



TOWN OF NEWTOWN
BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS

MINUTES FROM THE BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING HELD TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2017
TOWN HALL SOUTH CONFERENCE ROOM
3 MAIN STREET, NEWTOWN

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

PRESENT: Dan Rosenthal, Virgil Procaccini, Andy Sachs, Vice-Chairman Brian Budd and Chairman Joel Faxon

ABSENT: none

ALSO PRESENT: Chief James Viadero, Captain Chris Vanghele, Union President Lenny Penna, Chris Hottois part owner of 33 Main Street and partner in Flint Ridge Development, Michael Morehouse Vice-President of Fitzgerald & Halliday of Hartford, 1 member of the press, and 1 member of the public

Chairman Faxon called the regular meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: none

POLICE UNION PARTICIPATION: Union President Penna reported that the communication between the Chief and the Union has been very open and has resulted in no grievances being filed since the Chief took over. Chairman Faxon added that it speaks volumes with the transparency to which the way things are being handled.

As the approval of the minutes from the December 6, 2016 meeting were not on the agenda, Chairman Faxon asked for the Commissioners approval to add it to the agenda. Commissioners unanimously approved the Chairman's request.

Commissioner Rosenthal moved to accept the minutes of the regular meeting December 6, 2016 as corrected. Vice-Chairman Budd seconded and the motion unanimously carried.

Corrections: Page 3, 3rd paragraph, 2nd sentence, under Old Business, "average speed on Key Rock Road was reduced to 43 mph with the speed tables" should read "average speed on Key Rock Road was reduced to 29 mph with the speed tables."

CONSIDERATION AND ACTION ON THE MINUTES: January 3, 2017:

Vice-Chairman Budd made the motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting January 3, 2017. Commissioner Rosenthal seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

CHIEF'S REPORT: Budget - Chief Viadero reported that the budget had been presented to the Board of Selectman and several cuts were made as a result of the fiscal crisis going on in the

State. The Chief assured the Board that the Department had funds in its asset forfeiture account which could be used for certain items. Chief Viadero said he had told Selectmen that the vehicle purchase program of three vehicles per year was going well. He told Commissioners that the biggest increase was the 2.25 increase through collective bargaining. The Chief noted that the only real variables in the budget were investigations and prisoner watches. Criminal Activity – Chief Viadero stated that both burglaries were being investigated and that warrants were forthcoming. He added that the Red Rooster was a complex investigation. Accidents under Investigation – The Chief reported that there was a serious accident involving vehicles that were racing on Huntingtown Road and the individuals were recovering. He also stated that there was a fatal motorcycle accident on Mt. Pleasant which was also still under investigation. Officer Injuries – Chief Viadero stated that Officer McCluskey was back and Officer Figol was coming back. He added that Officer Hayes was still out after he fell during the last snow storm and injured his shoulder. Training – The Chief told the Board that the Re-Cert Training was going as well as evidence tech training. “Blue Plan” – Chief Viadero reported that everyone in Fairfield County was part of a mutual response network called the Blue Plan. According to the Chief, the Blue Plan involves agencies coming together in a coordinated response during the time of crisis and was developed following the incident that took place in Sandy Hook in 2012. He noted that Channel 12 put together a training video for them. Chief Viadero said that the Plan was something they could be very proud of and was just rolled out at the Bridgeport Academy. Enforcement – The Chief reported that they are doing radar enforcement on Poverty Hollow together with Speed Control Sign; doing continued enforcement on Walnut Tree Hill Road; and doing enforcement on Huntingtown Road following the serious accident. New Hires – Chief Viadero told the Board that the new hire process was going well. He said they were vetting applicants through the polygraph process. The Chief suggested they hold a special meeting the last week of February to do interviews as they had an upcoming start date of March 26 at the Bridgeport Academy. The Board discussed dates for the special meeting and agreed on February 27, 2016 at 6 pm.

Presidential Inauguration – Chief Viadero stated that three of the officers from the Department worked at the Presidential Inauguration. He added that their expenses were completely reimbursable so it cost the Town nothing. New Building – According to the Chief, the Department was given the approval and was now prepared to go forward with looking for a site for the new building. New Uniforms – Chief Viadero reported that the Department had identified the specs of the new dark blue uniform and although it was a little more expensive it was more comfortable and durable meeting the requirements of today’s standards. Officer James was present wearing one of the examples of the uniforms. The Chief suggested that the Department was looking to rollout the new uniforms this summer before July 1. Body Cams – Chief told Commissioners that the Department was currently checking out the Body Cams of two vendors, Tiger and Watch Guard, testing each of the vendor’s cams to get something that works for the officers and works with the technology the Department has. California Officers – The Chief reported that two officers from Department near the LAX visited Newtown Police Department to come up with a Blue Plan like what Fairfield County has to respond to an active shooter. He added that they are putting together a best practice manual for officers. Appearances – Chief Viadero stated that he had made addressed the Blues Club last month and it went very well; and he added that he was going to be addressing Hearts for Hope soon. Fundraiser at Giants Stadium – The Chief told Commissioners that they were planning fundraisers in the spring at Giants Stadium and would be using the funding for Hearts 911. Swearing In Ceremony – Chief Viadero concluded his report by thanking everyone for attending the swearing in ceremony of the newly promoted officers.

Commissioner Rosenthal asked the Chief if using of the asset forfeiture funds would require them to push out Capital items. Chief Viadero said no but that asset forfeiture funds were not a

guaranteed thing. According to the Chief, the funds are in asset forfeiture this year because they have an officer in the Statewide Narcotics Task Force. Vice-Chairman Budd added that the Department was restricted as to what it spends the funds on. ACLU – Chairman Faxon stated that he would like to comment on the ACLU issue. He said that the Board takes very seriously any complaint adding that the Board of Police Commissioners' door is always open. The Chairman said they appreciate the fact that this is a learning opportunity for the Board and it will address things that are needed to be changed and do so.

CAPTAIN'S REPORT: Captain Vanghele said that the Chief basically stole his thunder because they had combined their information for his report. The Captain added that he was still observing and that the Chief would be revising his role in the future.

OLD BUSINESS: none

CORRESPONDENCE: Chief Viadero informed Commissioners that there were a couple of thank you letters in their packets.

NEW BUSINESS: Main Street Streetscape Proposal (Flint Ridge Development) Pedestrian Traffic Safety - According to Chairman Faxon, the Board has been trying to make the area of the Flagpole as safe as possible. He said he met with Chief and they were presented with excellent ideas dealing with the CDOT response.

The Chairman opened the floor to Mr. Hottois part owner of 33 Main Street and partner in Flint Ridge Development, Mr. Morehouse Vice-President of Fitzgerald & Halliday of Hartford. Flint Ridge Development contracted Fitzgerald & Halliday to come up with schematic.

Mr. Hottois began the presentation by suggesting that Mr. Morehouse and he were there to address the concerns of Main Street but to protect its attributes. He noted that this was not a traffic study but rather a concept serving as an enhancement project.

According to Mr. Hottois, Main Street is faced with several safety challenges: a high volume of vehicles traveling at a high rate of speed, the high rate of speed bifurcates the community making people uncertain with crossing the street, long term risk with current Main Street condition, and vehicles driving on shoulder of road to pass vehicles stopped at flag pole.

Mr. Hottois used a power point presentation to present the Board with an aerial view of the Main Street in the area of the Flagpole as it is today then a rendering of their proposal. He told the Commissioners that they are proposing curb extensions, crosswalk refuge islands, textured median and road surfaces and a shoulder; and he suggested the textured areas be cobblestone or Belgian block.

Mr. Hottois explained that the design's outcomes would channel vehicles and calm speeding, shorten pedestrian crossings and improve pedestrian safety and visibility. He suggested that the design would take advantage of high-visibility crosswalks utilizing a blinking visibility sign, recessed lights in pavement and Alert Brands' median reflectors. In addition, Mr. Hottois indicated that the design would take advantage of mountable medians and shoulders which would channel vehicles and calm speeds, create a Flagpole intersection that mimics a roundabout and retain the historic aesthetic using cobblestone.

Chief Viadero stated that a lot of crosswalks have incorporated that.

With regards to the Meeting House parking, Mr. Hottois suggested that they convert the rear lawn behind the meeting house for more parking helping to resolve the current parking issues that exist today.

Mr. Hottois then opened the floor to questions.

Chairman Faxon stated that if they go forward to the State that they want to alter something, the State will look at what projects of this type have been done before in Connecticut or other places

in the Northeast. Vice-Chairman Budd added specifically in Connecticut and specifically on State roads.

Mr. Morehouse presented the Board with an animated overview of the current traffic volume at the intersection of the Flagpole on Main Street as it is today and then an animated overview with the proposed changes.

He suggested that to slow vehicles down they would narrow the lanes, choke traffic down, and slow the speeds.

Mr. Morehouse added that they have experience helping large and small cities as well as towns. He said they helped the City of New Haven with complete street design manual and went on to do work in Norwalk. Mr. Morehouse stated that they are currently working with Brookfield to redesign the Four Corners intersection which is an intersection of State roads. He noted that the State DOT agreed with the plan. In addition, Mr. Morehouse explained that they have done work in Danbury and Stratford as well as on the Black Rock Turnpike, the I-84 in Project in Hartford, and a roundabout in Kingston, NY.

Chairman Faxon stated that there were several State roads involved here. He said that the Board has been involved with the CDOT and has found the CDOT more receptive than they were 10 years ago. The Chairman suggested that the CDOT won't build anything that doesn't have the support of the community.

Commissioner Procaccini asked if they recommended additional lighting.

Mr. Morehouse said that the lighting should be increased with better signage also.

Vice-Chairman Budd said he liked the ideas and hoped the DOT would be receptive

Chairman Faxon suggested he was in favor of the concept noting that the design would slow people down, limit travel and would possibly divert more people to I-84.

Mr. Hottois noted that they recommended using cobblestone from a historic standpoint instead of brick. He added that he has met with everyone in Town and they have received this concept favorably. Mr. Hottois suggested that this was a complex issue and thinks this addresses the concept of pedestrian safety.

Commissioner Sachs said that he thought this was the most well thought out plan.

Chief Viadero said he would talk to Director of Public Works Fred Hurley about the area behind the church.

The Commissions all thanked Mr. Hottois and Mr. Morehouse for their presentation.

As the Board of Police Commissioners is charged with the responsibility of being the traffic authority in Town, Chairman Faxon believed that the Board should give residents an opportunity to speak their mind before the Board puts forward its support. He suggested that this support would be by vote so something is on record.

COMMISSIONER'S PARTICIPATION: none

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: none

ADJOURNMENT: Vice-Chairman Budd made the motion to adjourn at 8:42 pm. Commissioner Sachs seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Ted Swigart, Clerk