



POLICE COMMISSION

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MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
BETHEL POLICE COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, AUG 15, 2012
BETHEL POLICE DEPARTMENT-CONFERENCE ROOM

ATTENDING: CHAIRMAN NICHOLAS ELLIS
VICE CHAIRMAN HUGO GRECO
COMMISSIONER CHRIS MCCOLLAM
COMMISSIONER MIKE DUFF
CHIEF JEFFREY FINCH

ABSENT: COMMISSIONER DAN GROSSO

Chairman Ellis opened the meeting at 6:08 p.m.

1. General Public Comments

Judy Spak of 54 Chestnut Hill Rd referred to the letter she submitted on behalf of herself and eight Chestnut Hill residents complaining about the fast speed of passing cars, motorcyclists and bicyclists. Their request was for speed bumps to slow traffic and increase safety. Ms Spak referred to neighborhood small children and specifically mentioned one resident whose garden, in order to be approachable for service, requires that her body be partially into the road. This issue is to be addressed under New Business item 5a.

Ann Cleary of 2 Eagle Rock Hill Rd complimented MACO officer Steven Shanley for his professional response to a recent dog complaint. Along with officer Burnes, who signed off on the report, a warning was given and witnesses obtained, which Ms Cleary stated she repeatedly requested in the past on issues with which she has been involved. A formal letter of praise will be posted to the Chief and the Commission.

2. Review of Past Minutes for 7/18/12

Comm McCollam noted an error in item 8, Commissioner comments. In the last paragraph the referred to dog belongs to Comm Greco's nephew. "his dog" should be replaced with "his nephew's dog". In reference to potential "liability issues" mentioned in connection with child safety seat belt checks, Chairman Ellis stated he was offended by this pointing out that many police activities have liability concerns. Checking seat belt installations is a service according to the Chairman which protects the public. Chief Finch stated that though there was a low request for this activity, many seek help with the entire installation process which can vary widely and be complicated. The Chief will explore training for

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some members of the Department in this area. Comm Duff stated that the minutes as presented were OK in regards to what was said.

Motion by Comm Greco to accept the minutes of the 7/18/12 meeting; seconded by Comm Duff – unanimous.

3. Budget Report

Since the new budget just started 7/1/12, there is nothing significant as yet to report according to Chief Finch. Chairman Ellis questioned the \$3K negative balance in the capital equipment account concerning police vehicles. This was due to the \$8,100 first lease payment on a new MACO vehicle being charged off against the 403 Capital Equipment account and the instructions from the Comptroller that it was ok to go \$8,100 into deficit. Also at issue according to the Chairman was the cost of the required modifications to emergency lights, radio, wiring and computer to make it compatible with the rest of the fleet when other necessary departmental expenses are being put off. The \$4,806 in required modifications were detailed by Capt Bruckenthal. The modifications were needed to cover potential liability concerns concerning equipment. The vehicle which had to be replaced can be used for the next eight or more years. Comm Greco stated that the modifications made the vehicle far more useful for other Department uses than was the old MACO van. For the record Chairman Ellis questioned the reason behind taking the time to fine tune a budget when an account can be invaded at any time. Comm Duff stated that “another fiduciary” taking money out of an account for which the Commission is responsible has “moral problems” and a letter of explanation from those involved would be in order. Chief Finch believes the Comptroller has such authority and suggested the Chairman may wish to set up a meeting with the Comptroller, the First Selectman and the Police Commission concerning the authority involved in matters such as this. Comm McCollam stated that there should have been better communication all along concerning this. This was also the first time in his knowledge that this had been done. Chairman Ellis questioned the overtime expenses incurred during the last fiscal year as a result of dispatch vacancies. An experienced candidate is going to be interviewed to fill the current vacancy according to the Chief.

Motion by Comm McCollam to accept the budget report as presented; seconded by Comm Duff – unanimous.

4. Old Business

a) Monthly Reports

Chief Finch stated that larcenies are on the rise pushing up the major crime UCR index.

Motion by Comm Greco to accept the monthly reports as written; seconded by Comm McCollam – unanimous.

b) Captain's Salary

The Commission discussed the salary of the Captain as agreed upon when promoted, at the same top step salary as the out-going Capt Cedergren. He was

subsequently denied the 2½% pay raise (negotiated by the Police Union and the Town) in July as well as \$1K stipend for those get who are MRT certified in order to create a starting step in the position of Captain as requested by the First Selectman.

Motion by Chairman Ellis that Capt Bruckenthal receive his 2½% increase starting July 1st of this year; seconded by Comm Duff – unanimous.

Comm McCollam initiated a discussion of the length of time between the two steps. Twelve months “in grade” is consistent with established practice as it applies to sergeants and lieutenants and the contract according to Chief Finch.

Motion by Comm McCollam that hereafter there shall be recognized a pay scale of two steps for the position of Captain with a starting step set at 97% of the recognized top step; seconded by Comm Greco – unanimous. In regards to the MRT stipend, the Commission discussed section 19-27 Town Personnel Rules and Regulations which states that “anyone promoted from a bargaining unit to a non-bargaining unit position shall maintain the same benefit package as they had before”. Because MRT stipend is negotiated in the contract Capt Bruckenthal is entitled to it.

Motion by Comm Greco that the Commission instruct the Town to make Capt Bruckenthal whole with his benefits per section 19-27 of Town Personnel Rules and Regulations pertaining to his MRT certification; seconded by Comm McCollam – unanimous.

Motion by Chairman Ellis to add Library Site Plan to New Business as item 5c; seconded by Comm Duff – unanimous.

New Business

a) Speeding – Chestnut Ridge Rd, 2 Areas

The smooth road is contusive to high speed according to Comm Duff. One neighbor’s floral arrangement at the side of the road is of concern to residents. One solution could be well placed speed bumps. Data is necessary.

Lt. Dickinson to put out the counter to obtain the necessary speed information. The Chief reports enforcement activity is presently being undertaken.

Motion by Chairman Ellis to hold this matter until the next meeting under Old Business; seconded by Comm Greco – unanimous.

b) Revised General Order 2007-09

This general order was revised based on the Academy’s modification of their existing policy which influenced the revision of this policy as indicated.

Motion by Comm McCollam that General Order 2007-09 with revisions of 7/27/12 be accepted; seconded by Comm Greco – unanimous.

c) Library Site Plan

This was placed on the agenda by the Chairman being erroneously accused of approving a site plan about the old town hall parking lot. In fact the site plan was not brought before the Commission. The Permanent Building Commission’s erroneous assumption arose from Lt. Dickinson being asked by one of their

commission members to informally look at the site and make safety recommendations which he did merely to be helpful. No motion was needed because this item was included for discussion only.

6. Correspondence

a) Ms C. Moretz

In her letter Ms Moretz thanked Offs Lynn Morris and Heather Burns

b) American Legion – Skip Clapp

This letter compliments Lt Kennedy, Sgt Kaluta and Off Zor

7. Chief's Report

• Training Report – Monthly

Lt Kennedy's report was in the hands of Commissioners.

• Dispatcher Opening

A candidate has been identified for interview

• National Night-Out at Target

National event held for the last 7 years

• Personnel Order – Command Structure

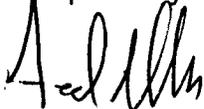
Arises as a result of promotion of a new captain. Budget responsibility has been assigned to the Captain. Uniform Division oversight, formally divided between the two lieutenants is now, along with Dispatch, totally under Lt Dickinson. The Detective Bureau will be under Lt Kennedy. Both report to the Captain and the Chief.

8. Commissioner Comments

Comm Duff expressed his concern that the \$80K for new police station plans was excessive. Chief Finch explained that unlike the original space needs study, \$80K will result in sufficiently detailed plans to allow the Town to go out to contractors for bids in order to establish a real price. Comm McCollam asked that the Commission be involved in the process.

At 7:55 motion by Comm Duff to adjourn; seconded by Comm Greco – unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,



Ferdinand Miller Jr

Secretary