

MINUTES OF THE POLICE COMMISSION MEETING

**Thursday, September 14, 2023 at 7:00p.m.
Town Hall Annex
66 Prospect Street**

Anyone requiring special accommodations due to disability is asked to contact Headquarters at 438-6531 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

Commissioners Present: John Frey, Chairman
Issy Caporale, Secretary
Marianne Coffin
Sharon Dornfeld
Ralph Money

Also Present: Major Shawn Platt

These minutes are an overview of the meeting; not a verbatim text.

The meeting was called to order at 7:04pm by Chairman Frey

Chairman Frey made a recommendation to move Crosswalk Art and Vincent Giordano – Proposal of Ridgefield Noise Ordinance to the beginning of the meeting as they were present at the meeting.

1. PUBLIC COMMENT

A. Alisa Trachtenberg, along with about 28 residents, presented to the Police Commission an overview of their desire to have a pride striped crosswalk in town. There was an overwhelming response from the audience present in favor of the crosswalk. Some attendees spoke including Ben from Danbury Road, Julie from Crest Road, Will from Aspen Mill Road, Sophia from Island Hill Road, Theo from Lakeside Drive and Lisa to reiterate similar thoughts such as – democracy compelling reasons that the crosswalk would be a sign of support, that we belong, emotional safety, to be seen and heard, importance of authenticity and as a parent to know your child feels welcome. Alisa also mentioned she has a video from the September 6 Board of Selectmen meeting showing overwhelming support of 4-1 for the crosswalk. She proposed to answer any questions which would clarify any false claims and uninformed speculation. Ms. Trachtenberg and the attendees were thanked for attending the meeting.

Sean Archambault voiced his disapproval for a Pride Crosswalk. He made a suggestion to display their artwork on a park bench or on the trail system in town like the Eagle Scouts do when they complete a project. Mr. Archambault also voiced his disappointment in the amount of traffic violations he has witnessed over the past few months in town. Major Platt explained that there was a recent citizen survey put out by the police department, in which the respondents voiced similar concerns with traffic related issues. Major Platt added that while officers are enforcing traffic related violations, the department will be reviewing its traffic enforcement strategies.

A special meeting, which will focus on the Crosswalk, will take place before the end of October.

B. **Vincent Giordano**, shared his group of resident's proposal to change the Ridgefield Noise Ordinance to the Police Commission. In summary due to the decibels of the gas-powered leaf blowers, they proposed that they only be used during spring clean-up which would be for 6 weeks in the Spring April 1 – May 14 and 6 weeks during fall clean-up October 15 – November 30; as well as emergency situations (hurricane or high windstorm event). Vincent stated gas powered leaf blowers create too much noise pollution, air pollution and the sound level can exceed 100 decibels. Vincent proposed a warning for the first offense and a \$250.00 fine to the homeowner or owner of the leaf blower if it is from a business. He also proposed battery operated and electric leaf blowers would be allowed anytime. Mr. Giordano was thanked for his presentation.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Frey requested a motion to accept the minutes of the July 13, 2023 Police Commission Meeting. Commissioner Coffin made a motion and Commissioner Dornfeld seconded the motion.

All in Favor

Minutes of the July 13, 2023 Police Commission Meeting accepted as written.

1. COMMISSION CORRESPONDENCE

A. Voicemail

Commissioner Caporale stated there were no voicemail received for the months of July and August.

B. Written Correspondence

Major Platt stated he received two Highway Use Permits, which were signed by Chairman Frey.

Half Marathon on Town and State Roads	10/22/23	0700-1030
Town Halloween Walk	10/28/23	1000-1200

A letter was received by the Police Commission from Sgt. Christopher DiFalco, PBA President, for their approval for the Annual PBA Fundraiser letter. After minor edits Commissioner Money made a motion to accept the PBA Fundraising letter and Commissioner Caporale seconded the motion. The mailer is planned to be distributed by the end of October.

All in Favor

John Tartaglia, a packet was presented to each Police Commissioner opposing the town roads from being painted, which included a printed presentation of "Why Permitting Rainbow Cross-walk Painting in Ridgefield Would Be Imprudent" and various laws and ordinances to support his claim.

Letters from the Board of Selectmen were presented to the Police Commissioners by way of Rudy Marconi supporting the painting of the crosswalk.

2. NEW BUSINESS

3. OLD BUSINESS

A. Crosswalk Art (moved to public comment)

B. Hiring Update

Major Platt stated he has received numerous applications for the police officer position which is now open. This phase of the application process closes on October 6.

C. Public Safety Building Update – where we stand, next steps

Major Platt was informed by Jake Muller that the plans are 95% done. Now that the survey is complete the next plans will show the

complete elevation design profile from Old Quarry Road. The next meeting with Rudy Marconi will be scheduled within the next couple of weeks.

D. Citizen Survey Results

The results from the Citizen Survey were very positive. While most of the responses were appreciative of RPD officers and their work, more traffic related enforcement was suggested for disobeying stop signs, speeding, distracted driving and other traffic related offenses. Major Platt stated that he and the Chief are appreciative of the public response, and are committed to making Ridgefield a safer community.

4. CHIEF'S REPORT

A. Traffic/Sign Report

Sgt. Mark Caswell, Sign Officer, submitted the following report.

Re: July 2023 Sign Report

Sign Maintenance:

1. Installed a curve sign on Rockwell Road.
2. Installed a 25 mph Speed Limit sign on Farm Hill Road
3. Installed a Dead-End sign on Sycamore Ln.
4. State DOT replaced the Stop Sign at Ashbee Ln / Ethan Allen Highway.

Sign/Traffic Follow Up:

1. There were concerns regarding the light timing at the Ethan Allen Highway / Branchville Road intersection. I spoke with DOT and the contractor. The timing loops have been cut and the lights have defaulted to the minimal time. The contractor fixed the issue and the timing on the light has been extended.
2. I received an email from Joseph Mikalavicius. He asked that the "No turn on red" sign at the exit from Stop & Shop on Danbury Rd. be removed. It was explained to him that Danbury Road is a state road and under the jurisdiction of the state DOT. That intersection has been studied for a number of years and the state feels it is appropriate to have the "No Turn on Red" sign installed.
3. I received an email from Deb Goodwin regarding the traffic light at the Copps Hill/Farmingville Rd/ Rt 35 intersection. The timing on the left turn arrows malfunctioned, limiting the number of cars allowed to pass through the intersection. This situation was exacerbated by the construction on Ligi's Way

pushing more traffic to Danbury Road. The state DOT was notified and the timing on the traffic light was fixed.

B. Training/PR Report

Capt. Jeff Raines, Division of Professional Standards, submitted the following reports for the months of July 2023 and August 2023.

**Ridgefield Police Department
Training & Community Policing/Public Relations Report
July 2023**

Training Attended:

**June 27-
July 3:** SRO Giglio, SRO Seibert and SRO Williams attended the annual NASRO Conference for School Resource Officers, which was hosted in Indianapolis, IN this year.

July 5-7: Captain Fowler and Detective Dardis attended “Pistol Mounted Optics Instructor” training hosted by Sig Sauer in Portsmouth, NH.

July 17-21: Sergeant Van Wattum attended “Supervisor Leadership Institute” training hosted by FBI LEEDA in Westchester, NY.

July 24-28: SRO Giglio, SRO Seibert and SRO Williams hosted the 2023 Junior Police Academy at HQ. Several Instructors assisted throughout the week.

P/R Events:

July 20: Major Platt, Captain Smith, Captain Raines and members of the Honor Guard all attended First Responders Night at Dunkin Park, in Hartford, CT. The Honor Guard presented the colors during the pre-game ceremonies, for the third year in a row.

July 28: Officer Clark attended Touch-A-Truck at the Lounsbury House with one of our new police cruisers. It was part of the Summer Fest event.

Upcoming Events:

There were no scheduled events for the Month of August, due to summer vacations, etc.

A total of 17 Public Relations were performed during the month(s) to include:

- Officers met with the staff and children at the Shir Shalom Temple.
- Several car seat installations were performed.
- Officers met with local businesses and spoke with employees.
- Multiple Social Media posts were put out in regards to Police Activities & Safety Messages.

**Ridgefield Police Department
Training & Community Policing/Public Relations Report
August 2023**

Training Attended:

August 8-10: School Resource Officer Giglio and Williams attended several school related safety courses at WCSU.

August 29: Captain Smith taught CPR to several of our new dispatchers in the training room at HQ.

P/R Events:

July 29: Officer Clark attended “Touch-A-Truck” at the Lounsbury House. This detail was part of Ridgefield’s Summer Fest.

August 21: Officer Giglio attended “Story Time” “What Is Your Job” hosted by the Ridgefield Library.

Upcoming Events:

The PBA Safety Day is scheduled for September 17th, at the East Ridge Middle School. We encourage everyone to attend.

A total of 12 Public Relations were performed during the month(s) to include:

- Officers met with the staff and children at the Shir Shalom Temple.
- Several car seat installations were performed.
- Officers met with local businesses and spoke with employees.
- Multiple Social Media posts were put out in regards to Police Activities & Safety Messages.

C. Department Stats

Major Platt reported the total number of incidents for the month of July 2023 was 1,362 and the total number for the month of August 2023 was 1,196. He highlighted some of the statistics for the two months.

5. Union Participation

None.

6. Executive Session

A. To discuss probationary candidate list

Commissioner Money made a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:46 pm. Commissioner Dornfeld seconded the motion.

Motion carried unanimously

The Police Commission returned to Public Session at 9:28pm. No votes were taken.

Commissioner Dornfeld made a motion to adjourn the Police Commission Meeting at 9:28pm. Commissioner Caporale seconded the motion.

Motion carried unanimously,

Respectfully Submitted,

Issy Caporale
Police Commission Secretary