTE NEEDED*

Captain Olson shared that the event uses fire personnel, police officers, and volunteers in the intersection. The event has occurred before and has all the appropriate insurance.

Vice Chairman Elmer made a motion to approve the St. Michael School 5k Run/Walk as submitted. Seconded by Commissioner Turner, all in favor, motion approved.

8. 2023 Regular Meeting Schedule *VOTE NEEDED*

Vice Chairman made a motion to approve the 2023 Regular Meeting Schedule. Seconded by Commissioner Turner. All in favor, motion approved.

9. Allen Street in Mystic Fencing

The owner of the Allen Street fencing Jason came to the commission to ask for the ability to put his fence panels back up. Town of Stonington Highway asked him to remove the panels in order to

complete work in the area after it was discovered the fence is located in the throughway. Chairman O'Shaughnessy clarified that Jason was requesting permission and that by granting the request the commission was not setting a precedent for anyone else. The permission is also granted with the understanding that the panels will be taken down as needed for work to be done, and the town is not responsible for any damage that occurs to the panels.

Vice Chairman Elmer motioned to grant permission to allow the Allen Street fence panels to be placed back up. Seconded by Commissioner Turner. All in favor, motion approved.

10. Traffic

a. Letter & E-Mail Re: Traffic Study Request Mason's Island Road at Route 1 Light for State
Chairman O'Shaughnessy shared that the Department of Transportation responded to the previous meetings letter inquiring about a traffic study at the intersection of Route 1 at Mason's Island Road.

b. E-Mail Re; Local Traffic Authority Concurrence: Land Use Change- Greenmanville Avenue, Mystic ***VOTE NEEDED***

Chairman O'Shaughnessy wanted to send a letter to the office of Traffic Administration regarding the traffic study done for Greenmanville Avenue. He pointed out several flaws in the study including the formulas used were from January 2020 which would not capture the busy season in the summer. The study did not take into account the other projects and events currently being constructed in the area. The study also failed to account for a fatal accident that occurred in the area. Chief DelGrosso added that a piece of the study was labeled Southington. Chairman O'Shaughnessy also addressed that there were some issues with dates in the study that chronologically just did not add up.

c. Letter RE: Support for Application for Bicycle Safety Mystic Bascule Bridge
Chairman O'Shaughnessy relayed that a letter was sent to the department of transportation in support of the safety suggestions for the Mystic Bascule Bridge made by the Presidents of Bike Groton.

11. Approval of Minutes from Thursday, September 15, 2022 Special Meeting *VOTE NEEDED*

Chairman O'Shaughnessy requested a change be made in the minutes from September 15th, 2022. Minutes to be approved with the change.

Commissioner Turner motioned to approve the minutes from Thursday, September 15th, 2022 with the requested change. Seconded by Vice Chairman Elmer. All in favor, motion approved.

12. Report of the Chief

a. Budget Report

Chief Delgrosso updated that the budget is on track. He is still keeping an eye on overtime and is pushing to fill the two open patrol positions. Chairman O'Shaughnessy inquired about new candidate plans. Captain Olson informed the positions are live on police app and currently there are 22 entry level candidates invited to an agility on November 6th, 2022 at Norwich Free Academy. He also mentioned the chief and Lieutenant Schneider are working on the recruitment video. The department voted on a logo to put on items and function as recognizable branding.

b. Monthly Report

c. Special Events Schedule

Vice Chairman Elmer motioned to accept the report of the chief. Seconded by Commissioner Turner. All in favor, motion approved.

13. Consent Agenda

a. Thank you Note: Blessing of the Fleet

The Blessing of the Fleet Committee wished to extend their heartfelt thanks for the contribution to a very successful celebration in honor of local fishermen, past and present.

b. Letter RE: Thank you- Officer Rodgers

Mr. Barry Cyr commended Officer Rodgers on his timely response, and his polite and courteous demeanor.

c. E-Mail RE: Chamber Events- Lobster Trap Tree & Starry Lights *FYI*

Lisa Konicki reached out to inquire about what else would be needed for the Lobster Trap Tree (Lobstertraptree.com) and Starry Lights (Starrylights.org).

d. Ride a long Information

Vice Chairman Elmer was able to do a ride a long with Officer Friend. He stated that Officer Friend was a true gentleman. Vice Chairman Elmer shared that he was able to help with the call because of his senior experience, and stated that it was a great experience.

Chairman O'Shaughnessy took a moment to present Vice Chairman Elmer with a plaque to recognize his five years of service. At that time Vice Chairman Elmer shared a parting message that is included below.

"I was very honored when over 5 years ago, then Chief Darren Stewart, asked for a meeting to discuss my becoming one of the 'old Gray Haired White guys' to serve on the Police Commission. I was further honored when the, then Board of Select persons chose me to fill that vacant seat.

It has been a privilege to have served the Town of Stonington and its Citizens these past 5 years under the leadership of Chairman Ray Trebbasacci, Chairman Henry Gourd and our Current Chair Bob O'Shaughnessy; As well as having been the beneficiary of the guidance, experience and insight of Chief Stewart, Captain Todd Olson, Lt. Bryan Schneider and now Chief DelGrosso. Under their leadership this Commission has met its obligations to meet the challenges presented in the areas of Parking, Traffic and Safety as well as held numerous meetings to interview and review Officer candidates for promotions and those that wished to join the Stonington Police Force. Always, our decisions were made in the best interest of the town and this Department. All of this was accomplished without bias or any one Commissioner attempting to move forward a personal agenda. This was never more evident than when we were faced with the enormous challenge of replacing Chief Stewart. This Commission met that challenge with determination, professionalism, fairness and most importantly, objectivity. As we all know, the result was that we proudly welcomed back one of our own in Chief DelGrosso, and our Town and this Department is better for it.

This past year, as Vice Chairman of this Commission, I never lost sight of the fact that I was 'a heartbeat away from the Chairmanship.' I'm confident that the Town lost nothing in my not having the opportunity to assume that responsibility. As I look to the future of this Commission, I'm confident that it will continue to act only in the best interest of the Department, the Town and most importantly all of its citizens...and this is as it should be. Finally... Old White haired white Commissioners never die; we just fade away. Thank you."

14. Adjourn

Commissioner Turner made a motion to adjourn. Vice Chairman Elmer seconded. All in favor, motion approved.

Respectfully Submitted,


~~Bill Turner~~ LISA TEPPER BATES
Secretary