



**TOWN OF NEWTOWN**  
**BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS**

**MINUTES FROM THE BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS**  
**REGULAR MEETING HELD TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2013**  
**TOWN HALL SOUTH CONFERENCE ROOM**  
**3 MAIN STREET, NEWTOWN**

*\*These minutes are not finalized until approved  
At the next regularly scheduled meeting.*

Chairman Paul Mangiafico called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

**PRESENT:** Brian Budd, James Viadero, Joel Faxon and Paul Mangiafico

**ABSENT:** Andrew Sachs

**ALSO PARTICIPATION:** Police Chief Michael Kehoe, Captain Jose Rios, 1 member of the press and 7 members of the public.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** Rich English, 3 Curry Drive, handed out a summary of his suggestions and concerns as he told the Board that he was there to discuss traffic and speed control in Town.

Mr. English said that there were issues around where he lives in the Borough.

First, he stated that there needs to be speed control on Currituck Road between Old Road and Main Street. Mr. English noted that it is regularly used as a cut through for people going from Main Street to Route 25 in Brookfield. He believes the problem could be resolved with a regular police presence, ticketing, speed displays in both directions and even sidewalks.

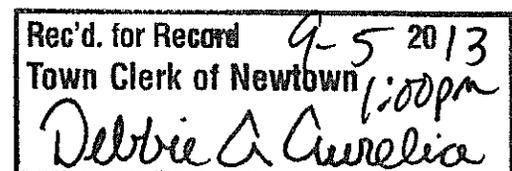
Second, Mr. English stated that there is excessive speed on Main Street between the War Memorial and the top of the hill past the ambulance station. He noted that drivers are going in excess of 55 mph.

Mr. English indicated that there is a flashing light for vehicles traveling southbound on Route 25 coming into town and suggested they there should also be a flashing light for motorists coming into Town traveling northbound on Route 25.

He recommended that police regularly run radar and use speed displays to slow the traffic down in this area as well. He noted that the speed display used for the Labor Day parade seemed to work.

Third, Mr. English called the Board's attention to the increase in "wide-load" traffic traveling through the center of Town. He suggested that they try to dissuade wide-load traffic coming through the center of Newtown thru police presence and signage at exit 9 and promote the use of exit 11 and Wasserman Way. Mr. English added that he doesn't know if it can be enforced but recommends it.

Fourth, he suggested that police do cut-thru road speed monitoring on The Boulevard, School House Hill, Elm Drive and the like; and should consider creative things when looking at finding solutions to the problems such as one-way roads and banning turns.



Fifth, Mr. English addressed the excessive cell-phone use issue by passenger and commercial vehicles. He stated the problem has increased and is everywhere.

Sixth, Mr. English questioned who has the jurisdiction for handicapped parking and no parking areas in parking lots. He informed the Board that he has run into officers who have said it's not their job to ticket handicapped parking violations.

Mr. English urged Police Commissioners to consider some of his points. He concluded by stating that he likes to see officers running radar.

Chris Fadus, 5 Sunset Hill Road, agreed that there is a problem on Currituck Road and urged Police Commissioners to address the problem on Sunset Road. She handed out a few maps to the Board and told members that at the most there is only 50' of visibility on the road and reminded them that it takes a car going 35 mph 200' to stop.

Mrs. Fadus stated that in the past month she had had to back up 3 times to avoid an accident and said that most recently her husband almost got clobbered trying to pull out of their driveway.

She said she asked officers to patrol the area because her son was a new driver.

Mrs. Fadus stated it's a bad corner where Sunset meets Currituck.

She told the Board that cars going up Main Street hit Currituck and actually pick up speed.

Mrs. Fadus said she called officers twice and is at her wits end. She stated that she just wants to see police cars come to slow traffic down and added that she has a daughter that will be 16 next year and driving soon.

Dan Shea, 44 Queen Street, told Police Commissioners that just recently there was an accident at a tag sale. He stated that a young woman who had just purchased a new car and parked her car to look at the tag sale on her way home had her car hit.

According to Mr. Shea, Officer Mary Helen McCarthy responded to the scene and discovered that the accident was reportedly caused by a young man who was texting while driving and failed to see the parked car.

Mr. Shea said his wife walks on the road and it could have been her that was hit.

He informed the Board that he sees many people talking and texting on their phones while driving.

Mr. Shea told Police Commissioners that his wife works at St. Rose and said that recently she saw people trying to leave the gas station get hit by a driver coming up Church Hill Road.

He said his wife holds her breath every time she sees kids run across the road to the ice cream shop.

Mr. Shea believes this is a recipe for disaster. He said people can't walk safely on Church Hill Road and Route 25 and believes there is a serious problem. He suggested that maybe they form a committee to talk to the State.

Bob Geckle, 35 Queen Street, thanked the Police Commissioners for what they have done on Queen Street. He noted that the efforts on Queen Street were well over 20 years and commended the Board for making fact based decisions rather than decisions based on conjecture.

Mr. Geckle stated that it has always been about public safety and he commended them for recognizing that.

He said that Queen Street is a model for what other neighborhoods are experiencing.

Mr. Geckle said his advice to those residents is consider to pursue it, get neighbors together, show a coalition and the Police Commissioners will look at it.

Sandy Smith, 6 Sunset Hill, expressed her concern about the accidents at Sunset and Currituck. She said they put a mirror across from Sunset Hill but the mirror got shot out.

Mrs. Smith said the traffic is now getting worse.

She said she would love to see someone do something for Currituck Road and said they can't

wait 20 years for something to happen.

Mrs. Smith stated that they have to think of saving lives.

Mr. English told those present at the meeting that he appreciated the comments from the people on Queen Street but said he doesn't think the speed bumps are the answer. He stated that they are more of a hazard and a nuisance.

Mr. English recalled that the traffic increased when Wasserman Way bi-pass road was put in. He added that he doesn't want the Queen Street model to be the solution for other roads in Town. Chairman Mangiafico reminded those present that feedback to the Board of Police Commissioners was on the agenda for later that evening.

The Chairman addressed fellow Police Commissioners by indicating he was getting disturbed month after month the they seem to address a lot of particular issues in Town related to one or two particular thing.

He reminded everyone that public safety was the issue when people speed on Queen Street.

First, Chairman Mangiafico stated that he has observed people speeding excessively with great frequency.

Second, he indicated that people are coming upon stop signs in Town without even slowing or stopping, as if the signs meant nothing to them.

Third, the Chairman said is the issue of cell phone usage. He said he has observed many using cell phones and believes they are texting because they keep looking down at them.

Chief Kehoe agreed and said the Department has to increase its enforcement in those areas. The Chief suggested they could lower the speed limit but if people don't pay attention to it, it doesn't matter.

Chairman Mangiafico told the Chief that they need to increase the enforcement of traffic regulations in town; and that way even the people who live in town will say they won't speed because they will get caught.

The Chairman urged Chief Kehoe to give this strong consideration because what they are doing doesn't seem to be working and it's getting worse.

Looking at the reports, Commissioner Faxon pointed out that the traffic stops for the past few months are half of what they were last year. He suggested that they are better than they were several months ago but they need to continue to move on further improving those numbers.

Chairman Mangiafico agreed and recommended the Department increase its enforcement to increase results.

He noted that the traffic volume has never really changed for the better since the last traffic study but rather the volume has increased significantly.

The Chairman Mangiafico suggested that the Department and the Board can't solve the traffic issue in Town on their own and he suggested that the Town truly needs professional help.

When Chairman Mangiafico called for a motion on the minutes from the last meeting, Chief Kehoe indicated that they couldn't vote because the Agenda was not properly noticed.

**CONSIDERATION AND ACTION ON THE MINUTES FOR: Regular Meeting August 6, 2013:** In lieu of the Chief's comment, Chairman Mangiafico tabled the approval of the minutes until their next meeting.

Two corrections were addressed: Page 1, the meetings date was August 6, 2013 not July 6, 2013; and Page 1, under Public Participation, 2nd paragraph, 2nd sentence, should read, "She added that there was a person in Town and they knew who it was trying to rile people up."

**POLICE UNION PARTICIPATION:** None. Union President Ruszczuk was not in attendance.

**CHIEF'S REPORT: Personnel Report** - Chief Kehoe reported that the Department had not made any significant gains. He said they have secured three seats for the January 2014 class at

the academy and three tentative seats in the October 2013 class if things move along more quickly.

Chairman Mangiafico asked the Chief if it cost the Town anything to send the officers to the academy or if the State was still paying for it.

Chief Kehoe said that as of a year ago in July, the Town was paying \$1500 per officer to go to training.

**Budget- FY 12/13** - The Chief told Commissioners that the Department is close to delivering what the 12/13 budget will look like and indicated it was in their packets. He noted that there may be a couple of minor changes before they close out the books.

Commissioners discussed how the nearly \$700,000 in OT for the past fiscal year would be covered. Chief Kehoe indicated that some money would come out of the budget and the majority of it, which was a result of the incident on December 14, would come out of the Contingency Fund as a loan until the Grant from the State came in to cover it. The Chief indicated that anything that pertains to the event on December 14 -such as the OT - would be covered.

The Board then discussed the three categories of officers that would be at the schools - the unarmed security, the armed SSO's, and the armed SROs.

Commissioner Faxon expressed his concern about the three different types of authority indicating that other than the sworn officers the SROs the non-sworn officers that were armed could be a potential liability.

Commissioner Viadero indicated that all the school security and officers in Bridgeport answer to the Chief of Police.

Commissioner Faxon suggested that seemed to be a prudent way to handle it.

**Fleet Report** - Chief Kehoe reported that the department did a complete analysis of the fleet in August and determined it needed to keep up with the fleet.

He explained that the department has to get into a system of replacing cars earlier.

The Chief indicated the department needed to maintain its 11 front line vehicles first. He noted that the vehicles reach capacity in 3 years. The vehicles taken off the front line could be used by administrative personnel for another 4 or 5 years.

Chairman Mangiafico said he was glad the Department had a plan of replacing 3 vehicles, but given the fact it needs to turn over cars faster than the replacement plan the Board has to look at it.

Commissioner Faxon asked what the gross mileage on the vehicles was and the Chief indicated an average of 30,000 to 40,000 miles per year for front line vehicles excluding the idol time.

Commissioner Faxon replied that the Department is under replacing the vehicles just given the mileage.

**Training Report** - Chief Kehoe informed Police Commissioners that the report was in their packets. He noted the department was gearing up for training in September for the whole department. The Chief indicated that the Town use to use the gun range in Monroe but because it is so close to the current school for the Sandy Hook students they have to go to the Federal Correctional Center in Danbury to do it.

**Letters of Gratitude** - The Chief reported that he had received one letter of gratitude to Officers Penna and Flynn which was in the Commissioners packets.

**Correspondences** - Chief Kehoe indicated that he received one correspondence from the DESPP regarding the Recruit Training Request.

**K-9 Baro / Program Update** - Chief Kehoe announced that they were planning the role out of the new dog on December 19. The Chief noted that he hopes that the new dog will have returned from its training overseas by then.

He noted that on that same day they would like to honor Baro with a plaque.

Chief Kehoe said he hopes the ceremony will take place at the Newtown Municipal Center.

**Brushy Hill Road** - Subsequently the Chief addressed an email in their packets for 168 Brushy

Hill Road. The curve where the fatal accident had occurred since they last met in August. Chief Kehoe also called their attention to the email regarding Officer Penna who will be honored in Bridgeport the middle of the month.

**Enlarged “Wrong Way” Signage** - The Chief also indicated he had received a letter regarding the enlarged signage at the I-84 entrance ramps for wrong way drivers.

**New Traffic Light: Rte 34 and Toddy Hill Road** - In addition, Chief Kehoe said he had received a communication indicating that the State of Connecticut will replace the light on Route 34 and Toddy Hill Road will change to LED. The Chief said the department is asking the State for an audible device so that emergency vehicles can control the light.

### **CAPTAIN’S REPORT:**

**Incident Analysis Reports for August 2012 – 2013-** Captain Rios reported that traffic stops were down 28% last month and down 51% from August 2012. He added that he does anticipate improvement moving forward.

Chairman Mangiafico asked how the Board was going to measure improvement and the Captain replied that the Board could look at the assignments.

The Captain suggested that the improvement will come from closer daily supervision. He said they will start with Patrol Sergeants working with Patrol Officers on a daily basis.

Chairman Mangiafico told the Captain that he wants to see the data on the speeding tickets and hand-held devices. He noted that just because the numbers are going down it’s not a bad thing. The Chairman suggested that people could be slowing down, but said it seems to him speeding is a bad thing in town.

Chief Kehoe reassured the Chairman indicating the Department would look at core group and reduce them. He added that Omni presence was a good thing.

Captain Rios suggested that the numbers don’t always reflect the work and explained that the officers were not only giving out infractions but they were also giving written warnings and verbal warnings.

Chief Kehoe added that the sergeants will review the quantity and quality of the violations.

Chairman Mangiafico suggested that they can go down by the flag pole and watch and see how many people are on cell phones. He told the Captain and the Chief he wants a correlation between speeding and crash data or hand-held devices and crash data.

Chief Kehoe said that he was not sure if month to month statistics would help them.

Chairman Mangiafico asked the Captain and Chief if they thought use of devices was better or worse today compared to a year or two ago and the Captain said he thinks it’s worse. The Chairman asked the same question in regards to people speeding and the Captain said it depends on who you talk to. Chairman Mangiafico questioned how they know if they are making any progress.

Chief Kehoe added that the 3 EEE’s are so important – Enforcement, Engineering and Education.

Commissioner Viadero suggested that if they did a survey of the residents in town, residents would say the PD is out there, but there will be people that say there is more speeding. He believes that the most prevalent problem is use of the hand held device. The Commissioner suggested they do a big enforcement push on that one thing.

Chief Kehoe indicated that they had received a large grant from the DOT for a texting and distracted driving campaign and noted that the department held one in July and was going to hold another in October. He added that officers were out there doing their work even more now that school is back in session.

Chairman Mangiafico said he would like to know how many infractions are issued for hand-held devices.

Commissioner Faxon reminded fellow Commissioners that roughly a year ago at the intersection of Key Rock Road and Hattertown Road he was hit in his car by a guy on a cell phone who was speeding and going through a stop sign. He informed the Board that his partner was at the Weston Police Commission meeting tonight about going into the school and doing a distracted driving program.

Chief Kehoe noted that their next wave of initiatives will be distracted driving and taking drugs and driving.

**Monthly Traffic Enforcement Unit Report for August 2013 - Written Report by Officer Silver** – Captain Rios told the board that Officer Silver was a “one man” traffic unit at this point. The Captain said officer Silver is in the traffic enforcement unit, still involved with Sandy Hook Elementary, involved heavily in the fleet, and performs the truck stops.

**Monthly Detective Division Report for April 2013 - Written Report - Lt. Robinson** – The Captain indicated that the division remains very active and has been actively involved in the search for a man who has been missing for 3 weeks.

**School Security** – Captain Rios stated that school opened on August 27 with security guards and police at every school. He said that Dr. Reed’s letter indicates they still have School Security Committee and they are working with a consultant to work with schools on their security. The Captain reported that they will be having a Table Top exercise in mid-September to test their effectiveness with an emergency scenario. He noted that it will be held during the day for four or five hours with a debriefing afterwards.

In addition to the six officers in the schools, Captain Rios indicated that they have officers parking at the various schools to write their reports to increase visibility.

Chairman Mangiafico asked what the biggest issue was facing the schools and Captain Rios said physical enhancements to the schools such as surveillance systems and working to improve emergency response teams.

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**Newtown Bikeways** – Chairman Mangiafico tabled the matter until the next meeting.

**Police Commission Performance Feedback** – Chairman Mangiafico began by stating that the Board had received four letters of feedback from members of the community. Seeing no one in the audience who desired to give the Board feedback that evening, Chairman Mangiafico asked the Captain and the Chief for their input.

Chief Kehoe told Police Commissioners that he appreciates the work they do now. He said he would like them to continue on the path they are on and continue to improve things with the town and the agency and continue to reach out to the personnel in the agency as well. The Chief added that open communication is the key.

Chairman Mangiafico informed the Board that the responses they had received dealt with the decision making rather than the process.

Captain Rios commended the Board for bridging the gap between the Commission and the Union. He said that the minutes to the meeting are posted on the Union board and he said the Department looks to Police Commissioners as leaders.

The Captain said he thinks, speaking for both he and the Captain, they appreciate the Board’s support at the budget meetings and suggested that in the past there was virtually none.

Captain Rios suggested that Police Commissioners keep working with the management team and union on the conditions there. He said he thinks they can work together on the priorities which are important to the management team and rank and file.

Chairman Mangiafico asked if they thought the Board connected sufficiently with the public in town and the Captain said he thinks some residents what you do or who you are.

Chief Kehoe added that the Board does the best it can.

Chairman Mangiafico stated that he would like the Board to come up with its own strategic plan and identify and prioritize recommendations.

Commissioner Faxon said that he personally would like to get a better handle on things and to see and watch more of the day to day operations of the police force.

Commissioner Budd noted that in regards to the charter and budgeting component, the budgets year to year are spot on with the Chief. He said that makes the Commissioners' job easier as a Board and he suggested that it could be a whole lot harder.

Commissioner Viadero thanked the Captain and Chief for always being very honest.

**NEW BUSINESS:** none

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** Frank Corigliano, 174 Brushy Hill Road, said that the accident at 170 Brushy Hill Road was his neighbor. He said it's the second bad accident over the arc of the curve between 170 and 174. Mr. Corigliano said that somebody put a sign coming southbound but indicated that there is no sign coming northbound. Chief Kehoe indicated that there a sign coming northbound but it was stolen. The Chief said the Department has been out there and said that although there aren't many accidents there is a problem with speeding.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Commissioner Faxon made a motion to go into executive session at 10 pm under General Statutes 1-210-B3 to discuss an ongoing police investigation and General Statute 1-210-B8 to discuss strategy and negotiation of personnel matters and collective bargaining. He invited Chief Kehoe and Captain Rios to attend. Commissioner Budd seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

At this time the clerk left the meeting.

The Board came out of out of executive session at 1135 pm. Commissioner Faxon moved to adjourn at 1135 pm. Commissioner Budd seconded and the motion passed.

Ted Swigart, Clerk

Richard English

Police Commission - 9/3/13

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The Borough of Newtown ~ Traffic/Road Concerns

- Speed control on Currituck Road between The Old Road and Main Street
  - Cut through road (Main Street to RT 25 Brookfield)
  - Speed Displays
  - Sidewalks
  - Regular Police "radar" presence and ticketing
  - "Actual Speed Displays" in both directions
  
- Excessive speed on Main Street, both direction, between War Memorial and top of hill just past Ambulance Station.
  - Excessive speed exiting center of town, in order to speed up hill near Ambulance Station.
  - Excessive speed entering town, coming down from hill near Ambulance Station.
  - "Blinking Caution Lights" northbound, to match those existing southbound
  - Regular Police "radar" presence and ticketing
  - "Actual Speed Displays" in both directions.
  
- Dramatic increase in "Wide-Load" traffic through the center of Newtown
  - Use Exit 11 and Wasserman Way
  - Police presence and signage at Exit 9 to dissuade Wide-Load traffic through the center of town.
  
- Cut-Through road speed monitoring (The Boulevard, School House Hill, Elm Drive, etc.)
  - Consider one-way roads
  - Ban turns
  
- Excessive cell-phone use by passenger AND commercial vehicles
- Jurisdiction responsibilities for "Handicapped Parking", and "No Parking" areas in parking lots