

STONINGTON BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING
Tuesday, November 16, 2021 at 5:00 P.M.
STONINGTON POLICE HEADQUARTERS
173 SOUTH BROAD STREET
PAWCATUCK, CT 06379

MEETING MINUTES

Present: Chairman Robert O'Shaughnessy & Vice Chairman Robert Elmer
Commissioners Bill Turner, Lisa Tepper Bates, & Patricia Coan
Chief Darren Stewart & Captain Todd Olson

1. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman O'Shaughnessy called the meeting to order at 5:00p.m.

2. Election of New Board of Police Commissioners Officers

Commissioner Elmer made a motion to nominate Robert O'Shaughnessy as Chairman of the Board of Police Commissioners. Commissioner Turner seconded the motion. No discussion. All in favor, motion approved.

Commissioner Turner made a motion to nominate Robert Elmer as Vice Chairman of the Board of Police Commissioners. Commissioner Bates seconded the motion. No discussion. All in favor, motion approved.

Commissioner Bates made a motion to nominate Commissioner Turner as Secretary of the Board of Police Commissioners. Chairman O'Shaughnessy seconded the motion. No discussion. All in favor, motion approved.

3. Remarks of the Public

None.

Chairman O'Shaughnessy welcomed Patty Coan to the Board of Police Commissioners. He noted that she comes with a strong financial background.

Sixty-five Police Departments across Connecticut are participating in No Shave November. They are raising money for the American Cancer Society and donations are appreciated.

Chairman O'Shaughnessy stated that the University of Connecticut is performing traffic studies and the Town may be able to get funding for the one Town owned traffic light.

4. Action Items

a. Planning & Zoning Application: Lattizori Development, LLC – Jerry Browne Road *VOTE/COMMENTS NEEDED*

David Lattizori, Lattizori Development, LLC

Dave Sullivan, SLR International Corporation, Milone & MacBrooom

Mr. Lattizori gave the Police Commission a brief overview of the project. They have built an ambulatory care center, one hundred and twenty-one apartments and fifty townhouses on the Perkins Farm site. There are two access points, one at the intersection of Coogan Blvd and Jerry Browne Rd and a residential access road to the south on Jerry Browne Rd. So far, according to Mr. Lattizori, this build has been very successful with all green energy buildings. He is requesting an additional 20,000 sqft medical building. The plan is to allow ease of access for medical patients and further enhance coordinated care. He is also proposing the addition of one-hundred and twenty-four apartments by expanding the village housing into the professional zone as well as reducing the professional zone by adding the medical building expansion. Mr. Lattizori stated that they will be keeping the commercial and residential components separate, there will be surveillance cameras, and they will have two points of emergency access.

Mr. Lattizori showed the Police Commissioners the layout and design. Mr. Sullivan gave a review of the traffic study. The actual traffic generated is less than the 2016 projections for both the residential and medical site as currently occupied. According to Mr. Sullivan, new trips generated by this expansion is a wash since the projected numbers were higher than the actual numbers. Mr. Sullivan stated that the levels of service for the intersections are all A's and B's. There was some discussion in regard to moving the stop bars closer by approximately 30 ft at the Coogan Blvd., Jerry Browne Rd. intersection.

Chairman O'Shaughnessy asked what is the impact of the addition to the development at the Clara Dr., Coogan Blvd. intersection? Mr. Sullivan answered that this intersection fell outside the purview for this study, however, he feels the impact would be minimal. Chairman O'Shaughnessy asked if a traffic signal at the Coogan Blvd., Jerry Browne Rd. intersection would be considered? Mr. Sullivan answered that the intersection does not warrant a traffic signal as it does not meet the criteria. Chairman O'Shaughnessy noted that, once the project is complete, it may be beneficial to revisit this intersection and possibly consider a flashing red light or enhanced signage. Vice Chairman Elmer asked the Chief what his thoughts are on this intersection. Chief Stewart stated that the accident data shows minimal accidents and he agrees that tightening up the intersection by 30 ft would be beneficial.

Chief Stewart asked if this will be a twenty-four-hour emergency center? Mr. Lattizori stated that it is not an urgent care. Chief Stewart commented that the increase in call volume to this facility could justify adding another officer to the budget. Chairman O'Shaughnessy commented that they may need to look into a BDA for the addition. Also, a digital speed sign may be necessary. Commissioner Turner complimented the project and asked Mr. Sullivan if people generally get used to a change at an intersection? Mr. Sullivan stated that people eventually expect the changes to the intersection. Commissioner Bates complimented them for providing the denser housing and the rental properties along with their efforts for preserving the existing environment and green space.

Commissioner Bates made a motion to pass along the following comments to Planning and Zoning; that the Police Commission sees no issues with traffic or safety with this application based on this presentation provided that the items brought up by the Police Commissioners are met; speed signs, BDA, etc. Motion seconded by Vice Chairman Elmer. No discussion. All in favor, motion approved.

b. Planning & Zoning Application: RoxRiv Realty Assoc. (Tesla) *COMMENTS NEEDED*

This is a request to install Tesla electric vehicle charging stations in the Mystic Starbucks parking lot. Chairman O'Shaughnessy commented that this may impact the use of Valley Farm Rd. and that people should be encouraged to correctly exit the parking lot.

Commissioner Turner made a motion to pass along the following comments to Planning and Zoning; that the Police Commission sees no issues with traffic or safety with this application. Motion seconded by Vice Chairman Elmer. No discussion. All in favor, motion approved.

Chief Stewart commented that, due to the latest infrastructure bill, these charging stations will be seen in a variety of places throughout town.

c. 2022 Mystic Half Marathon & 10K *DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE VOTE NEEDED*

Commissioner Bates made a motion to table this to next meeting. Motion seconded by Commissioner Turner. No discussion. All in favor, motion approved.

d. New Vehicle Bid Waiver Request *VOTE NEEDED*

Chief Stewart stated that Lieutenant Schneider provided quotes. This is for three marked police interceptor SUV's and one police rated pick-up truck. Chief Stewart has had a discussion with First Selectwoman Chesebrough about the possibility of going hybrid or electric and she was willing to assist with the increase in costs. The department may need to test a vehicle. Chief Stewart recommends that the Police Commission forward this request with the caveat that they may go electric or hybrid with the pick-up truck.

Commissioner Bates made a motion to forward the new vehicle bid waiver request to the Board of Finance as submitted. Motion seconded by Vice Chairman Elmer. No discussion. All in favor, motion approved.

5. Traffic

a. Letter Re: Request for Additional Stop Signs and Lower Speed Limits – Route 27 @ Broadway and School Street *POSSIBLE ACTION*

Jane Fitzpatrick, 3 Broadway Ave., Mystic

Ms. Fitzpatrick informed the Police Commission that speeding has increased significantly on Broadway Ave. She suggested stop signs. Chairman O'Shaughnessy noted that there have been concerns throughout town regarding speeding. He noted that the Federal Highway Department distributes guidelines for the States and that the State does not recommend the use of stop signs to control speeding. Chief Stewart commented that putting a cruiser in the area will help with the speeding and he also noted that the intersection is too close to the neighboring intersection to put in stop signs. Ms. Fitzpatrick did not specify exact times when speeding is more prevalent. Chief Stewart commented that there have not been any accidents in the area and he asked Ms. Fitzpatrick to keep in touch with him.

b. E-Mail Re: Traffic Light Intersection of Route 1 and Route 2 *FYI*

Chairman O'Shaughnessy commented that, years ago, there was a traffic light at this intersection and it did not work. Chief Stewart noted that the intersection was busier in the past when there were large businesses on Mechanic Street. He further stated that a light would back up traffic into Westerly and it would also cost a fortune. The intersection is not perfect but it works OK. Approximately twenty-thousand vehicles travel through it especially in the summer and there are not too many accidents.

c. E-Mail Re: DOT Project – Wrong Way Signs with Flashers

Chief Stewart has made numerous recommendations to the State regarding this so he will sign off for the State to install wrong way signs with flashers at the I-95 South Exit 90 at Route 27 ramp.

d. Request for Handicap Parking Space, McGrath Court *POSSIBLE VOTE*

Chairman O'Shaughnessy noted that this is an ongoing issue. He suggests tabling this to next meeting so the Chief may send out letters to the neighbors and the Police Commission can see the response from neighbors to this request.

Tabled.

6. Approval of Minutes from Thursday, October 14, 2021 Regular Meeting *VOTE NEEDED*

Add to the minutes the notice of Chief Stewart's retirement.

Vice Chairman Elmer made a motion to approve the minutes for the Thursday, October 14, 2021 Regular Meeting as with the noted addition. Motion seconded by Chairman O'Shaughnessy. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

7. Report of the Chief of Police

Chief Stewart noted that a tornado touched down in town. There were no injuries.

Stuff-A-Cruiser will be held December 11th.

a. Budget Report

Chief Stewart noted that it is still early in the fiscal year and half of the Overtime budget has been used.

b. Monthly Report

According to Chief Stewart, there were 208 medical calls and thirty-seven 211/Human Services referrals. Chief Stewart noted that in one day they saw 7 mental health calls.

c. Alarm Report

FYI.

d. Special Events Schedule

This is filling up a little.

e. C.I.P. Budget *VOTE NEEDED*

Chief Stewart commented that 2022-2023 CIP budget is going before the Board of Finance this week. Included in the CIP budget for the department is police vehicle replacements, IT upgrade fund, town wide security cameras, radio microwave link, body worn/cruiser cameras and police radio portable batteries.

Vice Chairman Elmer made a motion to approve the 2022-2023 CIP budget and forward it to the Board of Finance. Motion seconded by Commissioner Turner. No discussion. All in favor, motion approved.

f. Hiring Status

Captain Olson stated that two, part time dispatchers have passed their physicals. The position for part time building maintainer has been posted online. In regard to police officer hiring, there are four

potentials and one lateral that will come before the Police Commission at the December meeting. Captain Olson has two seats available at the Academy. The Police Support Specialist position will be posted next week.

Chief Stewart commented that the Police Academy will be phased out and they will see more regional / satellite academies. This does require a lot of personnel and Eastern Connecticut does not have a department with a large training program.

The three current academy candidates will complete the Academy in December.

g. Letter of Retirement: Michael Gomes *VOTE NEEDED*

Chief Stewart noted that Michael Gomes is retiring. He has done an outstanding job and will be missed.

Vice Chairman Elmer made a motion to accept the retirement letter of Michael Gomes. Motion seconded by Commissioner Turner. No discussion. All in favor, motion approved.

The Police Commission thanked Mr. Gomes for his last six years of service.

h. Town of Stonington Agreement with PSAP

FYI.

i. Radio Update

Richard LaSaracina, Wireless Design Group, Stonington P.D. Radio Consultant

Mr. LaSaracina informed the Police Commission that he has been focusing on the microwave link. Currently, the Police Department is connected to a fiber optic feed. He proposes to make the microwave link the primary and use the fiber optic feed as a secondary, since, although it is functional, there are no guarantees with the fiber optic. Mr. LaSaracina finally got the State to agree that Stonington will only pay for the improvements made in Stonington. Mr. LaSaracina has worked out with SBA for the town to pay for a \$2500 study and the town would own the structural analysis report. He stressed that the microwave link is the preferred method of communication.

Chief Stewart noted that Selectwoman Strunk tried to get federal money for this project and was unsuccessful so it has been added to the CIP budget. Mr. LaSaracina commented that the State has agreed to cover costs for anything outside the Town of Stonington. Commissioner Bates commented that it seems there is a sense of urgency with this to which Chief Stewart commented that they need to move forward with the microwave link.

Chief Stewart informed the Police Commission that there is new technology being developed. If someone calls 911 from a cell phone, dispatch can send a text with a link and the person can provide video footage to responders. Chief Stewart commented that we are not yet ready for this, however, it is a glance at the future.

Vice Chairman Elmer made a motion to accept the Report of the Chief of Police. Motion seconded by Commissioner Turner. No discussion. All in favor, motion approved.

8. Consent Agenda

- a. Memo Re: Narcan Save**
- b. Letter & Highway Use Permit: Halloween Parade**
- c. Letters Re: Donations to Animal Control**
- d. Westerly-Pawcatuck Veterans Day Parade Paperwork**
- e. Borough Christmas Stroll *FYI***
- f. E-Mail Re: Thank You – Funeral Service for Judge Mack**

Vice Chairman Elmer made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Motion seconded by Commissioner Turner. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

9. Letter of Retirement: Chief Stewart *VOTE NEEDED*

Chairman O'Shaughnessy read aloud the letter of retirement submitted by Chief Stewart along with his list of achievements.

Commissioner Turner made a motion to accept the retirement letter of Chief Stewart. Motion seconded by Vice Chairman Elmer. Comments: Commissioner Bates commented that it is important to know that Chief Stewart is a leader among police in Connecticut. She further stated that she has been able to call on Chief Stewart for advice or good thoughts. People know and respect Darren Stewart from here to Hartford and it is incredible and speaks to his innovation. The arrangement for a regional agreement on telecommunications is a model in the State. His leadership in how we link together how we serve our community, not only in policing, but also in social services is critically important to move ahead in Connecticut. Vice Chairman Elmer commented that it is an honor to serve this town in this capacity as a Commissioner with Chief Stewart and his legacy speaks for itself. Commissioner Turner thanked Chief Stewart and noted that, at the end of the day, it comes down to Chief Stewart's love for this community and in making sure that people in this community are safe on a day-to-day basis and it speaks volumes for Chief Stewart as a man and Chief. Chairman O'Shaughnessy noted that it has been an honor to serve with Chief Stewart since Chief Stewart was an auxiliary Trooper and he was a Commanding Officer at Troop E. They started together and are finishing together. Chairman O'Shaughnessy congratulated Chief Stewart on his retirement. No further comments. All in favor, motion approved.

10. Appointment of Personnel Selection Committee for Executive Level Employment Candidate (Police Chief) *VOTE NEEDED*

Commissioner Turner made a motion to designate the Board of Police Commissioners as the Personnel Selection Committee for Executive Level Employment Candidate (Police Chief). Motion seconded by Vice Chairman Elmer. No discussion. All in favor, motion approved.

11. Executive Session

a. Personnel Matters: Retirement of Chief Stewart

At 6:23 p.m., Commissioner Turner made a motion to enter into Executive Session. Motion seconded by Vice Chairman Elmer. No discussion. All in favor, motion approved.

At 7:00 p.m., Commissioner Bates made a motion to exit Executive Session. Motion seconded by Commissioner Turner. No discussion. All in favor, motion approved.

12. Selection Process for New Chief of Police *VOTE NEEDED*

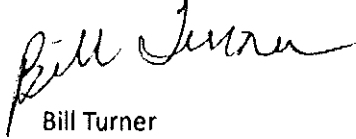
Vice Chairman Elmer made the following motion; that the Board of Police Commissioners shall initially open interviews for the position of Stonington Police Chief to members of the Stonington Police Department at the rank of Lieutenant and above. Should the Commission not find a suitable candidate

for the position as a result of those interviews, the Commission will then expand the search for a suitable candidate from outside the department. Interested candidates shall submit the following to the Police Commission by November 30, 2021: letter of intent for the position, resume, three letters of recommendations, one must be from a current Police Chief, other than the current Chief of the Stonington Department. Motion seconded by Commissioner Turner. No discussion. All in favor, motion approved.

13. Adjourn

At 7:02 p.m., Commissioner Turner made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Bates, all in favor, motion approved. All in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Turner", written in a cursive style.

Bill Turner
Secretary