

PC 2013/01/02

Rochester Police Commission
Rochester, NH 03867

James F. McManus, Jr., Chairman
Alan B. Bemis, Vice Chairman
David E. Winship, Jr., Commissioner

MINUTES OF THE POLICE COMMISSION MEETING

The Rochester Police Commission held their regular monthly meeting in City Hall Council Chambers on January 2, 2013. Present at this meeting was Comm. McManus, Comm. Bemis, Comm. Winship, Chief Allen, Dep. Chief Dumas, Attorney Grossman, Chaplain Lachapelle, the media, invited guests and recording Secretary Warburton.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M.

A. Pledge. All participated in the Pledge of Allegiance.

B. Prayer. Chaplain Lachapelle led the opening prayer.

C. Roll Call. The clerk called the roll marking all Commissioners present.

D. Election of Chairman.

Comm. Winship nominated Comm. Bemis as Chair. Second by Comm. McManus.

Comm. Bemis declined the nomination. He felt the board seats should remain the way they are currently seeing no reason to make a change.

Comm. McManus asked if there were any other nominations. There were none offered.

Comm. McManus said it appears the wish of the Commission is to continue as is with Comm. McManus as Chairman, Comm. Bemis as Vice-Chairman.

E. Election of Vice Chairman. No election. See paragraph above.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** There was no public comment offered.

3. **ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES:**

A. December 5, 2012

Comm. Bemis MOVED to accept the minutes of the December 5, 2012 meeting as presented. SECOND by Comm. McManus and PASSED 2-0, with Comm. Winship abstaining as he was not in attendance for said meeting.

4. **OLD AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

A. Goals and Objectives Update: 2nd Quarter. Chief Allen Stated that we are well on our way to accomplishing what we set out to do. The update is in the binders. We will continue to work on the goals and monitor our progress in the second half of the year.

5. **NEW BUSINESS:**

A. Oath of Office: Officer Geoffrey Moore took his oath as a Patrol Officer for the City, administered by Attorney Grossman. His parents were present to take part in the ceremony.

B. Recognition and Awards –

1. 40 & 8 Recognizes Officer Brinkman as Officer of the year. The 40 & 8 was formed following World War I. During two wars, boxcars served France as dual purpose railway haulers of military cargoes. Stenciled on the side was “Hommes 40 – Chevaux 8.” In the 1920’s some veterans with memories of rail journeys across France formed a fraternal group established as a subsidiary of the American Legion, taking its name from the cars “*La Societe des quarante Hommes et Huit Chevaux*” (40 & 8).

As part of the “*train de la reconnaissance Francaise*” or the “gratitude train” 49 cars arrived by ocean liner on February 3, 1949, filled with gifts for the United States of America, expressions of thanks from the citizens of France to the people of America for aid rendered during and after World War II. There was one car for each state, with the District of Columbia and Hawaii sharing one car. The car for NH is beautifully maintained and housed inside a brick building on Reed Street in Manchester.

2. Retirement of K9 Fina; Welcome K9 Phlirt. Mayor Jean read a proclamation highlighting some of Fina's accomplishments as a law enforcement partner for the past nine years, which included more than 75 arrests and several awards. A changing of the badge was held from Fina to new K9 Phlirt. Officer MacKenzie thanked Fina for listening to him in the cruiser all these years. He said "it's all her hard work. She makes me look like a rock star. I'm just the guy that holds the leash. "

C. Monthly Reports

1. Operations Report. While the ward meetings were not particularly active in December during the holidays, Ward 2 did have an emphasis on holiday shopping and theft prevention in preparation for the holidays.

The Housing Officer participated with Rotary in a program to deliver holiday gift boxes to some of our residents in the housing complexes. It's a nice program and was appreciated by the recipients.

We had a heavy presence at the annual Christmas parade. Along with officers' families and the Teen Drug Court volunteers, the Honor Guard, command staff, support staff, explorers, motorcycle and K9 all participated.

There were no call outs this period for the investigations bureau, but the case load continues to be high.

The motor vehicle unit is down to one officer currently, as we are still backfilling the open patrol shifts. Even so, this unit has been productive.

Officer Hayes continues in her role as the POP officer. She has done some work with the Monarch School using a couple of the students to help clean the cruisers. This not only is a big help to us, but provides life skills for the students.

There were 248 in attendance at Teen Night this period. The next event is Saturday, January 5, 2013. This continues to be a successful venture for the City.

Comm. McManus noted that Chief Allen had hosted a Christmas party this year that was attended by close to 100 people comprised of officers, staff and their families. A collection of canned goods and non perishables was taken up for delivery to the food pantry.

Chief Allen stated it was a great night out, and nice to have the collection to help folks in need. Mel Flanagan's restaurant did a great job accommodating us. The venue was perfect and it was nice to share time together outside of work.

2. Administrative Report. Dep. Chief Dumas said the SUV will be delivered tomorrow. It has all been outfitted, and simply needs to be stickered.

We received news that the State has additional funds that will purchase ten more portable radios, valued at \$22,000.00, from a Homeland Security Grant. We recently took delivery of 46 radios from this same source. We are processing the paperwork through the City Managers office. We will be just shy of having one radio to give to each member.

The three officers that were in the field training program have all been released to solo patrol. Off. Ducharme has just entered the FTO program, and Officer Moore will head off to the 160th session of the NH Police Academy on January 7.

We recently completed our first projection for the year. Vehicle maintenance is high but overall we are in good shape. We keep a tight manage on this every day.

We've put the finishing touches on our budget proposals under the zero percent increase and after factoring in the uncontrolled costs it amounts to a cut of \$453,000 from the budget. To get to that number we are looking at both operations and personnel. This must be finalized and in to the City Manager by Friday. We are scheduled to meet with him on January 28 and February 8. Any changes to this will have to come from the City Manager or Council.

All Departments had to do this and show what such action will look like and what effect it will present via the issues and options forms that outlined the cut or the increase we were looking for, with backup to support it. Dep. Chief Dumas stated that he and Chief Allen worked hard to create a total picture and honest assessment of what those cuts are going to mean so the City Manager and Finance Director have all the information they need to move forward from there.

Chief Allen said it's a process we have to go through. The dynamics of increases in retirement and health insurance across the entire city, we are the largest budget on the city side, and therefore facing the largest increase right out of the gate. There will be a balance the Council will have to find with the tax cap and other variables that will be determined step by step.

Comm. Bemis said that he hopes the Council is listening that the cars are a priority in the CIP. Comm. Winship is seeing maintenance issues. Hopefully we can convey the importance of the fleet replacement program.

Chief Allen said this will be discussed with the City Manager moving forward. The option we sent is preliminary to get to that zero percent increase.

Comm. Bemis inquired hypothetically can a person retire from the Rochester Police Department and then go get a full time job in the State?

Chief Allen said not one that pays into the retirement system, if they are drawing down on their NH Retirement.

Comm. McManus said the Police Department hires and pays the crossing guards. That should be shifted to the school. Are we losing an SRO? Can the school pay for that?

Chief Allen said that's open for discussion. Anything is possible. The school has not expressed any desire to fund those positions.

Comm. McManus said a vote prior on this was zero for them paying. Its not known if that has changed since the tragedy in Newtown, Connecticut.

We have discussed this as a way to mitigate in our efforts to get to zero percent. Keep in mind they have the same mandate we do.

The people are grateful to see the officers at the schools.

Chief Allen concurred and said that we work very closely with the school to make it as safe as we can.

C. Other

1. Ward 6. Comm. Bemis said that Ward 6 has not had a sergeant representative since Sgt. Miehle resigned. They have been gradually increasing the number of folks attending and they are scratching their heads right now. It takes time to find a location and they can't meet at the same location each month.

Dep. Chief Dumas said that we should have that Sergeant slot filled within a month. The Lieutenant that oversees that Ward can oversee that and we will put him in touch with you.

Comm. Bemis said that when people ask, and he doesn't have the answer it irks him.

Chief Allen said there are other representatives that can help to coordinate those meetings.

Dep. Chief Dumas added that if the Ward has leadership within the ward they can set the time and we will be there. These meetings are the residents' meetings. We are merely a component.

2. Open Positions. Comm. Bemis asked what we are doing in terms of finding candidates for the open position. Are we advertising or doing what we usually do with test scores.

Dep. Chief Dumas said we tried to hire two in this last round. We are putting feelers out for certified officers. The next Academy will not be until June and it doesn't seem logical to hire and pay someone if they still need certification and can't actively work a shift. That's no help to us.

Comm. Bemis said Somersworth PD is down four officers and many of the small towns are losing officers to other Departments. Rochester has one of the best Departments based on my experience.

We would agree with that, but we are not always as attractive because we are so busy. We do a lot with what we have. Finding quality candidates to fill these positions is not from a lack of effort.

3. School Security. Comm. McManus noted the recent music program that combined both the East Rochester School and the Nancy Loud School together. It was one of the best programs he has attended. The school was packed and it shows the city as a community – a safe community.

Comm. McManus continued that there are a lot of letters to the editor about safety in our schools following the loss of lives in Newtown, Connecticut. I think it's important to note that Chief Allen sent an email to Superintendent Hopkins that said we have officers maintaining increased surveillance at the elementary schools using both marked and unmarked cars during different hours. Officers are checking the security of these buildings.

Comm. McManus said the officers of this Department are going into the schools and offering safety tips such as cameras. The school staffs have the SRO, or look out and see a cruiser makes them comfortable in coming to work. They are happy with the way we have responded in making Rochester a safe place to live and work.

Comm. Bemis said he had a nice conversation with the School Board chair about this whole situation and that they been working on this preventative program with your [PD] people for quite some time. I don't think the City folks are aware of how actively this matter is being addressed.

Comm. Bemis said there have been numerous emails from people, folks wanting to address rumors and the way the Commission will respond is to reply back that the concern has been forwarded to the Department. It is not the intent of this Commission to run the police department. Overseeing operations is part of that in responding to concerns. Unless funding is restored, we will be losing two School Resource Officers in July. There have been talks in the state about having officers in the schools. This may be brought up. I want to make it perfectly clear that we will acknowledge any email. Apparently from what I am being told, we are politicians, but this is part of our job to continue the practice we have been doing.

6. CORRESPONDENCE:

Members of the Department, including the following were recognized this month. Supervisor Jason Cole is recognized at the City Employee of the Month. The Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce thanks the Department for the Departments contributions to the annual tree lighting and parade. Det. Tapscott is received recognition for his ICAC work by the NH Police, Fire and EMS Foundation; Sen. Kelly Ayotte recognizes his achievement. Principal McKenney thanks Off. Funk for his work as the Middle School SRO.

7. INFORMATION:

A. Information Other; enclosed with Agenda: Any discussion.

Comm. McManus asked Chief Allen for more information about the range being a source for revenue.

Chief Allen said he was recently approached by Sheriff Dubois about the use of the outdoor range for the Sheriff Department annual qualifications. A draft proposal for this was completed for review, but it has not been fully vetted through the City Manager. While it is a way to generate added revenue, it has not received the approval of the City Manager at this time.

Comm. Bemis inquired about any liability.

Chief Allen said that this will require more discussion before moving forward.

8. NON-PUBLIC SESSION: (Pursuant to: RSA 91-A:3)

Commissioner McManus MOVED to enter a nonpublic session at 8:16 P.M. pursuant to RSA 91-A: 3, paragraph II, section A (personnel) and section E (legal.) SECOND by Comm. Bemis. The motion PASSED by roll call vote with Comm. Winship, Comm. Bemis and Comm. McManus voting in the affirmative. The non-public session closed at 8:35 P.M. on a MOTION by Comm. McManus, SECOND by Comm. Bemis and PASSED unanimously.

9. ADJOURNMENT:

Comm. Bemis MOVED to adjourn. SECOND by Comm. McManus at 8:36 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rebecca J. Warburton,
Secretary