



POLICE COMMISSION

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

MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING
BETHEL POLICE COMMISSION
TUESDAY, JULY 26, 2011
BETHEL POLICE DEPARTMENT-CONFERENCE ROOM

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

RECEIVED

2011 JUL 29 A 11: 16

TOWN OF BETHEL
TOWN CLERK

Vice Chairman Hugo Greco opened the meeting at 6:05 p.m. First Selectman Matt Knickerbocker and Town Attorney Marty Lawlor were in attendance.

1. General Public Comments:

Ann Cleary of 2 Eagle Rock Hill Rd spoke regarding her perception of meeting minutes, disregarded opinions and general rudeness directed at her during last month's meeting.

2. Review Past Minutes 6/15/11

Chairman McCollam asked that the word "unanimously" be deleted from the 6/15/11 minutes (Item 1, pg2 General Public Comments "Nick Ellis has resigned his position as Chairman. The Commission has unanimously elected Chris McCollam as Chairman"). Chief Finch stated that meeting minutes have to be filed at the Town Hall within 48 hours if motions are passed. There is not time to run the minutes by Commission members. Any discrepancies are reviewed and corrected at the next meeting. Comm Ellis asked about the detail of public comments required in meeting minutes. Attny Lawlor stated that "nothing in the Charter defines what public comments are", in his opinion meeting minutes should include only a synopsis of what is said. A single sentence is sufficient in most cases. This is not a court record where every word is captured according to First Selectman Knickbocker. The more that is included, the more "subjective" the minutes become.

Motion by Comm Greco to accept the minutes of 6/15/11 as amended; seconded by Chairman McCollam – motion passed with Comm Ellis abstaining due to his having left that meeting.

3. Budget Report

Chief Finch stated he is still attempting to get the Comptroller's Budget Report properly formatted. To do this a program needs to be written to modify the new software. At First Selectman Knickbocker's request, the Chief along with Lt Dickinson will approach the Comptroller with the requirements before the next meeting. Due to the confusing nature of the report as it stands Comm Ellis questioned several line items and asked about the last fiscal year's "bottom line". Chief Finch stated that even in the face of dispatch overtime, between \$10K and \$15K was returned by the Department to the

Town. Motion by Comm Ellis to approve the budget report as presented; seconded by Chairman McCollam – unanimous.

4. Old Business

a) Monthly Reports

The reports were in the hands of the Commissioners. A fatal motor vehicle accident at Reservoir and Bethpage was noted by the Chief. Motion by Comm Ellis to accept the monthly reports as presented; seconded by Comm Grosso – unanimous.

5. New Business

a) Letter by Town Attorney Lawlor

Motion by Chairman McCollam to invite Town Attorney Lawlor into the meeting; seconded by Comm Greco – unanimous. The letter was written as a response to Chris McCollam's questions concerning procedural questions in the 6/15/11 meeting leading to the resignation of Nick Ellis as Chairman. This letter addressed the proceedings of the 6/15/11 meeting which were "confusing". Though Comm Ellis nominated Comm McCollam to be his successor, nothing in the minutes according to Attny Lawlor indicated a formal resignation. To be effected this must be formally stated in amended minutes or received in writing. Comm Ellis stated he was "intimidated" and "insulted" by the "mob atmosphere" created by the Police Union at this meeting and stated further that he did not nor does he intend to resign. Comm Ellis went on to say that the Police Union had no right to show up as a group and remove him from his position as Chairman. Though admittedly "not polished", Comm Ellis stated his belief that he is doing things "for the right reasons". Commissioners in turn offered admonishments and discussed the events of the meeting in question. Attny Lawlor offered criticism on the conduct of the meeting, into and out of executive session without the proper motions or not addressing issues in their proper sections. His advice is to wait for public comments to be over before making motions and adding to the agenda. Mr Lawlor also recommended reopening section 2 "Review of Past Minutes" to clarify the fact that even though there was an election, there was no resignation so the resignation was ineffective. Chairman McCollam stated that everything must be done correctly. Comm Ellis asked that it be clarified what the Chairman's duties are concerning outside work leading up to a meeting. The Town Attorney stated any commissioner can do this work. Chairman McCollam agreed as long as that person does not say they are representing the entire Commission unless the Commission previously agrees in meeting that he does. Motion by Chairman McCollam to invite First Selectman Matt Knickerbocker into the meeting; seconded by Comm Greco – unanimous. Mr Knickerbocker talked about the "grey area" defined by the "fine line" between obtaining information and the giving of instructions by an elected official. In this case this was perceived as interference. Police Commissioners merely serve on a Police Commission and cannot give orders or instructions.

b) Consideration of Vote of the Chairman Position

Motion by Chairman McCollam to clarify the minutes of 6/15. They were correct but procedurally there was no resignation therefore the vote concerning a new chairman was ineffective; seconded by Comm Grosso- passed by a vote of 3 with Comm Ochs abstaining. At 7:00 Comm Greco relinquished the chairmanship of this meeting to Nick Ellis who remains as Chairman.

c) CT United 9/11 Bike Ride

This annual motorcycle ride has been held in the past with no issues according to Capt Cedergren in his letter. Motion by Comm Greco to accept Capt Cedergren's letter and approve the bike ride; seconded by Comm McCollam – unanimous. Comm Ochs asked about the use of reverse-911 to announce anticipated traffic issues at this ride. Chief Finch stated that reverse-911 should be confined to true emergencies but will check on this to see if appropriate.

6. Correspondence

a) Chief Finch reported on a drug arrest involving significant marijuana cultivation and processing inside a local residence.

b) "Bethel Police Department Community Resource Program" brochure containing information and resources published by CIA (Crime in America) was given to Commissioners. It is available free of charge at various local establishments.

7. Chiefs Report

a) Lifesaving Call

On July 13th a medical call by four officers and the use of the defibulator resulted in the saving of the life of a heart attack victim. One dispatcher worked with the victim's wife instructing her in CPR procedures until help arrived, while the other arranged for the ambulance. Comm McCollam stated this as a reason why defibulators need to be in the budget every year along with the necessary training.

b) MV Accident

Fatal at Reservoir and Bethpage

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

8. Commissioner Comments

Comm McCollam stated that every meeting should run as well as this one.

Comm Ochs seconded these sentiments.

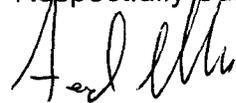
Comm Grosso thanked Chairman Ellis and Comm McCollam for working out the problem and working together in the future.

Comm Greco thanked First Selectman Knickerbocker and Town Attny Lawlor for attending

Chairman Ellis congratulated Det Bryce on his part in a recent case.

At 7:17 motion by Comm Greco to adjourn; seconded by Comm Grosso – unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,



Ferdinand Miller Jr

Secretary