



POLICE COMMISSION

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MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
BETHEL POLICE COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, JAN 18, 2012
BETHEL POLICE DEPARTMENT-CONFERENCE ROOM

2012 JAN 20 P 4: 03
RECEIVED
TOWN OF BETHEL
TOWN CLERK

ATTENDING: CHAIRMAN NICHOLAS ELLIS
COMMISSIONER CHRIS MCCOLLAM
COMMISSIONER HUGO GRECO
COMMISSIONER MIKE DUFF
CHIEF JEFFREY FINCH

ABSENT: COMMISSIONER DAN GROSSO

Chairman Nick Ellis opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

1. General Public Comments
None

2. Review of Past Minutes for 12/20/11

Comm Greco noted in addendum, 1/16/2003 should be 1/16/2013
Chairman Ellis asked that Sec 8 be changed from "approved Capt Cedergren's desire to replace ---" to "supports Capt Cedergren's desire to replace ---"
Comm Duff asked that the statement "rock protruding into the road on Nashville Rd" be changed to "rock adjacent to road across from the mailbox on 63B Taylor Ave". Also that the sentence "It either needs to be repainted or removed entirely" be struck as the solution should be left to the proper department. Motion by Comm Greco to accept the minutes of 12/20/11 with revisions; seconded by Comm McCollam – motion passed with Comm McCollam abstaining due to absence at 12/20/11 meeting.

3. Budget Report

Chief Finch had nothing of significance to report concerning expenditures.
Comm McCollam asked about MACO expenses being included in the office supplies account instead of having its own sub account. Comm Duff stated his belief that the Chief has the authority to transfer monies between line items, which the Commission can then authorize with the Comptroller providing the "quality control". Comm McCollam agreed except for Capital Account items which in the past, has involved the Comptroller. Comm Duff asked and received the Commission's approval to approach the Comptroller for clarification on this matter. Comm Greco questioned the high overtime. Chief Finch called attention to the breakdown of overtime expenses provided. Of the \$134K spent since

7/1/11, \$64K has been for Communications overtime. Motion by Comm Greco to approve the budget report as presented; seconded by Comm Duff – unanimous.

4. Old Business

a) Monthly Reports

End-of-year 2011 UCR Crime Report numbers are high according to Chief Finch, mainly due to an uptick in larcenies. Arrests are up as well. Motion by Chairman Ellis to accept the monthly reports as presented; seconded by Comm Duff – unanimous.

b) Blue Spruce & Plumtrees & Taylor Ave

Lt Dickinson looked at the rock on Taylor Ave (see minutes 12/10/11 item 6), noting from the records that it has caused several accidents in the past. Public Works has been contacted on this. Comm Duff asked about follow up on this and similar matters which expose the Town to potential liability problems.

Lt Dickinson also reported on his analysis of the request for a stop sign and a crosswalk at Blue Spruce and Plumtrees (see minutes 12/10/11 item 6a). The complainant's concern was for school children crossing the street to reach the sidewalk. The lieutenant does not recommend either a crosswalk or a stop sign. By law stop signs cannot be installed for speed control. Marked crosswalks do not improve safety according to studies and may even increase accidents. Four out of the last five pedestrians hit in Bethel were in marked crosswalks. Crosswalks are advisable when conditions require it best that people cross in a certain spot and when insufficient gaps in traffic are available so as to allow people to cross. In this situation adequate gaps exist, even during rush hour. Sight lines are excellent and cars are at a constant speed, not accelerating from a stop sign. Relatively few pedestrians would be using the crosswalk at this location. The installation of overhead lighting would also be needed. The lieutenant did recommend moving the speed limit sign at the beginning of Plumtrees by Maple Ave further down the road toward Blue Spruce to give drivers more exposure time. Motion by Comm Duff to accept Lt Dickinson's recommendation for moving of existing speed limit sign and his denial for the stop sign and crosswalk, seconded by Comm McCollam – unanimous.

5. New Business

a) Hoyts Hill Rd - Speeding

Lt Dickinson pointed out that Hoyts Hill Rd is a shortcut to and from Rt58. Gathered data shows traffic volume as being a non issue. At 3500 per day it is medium for area through roads, and peak is low at 300 cars/hour. Truck traffic is low. Heavy trucks will stay on the flatter Milwaukee rather than opting for the hill. Longer trucks tend to avoid the difficult turn at Hoyt and Rt58. With average speed being 35mph, 85th percentile being 39mph or less, speed is "fairly high" for a posted 25mph road which could benefit from selective enforcement. Only a single truck accident occurred in the past four years and that involved contacting an overhead wire. Considering cars, no serious accidents occurred between

Highland and Rt58 in the same time period. Of the five accidents which did occur, two were on private driveways and the other three were minor without injuries or the need to tow. The only issue is that those signing the petition all have pull-in-back-out driveways without the option of turning around in order to pull forward into traffic. A test required 11 seconds to back out and get up to speed while pulling out and turning right or left require 3 and 5 seconds respectively. Given the existing sight lines and general driver distractions, there is insufficient time to safely complete a back out then up-to-speed maneuver. One recommendation is to reposition the 25mph sign from Greenwood Ave closer to Fawn Rd for a longer recognition time and set it at seven feet to reduce the perception of road width and position it close to the road. From Highland Ave down the hill there is no speed sign so one needs to be installed, preferably by 82 Hoyts Hill. Other dingy, damaged signs should also be replaced with inappropriate private signs being removed. Motion by Comm McCollam to accept Lt Dickinson's recommendations for Hoyts Hill Rd; seconded by Comm Greco – unanimous.

Motion by Chairman Ellis to add Walnut Hill and Weed Rd bridge to New Business as item 5d and move Interviews – Police Office Candidates to 5e; seconded by Comm Greco – unanimous.

b) Danbury Half Marathon April 1st 2012

This foot race which starts in Danbury runs down Rt53 and out to Redding has been held in the past without incident according to Chief Finch.

c) Revised General Order 2010-02.

New State law requires police departments to follow certain guidelines when using photo lineups in identifying criminals. As a result 2010-02 General Order needed to be changed and updated. Motion by Chairman Ellis to approve the changes to General Order 2010-02 with new revisions; seconded by Comm Greco – unanimous.

d) Walnut and Weed Rd Bridge

Lt Dickinson reported this bridge project as being incomplete, its completion delayed by two major storms. What was accomplished has been asphalted over leaving a hump over the culvert. The project is scheduled to be finished by in the Spring, but in the meantime it could create a problem for drivers going over it at high speed. The lieutenant displayed an on-screen photo showing the signage solution agreed upon for both sides of the bridge. "Road Narrows" over "Caution Bump Ahead" followed by stop sign ahead symbol followed by a stop sign. In addition there are construction barriers. Motion by Chairman to accept Lt Dickinson's temporary signage of the Walnut Hill Bridge as presented; seconded by Comm McCollam.

Motion by Chairman Ellis to go into executive session for the purpose of interviewing police officer candidates and invite Chief Finch to attend; seconded by Comm Greco – unanimous.

e) Interviews – Police Officer Candidates
At 8:00 pm the Commission came out of executive session.

Motion by Comm McCollam that employment as a police officer be offered to Mr James VanWattum conditional upon a satisfactory background investigation and such other standard and regular requirements of the State of Connecticut and the Town of Bethel; seconded by Comm Greco – unanimous.

Motion by Comm McCollam that employment as a police officer be offered to Mr Alex Daniels conditional upon a satisfactory background investigation and conditional upon the next available opening within 60 days and other such other standard and regular requirements of the State of Connecticut and the Town of Bethel; seconded by Comm Duff – unanimous.

6. Correspondence
None

7. Chief's Report

The recent dispatch hire has given her notice and will be leaving for a job in a different field. The Department is again one dispatcher short and advertising for the position.

One officer is still out on injury leave.

Former dispatcher Linda Kavallines is now working in records.

Off O'Farrell has gone back on patrol from the Detective Bureau and Off

Delohery is now in the Detective Bureau on a temporary basis for the next year.

Crime is up because of larcenies. A year end report will be produced by the next meeting detailing statistical data.

8. Commissioner Comments

Comm McCollam welcomed Mike Duff to the Commission.

Chairman Ellis asked about the Academy. No slot will be available until April according to Chief Finch.

At 8:20 motion by Comm Duff to adjourn; seconded by Comm Greco – unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,


Ferdinand Miller Jr

Secretary