



Rochester Police Commission
Rochester, NH 03867

Derek J. Peters, Commissioner
David R. Stevens, Commissioner
David E. Winship, Jr. Commissioner

MINUTES OF THE POLICE COMMISSION MEETING

The Rochester Police Commission held their regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, February 2, 2022 at 7:00 P.M. in City Hall, Council Chambers. Participants in this meeting: Comm. Peters (by remote), Comm. Stevens, Comm. Winship, Chief Boudreau, Dep. Chief Thomas, Capt. Swanberry, Chaplain Cilley, Secretary Warburton, and invited guests.

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

All participated in the pledge of allegiance.

Chaplain Cilley led all in prayer.

B. Roll Call. The clerk called the roll marking Commissioner Winship, Commissioner Stevens and Commissioner Peters present.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT: No public comment.

3. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES:

A. January 5, 2022 regular meeting.

Comm. Peters MOVED to accept the minutes of the January 5, 2022 meeting. Comm. Winship SECONDED the motion. The motion to accept the minutes as presented PASSED by roll call vote. Comm. Winship-yes, Comm. Stevens-yes, Comm. Peters-yes.

4. OLD AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS: No old or unfinished business.

5. NEW BUSINESS: Chief Boudreau thanked all family and friends and department members for coming out tonight. It is always an exciting time to swear in new officers.

A. Oath of Office –

1. Officer Zachary Wilson is a local resident. He's a 2016 graduate of Marshwood High in South Berwick. After high school he enlisted in the Coast Guard where he served in a full time capacity until 2021. He is now a reserve officer with the Coast Guard. During his enlistment he received many awards and commendations. Two that stand out are the humanitarian service medal and national defense service medal.

The humanitarian service award is something we would look for in a police officer to be involved with the community and look out for our fellow citizens. Zachary is currently enrolled in a criminal justice degree program at Southern NH University.

Zach made it through a rigorous hiring process, and at the last second the Police Academy opened up another Academy to be held simultaneously with the one that began in January and they had extra slots if we had a person to fill it. So we reached out to Zach who reported the next day to the PT test at the Academy. He passed that test and is heading off to the Academy next week.

2. K9 Ripley. Chief Boudreau had Officer Hatch and K9 partner Ripley come up. He said it has been several years since we have done this. Officer MacKenzie retired with his K9 partners last year and we had to choose another K9 officer. This is a highly sought after position that comes with a great deal of responsibility in training and caring for the dog, and the dog lives with the officer at his home. Our thanks to the Hatch family for being part of this journey.

We introduce our newest K9, Ripley. She is an 8-month old Sable German Shepherd. We acquired her from a breeder in New York who supplies Shepherds to police departments in New England. Officer Hatch and Ripley are training, and attend the Working Dog Foundation training weekly. They are working toward certification for obedience, evidence detection and tracking.

Executive Secretary Becky Warburton administered the oath of office to Officer Wilson and K9 Ripley.

A ten minute recess was called. Back in session at 7:24 P.M.

B. Accept Resignation – Officer Joseph Rousseau

Comm. Peters MOVED to accept the resignation, with regret, thanking him for his years of service. Comm. Winship SECONDED the motion. The motion PASSED unanimously.

C. Award Education Incentive – Sgt. Elizabeth Turner. Sgt. Turner recently completed her Master's Degree at UNH and is eligible for the education incentive.

Comm. Peters MOVED to accept the transcript and award the education incentive for a master's degree to Sgt. Turner. Comm. Winship SECONDED the motion. The motion PASSED unanimously.

D. Policy Update Policy 61.4.1 Traffic, Towing of Vehicles: First Reading.

Comm. Winship recused himself from this discussion citing a potential for conflict of interest.

Comm. Peters MOVED to place Policy 61.4.1 Traffic, Towing of Vehicles into a first reading. Comm. Stevens SECONDED the motion. The motion PASSED 2-0, with Comm. Winship recused. Open for discussion.

Comm. Peters asked for the Chief to provide some background surrounding the change.

Chief Boudreau stated that following a discussion with the DPW Director Peter Nourse there have been issues with people parking in violation of the winter parking ban. This is causing issues for snow removal throughout the city and creating hazardous conditions. The recent ice storm there were 50 vehicles in violation.

We had in our policy to try and call and find the owners to move the cars, and if we can't locate them we would call for a tow. This practice hinders snow removal operations, which led us to create a new paragraph in the policy to specifically deal with winter ban.

The policy follows the RSA that doesn't require any notice and now reads:

"Any vehicle found to be in violation of the Winter Parking Ban should be ticketed for any such violation. If any such vehicle, in violation of the Winter Parking Ban is deemed by public works personnel to be a hazard for snow plowing/snow removal operations, the vehicle should be towed without delay in order to not hinder public works operations."

Comm. Stevens said so far this year we have had people in violation. When people park on a lot of our inner city streets, these are narrow streets and could delay getting an emergency vehicle down them, where a delay could put people in harm's way.

Chief Boudreau said if we are removing a vehicle for other than hazardous reasons and not during winter ban, we would try and find the operator for removal. But during a winter ban this affects our manpower and also delays DPW operations. Further it effectively delays other calls for service.

Comm. Peters concurred with the Chief that we need to make changes and this is the most appropriate way of doing it.

Chief Boudreau said that he has been in constant contact with DPW about making this recommendation. He has discussed it with the City Manager, and he believes that Director Nourse plans to bring this up with the Council Public Works committee.

Comm. Peters MOVED to suspend the rules and place Policy 61.4.1 Traffic, Towing of Vehicles into a second reading by title only, for adoption. Comm. Stevens SECONDED the motion. The motion PASSED 2-0, with Comm. Winship recused.

The motion to adopt Policy 61.4.1 Traffic, Towing of Vehicles as updated, PASSED 2 – 0, Comm. Peters and Comm. Stevens in favor, and Comm. Winship recused.

E. Monthly Reports

1). Operations. Captain Swanberry reported that RUN meetings remain on hold due to the ongoing pandemic. On the support side there were 19 cases sent up to investigations. There are 73 cases assigned. There were two detective callouts. There were nine backgrounds and 4 polygraphs.

Captain Pinkham, Sgt. Benjamin and Nicole Rodler all met with staff from the Sanford, Maine PD regarding homeless outreach resources.

COMPSTAT: Traffic stops have been lower than we would like to see, but that is attributed to staffing. There was one fatal accident this reporting period. Property crime is down significantly, and violent crime is down 28% for the year. Drug overdoses are down slightly for the month, but have increased year to date.

Comm. Stevens commented that property crimes being down 32% for the year and violent crimes being down 28% for the year are two big numbers on a good side.

Chief Boudreau said if you look at the three-year average it has trended down. Being faced with staffing challenges the past couple of years everyone is working extremely hard covering calls, being as proactive and visible in the community as we can. These numbers are a tribute to the hard work they are doing.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OFFICER/PROBLEM ORIENTED POLICING UNIT: The CEO and POP units have been temporarily reassigned for patrol staffing.

COMMUNICATIONS: The communications center has four candidates in the background process for current vacancies.

K9: Officer Hatch and K9 Ripley continue their training weekly toward certification.

OTHER: Comm. Stevens asked if there is a target date for the SRO to be back in the elementary schools.

Chief Boudreau said there is not a target date. Based on our staffing, if we had guess, it probably will not be this school year. More likely it will be in the fall.

Chief Boudreau said when we talk staffing the investigations bureau and POP are ones that I want to work toward so that we can get cases out of patrol faster. We have many cases that start with patrol officers that are time consuming and require follow up. If they are working on a complex case doing follow up in the building then they are not out on the street. We have to find a balance.

Comm. Peters said if we increase investigations by one or two it would free up manpower in patrol.

Chief Boudreau said Det. Rousseau's resignation this month was unexpected. We have selected someone to move over, but we are still down two in Detectives. We just haven't been able to get staffed to fill those. Then potentially we would like to add a third as staffing allows. We have three currently in FTO so as they are released we can look to moving people into investigations. But, when you put someone there, you are pulling from patrol.

2.) Administration. Dep. Chief Thomas advised that the new Animal Control truck was picked up this month. It is set to go to our vendor for installing the cap and other equipment. Two of the three cruisers have also arrived. They are being painted and then will go to the vendor for equipment installation. We are still waiting for the third cruiser.

Chief Boudreau provided an update on the body camera project noting that the finance committee approved the request to use WatchGuard without requiring a formal bid. WatchGuard is our current in car cameras vendor. The Council then gave unanimous support. We will be starting that process, getting the vendor representative in.

As the Commission is aware last fall Commissioner Stanley asked us to follow up on the fund created at the state to support agencies starting these programs. While this was supposed to be ready 6 months ago, they just released the information, today, on how to apply for the money. We are currently reviewing it.

Chief Boudreau said “I was a bit discouraged at first. The grant cannot supplant local funding. We started our project and partial funding has been allocated for it. I talked to the grant office today letting them know I don’t have the full funding. I do have almost the first three years. She said to apply.” There is a 50% match of up to \$50,000 per agency. The pool is not very large for all the agencies in the State and I suspect there will be a lot of competition for these funds. It is my intent to make a request to the City Manager to move this grant application approval forward.

Chief Boudreau continued stating we had \$150,000 budgeted based on the cost estimate where manufacturers had heavy upfront costs, and annual maintenance costs. Now it is a lesser upfront cost and a five year subscription model. We will buy 60 cameras. The storage is about \$48-50,000 annually.

Chief Boudreau said the cameras will be under warranty and if damaged it will be fixed or replaced.

Dep. Chief Thomas advised that we completed the budget building process within the deadline. We meet with the City Manager next week on our submission.

Comm. Peters asked that the Commission receives copies of our submission.

Dep. Chief Thomas advised that in training and hiring Officer Gleason completed field training and was released to solo patrol. The recruits who graduated the academy in December are moving into phase two of field training. We are targeting a mid-March release to solo patrol. We have four recruits heading off to the Academy on February 7th.

Dep. Chief Thomas said that the three candidates interviewed by the Commission the backgrounds are underway. One of the candidates background is complete, with a recommendation to hire.

Comm. Stevens commented that Sgt. Cost is working hard to bring good candidates before the Commission. It is a long process but pays off in the end.

Dep. Chief Thomas said that he has a couple more processes scheduled. One on February 28 and again on March 7.

Chief Boudreau added that we have been very aggressive with our advertising. Indeed has been our best recruiter for finding candidates at this point.

Comm. Peters said that we have a standard. We are looking for the right person to fit our organization. Not only fit, but to make it through training and stay with the City. We have put time and money into each individual we hire.

Comm. Peters said that he was approached by a commissioner to look at setting up a scholarship. He will report back on this at the April meeting if this is something that this Commission wants to look at supporting.

6. CORRESPONDENCE:

The following correspondence was received this period: Off. Gantert is thanked by a community member for his professionalism at an accident scene. Off. Robinson is recognized as a “credit to his profession” by a citizen thankful for his assistance. ACO Paradis is recognized by Granite State Dog Recovery for advice, teamwork and efforts in successfully trapping a dog missing for six days. Several Department members are recognized for work ethic, team work, leadership and professionalism, including: Off. Alexander, Off. Bibeau, Lt. Bossi, Specialist Bowley, Off. Danie, Supervisor Devine, Off. Gleason, Off. Hatch, Off. Kimbrough, Capt. Pinkham, Off. Porfido, Off. Seager, Capt. Swanberry and Dep. Chief Thomas. Det. Rousseau is thanked by the Town of Newfield for assisting with a polygraph during a hiring process. Off. Bilodeau when responding to a call for service noted the walkway was icy and used ice melt to prevent anyone from slipping. ACO Paradis is thanked for a quick response and capture for two loose dogs in extreme cold weather conditions.

Comm. Stevens commented it makes me feel good to see everyone stepping up to get the job done and to keep the city safe. It is a testament of leadership that command staff and senior leadership pitched in to help. There was no “it’s not my job.” That is remarkable and people need to know we do what we have to to keep people safe, and respond to the needs of the citizens.

The letter for Officer Bilodeau is another example if you see something unsafe you address it. He took the time to make sure no one would fall. He didn’t have to do it, but he did and that makes a difference. These letters are a testament to how we perform every day. I’m very proud of that.

Comm. Peters echoed those statements.

7. INFORMATION: None

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

Commissioner Peters MOVED to enter a nonpublic session at 7:53 P.M. pursuant to RSA 91-A: 3, paragraph II, section A (personnel) and section E (legal). Comm. Winship SECONDED the motion. The motion PASSED by roll call vote Comm. Winship – yes, Comm. Stevens – yes, Comm. Peters – yes.

The non-public session closed at 9:00 P.M. on a MOTION by Comm. Peters. Comm. Stevens SECONDED the motion. The motion PASSED by roll call vote Comm. Winship – yes, Comm. Stevens – yes, Comm. Peters – yes.

Comm. Peters MOVED to seal the minutes of the non-public session indefinitely. The motion was SECONDED by Comm. Stevens. The motion PASSED by roll call vote Comm. Winship – yes, Comm. Stevens – yes, Comm. Peters – yes.

9. MISCELLANEOUS:

Comm. Peters MOVED to accept the evaluations and merit track advancements as presented for Officer Bilodeau (track 3). Captain Pinkham (3.75%), Lieutenant Aucoin (3.85%), Lieutenant Bossi (3.75%), Lieutenant Gould (3.75%), Sgt. Deluca (3.46%) and Sgt. Cost (3.6%), and the evaluations of Officer Gantert, Officer Kimbrough and Officer Murphy (all top of grade). Comm. Winship SECONDED the motion. The motion PASSED by roll call vote Comm. Winship – yes, Comm. Stevens – yes, Comm. Peters – yes.

10. ADJOURNMENT:

Comm. Stevens MOVED to adjourn. SECOND by Comm. Winship at 9:01 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted

Rebecca J. Warburton
Secretary

APPROVED BY COMMISSION: