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Joel Faxon
Brian Budd
Scott Cicciari
Neil Chaudhary
Stephen Sedensky

TOWN OF NEWTOWN

POLICE COMMISSION

The Board of Police Commissioners
Regular Meeting, Tuesday, April 11, 2023, 6:30 P.M.
191 South Main Street, Newtown, CT
Conference Room

MINUTES ARE NOT FINALIZED UNTIL APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS

Present: Joel Faxon, Brian Budd, Scott Cicciari, Neil Chaudhary, Stephen Sedensky

Also Present: Chief Kullgren, Capt. Bishop, five members of the public, one member of the press and Officer McCarthy.

Chairman Faxon called the meeting to order at 6:30p.m., beginning with the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman Faxon welcomed back Chief Kullgren, who had been away at the FBI Academy saying he now has the benefit of this long term educational program.

Public Participation: Karen Martin, 54 Osborn Hill Road asked about the criteria for speed enforcement. The speeding on Osborn Hill is terrible during rush hour; it is mostly people that live in the neighborhood. She asked for a police presence during rush hours, saying giving out just one ticket could make all the difference.

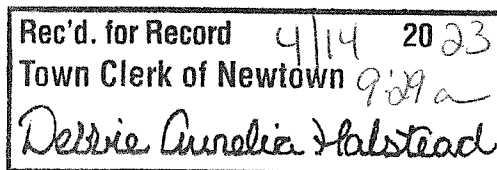
Peter Neary, 45 Osborne Hill Road asked if the police have selected enforcement. Chief Kullgren said the areas and times are identified and broken into patrol sectors bi-weekly. Officers go out when they have time; this is part of the education piece of enforcement. Mr. Neary further asked if there would be a benefit to having a trailer on site to record specific data. Chief Kullgren will consult with the traffic unit about this. Collected data is used for safety and to target a timeframe.

Stephanie Hummel, 6 Jordan Hill Road, thanked the officers that have sat at the end of her driveway. While she agrees the speeding comes from Monroe into Newtown, the traffic comes off of Rte. 34 at a high rate of speed as well. She asked if a digital device that takes photographs could be used. Chief Kullgren said no, this is not legal, but tubes could be used to monitor speed, an electronic speed sign as well as radar can be used.

Brendan Hummel, 6 Jordan Hill asked if the construction at Exit 11 takes police away from patrol. Officers at the construction site are off duty and sometimes from other towns.

Police Union Participation: none.

Consideration and action on minutes: Commissioner Budd moved to accept the minutes of the regular meeting of March 7, 2023. Commissioner Cicciari seconded. Commissioner Sedensky abstained. Motion passed.



Chief's Report: The department is fully staffed with 45 officers, one is out on a work related injury and one out on extended leave. The newest hire has completed field training and is on her own. A staffing vs. workload analysis was completed in the fall. Due to the police accountability bill requirements and an increase in calls for service the workload has increased. The department is asking the Town to hire additional officers. There are currently 4-5 officers covering the entire town during a shift. One domestic, car accident or back up on a medical call can take those officers from other things. Chief Kullgren asked for support in securing additional officers. While he understands it will require more funding, it is needed to keep services up to a respectful standard. Meetings this month include parking concerns at Fairfield Hills, department head meeting, the radio enhancement project meeting, meetings with Newtown Allies for Change to help modify policies. Chief Kullgren attended a ten week FBI training. There were 247 people in the class, 28 international. The culture of policing around the world was absorbed. It was a phenomenal experience. Chief Kullgren thanked Capt. Bishop, administrative staff, supervisors and all patrol officers for the jobs they continued to do in his absence. Chief Kullgren and Sgt. Chapman participated in a panel for Newtown Parent Connection. A meeting was held with Sandy Hook Promise to address security concerns. A town wide table top exercise was conducted with the Board of Education, EMS, all school districts and non-public schools as well. A no win emergency scenario was simulated, designed to stress all avenues of public resources to identify weaknesses and improve on them. It was a fantastic learning experience. This is the first of many county wide mutual aide plans. April is autism awareness month. The social media imprint has expanded to twitter, in addition to Facebook and Instagram. Capt. Bishop reported there were 30 traffic stops the first three months of 2022 and 150 traffic stops the first three months of 2023. Officers are out there making an effort.

Commissioner Chaudhary inquired about the speed camera pilot program with the state. Chief Kullgren noted in the past he has not seen the momentum on this as he sees now. He thinks it would help speed enforcement capability if there were intersections with traffic controls. There is a bill on the floor for speed enforcement (red light cameras). If passed it would allow the Town to purchase for a town intersection, deployed by the state.

Stephanie Hummel inquired if the uptick in traffic stops is due to increased enforcement or increased traffic. Chief Kullgren said that Covid had a national impact. There were less people driving and less stops due to social distancing requirements. There is now more traffic and enforcement.

Old Business:

Roadway Markings, Procedures: James Russo, 57 Osborn Hill Road attended the meeting relative to double lines on Osborn Hill Road and said that the lack of volume on Osborn Hill doesn't warrant lines. Commissioner Chaudhary stated that based on the MUTCD guidelines the Town has been striping roads that don't necessarily need to be striped and most of the roads that meet the criteria are already striped. Commissioner Chaudhary suggested roads should be treated case by case. Commissioner Cicciari said that decisions were made based on paving. If roads are resurfaced, the lines are then brought up to the guidelines. He said that may not apply moving forward. There needs to be a process to evaluate the reason to stripe, volume, safety or a combination of things. It doesn't make sense to Mr. Russo that after chip sealing a few years ago, Osborn Hill no striping was done; now that it is resurfaced striping is being considered. Commissioner Cicciari assured Mr. Russo that at this point there is no action on Osborn Hill.

No Parking Signs at Fairfield Hills Campus: Commissioner Budd thinks that if the Town wants the campus to become an active campus with events then there shouldn't be excessive no parking signs. He believes signs are short sighted and limit parking. Commissioner Chaudhary stated there are parking lots throughout the campus and if the event is big enough they can have overflow parking across the street with shuttles. He does not think asking that people do not park on the grass is unreasonable. Capt. Bishop thinks widening Keating Farms Road and putting in parallel parking is an option. Currently, it is Chief Kullgens opinion that six permanent signs on

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Keating Farms would look better than the many temporary signs that are there now and asks for a six month trial. There was no action taken. This item will be back on the agenda in May, possibly with more staff to speak to it.

New Business

Consideration and Action on Policy & Procedures: This item was not addressed.

Correspondence: none.

Commissioners Participation: Commissioner Cicciari congratulated Chief Kullgren on taking, and exceling at, the FBI course. He thanked Capt. Bishop and the rest of the department for continuing to do a great job in the absence of the Chief.

Chief Kullgren told Karen Martin to call dispatch when she sees speeders and police will go out to their homes and speak to them.

Adjournment: Having no further business the regular meeting of the Board of Police Commissioners adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

Susan Marcinek, clerk