

MINUTES OF THE POLICE COMMISSION MEETING

**Thursday, October 12, 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: Issy Caporale, Secretary
Marianne Coffin
Sharon Dornfeld
Ralph Money

Present by Phone: John Frey, Chairman

Also Present: Major Shawn Platt

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:01pm by Commissioner Caporale.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Caporale made a motion to accept the minutes of the Police Commission Meeting of September 14, 2023. Commissioner Coffin made a motion and Commissioner Dornfeld seconded the motion.

All in Favor

Minutes of September 14, 2023 Police Commission Meeting accepted as written.

Commissioner Money made a motion to add the following paragraph to the Police Commission Special Meeting minutes of September 20, 2023 on page 4 following Commissioner Dornfeld's motion to approve Ridgefield Pride's Application to paint a crosswalk in rainbow colors with the following conditions. Commissioner Money seconded the motion.

Commissioner Money asked the Chief if he viewed the guidelines contained in the MUTCD to cover not only the original crosswalk proposal but also cover the driveway motion put forth by Commissioner Dornfeld's current motion. The Chief answered affirmative and that he would apply the same guidelines to both crosswalks.

All in Favor

Minutes of September 20, 2023 Police Commission Special Meeting accepted as presented.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Jason Geane from 219 Mamasasco Road presented to the Police Commission his concern for the speeding traffic on Mamasasco Road. Approximately 10+ residents were present supporting this issue. Jason explained that Mamasasco Road is used as a cut through to get to the high school. Jason feels that it is just a matter of time before someone gets hurt, definitely not safe, with drivers showing a lack of respect to the residents. The worst time is 7:00am when students are going to school and about 2:00pm coming home from school, plus events on the weekends. He, along with the other residents present, want something to be done before someone gets hurt. One resident stated it is out of control, stating it is irresponsible when you can hear speeding cars over a conference call. One resident from 239 Mamasasco Road stated they live ¼ mile from the high school and they're kids can't walk to school because it is too dangerous. A resident from 177 Mamasasco Road expressed similar concerns stating the traffic has gotten worse.

Commissioner Dornfeld stated we can explore other speed reducing options. Asked what the high school policy is on parking.

The residents questioned about what could they do. Major Platt stated they could bring it to the attention of the Board of Education to see if there is any assistance that the school can offer to deter the influx of vehicles during these times.

Major Platt agrees 100% with their concerns. He explained that there has been speed enforcement on Mamasasco Road multiple times this week. Residents explained that there needs to be more focus during the after-school times. He will follow up with Patrol Capt. Fowler to strategize to help alleviate the problem. The residents were appreciative for having the opportunity to speak to the Police Commission about this issue. The residents were thanked for bringing this to our attention.

3. COMMISSION CORRESPONDENCE

A. Voicemail

Commissioner Caporale stated there were no voicemail received for the month of September.

B. Written Correspondence

The Police Commission received a letter from Dan Tewes and John Loehr from Main Street concerned about the speed of traffic on Main Street. That combined with local traffic, bicyclists and pedestrians this is increasingly hazardous. Chairman Frey stated the guidelines for Main Street aren't out yet. He sent them an email encouraging them to come to a meeting.

A letter was also received from the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) stating the lower east section of Branchville Road as one of the areas they have tentatively planned to possibly resurface with installation of centerline rumble strips (CLRS). This is a cost-effective, safety countermeasure to help reduce head-on collisions and sideswipe crashes. The letter was signed by First Selectman Rudy Marconi approving such measure. Commissioner Coffin stated the Police Commission also approve.

4. NEW BUSINESS

None.

5. OLD BUSINESS**A. Hiring Update**

Major Platt stated we are moving forward in the hiring process for the hiring of three new police officers. For next phase, eleven candidates will be interviewed by the Police Commission followed by a conditional offer and a background check for the highest scoring three candidates.

Major Platt stated consolidated dispatch is doing well.

B. Public Safety Building Update

Major Platt stated he is waiting for a meeting to be scheduled in the coming weeks regarding the building plans update.

6. CHIEF'S REPORT**A. Traffic/Sign Report**

The following traffic report was submitted by Sgt. Mark Caswell.

Subject: October 2023 Sign Report

Sign Maintenance:

1. Installed No Parking signs on Florida Hill Road
2. Repaired a 25 MPH Speed Limit sign on Florida Road

3. Installed a new Chevron Sign and cut back the brush on Gilbert Street and High Ridge Avenue
4. Repaired Police sign on East Ridge Road
5. Installed School Bus Stop Ahead sign on Old Oscaleta Road
6. Replaced the 25 MPH Speed Limit sign on Westmoreland Road
7. Installed an electronic speed sign on Farmingville Road

Sign/Traffic Follow Up:

1. Sgt. Mark Caswell received an email from Patrick Downend, the builder for the property on Bailey Avenue. He raised some concerns regarding the parking of vehicles in front of Bellagamba Electric. He inquired about additional No Parking signs. He was advised that the area was surveyed, and no parking issues were observed. It was recommended signage wait until a permanent traffic pattern for Bailey Avenue is established. He also advised him that he would contact the business owner to see if alternative parking areas for the winter were available.

B. Training/PR Report

Capt. Jeff Raines, Division of Professional Standards, submitted the following report for the month of September.

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

Training Attended:

- Sept. 5&6:** Sergeant DiFalco and Officer Clark attended De-Escalation training in Milford, CT.
- Sept. 5&6:** Sergeant Geller, Sergeant Van Wattum, Officer J. Romero and Officer McMahon completed EMR (Emergency Medical Responder) recert at HQ, taught by Captain Smith.
- Sept. 12:** Sergeant Van Wattum attended Taser Instructor recert in Fairfield, CT.
- Sept. 15:** Chief Kreitz and Major Platt attended the John Bailey Seminar (Legal Updates) in Wallingford, CT.

- Sept. 18-29:** Sergeant Van Wattum attended First Line Supervisor at RWU (Roger Williams University) in Bristol, RI.
- Sept. 20:** Several retired officers attended HR-218 at the Wooster Mountain Range, instructed by Captain Fowler and Detective Dardis.
- Sept. 22:** Captain Raines, Lieutenant Durling, Sergeant Brown, Officer Mulvihill, Officer McMahon, Officer Hartling and Officer B. Romero attended annual Firearms Qualifications at the Wooster Mountain Range, instructed by Captain Fowler and Detective Dardis.

P/R Events:

- Sept. 11:** Major Platt, Captain Fowler, Captain Raines, Lieutenant Knoche (HG), Sergeant Geller (HG), Sergeant Van Wattum (HG), Officer Luis (HG) and Officer Vasquez (HG) attended the annual 9/11 remembrance ceremony at Ridgefield Parks & Rec.
- Sept. 15:** Captain Fowler and Raines attended the annual MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) awards ceremony/luncheon at Mohegan Sun. This year's recipients were Officer Michael McKnight (who was unable to attend) and Officer Joshua Clark.
- Sept. 17:** The PBA Safety Day was hosted at the East Ridge Middle School. We were assisted by Eagle 2 and its crew out of New Milford and K-9 Officer Felicia Figol with K-9 Aris out of Newtown. The weather was great and we had a good turn-out.
- Oct. 5:** The PBA was at Queen B Coffee Co. on October 4th from 11:00am to 1:00pm for National "Coffee with a Cop" day. The event went well.

Upcoming Events:

- Oct. 28:** "National Drug Take Back" day will be held outside the Bissell Pharmacy from 10:00am to 2:00pm. The Ridgefield Prevention Council will be assisting us once again.

Oct. 31: Trunk or Treat will be at the Lounsbury House, in the parking lot from 5:00pm to 8:00pm. Registration forms were sent out to potential participants.

A total of 8 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 September was 1,279. He highlighted some of the statistics for the month.

7. Union Participation

None.

8. Executive Session

A. To discuss Police Chief's Contract

Commissioner Money made a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:14pm. Commissioner Caporale seconded the motion.

Motion carried unanimously

The Police Commission returned to Public Session at 8:20pm.

Motion made by Commissioner Money be it resolved that the Police Commission fully and enthusiastically supports and endorses the contract extension of Chief of Police Jeff Kreitz through January 1, 2029. Be it further resolved that this support is based in no small measure upon the Chief's: (1) outstanding performance and leadership of the Department to date; and (2) the high expectation of continued strong leadership and contributions to the safety of the people of our Town and in the future. Commissioner Coffin seconded the motion.

Motion carried unanimously

Commissioner Dornfeld made a motion to adjourn the Police Commission Meeting at 8:25pm. Commissioner Money seconded the motion.

Motion carried unanimously,

Respectfully Submitted,

Issy Caporale
Police Commission Secretary