

**LACONIA POLICE COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 20, 2021
3:00 P.M.**

10/20/2021 - Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Whittum called the meeting to Order at the above date and time.

2. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Chairman Whittum lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. RECORDING SECRETARY

Executive Assistant Lori Marsh

4. ROLL CALL

4.A. Chairman Whittum recognized Commissioners present - Chairman Douglas Whittum, Commissioner Frank Mello and Commissioner Scott Davis.

4.B. Chairman Whittum recognized Staff Present - Chief Matthew Canfield.

4.C. Chairman Whittum recognized a quorum has been established and there are three Commission members present.

5. PERSONNEL MATTERS

5.A. Commendations & Awards

Chief Canfield advised our Annual Awards Ceremony has been moved and will be held on November 10th.

5.B. Resignations/Retirement

No discussion.

5.C. Promotions/Classification Change

No discussion.

6. COMMAND STAFF REPORTS

6.A. Chief - Support Division

Chief Canfield reported the following:

Last week he and Captain Graton did a Capital Improvement presentation for the outlay of capital items.

He is working with Captain Graton to finalize our budget for next year, which is typically due at the beginning of December.

Today we did a drug operation at 20 Crescent Street. This was a combined effort between our Drug Unit, all of our Detectives and Patrol. In combination with that, we utilized SWAT patrol officers and the SWAT team executed a search warrant on that location. Two individuals were arrested and we recovered a fair amount of drug paraphernalia, packaging items and Fentanyl. This has been a nuisance house where they have been actively dealing drugs for a period of time. This location was the subject of an investigation last year, where a search warrant was done on it at that time also. This took place at approximately 3:30 am this morning and it was a good operation.

Detectives have been extremely busy with having been inundated with sexual assault cases lately. They took in four new cases last week and these entail in depth investigations that take a lot of time with interviews and CAC interviews.

We were awarded a Department of Justice De-Escalation Grant in the amount of \$200,000.00. This provided training equipment for our interactive use of force training, as well as the ability to send two employees to instructor school to teach the entire department about de-escalation, which is an on-going annual requirement. We were one of only three recipients in the State to be awarded that grant.

We applied for a School Violence Grant in the amount of \$380,000.00, which is a joint grant with the School Department. Some of this will provide equipment and training with the school staff and officers to respond to an active shooter if, God forbid, one should occur. We are waiting to hear if this is awarded to us.

We obtained approval on a Justice Assistance Grant for equipment in the amount of \$12,000.00.

The new cars that were ordered in March have a tentative delivery date of mid November.

6.A.i. Orders & Bulletins

No discussion.

6.B. Chief - Operations Division

Chief Canfield reported the following:

Operations has been busy as usual, especially with the Fall with the Biketemberfest and Weirtoberfest, as well as the Wicked Weirs block party coming up this weekend at the Tower Hill Tavern. They have also been busy assisting with some other bigger events such as assisting with traffic for the Colonial Theater events and foot patrols in that area.

6.B.i. Hirings

Chief Canfield advised we will be holding a recruitment test on November 7th at the Laconia Middle School. This will be a written and PT test, with Oral Boards scheduled to take place the following week to fill our two open vacancies to make us full staff. We are hoping to get backgrounds done so that the new hires can attend the January academy.

We are also working with a company called IHeartMedia to assist us with a media campaign through social media to promote interest in recruitment throughout the Greater New England area. We are looking to work with them for another recruitment test in January should we have any additional openings or vacancies.

We are looking to push that along with the recruitment bonus that Councilor Cheney assisted us in obtaining.

7. COMMISSION ACTION

7.A. Acceptance of minutes from previous meeting

On a Motion by Commissioner Mello, seconded by Commissioner Davis, and passed unanimously, the meeting minutes of September 23, 2021, we accepted as distributed.

7.B. Out-of-State School(s)

Chief Canfield advised Detective Horan has submitted to attend a SWAT Team Leader Development School from November 15th through the 19th in Brockton, Massachusetts, at a cost of \$1,728.00. Detective Horan is currently Assistant Team Leader on the SWAT team, taking on a leadership role. Being that this is a regional team for one of the biggest communities in Belknap County, his leadership has been very well needed on that team.

On a Motion by Commissioner Mello, seconded by Commissioner Davis, and passed unanimously, the above SWAT Team Leader Development School was approved.

8. REVIEW OF MONTHLY ACTIVITY REPORTS

8.A. Department Monthly Highlights

Chief Canfield reviewed the Department Monthly Highlights report, noting the total calls for service up about 12.5%, physical custody arrests are up 8.86%, and motor vehicle stops are up 55.76% from last year.

8.B. Criminal Investigative Unit Statistics

Chief Canfield reviewed the Criminal Investigative Unit Statistics report. No further discussion.

8.C. Budget Reports

Chief Canfield advised the budget is in good shape. We are still at the beginning of the year and we are monitoring it closely.

8.D. Monthly Traffic Statistics

Chief Canfield reviewed the Monthly Traffic Statistics report. No further discussion.

8.E. Monthly Fleet Report

Commissioner Whittum noted the date has moved up on the delivery of the new vehicles from December to November and Chief Canfield indicated he is hopeful that holds true.

9. CHIEF'S REPORT

Chief Canfield reported the following:

There was one on-line survey completed.

He reviewed the Drug Overdose Statistics for September. He advised that the report currently shows four drug overdose deaths; however, we are currently investigating eight overdose deaths this year. The reason for the difference is that the four are actual confirmed drug overdose deaths and the additional four are suspected, but we just haven't received the laboratory results back yet.

Halloween will be held October 31st from 5-8 pm.

Our Open House event will be held this Saturday from 11 am to -2 pm. There will be some demonstrations, give-aways for the kids , food and tours of the Police Station. This will be combined with National Drug Take Back Day. Commissioner Whittum inquired if the drone will be included and Chief Canfield advised yes.

We have begun work on the Christmas Newsletter for retirees that was started last year. This allows us to keep retirees informed of new faces and changes and things that have happened over the year. This was well received last year and they look forward to keeping in touch with what is happening in the department.

We have experienced an issue with our heating and ventilation system over the last several months. This has created a condensation problem, resulting in mold forming around vents. We removed one of the vents and found it to be filled with dust and mold. We purchased our own mold kit and did samples, which came back positive for mold. We have been in touch with Amy from Parks and Recreation and she has hired a company to do official tests and we are waiting for the results. Amy is working on rectifying this problem, which may involve cleaning all of the duct work, and is looking at costs to replace the system.

Next Thursday the Taylor Community will be conducting an appreciation day for law enforcement and we will be participating by driving through so they can hold up signs of appreciation.

10. OLD BUSINESS

No discussion.

11. NEW BUSINESS

No discussion.

12. OTHER BUSINESS

No discussion.

13. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Councilor Cheney addressed the Commission and indicated he wished to inform them that he had asked both Chief Canfield and the Fire Chief to provide data on pay parity between Laconia and other cities, with the intention of working on making sure we are competitive at both the high and low ends, noting we can less afford to lose a senior person than someone who just started. He also asked Chief Canfield for crime statistics in more detail than the monthly report, with the idea being to use the information for proposals he intends to make regarding staffing of the department. He would like to sit with Chief Canfield and do a manpower review and, based on that, get an idea of whether we are where Laconia should be or should we be looking for additional manpower. Whether we are where Laconia should be or should we be looking for additional manpower. He noted that back in the 80's he was the Police Chief for Laconia, so he has some knowledge of what the City needed for policing. A novice can look at the stats and see that the Police Department is doing a lot more "stuff" (criminal, calls for service, motor vehicle), and yet the department is essentially, with a few exceptions, at the same manning level. The argument would be that the population hasn't changed, but a lot more is being done than when he was the Chief. If perhaps we are at a sufficient level, that is fine, but if needs can be identified, that would be helpful. He has had other Councilors speak with him about observing cars more with motor vehicle issues, which has heightened the awareness of the department, and he is glad to see that. He thinks we can do more, but he is thankful to Chief Canfield for making that happen.

Additionally, at the last minute he has asked the Chief to add an item to Capital Improvements, that being parking enforcement. Both the City Council, Planning Board and the Steering Committee have all discussed parking being an issue downtown. There has been debate about the proposed eighteen spots designated for the Colonial Theater parking and where those should be. There has been a lot of discussion about the enforcement of two hour parking not being enforced enough and it looks like it is becoming a problem. He has asked Chief Canfield to provide the Capital Improvement Committee with some thoughts on purchasing equipment for parking enforcement. Chalking of tires is no longer allowed, so he intends to push to get equipment to assist, as well as personnel.

Councilor Cheney suggested that the Commission reaching out to him if they have any specific ideas or requests and he looks forward to hearing from them.

Chairman Whittum inquired about the chalking of tires and if it's a Civil Liberties issue. Chief Canfield advised it stems from a lawsuit filed in Wisconsin as far as unreasonable search and seizure, as it was found the tire was actually seized by touching it and placing chalk on it. He indicated the software that Councilor Cheney is speaking of is basically a hand held palm pilot, which takes a picture of the vehicle and license plate, where it is parked and the location of the valve stem, and records it automatically. That device can then reports when the vehicle parking expires and a digital ticket could then be issued from the device. He indicated Concord is using something similar, although Concord has a Parking Enforcement Division.

Chairman Whittum suggested the department have the Monthly Highlights printed in the paper once a month, as the average citizen doesn't know how many calls the Police Department responds to. Chief Canfield indicated work could be done to get those out through social media and the paper.

Commissioner Davis noted that the caveat would be to compare to what the surrounding towns

do per capita, as it might reflect poorly on Laconia if numbers by themselves are shown, as we are a much bigger population. We have calls for service, but that's being visible per event and preventative, as much as it is in response to something. That is an important distinction so that people are not wondering why we have 1000 calls for service and there's 2000 crimes happening, as it may not be that at all and may be other things that are of a more positive nature.

Councilor Cheney indicated it would be advisable to check with other towns and see what their calls for service levels are. He would also note that some agencies may have separate calls for service for each unit that responded to the same event, where Laconia has one call for service regardless of how many units respond to that one call.

14. CONFIRMATION OF NEXT MEETING DATE

The next Regular meeting date of November 17, 2021 was confirmed.

15. NON-PUBLIC SESSION (According To RSA 91-A:3,II)

On a Motion by Commissioner Davis, seconded by Commissioner Mello, and passed unanimously, in accordance with RSA 91-A:3II(a), the Laconia Police Commissioner entered into Non-Public Session at 3:35 pm.

Roll Call Vote to enter Non-Public Session:

Chairman Douglas Whittum	Yes
Commissioner Frank Mello	Yes
Commissioner Scott Davis	Yes

At 3:54 pm, the Non-Public Session ended on a Motion by Commissioner Mello, seconded by Commissioner Davis, and passed unanimously.

Public Session reconvened at 3:54 pm.

16. ADJOURNMENT

On a Motion by Commissioner Davis, seconded by Commissioner Mello, and passed unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 3:54 pm.