



POLICE COMMISSION

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

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
BETHEL POLICE COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, SEP 17, 2008
BETHEL POLICE DEPARTMENT-CONFERENCE ROOM

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 5:10 p.m.

1. General Public Comments:
None
2. Review of Past Minutes Aug 20, 2008 and Aug 25, 2008
Comm McCollam noted a necessary change to item 5f of the 8/20/08 minutes. The vote should read "passed by 3 with 1 abstention". Chief Finch asked that the last sentence of item 5c read "For the time period covering 5/1/07 through 7/1/08 there were a total of 18 investigations completed with 2 resulting in suspension time off, 7 resulting in a verbal warning and 1 resulting in counseling". Struck from the sentence was "2 resulting in termination of the employee". Motion by Comm Maturro to accept the amended minutes of 8/20/08 Regular Meeting and the 8/25/08 Special Meeting; seconded by Comm Ochs – passed by 3 with Comm McCollam abstaining because of his absence from the 8/25/08 meeting.
3. Budget Report:
In this first budget report of the new fiscal year, Chief Finch highlighted the fact that overtime is below last year-to-date. The Department is 3 officers short with 2 in academy and 1 serving in Iraq. The Commission considered the various accounts. Motion by Comm Greco to accept the budget report as presented; seconded by Comm Maturro – unanimous.

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4. Old Business:

a) Monthly Reports

Chief Finch stated that efforts are still underway to finalize exact numbers using the new computer system especially the arrest report. Motion by Chairman Ellis to accept the Monthly Reports; seconded by Comm McCollam – unanimous.

b) Traffic Signage, Plumtrees & Whittlesey – From May Agenda
No complaints or problems have been received on the newly posted signs by the ball field.

Motion by Chairman Ellis to add Greenwood Av parking under Old Business as item 4c; seconded by Comm Greco – unanimous.

c) Greenwood Av Parking.

In response to a letter (8/20/08 minutes item 6a) requesting a two hour time limit for parking spaces in front of 226 and 230 Greenwood Av, Lt Dickinson passed around photos of the area including the parking lot. In the complaint employees and customers of the next door hair salon used the parking spaces in front of the complainant's buildings for excessive periods of time. Lt Dickinson reviewed the situation speaking both to the complainant Knoll Edwards and Salon owner Robin Miller. One property in question is an "antique type retail establishment" with limited store hours, the other a "vacant for-rent store front" with separate residences in the rear. The salon has the most customers of businesses in the immediate area. On-street parking is always available on Greenwood and Grand St within 200 yards of the area in question. Lt Dickinson told the salon owner it would be preferable if her employees not park in the front. With parking-in-rear signs Mr. Edwards could provide some additional off-street parking behind his buildings. Denying "fair and equal access" by restricting parking in this case would adversely impact all the other area businesses. The recommendation is to not limit parking in this case. Motion by Comm Ochs to accept Lt Dickinson's recommendation of not changing the parking space requirements; seconded by Comm Maturro – unanimous.

5. New Business:

Motion by Chairman Ellis to add signage at Plumtrees and Whittlesey as New Business item 5e; Sec by Comm Maturro-unanimous.

a) Signage – Walnut Hill & Shelter Rock

Addressing a letter received by Mr. Walters, Lt Dickinson described this as a high traffic volume but low accident rate area. Traffic

moves well without backup. In the past the Department has worked with the neighbors in utilizing signage to redirect traffic away from Walnut Hill in favor of Old Hawleyville for Plumtrees Rd traffic heading for Route 6 and Route 84. Mr. Walters continues to complain about confused drivers turning around in his driveway and asking directions to Rt84 and requests additional direction signs. The Lieutenant would deny the request preferring not to direct traffic in this direction but rather let the preferred route remain Plumtrees to Old Hawleyville Rd. There are other more pressing requests for signage in Bethel according to the lieutenant. It would be preferable that Mr. Walters post "no backing in driveway" and "no trespassing" signs on his property. Chairman Ellis feels such an arrow sign would be beneficial for drivers who have already committed themselves to the Walnut Hill to the Shelter Rock or Payne Rd route. The Commission concurred. The public in general according to the Chairman would benefit by not having traffic backing and turning in this area. Motion by Chairman Ellis to add a Rt84 and Rt6 sign on the tip of the island pointing toward Shelter Rock and Payne Rd. the sign to be in compliance with State regulations; seconded by Comm Greco - unanimous.

b) Position of Vice-Chair

Comm McCollam introduced this into the agenda and produced a copy of the Town Charter showing that a Vice-Chair is required by the Charter Article IX Section C9-1 General Board Procedure. "All elective boards and commissions shall annually elect a chairman and vice chairman at their first annual meeting following the first Monday in December". The Commission agreed to elect a vice-chair at the December meeting.

c) Advanced Life Support Application

Chairman Ellis placed this item on the agenda for discussion. As opposed to a Basic Life Support System (BLS), advanced Life Support (ALS) is paramedic service utilizing more sophisticated life saving techniques. A single license, Primary Service Area (PSA) is allocated per town. The State Health Department required that this be assigned. The First Selectman and the State Health Department developed the idea that since the two fire departments in town could not over 2½ years of discussion agree as to which should hold the license, the Police Department, being the first responder and unlike the fire departments covers the entire town, it should hold the license. The Police Department can then contract for paramedic service. This will not affect police operations as Danbury Hospital will initially provide a lettered chase car. Even with the \$250K cost for the remainder of the fiscal year, since this service will be billed, it will more than pay for itself. Comm McCollam underscored the fact that this is a Commission matter

since the application involves the Chief, it should have been consulted. Chairman Ellis described the solution in terms of the First Selectman's frustration over not being able to get the two fire departments together on this issue.

d) Department Policy

Chairman Ellis stated that as a result of the recent grievance, the Commission should be approving but not drafting policy. Commissioners asked for more time to go over the books of policies and procedures in their hands for their consideration. Also to be included are the most recent 2008-04 Airborne Pathogens (TB) and 2003-03 Bloodborne Pathogens, HIV, AIDS. McCollam proposed giving individual questions in writing to the Chief before the next meeting so he can have answers available.

Motion by Chairman Ellis to table policy approval until the next meeting under old business and add the two newest, 2008-04 Airborne Pathogens (TB) and 2003-03 Bloodborne Pathogens, HIV, AIDS; seconded by Comm Greco – unanimous.

e) Plumtree and Whittlesey Signage

Lt Dickinson produced a signage plan for the new High School addition showing revised signage on the basic plan. Since the Fire Marshal brought it to the lieutenant's attention many areas of improvement were made. Greater emphasis on safety and traffic flow as well as "cultural changes" such as more parents driving children to school and increased use of bikes for transportation have become important in recent years. State approved signage has been incorporated into the plan. The closer parking lot signs are to road signs the better the public compliance. 1) Signage placed on Whittlesey shall have impact rated posts rather than vandalism resistant posts as shown in the plan. 2) Crosswalk signs are the standard school set. Motion by Comm Matturro that the revised signage plan for the High School be approved; seconded by Comm McCollam – unanimous.

6. Correspondence:

a) Glen & Wendy Vereen

Along with a \$200 donation to the Police Union this letter compliments detectives George Bryce and Ralph Deluca for their investigation of a burglary. Officers Conroy and Diana were also mentioned.

b) Robert Cadella

This letter introduced by Comm McCollam, expressed concern over the paramedic PSA issue as discussed previously in this meeting see (5c).

c) Bruce Martin
Comm Maturro introduced a letter from Bruce Martin of the Highway Dept thanking the Department for "going beyond the call of duty" for the funeral of his wife.

7. Chief's Report
a) Special Equipment
Chief Finch reported the acquisition of thermal imaging equipment using a State grant.

8. Commissioner Comments:
Comm Maturro reported a traffic problem at the new two-way stop Nashville & Chestnut. Thinking it is a 3-way stop people are pulling out in front of each other. Also was a request for promotion swearing ins to be held in the evening when Commissioners and other Town employees can more easily attend.
Comm McCollam asked if Lt Dickinson could look into the installation of guard rails on Whittlesey Dr by the new high school to protect pedestrians.
Chairman Ellis asked for selective enforcement targeting speeding on the newly repaved Taylor Rd. Also, for the record, the Chairman thanked Chief Finch for the changes he is attempting to make in spite of opposition and for doing a great job.

At 6:30 Motion by Comm Greco to adjourn; seconded by Comm Maturro – unanimous

Respectfully Submitted



Ferdinand Miller Jr.

Secretary