



POLICE COMMISSION

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MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
BETHEL POLICE COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, APR 20, 2016
MUNICIPAL CENTER, 1 SCHOOL ST MEETING ROOM "B"

ATTENDING: CHAIRMAN MIKE DUFF
COMMISSIONER ANTHONY RUBINO
COMMISSIONER RICHARD KOLWICZ
CHIEF JEFFREY FINCH

ABSENT: COMMISSIONER RICHARD BARTON
COMMISSIONER AMY MANNION

ATTENDANCE; Police Officers 1
Citizens 1

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TOWN OF BETHEL
TOWN CLERK

Chairman Duff opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m.
The Commission pledged allegiance to the flag.

Motion by Chairman Duff to add "Dispatch Concerns" to Old Business as item 5d;
seconded by Comm Kolwicz – unanimous.

1. Public Input
Tim Draper of 36 Aunt Pattys La clarified the latest iteration of his site plan for 49 Taylor Av which is to be forwarded to Planning & Zoning. There will be twelve parking spaces for 8 units and 137 feet of sight line obstructing ledge will be removed along with sight obstructing vegetation. Commissioners examined the revised site plan. Chairman Duff stated that Lt Dickinson will still have to see if the changes make the sight line technically correct per State regulations.
2. Review of Past Minutes
Motion by Comm Kolwicz to accept the minutes of 3/16/16; seconded by Comm Rubino – unanimous.
3. Grievance
UPSEU (United Public Service Employees Union) attorney Craig Manemeit and John Shay, Labor Attorney were in attendance.

At 6:15 the meeting recessed.

At 6:23 the meeting came back into session

Attorney Manemeit spoke on behalf of the Police Union's position that even though not defined in the collective bargaining agreement, arbitrator applied seven tests defining "just cause" before discipline were not all existent in the issue concerning Off Delaney. Because discipline should only be issued for just cause, Mr Manemeit argued that as far as the case in question, in addition to a biased complainant, Off Delaney was a victim of false contact information causing his inability to contact individuals involved in order to do supplemental reports and was thus not deserving of the level discipline resulting in a 4 day suspension. The Union's position is that this level of discipline should be reduced. In answer to Chairman Duff's question concerning what the Union would feel acceptable Mr Manemeit replied that Off Delaney feels one day would have been fairer than two and in the second case no discipline should have been merited because of aforementioned disputed claims.

Chief Finch addressed notice of complaint #149, the two day suspension and notice of complaint #158, the four day suspension. The Chief did not address notice of complaint #152 the proposed twenty four day suspension. The Chief related a litany of documented dates for incidents leading up to the two suspensions arising over a year and a half of verbal then written warnings, written reprimands over failure to follow two sergeant's requests relating to Off Delaney's cases, failure to follow proper procedure, being late for and missing assigned extra jobs, showing up late and failure to show up at all for scheduled duty, deceptiveness in his overall dealings with the Department. The four day suspension resulted from a single property damage case where timely and proper documentation was not done, suspect investigation not followed up immediately, not answering victim/complainant phone calls, no reports, no follow up at all in spite of being told to do so, resulting in finally being relieved from the case by his sergeant and charged with a violation of policy. There may have been other cases not documented. Excuses seem to follow an overall pattern of forgetfulness according to the Chief.

At 7:02, motion by Comm Rubino to go into executive session, seconded by Comm Kolwicz – unanimous.

At 7:15 the Commission came out of executive session.

Motion by Chairman Duff to deny the grievance for notice of complaint #149 because just cause has been exhibited and to support the disciplinary action taken by Chief Finch; seconded by Comm Kolwicz – unanimous.

Motion by Chairman Duff to deny the grievance for notice of complaint #153 because just cause has been exhibited and to support the disciplinary action taken by Chief Finch; seconded by Comm Rubino – unanimous.

Motion by Chairman Duff to table notice of complaint #152 for future investigation; seconded by Comm Kolwicz – unanimous.

4. Budget Report

a) Comptrollers Reports

Nothing remarkable to report per Chief Finch. Nearing the end of the fiscal year. Several large purchases still need to be made.

b) Overtime Reports

Several high expense items will be 75% or 100% paid for by grants. The Commission discussed weekly overtime expenses, high but not out of the ordinary according to Chief Finch.

c) Budget – *after the Finance Bd*

One car which had earlier been cut from the budget has been reinstated.

5. Old Business

a) Monthly Reports

The Commission considered the reports

b) Commissioner Safety Training

Civilian firearm safety training has been enhanced in duration and cost. Proposed last month (see minutes 3/16/16 item 5 New Business) Chairman Duff stated his desire to explore other in-house options.

Motion by Comm Kolwicz to rescind the training program proposed at the last meeting; seconded by Comm Rubino – unanimous.

c) Road Signage

Comm Duff questioned all the road signs popping up which did not have Commission approval. Too many signs lessen the effect of legitimate ones. Matt Knickerbocker stated that they are put up by residents and are not in compliance with State regulations.

d) Dispatch Concerns

Added at the request of Comm Kolwicz due to concerned citizen stating that overnight a shift sergeant could stand in for a second dispatcher in an emergency. Chief Finch stated that a sergeant is not routinely assigned. Chairman Duff stated that the decision to hire a second dispatcher was done as a safety measure to prevent a possible missed 911 call. Capt Pugner stated that if an emergency arose every officer would be needed on the road and not to back up the dispatch center.

6. New Business

• Cyclefest June 12, 2016

A long time event in Bethel run by Danbury's Hat City Cyclists, this event has not produced any issues over the years in which it has been run. The event starts and ends at Bethel Middle School 7:00 to 3:30 and is run in small groups of two to six.

Motion by Comm Kolwicz that the Commission is in favor of Cyclefest; seconded by Comm Rubino – unanimous.

• Summer Fest- Chamber of Commerce, July 16th

The proposal is to close PT Barnum Sq from 10am to 10pm on 7/16/16, keeping Greenwood Av, Main and School St open with 3 officers hired. Gail Furniss of Occasional Bridal produced a petition from 75% of 15 businesses and residents on PT Barnum Sq to not close the street on this date. Weekends are vital to Bethel business according to Ms Furniss and closing the street fronting the businesses even one day represents a financial hardship. The event should be moved to Municipal grounds. The festival according to the complainant is to showcase Bethel business, not to close street

access to them. Chairman Duff favored the gathering of more information so the issue can be addressed at the next meeting. Commissioners agreed.

- Berry School Driveway

Changes made to the Berry School Driveway proposal as previously passed by the Commission were presented in plan form by Lt Dickinson. The fire hydrant is to be moved by the water company, parking spaces added and a crosswalk added from the parking lot to the school. Lt Dickinson objected to the proposed angled crosswalk and for safety sake suggested putting the crosswalk in first, making sure it is 90° to the road. Motion by Chairman Duff to instruct Lt Dickinson to advise concerned parties of the recommendations made by the traffic commission; seconded by Comm Kolwicz – unanimous.

- Durant Av RR lot expansion

State traffic engineers need as part of the approval process the Town's traffic authority agreeing that the added railroad station parking spaces will not adversely affect area State roads by increased volume. Lt Dickinson does not see any adverse effect of the additional 127 spaces bringing the total to 250 spaces.

Motion that the Police Commission accepts the State's findings as valid; seconded by Comm Kolwicz – unanimous.

- Controlled Substance

Chairman Duff requested the Commission receive a briefing on controlled substance abuse by Bethel's adolescent population. The Chairman asked if the Department canine could be more fully utilized to detect drugs within the schools. The Chief noted that this is up to the Board of Education and school administrators. Chairman Duff to speak with Chairman Crabas.

7. Correspondence

- Emily Dykes

A little girl's letter of thanks to the Police Department

- Ms T. Seagraves

A donation with a letter of thanks for assistance at a medical call. Chief Finch will send a letter of gratitude on behalf of the Department.

8. Police Building

The Building Committee approved Brian Humes as architect and is in the process of approving a construction company.

9. Chief's Report

Two events were noted:

- Exchange Club April 21st
- Awards Ceremony – April 29th

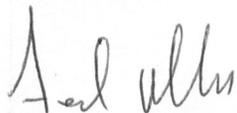
10. Commissioner Comments

Comm Rubino asked about the previously approved "ride along" for Commission members

Chief Finch stated that Commission safety training can be set up and asked for Chairman Duff's list of what he sees as required.

At 8:35 motion by Comm Kolwicz to adjourn; seconded by Comm Rubino – unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ferd Miller Jr".

Ferdinand Miller Jr
Secretary