

LACONIA POLICE COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

JUNE 16, 2021

3:00 P.M.

6/16/2021 - 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 the Annual Awards Ceremony will be held in October in conjugation with the rescheduled National Police Week events that usually take place in May. He indicated he will let the Commission know when the details for this have been finalized.

5.B. Resignations/Retirement

No discussion.

5.C. Promotions/Classification Change

No discussion.

6. COMMAND STAFF REPORTS

6.A. Chief - Support Division

Chief Canfield advised the following:

- a) They are working hard to wrap up the year end budget, which is looking good and will be within budget.
- b) They have been actively searching for numerous grants, one of which is a JAG Grant from the Department of Justice for \$14,000.00 and have been searching several other grants that will be brought to the Commission when finalized.
- c) They are ironing out a few of the fine tuning items on the radio project, but for the most part it has been wrapped up.

6.A.i. Orders & Bulletins

6.B. Chief - Operations Division

Chief Canfield advised the following:

- a) We are in the middle of Motorcycle Week, which Captain Finogle and Lieutenant Noyes have spent a lot of time planning for, and so far so good. The first weekend we had a total of 17 accidents, several of which had injuries. They were busier downtown with normal incidents.
- b) They are working the summer schedule, so all of the firearms qualification training took place prior to this.
- c) They are planning for 4th of July, which appears will have normal events with some bands at Opechee and a parade that will start at the High School and go to Opechee Park.
- d) They have been working to put people on the schedule in some different capacities instead of just uniform patrol, particularly the bikes and walking patrols in the downtown area and WOW Trail to provide the visibility down there. In addition to that, we have been using some of our Highway Safety grant money to enforce some of the right hand turns, which was a concern recently brought forward with people making right turns when the cross signal is activated, as well as motorized scooters on sidewalks, which have become quite popular.

Commissioner Davis inquired if scooters are allowed on the WOW trail and Chief Canfield responded he is not sure. He indicated he would assume it would be consistent with the rules regarding those being on sidewalks, but will check on that.

Commissioner Davis also inquired if we have a sense of numbers for Bike Week this week and if they are similar to past numbers or down. Chief Canfield indicated Charlie St. Clair is probably the best person to consult with on that, but indicated the first weekend was busy in comparison to approximately the past five years. Commissioner Davis noted that it seems like there were quite a few bikes around when he was up north today and was curious if the numbers were more or less than past years. Chief Canfield advised the first weekend traffic was backed up beyond the Naswa on Weirs Boulevard, Route 11B was backed up over the hill all the way to Plantation Road, and then on the hill beyond Cumberland Farms. He indicated the weather going into this weekend is looking really good, so he thinks it will be pretty busy.

6.B.i. Hirings

Chief Canfield advised we currently have one opening and we conducted a PT test and recruitment test last weekend. He indicated we didn't have a whole lot of qualified successful candidates out of that, but there are two in the works who we are looking at. Interviews are coming up next week.

Chairman Whittum inquired how many applications we had submitted for that position. Chief Canfield responded he is not sure how many applications, but we had two qualified people show up. Chairman Whittum inquired how many applicants we would have had approximately 4-5 years ago and Chief Canfield noted it would have been a lot more. He indicated going back ten years we would have had a couple hundred. He advised it is not real competitive to get into this field and we're really competing with other agencies, such as State Police, who held their PT and recruitment test on Saturday also. People know what is out there and they are being enticed by either pay and benefits or other career opportunities available. He noted State Police recently relaxed their tattoo policy in an attempt to gain more applicants.

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 May 19, 2021 were accepted as distributed.

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

Chief Canfield reviewed the Out-of-State training request by Dispatcher Amanda Fritzen for the APCO International Conference in San Antonio, Texas. He advised Dispatcher Fritzen knows several others who are attending this conference who she can stay with, so there is no expense for lodging and will just require travel expenses and meals. He advised APCO is a dispatchers conference that has a lot of good training and we're hoping she will glean some good information out of this to bring back to our agency. He indicated we are trying to raise the level of proficiency and expertise in our dispatch center, which included the upgrade to Priority Dispatch software that we currently have up and running.

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

On a Motion by Commissioner Mello, seconded by Commissioner Davis, and passed unanimously, the APCO International Conference for Dispatcher Fritzen was approved.

8. REVIEW OF MONTHLY ACTIVITY REPORTS

8.A. Department Monthly Highlights

Chief Canfield reviewed the Department Monthly Highlights report. Commissioner Mello noted the numbers seem to be going up and Chief Canfield advised it certainly has been busier than it has been for quite a while. He indicated some numbers seem really high, some 43% higher, but that's also because we were in the middle of COVID in May and we saw a decline. He cited it's probably not a true number compared to last year when everyone was hunkered down for COVID.

8.B. Criminal Investigative Unit Statistics

Chief Canfield reviewed the Criminal Investigative Unit statistics. No further discussion.

8.C. Budget Reports

Chief Canfield advised the budget is looking good and we are wrapping up the year end with the budget concluding at the end of this month.

Chairman Whittum inquired if we are predicting a return of approximately \$20,000.00 and Chief Canfield said they are probably going to take some of the radio equipment out of that, but we should be returning a significant amount this year.

Chairman Whittum noted this speaks highly of those who keep their fingers on the budget and Chief Canfield agreed, noting we are responsible with our spending.

8.D. Monthly Traffic Statistics

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

8.E. Monthly Fleet Report

Chief Canfield advised there is nothing new to report other than all of the new cars from last year are all finally on-line as of several weeks ago.

9. CORRESPONDENCE TO AND FROM THE DEPARTMENT

Chief Canfield advised we received a nice thank you note from the Kiwanis Club for our participation in their bicycle safety rodeo, which they do every year. He noted this is a great partnership with Kiwanis, as well as the Salvation Army this year, who donated over sixty brand new bicycles to kids who didn't have one. He advised this is a true team effort lead by the Kiwanis and we look forward to it each year to teach

bicycle safety, issue helmets that we are given by Highway Safety, and certainly this year the ability to give away bikes to kids in need of them, which was the highlight.

We also received a thank you letter in recognition of Law Enforcement Week, as well as one for our participation in a Make-A-Wish event with an escort.

Chairman Whittum noted these are the types of things the community should be made aware of and Chief Canfield agreed that it's really "great stuff".

10. **CHIEF'S REPORT**

Chief Canfield reviewed the Overdose Statistics report and noted that we actually have had a total of three drug overdose deaths this year instead of one that is noted in the chart, as we had two in one day about a week ago.

Chief Canfield indicated the following:

- a) The budget presentation was done a week ago and PET Officer Eric Adams did a presentation on his work. We look forward to expanding that program to other agencies.

- b) Tomorrow afternoon and Friday there will be a company coming to do a recruitment video for us. They will be speaking with several officers throughout the department and doing some footage, and they will be putting together a recruitment video that we can utilize to hopefully attract qualified applicants for police officers here. He advised some of the specialty units will be highlighted for the department and they will follow some of the officers and listen to them speak about why they like working in Laconia and seeing them interact with citizens. His hope is that this will be a great tool to tag onto our website and social media and really get the word out that this is a place people want to work. He advised once that is completed he will get a copy to the Commission.

11. **OLD BUSINESS**

No discussion.

12. **NEW BUSINESS**

No discussion.

13. **OTHER BUSINESS**

No discussion.

14. **CITIZEN COMMENTS**

Councilor Cheney addressed the Commission, stating that he wanted to address two issues. The first issue he spoke to was the Chief's budget presentation to the City Council. In that presentation, the Chief had mentioned the traffic officer. Councilor Cheney wanted to remind the Commission that the Council had authorized/approved two positions, and he hopes that the second position will soon be filled.

The second issue that he spoke to was the budget, and he emphasized that he was speaking for himself and not on behalf of the City Council and what he was going to express were his views alone. He stated that he understands that negotiating a contract is not an easy process. He spoke to the issue of the 1.8% cost of living increase and the impact that the stipends presented in the Commission's proposal would have on an officer's salary. Taking the stipends out of the 1.8% COLA would equal out to approximately \$280.00 annually that each employee would see as a reduction in his/her salary - not taking into account the stipends added to certain other salaries. The \$280.00 loss in an annual salary equals about \$5.38 per week - slightly more than the cost of a large coffee.

Councilor Cheney stated that he hoped some agreement could be reached so that, over the long haul, every officer could get the same COLA as everyone else, and that the existing stipends would still be in hand.

Councilor Cheney went on to state that he was not speaking to lecture the Commission or Chief Canfield, but simply to point out that the Council is not asking the officers to take a huge pay cut to get the added stipends requested. However, the other unions did not settle on the 1.8%. The Commissioner proposal of 1.8+% would, most likely, cause the other unions to return to the table. The other unions are in line with each other - with the police union a stand alone.

Councilor Cheney is a strong supporter of the Police Department, but he understands the difficulty the City Manager and the Mayor have in providing equity to the other unions. He will champion getting the contract issue resolved if the Commission and the Union come to an agreement of 1.8%.

CONFIRMATION OF NEXT MEETING DATE

15.

The next Regular or Special Meeting date of July 21, 2021 was confirmed.

16.

ADJOURNMENT

On a Motion by Commissioner Mello, seconded by Commissioner Davis, and passed unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 3:26 pm.