

SUFFIELD POLICE COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING, NOVEMBER 19, 2014

Present: Kevin Armata, Chairman
Kenneth Pascoe, Vice Chairman

Commissioners: Clerk, Linda Stevenson
Matt Joyal
Jeff Davis
Jack Quinn

Also Present: Michael Manzi, Chief
Craig Huntley, Captain
Karen Doyon, Recording Secretary

The proceedings of this meeting were voice recorded.

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ATENDANCE

Chairman Armata called the November 19, 2014 meeting to order at 7:00 pm and asked Mrs. Doyon to take a silent roll.

I. CORRESPONDENCE

Clerk Stevenson read into the record the following correspondence:

- Letter from Heidi E. Huhn Partain, President of BrightStar Care of Hartford, dated November 5, 2014. This letter thanked Officer Geoffrey Miner for his quick response, care, and compassion regarding a call he responded to on November 4, 2014.
- Donation made to the Police Department by James & Janell Wray.

II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – PRESENTATION

Several Town's people and approximately eleven Suffield Police Officers were present to give public comment and to listen to advice by Suffield Town Council, Attorney Joseph Flynn in regards to a pending internal investigation. Attorney Flynn will give advisement during the Communications and Announcements portion of the meeting.

Chairman Armata opened up the floor for public participation and asked everyone to limit comments to two minutes.

- Amy Raye, Town resident supports having an external investigation.
- Nancy Gegesky of Jackson Drive is concerned why individual members of the organization are asking for an independent investigation into the recent incidents. She is in support of having an external investigation.
- Shannon Watson of Griffin Road, West Suffield stated her concerns, which included a level of trust. She is in support of having an external investigation.

- David Sisk of Ratley Road West Suffield spoke in support of an external investigation.
- Ally Kuras Town resident has concerns and spoke in support of an external investigation.

III. MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING

Chairman Armata asked if everyone reviewed the October meeting minutes, then asked if there were any changes. With none, Commissioner Quinn moved to approve the minutes as submitted, seconded by Clerk Stevenson. Motion carried unanimously.

IV. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Budget: *Captain Huntley at the beginning of the meeting handed out the October Police Budget.* Highlighted were the following:

- Correction to Septembers budget-Union Dispatch
- October budget-Payroll, Training, and Workman's Comp Line item.
- Operation side-uniform and cleaning, Ammo expense, etc. On budget.
- Cruisers-Ordering two new cruisers next month.
- Grand total matches at 67% remaining.

Commissioner Joyal questioned why the increase under the line item for Repairs and Maintenance was so much higher during October. Captain Huntley gave a brief explanation.

Activity:

Commissioner Joyal stated that he noticed an increase of patrol on South Stone Street, and a decrease in speeders.

Commissioner Joyal asked why there is an increase on the "Average Time on Call." Chief gave a brief response.

Detectives Report:

Chief Manzi gave a broader detail of the 1.1 million dollars in cash and 130 lbs. of marijuana discovered in a storage unit in Agawam.

K-9:

No report submitted.

With nothing further, Clerk Stevenson moved to accept the Department Reports as submitted, seconded by Commissioner Davis. Motion approved unanimously.

- ### V. COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS
- Discussion with Town Attorney [possible Executive Session]. **Moved to after the Chiefs Report.**

VI. CHIEF'S REPORTS

Items offered in Chief Manzi's report and items added to his report were as follows:

- Discussion on the 2014 Legislative Updates regarding Advance Taser X26.
- Speed Tables.
- Counterfeit bills.
- Discussion on heroin overdoses and the steps taken to gather information related to the recent increase in heroin overdoses within the New England region.
- Police officers killed in the line of duty.

Vice Chairman Pascoe motioned to accept Chief Manzi's report as submitted, seconded by Commissioner Quinn. Motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Armata asked for a ten [10] minutes recess at 7:29 pm.

V11. COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS – Discussion with Town Attorney [possible Executive Session].

Chairman Armata called the meeting back to order at 7:38 pm.

Attorney Joe Flynn of Alfano and Flynn who serves as Town Council for the Board of Selectman and the Police Commission introduced himself. Attorney Flynn was asked to assess the events of the past few months in order to clarify what is legally relevant to the Town, particularly in regards to the jurisdictions to the Police Commission. Without prejudices with any parties involved. Attorney Flynn outlined three elements for further discussion, and they were: 1.) Actions taken by the Town relating to the Police Department, 2.) Concisely describe the factual developments, which have legal significance to the Department, the Commission and the Town and 3.) Confirm the Commissions and the Towns options moving forward.

As counsel, Attorney Flynn submitted that the Commission should focus on the following two events, which fall within the Commissions duties regarding the performance of a Department Employee. They were Chief Manzi's internal investigation being done due to representations made by members of the Police Department, and subsequently portions of the investigations that were made public to the media, which the Chief was also required to investigate.

Attorney Flynn stated that he is in receipt of a letter dated November 7, 2014 from the Police Union, [which was also sent to the Commission and the First Selectman] on legal implications, which prompted a dialogue between his office and the State's Attorney's office to gain guidance, and advice.

The State's Attorney's office gave the following options [*side note: "The State Police will not be allocating any resources to assist the Town of Suffield in these investigations."*]

- Continue the investigations internally.
- Hire another municipality to investigate. [*Not recommended by the States Attorney's Office.*]
- Hire a private third party to perform the investigation.

Attorney Flynn stated that according to the Town Charter [in this instance], which requires a third, party agreement for the expenditure of funds; this would require the consent of the Board of Selectman and then authorization from the Board of Finance.

Attorney Flynn reports that their office has responded to all Freedom of Information [FOI] requests and continues to respond in accordance with procedure.

Attorney Flynn respectfully submitted that the Commission ensure the completion of the investigation, and as a Commission, deliberate as to how they wish to proceed.

Discussion followed reiterating the Town Attorney's options. Dialog between the Commission members followed regarding a third party, the Chiefs timing for his investigation, and Board of Finances approval.

The Commission deliberated Chief Manzi continuing his internal investigation and then have a third party review its findings. Attorney Flynn stated that he did not think of that option, but did not see any obstacle legally if the Commission chose to make that decision.

After deliberations, the Chair asked the Commission to respond on an individual basis how they wish to proceed. Based on their responses, the Chair stated that the Commission agrees for Chief Manzi to move forward with his internal investigation, get approval from the Board of Selectman and the Board of Finance to hire an independent reviewer.

Chairman Armata stated that at the next scheduled meeting the Commission would evaluate three potential agencies/organizations who will review the internal investigation completed by Chief Manzi. The Commission will evaluate the agencies/organizations as follows:

- Credentials;
- Scope of work;
- Time-frame, and;
- Cost.

Discussion followed.

Chairman Armata motioned that the Chief complete his investigation within three weeks, upon completion formally request from the Board of Selectman for a private third party review of the investigation, seconded by Commissioner Quinn. The Chair asked for a roll call, the motion was approved unanimously. 6-0-0.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

Commissioner Joyal asked if the Chief would approach the Board of Education to have a dog sniff. Chief Manzi reported that the police could not conduct a canine search unless the Board of Education makes a request. Chairman Armata recommended that Commissioner Joyal attend a Board of Education meeting and discuss his concerns.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

Vice Chairman Pascoe asked what model vehicles the Department anticipates ordering. Chief responded, one of each.

X. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairman Armata opened up the floor for public comment.

- Nancy Gegesky of Jackson Drive spoke on her displeasure that Commission did not vote on one option or the other offered by Town Council this evening, being there may be a conflict of interest.
- David Sisk of Ratley Road West Suffield spoke on his displeasure on the outcome of the Commission's vote.
- Shannon Watson of Griffin Road spoke on her displeasure on the outcome of the Commission's vote based on an extended period needed for an outcome.
- Ally Kuras Town resident spoke on her displeasure on the outcome of the Commission's vote.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

With no further comments or concerns, a motion was made and seconded to adjourn the November 19, 2014 regular Suffield Police Commission meeting at 8:22 pm.

Chairman Kevin Armata