



# POLICE COMMISSION

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

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING  
BETHEL POLICE COMMISSION  
WEDNESDAY, DEC 15, 2010  
BETHEL POLICE DEPARTMENT-CONFERENCE ROOM

RECEIVED

10 DEC 20 AM 10:24

ATTENDING: CHAIRMAN NICHOLAS ELLIS  
V. CHAIRMAN CHRIS McCOLLAM  
COMMISSIONER HUGO GRECO  
COMMISSIONER BILL OCHS  
COMMISSIONER DAN GROSSO  
CHIEF JEFFREY W FINCH

Chairman Nicholas Ellis opened the meeting at 6:10 p.m. First Selectman Matt Knickerbocker was in attendance

1. General Public Comments:

First Selectman Matt Knickerbocker presented a citizen's letter asking about the intersection of Codfish Hill Ext and Aunt Pattys La, an issue which had been addressed at a previous Commission meeting (11/18/09 item 5a). Lt Dickinson stated the solution was to simply paint a center line to better direct traffic through the curve on Codfish Hill Ext. More than twice Public Works was directed to effect the needed change. The First Selectman asked for a copy of those minutes and asked that in the future any such requests be forwarded to his office.

2. Review of Past Minutes Nov 17, 2010

Comm McCollam noted a change to the minutes of 11/17/10. New Business item 5c should read "Comm Greco and Chairman Ellis will form the sub committee". Comm Greco stated that Budget Report item 3 should read "Motion by Comm Greco to accept the current budget report as ----". Motion by Comm Greco to accept the amended minutes of 11/17/10 meeting with correction; seconded by Comm Grosso – unanimous.

3. Budget Report:

The Commission considered the reports. Overtime is "considerable" according to the Chief who then provided a breakdown. \$2,000 will be returned by a DUI grant. The rest is the result of dispatchers using up vacation time before the end of the calendar year. Comm McCollam objected to account 360-111 designation as "payroll", as educational incentive it clearly is not payroll. First Selectman Knickerbocker stated that the title will change when new system software is installed. A discussion of high overtime expenses followed and various solutions offered and appraised, from additional hiring to the use of specials to regionalization with surrounding towns. Motion by Chairman Ellis to accept the current budget report as presented; seconded by Comm Greco – unanimous.

4. Old Business:

a) Monthly Reports

Comm McCollam noted that arrest totals are "on track to surpass last year's numbers". The Commissioner also pointed out that eventually more officers will have to be hired. Comm Grosso commented that police needs should be at the "forefront" of needed expenditures for the Town. Proper police protection should come first. Comm McCollam complimented the data breakdown on the reports as presented. Motion by Comm Greco to accept the Monthly Reports as presented; seconded by Comm Grosso – unanimous.

5. New Business:

a) Budget 2011 – 2012

Chairman Ellis stated that a proposed budget is ready for presentation to the joint meeting of the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance in February. Overall the budget represents a .69% increase over last year. This represents a \$24,451 increase with a \$3,559,962 overall total. Chief Finch read the line items list noting increases, decreases and no changes. The Commission subcommittee recommended a .36% cut to the original proposal which was subsequently done. Comm Ochs asked what was cut from the first budget draft. Chief Finch reviewed those items which reduced the budget from 1.05% to .69%. Comm McCollam questioned the continued use of the outdated "MRT" terminology in current policy. Chief Finch read a letter from Lt Dickinson which stated that "EMR" terminology should be implemented when the officer's recertification from the State show that term on their licenses. Currently MRT is still in common usage and still being used by Danbury Hospital referring to this level of training. Motion by Comm Greco to accept the proposed budget for presentation to the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance; seconded by Comm Grosso – the motion passed with a vote of 3 to 1, Comm Och's no vote based upon his belief that a light bar removed from the budget should have been put back in.

b) Set Meeting Dates for 2011

Chairman Ellis produced a proposed list of meeting dates for the third Wednesday of the month for 2011. Commissioners and the Chief were asked if any of the dates need be moved for potential conflicts. Chief Finch asked that the 12/21/11 date be moved to 12/20/11 (Tuesday) due to Christmas. Motion by Comm Greco to accept the proposed meeting dates for 2011; seconded by Comm McCollam – unanimous. The dates are as follows:

Police Commission Meeting Dates for 2011, meetings held at the Bethel Police Department 49 Plumtrees Rd, Bethel CT at 6pm.

January 19 <sup>th</sup>	July 20 <sup>th</sup>
February 16 <sup>th</sup>	August 17 <sup>th</sup>
March 16 <sup>th</sup>	September 21 <sup>st</sup>
April 20 <sup>th</sup>	October 19 <sup>th</sup>
May 18 <sup>th</sup>	November 16 <sup>th</sup>
June 15 <sup>th</sup>	December 20 <sup>th</sup>
	January 18 <sup>th</sup> (2012)

c) Election of Chairman for 2011  
Comm Greco nominated Nicholas Ellis for Chairman for 2011.

Comm Ochs nominated Chris McCollam for Chairman for 2011.

Motion by Comm Greco to close nominations; seconded by Comm Ochs – unanimous.

Raising of hands called for by the Chairman for those in favor of Nick Ellis as Chairman. Two hands raised.

Raising of hands called for by the Chairman for those in favor of Chris McCollam as Chairman. Two hands raised.

As tie breaker Nick Ellis voted for himself as Chairman.

The vote was three to two in favor of Nick Ellis as Chairman.

d) Election of Vice Chairman for 2011

Comm Ochs nominated Chris McCollam for Vice Chairman for 2011.

Chris McCollam respectfully declined.

Comm Grosso nominated Hugo Greco for Vice Chairman for 2011.

Voice vote was called for by the Chairman for those in favor of Hugo Greco as Vice Chairman. Hugo Greco elected as Vice Chairman.

6. Correspondence:

Motion by Comm McCollam to add Tulio Belardinelli letter to Correspondence as item 6b and Robert Martin letter to Correspondence as item 6c; seconded by Comm Greco - unanimous

a) Cheryl Triscia

This letter complimented Sgt Durkin, Sgt Bruckenthal and Off Delohery for their part in a recent incident.

b) Tulio Belardinelli

This letter questioned Off Conroy's authority enforcing trespass laws on Belardinelli's property as well as on Edward Rockwell's property. In camouflage the officer "harasses" people who have permission to be there. Mr Belardinelli asks that Off Conroy not "hang around" his property in the future. Chairman Ellis quoted numerous complaints from constituents and questioned the manner and demeanor in which Off Conroy confronts people in these off duty hunting situations. A solution is called for according to the Chairman. A certain amount of leeway should be allowed. Better to just tell the offender to get on the proper side of the boundary than to bring several people into the process with maps and surveyor marks. Chief Finch stated that officers have an obligation to enforce the law when hunting/trespassing violations occur. The Chief stated it is his job to make sure officers operate legally. Just because the violator feels offended is no reason to tell an officer not to enforce the law. Comm Greco pointed out that in these confrontations Off Conroy is in camouflage and not in uniform. His job is to patrol the streets of Bethel and should react to hunting incidents only when they occur on his shift. When working privately, with authorization, he also needs to carry a letter from the property owner. Comm McCollam used the words "rudely" and "disrespectfully" and went on to explain that, following Department directive, the duty sergeant was called in who in turn contacted a DEP officer resulting in a

“waste of resources”, all avoidable if he would only hunt and leave everyone else alone instead of “using the Department” in pursuit of his personal agenda. Chairman Ellis directed that the Belardinelli letter be attached to these minutes (see addendum).

c) Robert Martin Letter

In this letter Robert Martin stated that he had permission to hunt and provided the necessary form. In his response to Robert Martin, Chief Finch’s letter stated that the infraction issued was based on information sufficient to prove trespass occurred. The ticket was withdrawn only on the request of the property owner. The burden is on the hunter to know property lines on which he is allowed to hunt. Comm McCollam stated that the reason why people are upset is not due to “the message being delivered but rather the manner in which the message was delivered”. “Customer service” or how people are treated is important. Outside of the woods, Comm Grosso called Conroy’s performance as an officer totally professional. In his experience with Off Conroy on motor vehicle accidents and EMS calls, Comm McCollam called him the “consummate professional”. The kind of confrontation in the woods as addressed by Comms Ellis, Greco, Grosso and McCollam could lead to something far more serious. The Chief asked the Commission what they would request he do. Chairman Ellis requested that the Chief “find a solution that fixes this situation and which fits everybody” where the public does not feel mistreated.

Dept Public Health Letter

In a letter from the State of CT Dept of Public Health, Bethel was designated as having met the parameters to be a “heart safe community”. Recognized was the Town’s effective 911 early access dispatch center, cardiopulmonary resuscitation abilities, defibulation and advanced care with paramedics.

7. Chief’s Report

a) Training Report

Lt Kennedy’s training reports were in the hands of the Commission.

b) Table of Organization

Changes clarify and realign the organization structure. Where previously much fell directly under the captain, the structure now shows lieutenants as directly responsible for the management and supervision of uniformed shifts. Further definition of responsibilities will be forthcoming.

c) Dispatch Opening

The Department is actively looking for candidates. A decision will be made within a week.

d) Injuries

Two officers are out, two with injuries, one on long term disability the other doing light duty. Another officer is in the Academy.

8. Commissioner Comments:  
Comm McCollam and Comm Greco both asked that the Off Conroy issues be resolved.  
Chairman Ellis extended a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

At 8:40 motion by Comm Greco to adjourn; seconded by Comm McCollam – unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted

Ferdinand Miller Jr.



Secretary

## Addendum

Tulio J. Belardinelli  
74 Putnam Park Road  
Bethel, CT 06801  
(203)948-6559

Bethel Police Commission  
49 Plumtrees Road  
Bethel, CT 06801

Dear Commissioners:

It has come to my attention that one of your officers, Mike Conroy, is encroaching on the back of my property. A young man, Nick Casertano, was hunting with my permission on my property when he was approached by Officer Conroy. Conroy was wearing camouflage and carrying a rifle when he approached Nick and accused him of being on private property. Nick informed him that he was on my property to which Conroy answered, "apparently Mr. Belardinelli doesn't know where his property is".

Apparently Officer Conroy contacted the ranger at Putnam Park who came and ticketed Nick Casertano. Last year a friend of mine, Dan Grosso, was hunting on Edward Rockwell's property with his permission when Officer Conroy approached and harassed him. I have heard from members of the Bethel Fish & Game Association that they have been harassed by Officer Conroy as well.

I would like to know under whose authority Officer Conroy is operating when he is, in my opinion, intentionally concealing his presence by dressing in camouflage and not wearing the hunting orange and is apparently patrolling these various properties. I do not want him hanging around my property as I feel he harbors ill feelings toward me and is trying to cause trouble.

Thank you for considering this matter and taking the proper action.

Sincerely,



Tulio J. Belardinelli

cc: ~~Matthew Knickerbocker~~  
First Selectman, Matthew Knickerbocker