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STONINGTON BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
Thursday, February 10, 2022 at 5:00 P.M.
STONINGTON POLICE HEADQUARTERS
173 SOUTH BROAD STREET
PAWCATUCK, CT 06379

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

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

Absent: Vice Chairman Robert Elmer

1. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance
Chairman O'Shaughnessy called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. Remarks of the Public
None.

3. Correspondence
a. Letters Re: Hiring of New Chief of Police
Chairman O'Shaughnessy stated that the following letters will be attached and posted with these minutes.

1. **Steven Johnson**
   Pawcatuck resident in support of Lieutenant Bryan Schneider for Chief of Stonington Police (See Appendix A).

2. **Old Mystic Fire Department**
   Letter from Old Mystic Fire Department in support of Lieutenant Bryan Schneider for Chief of Stonington Police (See Appendix B).

3. **Stonington Fire Officers Association**
   Letter from Fire Chief Kenneth W. Richards, Jr., President Stonington Fire Officers Association on behalf of the Stonington Fire Officers Association in support of Lieutenant Bryan Schneider for Chief of Stonington Police (See Appendix C).

4. New Business
a. Event: Ragnar Relay in Stonington *VOTE NEEDED*
Amber Sadlier, Senior Race Director, Ragnar Events, LLC

Ms. Sadlier joined the meeting via phone. She stated that the race will be similar to last year, they will enter Stonington via Route 184 then continue down North Anguilla Rd. She noted that the Stonington Police were fantastic at last year's event. Ms. Sadlier asked the Police Commission if they have any issues. Chairman O'Shaughnessy commented that he thinks that North Anguilla Rd. is too narrow. He

would also like to see the route in writing as well as the necessary insurance paperwork. Ms. Sadlier stated that the insurance was submitted to the Town, however, she will forward it to the Police Commission as well.

Chief Stewart informed Ms. Sadlier that Groton Town Police Department also needs to be included since the event also runs through their jurisdiction. Groton Town was not informed last year. Chief Stewart commented that they need to work on the route from Elmridge Rd. to White Rock Rd. Captain Olson stated that there were no issues with the support vehicles. He noted that some changes need to be made to the route at Elmridge Rd. and Route 2. He is not sure if they can set up cones on a state road. Ms. Sadlier commented that she looked into avoiding North Anguilla Rd. and continuing on to the rotary on Route 184 then head down Route 2, however, the shoulder is narrow. Captain Olson does not recommend the route to go through the rotary. Chairman O'Shaughnessy stated that he is ok with the route going along North Anguilla Rd. since Captain Olson sees no issues.

Ms. Sadlier stated that there were 135 runners last year and they may have more this year. She may need to cap the runners at 200 and will give the Police Commission an exact count closer to the event date. Commissioner Bates asked if this race supports local non-profits? Ms. Sadlier stated that they make donations to local churches, they reach out to the Boy Scouts, local fire departments, local non-profits and cancer patients.

Commissioner Turner made a motion to approve the Ragnar Relay in Stonington to be held May 20, 2022, subject to the requirements the Administration may deem necessary, and upon proof of proper insurance. Motion seconded by Commissioner Bates. No discussion. All in favor, motion approved.

b. Event: 22nd Annual Pawcatuck River Duck Race *VOTE NEEDED*
Lisa Konicki, President, Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce

Ms. Konicki stated that they want to bring this event back to the community and this will be the 22nd year for the event. Chief Stewart sees no issues.

Commissioner Turner made a motion to approve the Pawcatuck River Duck Race to be held April 30, 2022, subject to the requirements the Administration may deem necessary, and upon proof of proper insurance. Motion seconded by Commissioner Bates. No discussion. All in favor, motion approved.

Ms. Konicki noted that Ragnar donated to the Stonington Veterans Monument Project. Commissioner Bates thanked Ms. Konicki for all her efforts and she also recognized the Chamber for the success of the lobster trap tree.

c. Planning & Zoning Commission Zoning Regulation Text Amendment Application Re: Moratorium on Cannabis Establishments *COMMENTS NEEDED*
Keith Brynes, Town Planner, Stonington

According to Mr. Brynes, the State of Connecticut passed the legalization of cannabis. Planning and Zoning and the Board of Selectmen held a public referendum with the findings that the public is in favor of cannabis establishments. The Town is looking to put a six-month moratorium on businesses applying for cannabis establishments, which would begin after a public hearing, in order to create regulations. This will also be brought to the Police Commission as it has to do with public safety. The State limits the Town to one retailer and one micro-cultivator. Commissioner Turner asked if the zoning regulations will

be worked on during the moratorium to which Mr. Brynes stated they will be working on this during the moratorium.

Commissioner Bates made a motion to pass along the following comments to Planning and Zoning; that the Police Commission sees no issues with the temporary moratorium, however, in the future, the Board of Police Commissioners will need to see the actual locations to determine if there are any issues with making a decision at that time regarding traffic, parking or public safety. Motion seconded by Commissioner Turner. No discussion. All in favor, motion approved.

d. Planning & Zoning Special Use Permit & Coastal Area Management Review Application: 29 Old Stonington Road, Mystic *COMMENTS NEEDED*
Sergio Cherenzia, Cherenzia & Associated, LTD., on behalf of George Secchiaroli, Owner

Mr. Cherenzia stated that this is due to a modification to the original proposal. Mr. Cherenzia showed the Police Commission the original plan and the proposed changes. The portion of the building that would have been retail will be demolished since it is not in good condition. The portion that will be torn down will be rebuilt on the left side of the property. There will be changes to the parking layout, the curb cuts will remain the same, no changes to the street scape, there will be no outside vendors and all parking can be accommodated on-site. Chairman O'Shaughnessy asked if the number of parking spaces will be different to which Mr. Cherenzia stated that it went from 86 spaces to 91 spaces. Chairman O'Shaughnessy asked what type of retail is proposed for the space to which Mr. Cherenzia stated that the client is not sure. He further noted that parking is based off the square footage and not the type of retail use. There is no residential space proposed. Chief Stewart commented about parking issues on the road and that the Police Commission may have to revisit parking issues on the street depending on the site's popularity.

Commissioner Turner made a motion to pass along the following comments to Planning and Zoning; that, in regard to the Special Use Permit for 29 Old Stonington Rd., the Police Commission sees no issues with this application as submitted, subject to meeting any additional requirements the Police Commission or the Police Department may deem necessary. Motion seconded by Commissioner Coan. No discussion. All in favor, motion approved.

5. Old Business
a. Request for Handicap Parking: McGrath Court *VOTE NEEDED*
Request withdrawn.

No Action.

b. Report of the Police Chief's Personnel Selection Committee
Chairman O'Shaughnessy commented that the committee has met and he thanked them for their time and effort. Nine applications were received and three have been invited to be interviewed by the Police Chief's Personnel Selection Committee along with the internal candidate. Interviews will be held February 26th.

6. Traffic
a. E-Mail Re: Bus Stop Sign on Route 27 *POSSIBLE ACTION*
Chief Stewart commented that this area is a straight-away and also a state road. They cannot put up radar signs. He can send the recommendation of putting in bus signs to the State, however, he is unsure

of what the signs will accomplish. Commissioner Coan asked if bus drivers report incidents to which Chief Stewart responded yes. Chief Stewart will forward this request to the State.

b. E-Mail Re: Old Mystic Intersection Request *POSSIBLE ACTION*
Chairman O'Shaughnessy noted that this is the intersection by the General Store in Old Mystic. Chief Stewart commented that there have not been any accidents lately at this intersection. He noted that the bigger issue is that the fire department has had problems with parking. Chief Stewart also stated that Route 27 is a state road, however, he can put officers out in the area. Chief Stewart further noted that they have to balance parking with the needs of the businesses. Chief Stewart commented that he informed the fire department to call the police department when there are parking issues. Commissioner Turner and Chairman O'Shaughnessy will visit the site.

No Action.

7. Approval of Minutes from Thursday, January 13, 2022 Regular Meeting *VOTE NEEDED*
Commissioner Coan made a motion to approve the minutes for the Thursday, January 13, 2022 Regular Meeting as submitted. Motion seconded by Commissioner Bates. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

8. Report of the Chief of Police
a. Budget Report
Chief Stewart stated that we are 55.8% through the budget year and have used 55.2%. He continued to list the individual line items that are over. Chief Stewart feels the budget will balance at the end of the fiscal year.

b. Monthly Report
Chief Stewart noted that there has been an uptick in the number of calls. There were thirty-five 211 calls. Last year there were 22 arrests in January, this year there have been 44. There has also been an increase in domestics.

c. Yearly Statistics Report

d. Alarm Report

e. Special Events Schedule

f. Body Camera Policy *VOTE NEEDED*
Chief Stewart commented that there will be a few versions of this policy as it rolls out. The Department has already had some training. This policy has been set up based on the State's policy.

Commissioner Turner made a motion to approve the Body Camera Policy as submitted. Motion seconded by Commissioner Bates. No discussion. All in favor, motion approved.

Chief Stewart reminded the Police Commission that it is the start of the budget season and asked the Police Commissioners to mark the dates on their calendars. Chairman O'Shaughnessy and Commissioner Coan are planning on attending the March 9th Board of Finance meeting.

Chief Stewart noted that the Department continues to see overdoses and there have been a number of lives saved by officers. The homeless issues have decreased and the Department is continuing to work with Mobile Outreach.

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

9. Consent Agenda
a. Board of Finance 2022-2023 Budget Presentation Schedule *FYI*
b. Letter Re: Wonderful Conversation – Chief Stewart
c. Memo Re: Nice E-Mail: Officer Emery
d. Thank You Letter: Bill & Adrienne Keicher
e. Letter Re: 2022 Mystic Half Marathon
f. Letters Re: Mystic Irish Parade
g. Memo Re: Planning & Zoning Application – Seacoast Mushrooms, LLC
h. Memo Re: Sergeant Marley 25 Years of Service
i. Letters Re: Thank You – Services for Retired Captain Desmond
j. Motorola Service Agreement *FYI*
k. Letter Re: Blessing of the Fleet 5K
l. Letter Re: POSTC Officer Kyle Miller
m. Records Destruction Authorization List *FYI*

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

10. Adjourn
At 5:42 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,

Bill Turner
Secretary

Appendix A

Steven R Johnson

Pawcatuck, CT 06379

January 14, 2022

Honorable Members of Stonington Police Commission,

I am a resident of the town of Stonington, having grown up in the town living there for 22 years, moving to Westerly for a few years, only to return 13 years ago. I grew up in a Stonington Police Law enforcement family, crediting my own career path to my interactions as a teenager with many members of the Stonington Police Department including Chief Stewart, Sergeant. Diamanté, and Sergeant Beebe.

The success of any Police Department is directly dependent upon the confidence and respect that the rank-and-file members have in their leadership. This confidence and respect can only be earned by a leader who both supports officers and holds officers accountable. This respect and confidence are gained through actions and interactions with the officers. This, many times is something that takes several years to develop. This confidence and respect directly affect the rank-and-file Officers moral, which in turn directly relates to the quality of work that is performed by every Officer.

During our recruitment process for new officers one of the questions that is commonly asked is what they're career aspirations are. A potential candidate who answers that question indicating that they aspire to move through the ranks all the way up to the chief of police is a candidate that I look at as a very positive hire for a police department. That is an officer who is going to go out every day and do their job to the best of their ability, representing the Department positively and professionally.

When a Department, who has interested qualified candidate(s) from within the Department, seeks to go outside of that Department it inflicts irreparable damage that takes many years to repair. The moral of the Department suffers severely and the quality and quantity of work from the rank -and- file diminishes greatly. Officers who were building their careers to move up the ranks now become discouraged and, in some cases, will even look to move to other Departments. Officers will ask themselves, why bother to do that something extra or go above and beyond.

I have been directly involved in two of this exact type of situation myself and have witnessed firsthand the struggles those outside leaders go through and the struggles and damage it causes to the Department. In many of these cases the outside candidates appear on paper to, and in most cases do, have the qualifications to be a Police Chief. But it takes this outside candidate a long time, in many cases years, to develop that confidence and respect of the rank-and-file Officers that is necessary to be a successful leader of a Police Organization. In contrast a qualified leader from within the Department in most instances, and especially in this instance, has already established that confidence and respect therefore is able to keep the Department moving forward without any delays or interruption.

I am a firm believer in a successful leader being a leader who leads by example. Lieutenant Bryan Schneider is a leader who leads by example and is a respected leader by his own Department and Police Departments in both CT and RI. I have had the distinct pleasure of interacting and working with Lieutenant Schneider over several years of both of our careers. I have interacted and had the opportunity to see Lieutenant Schneider on many different types of Police incidents, both routine and serious, with him as a Patrol Officer, Sergeant, and now Lieutenant. During all those interactions I have observed a knowledgeable, levelheaded, calm, leader. Lieutenant Schneider always strives to provide his Officers

with the best possible tools, equipment, programs, and practices enabling them to provide the best possible Police Services to the Town of Stonington.

A quality Police Leader should be encouraging Officers under his command to strive to move up the ranks within the Department and has an obligation to help to groom those interested in taking on the role as the Chief of their Department at his departure. In fact, Chief Stewart was a direct beneficiary of that very philosophy under Chief Erskine and I would hope he would be doing the same. The fact that this Police Commission has determined to open for candidates from the outside should be felt as an embarrassment to the current Police Chief.

Given the fact that the Stonington Police Department has qualified candidates from within the Department, and at least one of those candidates has expressed interest, I strongly encourage you as the Police Commission to reconsider and immediately appoint Lieutenant Bryan Schneider as the next Chief of Police for the Stonington Police Department. I ask you to do this not for Lieutenant Bryan Schneider, but for the members of the Stonington Police Department and for the residents of the Town of Stonington.

Respectfully,

Steven Johnson
Pawcatuck Resident

Appendix B

Old Mystic Fire Department

Reliance Fire Company No.1

295 Cow Hill Road, Mystic, CT 06355
Telephone (860) 536-2220 Fax (860) 536-7811

January 20, 2022

Stonington Police Commission
173 South Broad Street
Pawcatuck, CT 06379

Dear Commission Members:

I am writing this letter with concern regarding the hiring of a new Chief of Police within the Town of Stonington. I understand and respect the responsibility of the police commission to seek out the most qualified candidate. The only inside candidate, Lieutenant Bryan Schneider is highly respected and trusted by his peers, which is evident in a public letter that represented the vast majority of employees at the Stonington Police station. Additionally, letters of support were also issued from the Westerly Police union and all Fire Chiefs from the Town of Stonington who interact with him on a regular basis. I can personally tell you that my interactions with Lieutenant Schneider have been nothing short of professional, honest, and attentive. Furthermore, he has always exemplified character and integrity, and has been a force in much of the forward movement that I have witnessed within the Stonington PD.

Respectfully, I ask that you take a hard look at the short- and long-term impact on the morale of the department that could be gained or lost by hiring from the outside to fill the position of Chief of Police.

Sincerely,

Kenneth W. Richards, Jr.
Fire Chief / Fire Marshal

Cc

Appendix C

Stonington Fire Officers Association

295 Cow Hill Road, Mystic, CT 06355
(860) 536-3432

November 29, 2021

Stonington Police Commission

173 South Broad Street

Pawcatuck, CT 06379

Dear Commission members,

The Fire Chiefs within the Town of Stonington would like to express our confidence in the abilities of Lieutenant Bryan Schneider to lead the men and women of the Stonington Police Department as their next Police Chief. During his twenty-one-years of service with your department, all of us have had the privilege to work with him both on and off the emergency scene and have found him to be proficient, honest, and of the sound integrity and character needed to lead the department into the future.

Fire Chief Kenneth W. Richards, Jr

President Stonington Fire Officers Association