

**STONINGTON BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING**

**Thursday, June 11, 2020 at 5:00 P.M.**

**VIRTUAL WEBEX MEETING**

**Dial: 1-408-418-9388**

**Enter Access Code: 129 813 5576**

**-OR-**

**Streaming live on the Town of Stonington's Facebook page  
(see "Return to Public Meeting" item for meeting info join after the  
executive session)**

MEETING MINUTES

Present: Chairman Henri Gourd & Vice Chairman Robert O'Shaughnessy  
Commissioners Bill Turner, Bob Elmer (5:20 p.m.), & Bob Tabor (5:25 p.m.)  
Chief Darren Stewart & Captain Todd Olson

**1. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Gourd called the meeting to order at 5:06 p.m.

At this time, Chairman Gourd, Commissioner Turner, Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy, Chief Stewart, and Captain Olson are all in attendance for this virtual meeting.

Chairman Gourd made the following remarks in reference to recent events in the headlines regarding excessive use of force by police:

*I want to be very clear, neither unnecessary nor discriminatory use of force will be tolerated by this Board of Police Commissioners nor this Police Department. We stand proudly with the Chiefs of Police across the state and the nation who denounce excessive and inappropriate use of force. Stonington Police Department has policies in place and instills in our training practices that put a priority on de-escalating tense situations before resorting to the use of force. Every day, our officers go into the field walking into situations that can turn dangerous in a second. I note, however, the article in Sunday's New London Day reports, of the nine complaints filed against Stonington police officers in the last two and a half years, more than half were initiated internally for failing to follow procedure and none were for excessive use of force. The Department is community focused. For years there's been a close working relationship with the Superintendent of Schools and the Town's Department of Human Services. On a typical month, the Department may receive as many as half a dozen letters of thanks and appreciation for the way our officers have responded to calls and the empathy they have shown.*

*The Department has also been proactive in promoting positive relations with its constituents well before the recent events that dominate the news today. I highlight a couple; Coffee with the Chiefs, which is a public forum for community members to speak directly to the Chief of Police to*

*voice concerns and get a response as to why or when certain actions may be taking place. Recently, bedtime stories have been read by officers to our young children on the Department's Facebook page during the Covid-19 lockdown. We have instituted a Chaplain's program to assist those struck by tragedy to help family members cope emotionally and on a practical level following a death or traumatic incidents. Youth officers who regularly meet and interact with school age members of our community, promoting our women and men in uniform as people they can turn to and not be afraid of. These are programs which were initiated within the Department and not imposed upon its members. No organization is perfect, and we have dismissed personnel and we have made adjustments to policies and practices as situations dictate, however, this is a Department that truly cares about this community and we as the Board of Police Commissioners are proud of the work they do. Thank you.*

## **2. Remarks of Public**

June Strunk, Stonington Selectwoman

Selectwomen Strunk expressed her support for the Stonington Police Department and thanked them for their service and for keeping everyone safe.

## **3. New Business**

### **a. Planning & Zoning Special Use Permit Application Re: Expansion of Existing Masonic Temple, 637 Pequot Trail, Stonington \*COMMENTS NEEDED\***

Theodore Ladwig, Project Leader representing Coastal Masonic Temple Corporation of Conn, Inc.

Chief Stewart noted that this is the property on Pequot Trail west of Sergio Franchi Dr. before Farmholme Rd. He stated that it looks like they want to make improvements to the building and they have plenty of room in the area and he does not see any issues with parking, traffic or safety. Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy also sees no issues. Commissioner Turner asked if this is the property that is referred to as the grange to which Chairman Gourd stated that it is.

Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy made a motion to pass along the following comments to Planning and Zoning; that the Police Commission sees no negative impact on traffic, parking or public safety with this application. Motion seconded by Commissioner Turner. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

Mr. Ladwig joined the virtual meeting at 5:31 p.m. and asked the Board of Police Commissioners for a waiver of the traffic study. The Board of Police Commissioner's do not see a problem with the requested waiver and amended the motion as follows:

Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy amended the motion to add the comment, to include the statement that the Police Commission has no problem with waiving a traffic study. Motion seconded by Commissioner Turner. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

## **4. Traffic**

According to Chairman Gourd, the Police Commission received a request this afternoon from the Stonington High School for a parade/procession to go from the High School, down Route 1 to Flanders Rd. to Jerry Browne Rd. to Old Mistick Village, to be held, weather permitting, on either June 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> for the graduating class. They will be honoring social distancing at this event.

Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy made a motion to add the Stonington High School's request to the agenda. Motion seconded by Commissioner Turner. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy made a motion to approve this request, subject to any approvals deemed necessary by the Administration. Motion seconded by Commissioner Turner. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

**a. E-Mail Re: Route 201 @ Olivia Lane Passing Zone**

No one in attendance. Last month, concerns were brought to the attention of the Board of Police Commissioners in regard to vehicles passing in the passing zone causing a danger to pedestrians and vehicles entering and exiting Olivia Lane. Chairman Gourd noted that Chief Stewart sent a letter to the State DOT. It was found that Olivia Lane is not a town accepted road, it is still owned by the developer, therefore, the State will not make any changes until the Town accepts the road. Chief Stewart is unsure if the Town is in the process of accepting the road.

As it stands, the road is not Town owned so the State will make no changes.

**b. Letter Re: Property Stanton Lane @ Willow Street, Mystic Site-Line Issue**

Chief Stewart noted that the property owner was sent a letter and immediately addressed the site line issue.

**c. E-Mail Re: HHC Signage**

It is in the works to enlarge the signs, according to Chief Stewart.

**d. E-Mail Re: Cottrell Street Trouble with Parking/ Traffic Flow**

There was a request made to the First Selectwoman's Office for mirrors to help see when backing out of the spaces on Cottrell Street. Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy stated that the Police Commission received this request second-hand and he would like to be in direct contact with the requestor in order to discuss these concerns. Chief Stewart noted concerns with convex mirrors; sun glare, distortion, etc.

No action.

5:20 p.m. Commissioner Elmer joined the meeting.

**e. E-Mail Re: Commercial Vehicles/Trucks Traveling on Residential Roads**

Chairman Gourd noted that there is no way to prohibit local truck traffic. Chief Stewart stated that a truck coming from one town through another town to a third town can be prohibited on local roads with the permission of State DOT. Chief Stewart briefly explained this application. He stated that it does not apply to this particular request.

**f. E-Mail Re: Mechanic Street**

Chief Stewart had a meeting with a resident about the speeds on Mechanic Street. The request is to lower the speed limit. Chief Stewart suggested putting up the radar sign and review the data it generates. The Department does not set the speed limits but the State will come out to do a survey. They may decide to raise the speed limit. Chief Stewart is not convinced that lowering the speed limit in that area will solve the issues.

5:25 Commissioner Tabor joined the meeting via speaker phone.

Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy noted that the marinas are generating more traffic on Mechanic

Street at this time of year. The Police Commissioners agreed to wait for the data from the radar sign before deciding to contact the State DOT in regard to the speed limit.

#### **5. Old Business**

##### **a. E-Mail Re: Truck Sign on William Street – Tabled from May Meeting \*POSSIBLE VOTE\***

No one in attendance. Chief Stewart recommends keeping this on the agenda for one more month to get an update from Ms. King and her neighbors.

#### **6. Approval of Minutes from Thursday, May 14, 2020 Regular Meeting \*VOTE NEEDED\***

Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy made a motion to approve the minutes for the Thursday, May 14, 2020 Regular Meeting as submitted. Motion seconded by Commissioner Elmer. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

#### **7. Report of the Chief of Police**

Chief Stewart brought to the attention of the Police Commission that on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup>, the Police Department responded to overdose related calls where Narcan was delivered, saving the lives of three individuals.

Chief Stewart also mentioned that officers were in Mystic working and conversing with the community during the protests. Their efforts are certainly appreciated. Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy stated that he went to observe the protests and commented that the officers did a tremendous job.

At this time, 5:31 p.m., Theodore Ladwig joined the meeting to discuss agenda item 3. **New Business**

##### **a. Planning & Zoning Special Use Permit Application Re: Expansion of Existing Masonic Temple, 637 Pequot Trail, Stonington \*COMMENTS NEEDED\*. (See above 3.a. for amended motion)**

##### **a. Budget Report**

Chief Stewart stated that we are about 90% through the budget. He noted that the Department is in the positive and he expects it to stay that way.

##### **b. Monthly Statistics**

Chief Stewart commented that there has been an increase in activity. The numbers show more disturbances, some domestics, and in general that more people are out and about compared to last month.

##### **c. Alarm Report**

##### **d. Special Event Schedule**

##### **e. Memo Re: Connecticut Law Enforcement Support Office (LESO) Program Participants**

This is an FYI that they will be ending this program in the near future. Chief Stewart will speak to the Police Commission about it soon.

##### **f. E-Mail & Letter Re: Documentation of Municipal Designation – Executive Order**

The Police Department will be the municipal designee in regards to violations of Sector Rules

pursuant to the Governor's Executive Orders.

**g. E-Mail Re: Memorandum of Understanding between Stonington Public Schools and Stonington Police Department \*VOTE NEEDED\***

According to Chief Stewart, this is a school violence prevention grant opportunity for Stonington Public Schools.

Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy made a motion approve the MOU between Stonington Public Schools and the Stonington Police Department, with the caveat that the original MOU requiring 12 training sessions be changed to meetings scheduled as per the All Hazards Safety Plan, which, as Chief Stewart noted, has been amended on the revised version of the MOU included in the Police Commissioner's packet. Motion seconded by Commissioner Tabor. No discussion. All in favor, motion approved.

**h. Policy Update: Chapter 3E, Section 2: Off Duty Firearms Carry \*VOTE NEEDED\***

Chief Stewart noted that previously, officers would need the full qualification course to carry firearms off duty. The new policy makes it more realistic for the officers to qualify.

Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy made a motion to approve policy update Chapter 3E, Section 2: Off Duty Firearms Carry. Motion seconded by Commissioner Tabor. No discussion. All in favor, motion approved.

**i. Policy Update: Chapter 3F: Duty to Intervene \*VOTE NEEDED\***

Chief Stewart stated that Use of Force training is conducted by Sgt. Beebe, Officer Hewes, Officer Cullen, and Officer Sundman. They teach a variety of things including de-escalation, what to do and not do. Each officer is responsible for the other's action. If your partner is stepping over the line you are required to stop him/her. Officers are to be watchful if another officer is operating through emotion. The duty to intervene has been taught for a long time. Choke holds are not part of Stonington Police Department's training or taught in the Police Academy. The Police Academy will make this part of their sixteen policies that the State requires all Departments to have. The Use of Force policy will prohibit the use of choke holds and also add the duty to intervene.

Commissioner Turner asked if this is new language or if it is amended existing language to which Chief Stewart stated that he borrowed from it from another Police Department that has already put this policy in place.

Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy made a motion to approve the policy update Chapter 3F: Duty to Intervene / De-escalation and Use of Force. Motion seconded by Commissioner Tabor. No discussion. All in favor, motion approved.

**j. Letter Re: Sergeant James McCaffery Retirement**

Chief Stewart informed the Police Commissioners that they have received a letter of retirement from a 30-year serving Sergeant, Sergeant McCaffery. He will be leaving in November. Chief Stewart thanked Sgt. McCaffery for all his years of service and wishes him well. Chief Stewart commented that this opens up a Sergeants position.

Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy made a motion to accept the retirement letter from Sergeant James McCaffery, and also, to send a letter from the Board of Police Commissioners thanking him for his 30 years of dedicated service to the Town of Stonington. Motion seconded by Commissioner Tabor. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

**k. Youth Officer Assignment**

According to Chief Stewart, Youth Officer Paige has indicated that he will be retiring at the end of summer. This is a highly visible position, and the Department has had a series of interviews. Dr. Riley from Stonington Public Schools and Captain Olson sat in on the interviews. Chief Stewart was very proud of all those officers who interviewed. Chief Stewart was proud to announce that they will be extending the Youth Officer position to Officer Kerry Manley Browning. She will be Stonington's first female youth officer.

**l. Adjustment to Longevity for Chief and Captain to Match Union Contract \*VOTE NEEDED\***

Chief Stewart respectfully asked that the Police Commission approve the same longevity language that the union has approved for the officers for himself and Captain Olson. Chairman Gourd added that it has been the policy and practice to have the Administration's raises mirror what has been negotiated for the rest of the force and he is in favor of this request.

Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy made a motion to approve the longevity of the Chief and Captain to match that of the union contract. Motion seconded by Commissioner Tabor. No discussion. All in favor, motion approved.

Chief Stewart thanked the Board of Police Commissioners for staying in touch over the last couple weeks and for their support.

Chairman Gourd thanked Chief Stewart.

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

**8. Consent Agenda**

- a. Letter Re: 2020 Mystic Half Marathon
- b. Letters & E-Mails Re: Pawcatuck River Duck Race/Cancellation of Duck Race
- c. Letter Re: St. Michael School Fun Run/Walk
- d. Letter Re: Feast of the Assumption Friday Evening Procession
- e. Memo Re: Planning & Zoning Application – PZ2008SUP Reveka Tsiakiris (D. Devlne)
- f. Letter Re: 2020 Distracted Driving High Visibility Enforcement Project Update
- g. Letter Re: Reserve Officer Dale Brummund
- h. E-Mail Re: Blessing of the Fleet 5K Cancellation
- i. Memo Re: Good Job – Officer Hersh
- j. Memo Re: Good Job – Officer Hersh & Officer Browning

Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda. Motion seconded by Commissioner Tabor. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

**9. Executive Session**

Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy made a motion to adjourn and enter the executive session at 5:54 p.m. Motion seconded by Commissioner Tabor. No discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

**a. Interview of Police Officer Candidate**

**10. Return to Public Meeting at 7:00 p.m.**

**Virtual Webex Meeting**

**Dial: 1-408-418-9388**

**Enter Access Code: 129 728 1693**

**-OR-**

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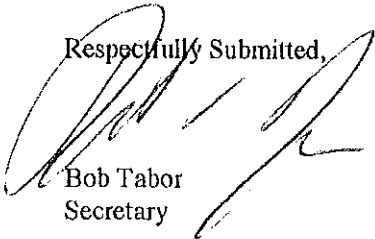
Chairman Gourd stated that, at 7:03 p.m., the Police Commissioner's went back into the regular June 11, 2020 meeting of the Stonington Board of Police Commissioners following the Executive Session.

Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy made a motion to make an offer of probationary employment to Chris High, contingent on successful completion of Police Academy requirements. Motion seconded by Commissioner Tabor. Discussion: Chief Stewart stated that Mr. High will be brought in one level down from the top level of patrol (level four) and will also be offered one week of vacation to start due to his number of years of service to the State Police. Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy amended the motion as follows: to make an offer of probationary employment to Chris High, contingent on successful completion of Police Academy requirements with the offer to come in at patrol level four with one week vacation up front. Motion seconded by Commissioner Tabor, no further discussion, all in favor, motion approved.

**11. Adjourn**

At 7:05 p.m., Vice Chairman O'Shaughnessy made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Tabor, all in favor, motion approved. All in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,



Bob Tabor  
Secretary