



POLICE COMMISSION

49 Plumtrees Road, Connecticut 06801 • Phone: (203) 743-5500 • Fax: (203) 748-1333

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
BETHEL POLICE COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, SEP 16, 2009
BETHEL POLICE DEPARTMENT-CONFERENCE ROOM

RECEIVED

SEP 18 2009

TOWN OF BETHEL
TOWN CLERK

ATTENDING: CHAIRMAN NICHOLAS ELLIS
COMMISSIONER CHRIS McCOLLAM
COMMISSIONER HUGO GRECO
COMMISSIONER BILL OCHS
COMMISSIONER ANDREW MATTURRO
CHIEF JEFFREY W. FINCH

Chairman Nicholas Ellis opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

1. General Public Comments:

Ann Cleary of 2 Eagle Rock Hill Rd reported on a recent meeting between herself, Chief Finch and Chairman Ellis. Her concern continues to be the absence of what Mrs Cleary considers vital information from reports concerning herself, the findings of a Commission appointed committee reviewing those reports and the absence of an alleged home video connected with her motor vehicle incident and subsequent Department arrest processing videos as well as her citizen complaint form. Courtesy cards should be issued in all cases by involved officers to include case numbers, freedom of information rights and citizen complaint procedures. She asked that her case be reopened and the actions of involved officers reviewed. Chairman Ellis promised that the Chief will produce his findings in this matter by next Thursday.

Matthew Siliano of 24 Bethpage Dr was in attendance for the discussion of Bethpage Dr under New Business item 5a.

2. Review of Past Minutes Aug 19, 2009

Motion by Comm Greco to accept the minutes of 8/19/09; seconded by Comm McCollam – unanimous.

3. Budget Report:

Chief Finch reported overtime is starting to climb but is still below last year-to-date. Budgeted dispatch overtime is low and needs to be addressed with the Comptroller. An accounting of alarm response charges, parking tickets and gun permit fees was

produced. In response to a question by Comm Greco, Chief Finch reported that DARE donations go directly into a revolving account which is used for DARE activities. Motion by Comm Maturro to accept the budget report as presented; seconded by Comm Ochs – unanimous.

4. Old Business:

a) Monthly Reports

The Commission considered the reports. Accident rates have “clearly declined” last year-to-date and back to 2005 and 2006 according to Chief Finch. Comm Maturro asked about the possibility of a paramedic report. No paramedic report will be issued according to the Chief. Funding comes directly from the Selectman’s office. Medical response accounting and fees generated is within the auspices of the Town. Billing is done by a private company from information provided by the Fire Dept. Comm Maturro asked that since the Police Department is active in dispatching medics as well as handling this activity for Redding, additional monies should be provided in the budget. Chairman Ellis and the Commission in general felt this was a good idea which can be addressed in January’s budget meeting. Motion by Comm Greco to accept the Monthly Reports as read; seconded by Comm Maturro – unanimous.

b) CALEA Refund Request

A request for advance payment monies refunded by CALEA was denied by the Comptroller according to Chairman Ellis due to the spending freeze.

c) No Thru Trucks Hawleyville Rd

Lt Dickinson reported that according to the Highway Dept, repaving should be done by the end of September. At this time the new “road dynamics” will be examined and any signage and marking improvements needed will be recommended.

5. New Business:

Motion by Comm Greco to add Municipal Center handicap parking to the agenda as New Business item 5d; seconded by Comm Maturro – unanimous.

Motion by Comm Ochs to add meeting time to agenda as New Business item 5e; seconded by Comm McCollam – unanimous.

Motion by Chairman Ellis to add Blue Jay Orchard Crosswalk to New Business as item 5f; seconded by Comm McCollam.

a) Bethpage Dr

Lt Dickinson obtained a estimated cost of \$4,000 per speed hump from Stone Construction. The traffic counter recorded peak traffic volume of 100 per hour which according to the lieutenant is low for Bethel. The accident rate is low showing only 1 minor accident per year over the last 3½ years. Chief Finch underlined the fact that a clear spike in traffic volume is indicated by the data at rush hour showing the road is being used as a short cut. Except for one short section even 30mph is an uncomfortable speed for this road. Signs do not work, only putting an officer there, (not a permanent solution) or speed humps work. It is also necessary to do a complete neighborhood survey before installing speed humps. Slowing traffic is only one factor. Noise, vibration, flying hub caps, general animosity are all considerations in the installation of humps, bumps or speed tables in increasing order of severity. The Chief also pointed out that it will also be necessary to see if the Town is willing to finance their installation. Comm McCollam pointed out that Oven Rock would have to be included in the survey since residents have no choice but to use Bethpage. Comm Matturro asked if firm prices could be obtained and suggested using temporary speed bumps in the meantime to see how such a solution works. Lt Dickinson stated that he would need to provide specifications for the humps before obtaining actual quotes. Motion by Chairman Ellis to put out a survey on Bethpage and Oven Rock to access the reaction to speed; seconded by Comm McCollam - unanimous.

b) Grassy Plain Terrace

Lt Dickinson displayed photos of the intersection showing the difference in striping since 2006. In that year there were 12 motor vehicle accidents, 5 in 2007, 3 in 2008 and year-to-date 2009 there has only been one accident. The marking does its job as long as the lines remain visible. Motion by Chairman Ellis that the State be contacted to repaint the road markings at the intersection because accident data shows they work; seconded by Comm McCollam to direct Chairman Ellis to send a letter on behalf of the Greco – unanimous.

c) Crosswalk – Whittlesey Dr

Lt Dickinson displayed a photo of the crosswalk from the front of the high school across Whittlesey Dr to Berry School temporarily added during construction because the sidewalk disappeared. This crosswalk has worked well and the lieutenant wants to make it permanent by adding it to the list of crosswalk improvements making it 2 feet wider, out to 8 feet, using reflective epoxy paint. Motion by Comm McCollam to make the Whittlesey Dr crosswalk permanent; seconded by Comm Ochs – unanimous.

d) Municipal Center Handicap Parking

Comm Greco proposed adding two handicap parking spaces in front of the Municipal Center. Currently handicap parking exists in the rear but the commissioner feels the front of the building is the logical place since it is the official entrance. Lt Dickinson pointed out that even the existing handicap parking space in front may not qualify because it is parallel and close to the road. The ramp in front is not conveniently placed for the proposed spaces. Comm Matturo proposed adding "Handicap Parking in Rear" signs instead.

e) Commission Meeting Time

Comm Ochs stated that the 5:00 to 6:30 change has not resulted in an increase of public attendance. He asked that the time be changed to 6:00 or 5:30. Chairman Ellis stated that people may not have realized that the meeting time has changed as yet. 5:30 or 6:00 meeting times may not give the general public sufficient time to attend. Comm McCollam requested that it be put on the December meeting agenda which sets meeting dates and times for January. Motion by Comm McCollam to put meeting times on the December agenda: seconded by Comm Greco – unanimous.

f) Blue Jay Orchard Crosswalk

Large seasonal business requires the orchard to employ officers on weekends for controlling traffic at the crosswalk. The crosswalk is misplaced according to the lieutenant and the placement of parking lots result in a wide swath of pedestrians crossing the road which is difficult for the officer to control. In a drawing the proposed improved and wider crosswalk is moved 100 feet, more central to the store making it easier for pedestrians to use the crosswalk better balancing the sight lines on either side. In addition there are proposed crosswalk warning signs. Comm McCollam asked about the disposition of the old crosswalk, Lt Dickinson stated it is 70% faded and the remains can possibly be power washed away or painted over. Motion by Comm Matturo to accept Lt Dickinson's recommendation to reposition the Blue Jay Orchard crosswalk – sec by Comm McCollam – unanimous.

Lt Dickinson displayed the solution to a Ridgedale Rd resident complaining about sight lines leaving the Big Y Old Hawleyville entrance/exit. The sight line was compromised by shrubbery which has since been cut significantly lower, solving the problem.

6. Correspondence:
None

7. Chief's Report

- a) The training report was in the hands of the Commissioners.
- b) Scotty Picnic 9/12.
A table was set up and operated by Offs Morris and Burnes
- c) Sidewalk Sales 9/26
A table similar to the one for the Scotty Picnic will be set up
- d) Donation
From Verdi Construction for communication headphones to be used by the ESU team. The approximate value is \$8,000.

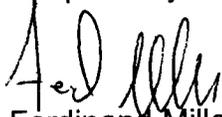
8. Commissioner Comments:

Comm Ochs asked about the replacement of the recently resigned officer. Chief Finch stated that the existing list is too old and the Department is currently looking for a certified officer. With certification an officer can be functional within 3 to 4 weeks. A candidate test could not be done until February or March and after that it would be six months before the officer could be on his own.

Comm Maturro asked if every call gets a report number. Chief Finch will check policy on this. Comm Maturro also asked the Chief to look at video monitoring policy. Chief Finch stated this is done both for the benefit of the public and the Department. The system is very expensive and the cost of retention expensive as well. Video cannot be kept permanently on disk and is overwritten with 30 to 40 days unless there is a complaint request to capture a particular incident.

At 8:15 motion by Chairman Ellis to adjourn; seconded by Comm Maturro – unanimous

Respectfully Submitted



Ferdinand Miller Jr.

Secretary