

**STONINGTON BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING**

Thursday, April 8, 2021 at 5:00 P.M.

VIRTUAL WEBEX MEETING

Dial: 1-408-418-9388

Enter Access Code: 129 835 5112

-OR-

Streaming live on the Town of Stonington's Facebook page

MEETING MINUTES

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

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. New Business

a. St. Michael School 5K Road Race & 1 Mile Fun Run/Walk *VOTE NEEDED*

Danielle Yates, 5K Race Coordinator

Bethany Kennedy, 5K Race Coordinator

Ms. Yates informed the Police Commission that they are hoping to get approval to hold the 12th annual race this year. According to Chief Stewart, they do a nice job and the event raises money for St. Michael's School. His only request is that they provide the proper insurance.

Commissioner Turner made a motion to approve the St. Michael School 5K Road Race & 1 Mile Fun Run/Walk to be held Saturday, November 6, 2021 as presented, subject to the requirements the Administration may deem necessary, and upon proof of proper insurance. Motion seconded by Vice Chairman Tabor. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

Ms. Kennedy shared her appreciation for the kind words and support from Chief Stewart.

b. Planning & Zoning Application: Susanne V. Toczko *COMMENTS NEEDED*

Chairman O'Shaughnessy noted that this application is for a change in zoning. Chief Stewart does not see any issues with traffic, parking or safety in regard to this proposed change.

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

4. Old Business

a. Update from Radio Consultant Richard LaSaracina on Cameras and Radio System

Mr. LaSaracina informed the Police Commission that the forty-five cameras are all operational and started recording effective on February 24th. He continued that the work stations have been installed and briefly went over them with the Police Commission. He was successful in getting each jail cell recording in three areas, the primary server, on each jail cell camera and on an independent network recorder. A rear parking camera was replaced since it was defective. Mr. LaSaracina explained that, in speaking with the Dispatchers and Sergeants, he was able to see what templates they wanted and then he was able to customize the templates. Mr. LaSaracina went over live playback recording in a training session with staff and briefly explained the process for the Police Commission.

According to Mr. LaSaracina, a separate network video recorder was installed for the convenience of viewing the cameras throughout the building. It operates on the Town IT network. He will add a list of trusted computers within the building for that recorder.

Mr. LaSaracina recommends upgrading the Comcast modem which will improve the performance of the outside, town-wide cameras. He recommends replacing the Pawcatuck Rotary and Coggswell Street cameras. Mr. LaSaracina also recommends upgrading Workstation 2 from Windows 7 to Windows 10. He further noted that, before installing the independent network recorder, the computers need to be up to speed to handle it. Possibly, in the next budget discussion, Mr. LaSaracina recommends having dedicated circuits installed for the remote cameras in town to improve security and performance of those cameras. He went into some detail about the circuits.

Vice Chairman Tabor asked how Mr. LaSaracina was notified about the camera that needed to be replaced? Mr. LaSaracina stated that with old system, they only knew it was out due to the black screen. The new system uses a GPU configuration tool and it is programmed for all the cameras to report every fifteen seconds. If they do not report, it goes into the error log, and if it is not resolved in an hour, Mr. LaSaracina gets a notification. Chairman O'Shaughnessy asked what is the cost of replacing the two cameras in Downtown Pawcatuck? According to Mr. LaSaracina, if they are both done at same time, the cost is approximately \$3300.

Mr. LaSaracina informed the Police Commissioners of some interesting statistics from the State of Connecticut. The Stonington Police Department had 217,833 transmissions and 17,777 actual talk minutes on the radio in the year 2020. Mr. LaSaracina noticed that the ACO radios go into a lock mode due to the latest software update. Mr. LaSaracina reprogrammed them and added unlocked features. He suggests updating the firmware for the mobile units and the portable radios, he discussed this further with the Police Commission.

Mr. LaSaracina noted no changes to report on the VHF system. They are still trying to convince the fire departments to be interoperable. He stated that Chief Stewart is a great advocate for joining the State system. Mr. LaSaracina commented that the Department has gone through many mobile unit microphones, they are still under warranty, but a simple fix has been provided. Mr. LaSaracina recommends that he take care of doing the fix to the mobile units.

Mr. LaSaracina noted that 8.28 is the firmware the Police Department is currently using and he suggests going to 8.30. He has tested it and it performs as it should with the State system. The Department still needs to figure out if they want to stay with dual band in the cars. Mr. LaSaracina will coordinate with Lieutenant Schneider to upgrade the firmware as soon as possible.

Captain Olson thanked Mr. LaSaracina for the training he did with the staff in regard to the camera system.

b. Request for Weekend Flea Market & Farm – 29 Old Stonington Road *TABLED FROM MARCH MEETING*

Chairman O'Shaughnessy noted that the Police Commission still has not received further details.

Tabled to May.

5. Traffic / Boating

a. Letter Re: Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons

According to Chairman O'Shaughnessy, this came in from the State and is at no cost to the Town. Chief Stewart recommended one rapid flashing beacon on Coogan Blvd. near the Mystic Aquarium and one on Pequotsepos Rd. near the Nature Center. The application was sent off to the State and Chief Stewart also recommended one on Route 27 near the Mystic Seaport, however, this is a State road and the project is for Town owned roads.

6. Approval of Minutes from Thursday, March 11, 2021 Regular Meeting *VOTE NEEDED*

Commissioner Elmer made a motion to approve the minutes for the Thursday, March 11, 2021 Regular Meeting as presented. Motion seconded by Vice Chairman Tabor. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

7. Report of the Chief of Police

a. Budget Report

According to Chief Stewart, we are 71.2% through the fiscal year and have used 67.4% of the budget. Currently, the Department is under budget. He noted that some lines are over but they can do line-item transfers. Chief Stewart is unsure if there is money in the CIP account to replace the cameras, however, he will check into it.

b. Monthly Statistics

Chief Stewart noted that there has been an increase in Medical Assists. There were thirty-three pistol permit applications for the month of March and a total of ninety-two for the year.

c. Alarm Report

d. Special Events Schedule

e. Officer Chris High Resignation *VOTE NEEDED*

Chief Stewart recommends the Police Commission accepts Officer High's resignation.

Commissioner Turner made a motion to accept the resignation of Officer Chris High from the Stonington Police Department. Motion seconded by Commissioner Bates. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

f. Officer Chris High – Request for Reserve Status *VOTE NEEDED*

No motion made, passed on this item.

g. Axon Enterprises Quote – In Car Recording

According to Chief Stewart, this is a quote for in-car recording. Chief Stewart thanked Lieutenant Schneider for all his work on this project and coordinating with the Board of Finance, the Director of Finance Jim Sullivan and Axon.

h. Crossing Guard Tom McCoy Resignation *VOTE NEEDED*

Chief Stewart informed the Police Commission that Mr. McCoy has turned in his resignation. Chairman O'Shaughnessy stated that the Police Commission would like to thank Mr. McCoy for over thirty years of being a substitute teacher, a coach and a crossing guard. He is a fixture for the Borough. The Police Commission will send a letter personally thanking him for his service.

Commissioner Elmer made a motion to accept the resignation of Crossing Guard Tom McCoy and for the Police Commission to send him a formal thank you. Motion seconded by Vice Chairman Tabor, however, with regret. Vice Chairman Tabor further expressed how Mr. McCoy impacted his daughter's life and that he is a very nice man. Discussion: Commissioner Bates stated that she saw firsthand the care and concern Mr. McCoy has for every single person he comes across. She further stated that Mr. McCoy is always kind, patient and always has a smile and he will be greatly missed by her family and everyone in the Borough. The community has great respect, admiration and love for him and Commissioner Bates is glad that the Police Commission is sending along a formal thank you to Mr. McCoy for his tremendous service. No further discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

According to Chief Stewart, the standby crossing guard Danielle will be stepping in to replace Mr. McCoy.

i. Promotion of Sergeant – Interviews Next Month

Chief Stewart noted that the Department is moving quickly with this and that the Police Commission has already scored and ranked the candidates, however, Commissioner Bates has not had the opportunity to meet the candidates. Chief Stewart recommended affording Commissioner Bates the opportunity for a meet and greet in the next week or two.

j. Hiring Statue *PICK DATES FOR SPECIAL MEETINGS*

Chief Stewart commented that there will be a series of special meetings; to look at three more laterals, to look at the four candidates that passed the oral board from the last agility, and to look at the candidates generated from the April 22nd agility. So far there are ten participants for the April agility.

Chief Stewart noted that they will be holding the swearing in for Officer Brito on April 26th at 9 am.

Chief Stewart stressed that they need to keep moving with the hiring process since there is a lot of competition. There was further discussion on setting the dates for the special meetings.

Chief Stewart noted that he has been continuing to talk with Commissioner Bates on a variety of issues. He has talked with Human Services Director Leanne Theodore and First Selectwoman Danielle Chesebrough about the new community outreach person. He stated that there was an incident earlier in the week involving a call that quickly became a mental health call. It reflects what is happening in society today and what the officers are seeing in some of the calls they have been going on. Chairman O'Shaughnessy, Commissioner Bates and Chief Stewart meet with First Selectwoman Chesebrough about these issues and Chairman O'Shaughnessy invited Commissioner Bates to comment. Commissioner Bates informed the Police Commission that they had terrific discussions from the perspective of 211, and with Chief Stewart, about how to better inform residents about the resources

that are available via 211 in the event of a mental health crisis. They provide the front door to the Adult and the Youth Mobile Mental Health Crisis Services. She stressed the importance of 211 and how they can be reached and noted that there has been a higher volume of need. They are rapidly scaling up to accommodate the increase in calls and they are working with the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. Commissioner Bates thinks that there are calls that definitely need police intervention, however, many calls do not need to end with police intervention. She further stated there are ways that that Connecticut residents can be helped via 211 and directed to necessary resources. They will be making a shared effort to push out this knowledge to the Stonington residents and perhaps relieve some calls to the police. Commissioner Bates thanked Chief Stewart and Chairman O'Shaughnessy and noted that they both bring really important experience and expertise to the discussions. She stated that this is a conversation on a national level, and we have an opportunity in Stonington to be ahead of the curve.

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

8. Consent Agenda

- a. Memos Re: Planning & Zoning Applications**
- b. E-Mail Re: Good Friday Walk Approval**
- c. Highway Use Permit: Good Friday Walk**
- d. Letter Re: Mystic Aquarium Grant for Non-profit Security Infrastructure Improvement**
- e. Letters Re: YMCA Event Approvals**
- f. Letter & Memo Re: Officer Palmer & K-9 Odin Good Job**
- g. E-Mail Re: Thank You – Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center Signs**
- h. E-Mail Re: Thank You – Alarm at Denison Homestead**

Chief Stewart commented that the thank you's continue to come in.

Chief Stewart noted that he thinks this is going to be a very busy summer. Downtown Mystic has already been very busy. The Department needs to get on with the hiring process to get the necessary manpower on the street.

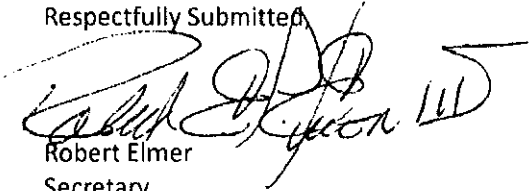
Commissioner Bates commented that it is impressive that thank you's consistently come in every month. She expressed her appreciation for the Chief and his whole team because this is an incredible reflection of the work they have been doing.

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

9. Adjourn

At 5:52 p.m., Commissioner Elmer made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Turner all in favor, motion approved. All in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,


Robert Elmer
Secretary