

LACONIA POLICE COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 19, 2020
3:00 P.M.

2/19/2020 - 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, Prosecutor James Sawyer, Captain Allan Graton and Captain Michael Finogle.

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

5. PERSONNEL MATTERS

5.A. Commendations & Awards
No discussion.

5.B. Resignations/Retirement
No discussion.

5.C. Promotions/Classification Change
No discussion.

6. COMMAND STAFF REPORTS

6.A. Captain - Support Division

Chairman Whittum recognized Captain Graton. Captain Graton advised he has a couple of out-of-State schools that will need approval under the Commission Action section.

He advised the first is for Dispatcher Fritzen for a Communications Training Officer class to be held in Sandwich Massachusetts Police Department in Sandwich, Massachusetts on April 8th through the 10th. He indicated the only cost is for the class, as she will be staying with a friend down there.

He advised the second is for a Street Smart Cop / Pro-Active Patrol Tactics class for Officer Hoffman. He advised this class will be held in Dorchester, Massachusetts on March 2nd and 3rd. He advised the only cost will be for tuition of \$249.00.

6.A.i. Orders & Bulletins

No discussion.

6.A.ii. 2019 Attrition Summary

No discussion.

6.A.iii. 2019 IPC Summary

No discussion.

6.A.iv. 2019 Use of Force Summary

No discussion.

6.B. Captain - Operations Division

Chairman Whittum recognized Captain Finogle. Captain Finogle advised we are in the early stages of preparing for Bike Week and we just had the Sled Dog Race, which was a success for the City, as well as for the event itself. well.

6.B.i. Hirings

Captain Finogle advised we have two in the Academy and are due to graduate on April 3rd. He advised we also have three in process of field training and just graduated the in-house training. He indicated they will be going into the Academy in May, with a tentative graduation date of August. He indicated we also have two in backgrounds with one vacancy. He also indicated we went down to Great Bay this past Saturday and out of 113 people, our agency was able to directly contact and speak to about 56 potential candidates about our agency. He also indicated we sent out e-mails to all 113. He indicated our PT test is coming up on Sunday and we will be doing Oral Boards in mid march to establish a candidacy list.

Commissioner Davis inquired if Great Bay has a Criminal Justice Program and Lieutenant Finogle advised they do and part of their promotion for the program is to bring Law Enforcement down there to get students jobs and they test there for about 70 police departments. Commissioner Davis inquired how we compare for salary and benefits and Lieutenant Finogle advised we are right on par. He advised some places are offering a couple more thousand at start; however, our pay for senior officers is probably better in that area. He also advised that some agencies are starting sign-on bonuses; however, this is pretty complicated and he doesn't feel this could be accomplished without offending the large group of officers just hired.

6.C. Legal Prosecutor

Chairman Whittum recognized Prosecutor Sawyer. Prosecutor Sawyer apologized for not attending the past two meetings, however, he was covering juvenile hearings on those dates. He gave an update on the Redaction Unit, advising that Detective Jeff Wholley had been doing all redactions for his office, as well as the County Attorney's Office, for body cam videos; however, Jeff and Lindsey Batstone approached him and Captain Graton inquiring if she could take on some of the responsibility. He advised the redactions are now divided up between Detective Wholley and Lindsey Batstone, with Jeff doing his redactions for District Court and Lindsey doing all felonies for the County Attorney's Office. He advised she has been trained by Jeff on how to use the software and what to redact and this seems to be working well. He indicated this has taken some of the burden off Jeff, as he spent a large amount of his time on redactions, as it is very tedious.

7. COMMISSION ACTION

A Motion was made by Commissioner Mello, seconded by Commissioner Davis, and passed unanimously, to approve the out-of-State schools proposed by Captain Graton under section 6.A.

7.A. Acceptance of minutes from previous meeting

One correction was pointed out to be made to page #1 under 5.D.

On a Motion by Commissioner Mello, seconded by Commissioner Davis, and passed unanimously, the meeting minutes of January 15, 2020 were accepted with the one correction.

7.B. Acceptance of Laconia Police Commission Attendance Report - 2019

On a Motion by Commissioner Mello, seconded by Commissioner Davis, and passed unanimously, the 2019 Laconia Police Commission Attendance Report was accepted as distributed.

8. REVIEW OF MONTHLY ACTIVITY REPORTS

8.A. Department Monthly Highlights

Chairman Whittum recognized Chief Canfield. Chief Canfield reviewed the Department Monthly Highlights report. No further discussion.

8.B. Criminal Investigative Unit Statistics

Chairman Whittum recognized Chief Canfield. Chief Canfield reviewed the Criminal Investigate Unit Statistics report. No further discussion.

8.C. Budget Reports

Chairman Whittum recognized Captain Graton. Captain Graton advised we are running on track as of the end of January at approximately 2.3% under budget. Chairman Whittum noted the budget always looks good.

8.D. Monthly Traffic Statistics

Chairman Whittum recognized Chief Canfield. Chief Canfield reviewed the Monthly Traffic Statistics report.

Chairman Whittum inquired if the increase in numbers are due to more aggressive enforcement or just more people on the streets. Chief Canfield advised both, having more people on the streets than we did last year. He advised it is also due to a more direct emphasis on motor vehicle enforcement and may be due to the weather being a little more mild this year than last year, which also helps in being able to stop vehicles.

8.E. Monthly Fleet Report

No discussion.

9. CHIEF'S REPORT

Chairman Whittum recognized Chief Canfield.

Chief Canfield reviewed the Drug Overdose Statistics report and noted there have been no fatal overdoses year to date.

He advised the Commissioners have in their packets a copy of the 2019 Goals and Objectives, most of which have been completed. He advised several of them were carried over. He advised one of the big things in 2019 was the Active Shooter Readiness and Response, which carried over. He indicated again we are working on this area with Homeland Security to do a tabletop exercise, a board game and a full scale exercise in the fall. He indicated acquiring rifle optics was completed, the air handling system for the evidence room was completed, and the body camera and cruiser camera projects were completed. he advised the recruitment video has been carried over and will be tentatively completed in the month of March, as well as the Cop Card program.

Chief Canfield noted that in regards to the above goals, they were pretty big undertakings and were very big projects and he attributes a lot of the success in getting those programs implemented, especially the body camera and cruiser camera projects, to the Staff working for us and everyone's willingness to make it happen. He noted Captain Graton was very involved in getting those set up and going and it was by no means a small project. He advised there were a lot of concerns initially as far as just logistics in getting everyone trained and equipped and overall it went off seamlessly.

Chief Canfield advised that also contained in the Commission packets are the 2020 Goals and Objectives. He indicated again they are quite an undertaking and some of the goals are big, but thinks we will be able to address these and get them going, even if they carry over to next year's goals.

He advised the 2020 goals include creating a UAV (DRONE) Program, completing a complete review of the Detective Unit to make sure we're using personnel properly and to the best of their abilities and expertise, and study technology and how we can implement new technology to better utilize our staff and communicate messages throughout the department. He indicated one of the aesthetic things we wanted to look is the patrol office, which is a bit outdated in the usefulness of it and whether it's time to clean it up and maybe do something with the countertops. He also advised one of the goals is to create a study committee to review departmental uniforms, as well as the development of a firearms range program. He advised that in addition to these, we will be doing a comprehensive review of our written directives, which will be a multi-year project (3-5 years) to look at our policies, which are CALEA Accredited, but determine areas that need to be tightened up. He advised we are scheduled for our CALEA Re-Accreditation in July of this year, which is a four-year cycle. He indicated we do our annual compliance checks every year, which involves about 25% of our policies to ensure compliance, but this will be an on-site visit by CALEA assessors. He indicated this is a multi-day visit where they will come to the department, they will conduct a public hearing, and will take input from the department, as well as expect several presentations by our Staff. He advised the department video is also listed, which was carried over from last year, as well as the Active Shooter Response and Readiness, which we continue to work on.

He advised he provided the Commission with a copy of an article by CNN of a police drone that was used to find a 62 year old blind man in Connecticut. He advised this man was missing for about 33 hours and, with the help of the drone unit from the police department, they were able to find him. He indicated this is the exact reason why we are looking at this technology here for situations such as that, as well as increase office safety and the ability to provide overwatch for armed individuals so we do not have to risk an officer's life, in addition to crowd monitoring for large events. He indicated that Drone Unit will be strictly governed by policy and the use will be approved prior to deployment.

Chief Canfield advised the Motorcycle Week briefing is scheduled for May 27th at the Beane Center at 9:00 am. He also advised that a number of our officers are again participating in the Winni Dip for Special Olympics. He advised that it may have been noticed around our department that a number of officers chose to participate and are allowed to grow beards for a 6 week period prior to the Winni Dip if they raised \$100.00. He advised in order to do that, they had to raise \$100.00, which had to be paid prior to being allowed to grow a beard for that 6 week period. He advised it's for a very good cause and builds camaraderie throughout the department. Commissioner Davis inquired when this will be held and Chief Canfield advised March 7th at Margate.

9.A. Towing Policy

Chief Canfield advised there is a new policy for the Commission to vote on and approve. He advised there has been a little confusion in the way our tow services were selected to be part of the towing list to tow for police tows, so a new policy has been created to give some direction and guidance. He requested the Commission review this policy and take a vote to approve it.

On a Motion by Commissioner Davis, seconded by Commissioner Mello, and passed unanimously, the Towing Policy was approved as distributed. .

10. **OLD BUSINESS**

No discussion.

11. **NEW BUSINESS**

No discussion.

12. **OTHER BUSINESS**

Commissioner Davis inquired if parking enforcement has gotten easier or harder for enforcement with the new angled parking. Chief Canfield advised we haven't noticed any difficulties as all and that it was implemented pretty well and seems to flow very well.

13. **CONFIRMATION OF NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next Regular or Special Meeting date of March 18, 2020 was confirmed.

14. **CITIZEN COMMENTS**

Councilor Bruce Cheney approached. He indicated he represents Ward #1 and is the Public Safety Chairman, as well as the liaison to the police department. He indicated he asked Chief Canfield if he could provide some data, which the Commission has also seen, to support the idea of developing a Traffic Unit. He advised he wanted to make clear that usually requests like this end up being accusations of "empire building". He stated Chief Canfield has not tried to "build his empire" and he himself asked the Chief to provide him with the data. He advised the purpose or impetus behind the recommendation he will make to the Council is that for the past two Springs of being on the Council, the complaints start about traffic and tire burning and so forth. He advised every year the Council talks with the Chief about enforcement in the Weirs and, in his particular case, suspect other parts of the City from other Council members.

Councilor Cheney advised today he heard of 55 accidents, 16 which involved injuries, which he believes could be better handled by a Traffic Unit rather than routine patrol and free up routine patrol to handle other matters that are obviously getting out of hand through no fault of the department.

Councilor Cheney advised his purpose for coming before the Commission today is to make the Commission aware that it is his intent to ask first the Public Safety Committee, and then the Council, to authorize Chief Canfield to make application for two positions. He advised the Police Commission may have other thoughts about how many and he is open to those thoughts. He stated he asked Chief Canfield to put together some justification and also the paperwork necessary to apply for two positions for a Traffic Enforcement Unit. He advised these would be folks assigned primarily to traffic work, but obviously other matters may intercede or interfere with that at time. He advised he and Chief Canfield have had many discussions and some of the Commissioners have heard his views on traffic enforcement, which he feels effects everything else the department does.

Councilor Cheney advised a few years ago when he was the Chief of Police, they used to ask for four stops per shift per person. He advised the purpose of that wasn't to flood the City with summonses, but rather flood the City with blue lights, as they thought at the time that it helped thwart folks who were thinking about doing things they shouldn't be doing.

Councilor Cheney advised that in closing, he and the Chief try to meet fairly regularly, but if the Commissioners would like to talk with him or had some thoughts, it could be done either individually or perhaps a meeting could be scheduled at some point where the Commissioners could express their views. He just wanted the Commission aware of what he is intending to do and that is why he wished to speak today.

Chairman Whittum advised the comment about the blue lights was right on. He advised you can be driving down the road and might pass a cruiser going in the other direction and you don't really see it

because it blends in with all of the traffic. But if you look off in the distance and see the flashing blue lights, it gets your attention.

Councilor Cheney advised that as he drives up North Main Street and sees car stops, it's amazing how the speed limit suddenly is in vogue and people start to pay attention to the speed limit. He advised he believes the more people see the department, exemplified by blue lights, the more inclined they are not to do something. He advised he thinks the two most serious problems are people with distracted driving with cell phones and such and red lights. He advised you cannot drive in this City without seeing someone hit the gas the minute the light turns yellow and three out of five times at Elm Street they blow the red light. He advised they are halfway through when it turns red or they are still behind the white line when it turns red and they just hit the gas to get further. He stated if they see more traffic stops, people will start to pay more attention.

Chairman Whittum inquired if Chief Canfield if the addition of two officers would lighten load and allow more attention to other more serious issues. Chief Canfield advised ye, advising it would certainly free up other officers' time, especially when talking about officers solely dedicated to a Traffic Enforcement Unit, taking accident investigations, and then addressing problem neighborhoods. He advised that is what we've worked on in the past year is there are certain areas that take a lot more than just traffic enforcement, such as Scenic and Watson Road, which was a problem all summer last year. He advised if you have one sector car that is working that entire area, traffic enforcement dwindles down on the scale of priorities, because responding to calls for service is the most important, and conducting his investigations and getting his paperwork done. He advised the traffic enforcement goes lower. He advised he certainly can park in that area to try to curb some of that, but with two officers assigned just to traffic enforcement would be a very concentrated and very directed patrol and would make a huge difference.

Commissioner Mello inquired if this would be the same as the DWI and Step Patrols through Highway Safety and Chief Canfield advised no, as those are grant funded, so those are additional hours where officers sign up to do that outside of their normal shifts. He advised the Traffic Enforcement Unit would involve regular shifts with a direct emphasis and primary focus of traffic enforcement.

Chief Canfield advised that in addition to the traffic enforcement, we live in a pretty rural area and crime travels by vehicle mostly here. He advised this would be the other impact we would see secondary to that. He advised that we get people who are trafficking drugs or moving stolen goods and that is when the Traffic Enforcement Unit can help curb that side.

Chief Canfield and Chairman Whittum thanked Councilor Cheney.

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

Not applicable.

16. ADJOURNMENT

On a Motion made by Commissioner Mello, seconded by Commissioner Davis, and passed unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 3:34 pm.