

Rochester Police Commission
Rochester, NH 03867

Derek J. Peters, Commissioner
David R. Stevens, Commissioner
Lisa M. Stanley, Commissioner

MINUTES OF THE POLICE COMMISSION MEETING

The Rochester Police Commission held their regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, December 2, 2020 at 7:00 P.M in City Hall, Council Chambers. Participants in this meeting: Comm. Peters, Comm. Stevens, Chief Toussaint, Dep. Chief Boudreau, Capt. Thomas, Chaplain Cilley and Secretary Warburton.

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

1. Preamble. Chairman Peters read the City's Preamble for accessing this meeting into the record. He further noted that the Commission will be meeting using the TEAMS method from January to April of 2021.

**City of Rochester, NH
Preamble**

Good Evening, as Chairperson of the Police Commission, I'm declaring that an emergency exists and I am invoking the provisions of RSA 91-A:2, III (b). Federal, state, and local officials have determined that gatherings of 10 or more people pose a substantial risk to our community in its continuing efforts to combat the spread of COVID-19. In concurring with their determination, I also find that this meeting is imperative to the continued operation of City government and services, which are vital to public safety and confidence during this emergency.

a.) **Public Input:** Due to the ongoing situation with COVID-19, the City of Rochester will be taking extra steps to allow for public input, while still ensuring participant safety and social distancing. In lieu of attending the meeting, those wishing to share comments, when permitted, with the Police Commission are encouraged to do so by the following methods:

- **Mail:** Becky Warburton/Public Input, 23 Wakefield Street, Rochester, NH 03867 (*must be received at least three full days prior to the anticipated meeting date*)
- **email** becky.warburton@rochesternh.net (*must be received no later than 4:00 pm of meeting date*)
- **Voicemail** 603-330-7131 (*must be received no later than 12:00 pm on said meeting date in order to be transcribed*)

Please include with your correspondence the intended meeting date for which you are submitting. *All correspondence will be included with the corresponding meeting packet (Addendum).*

In addition to the above listed public access information, the Police Commission will be allowing the public to enter Council Chambers and speak in person during the Public Input portion of this meeting.

In an effort to adhere to CDC guidelines: enter only at the front Wakefield Street entrance and exit on the side closest to the police department and adhere to 6-foot social distancing while inside. Hand sanitizer and facemasks will be available at the Wakefield Street entrance. Participants will be admitted into Council Chambers one at a time to speak, and will exit directly thereafter. Please note; the seating in Council Chambers will not be available for the public during meetings.

At this time, I also welcome members of the public accessing this meeting by phone. The public can call-in to the below number using the conference code. This meeting will be set to allow the public to “listen-in” only, and there will be no public comment taken via conference line during the meeting.

Phone number: 857-444-0744 Conference code: 843095

A. Pledge. All participated in the pledge.

B. Prayer. Chaplain Cilley delivered the opening prayer.

C. Roll Call. The clerk called the roll marking Commissioner’s Peters and Stevens present.

Comm. Stanley was excused.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT:

No public comment.

3. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES:

A. November 4, 2020 regular meeting.

Comm. Stevens MOVED to accept the minutes of the October 7, 2020 meeting as presented. Comm. Peters SECONDED the motion. The motion to accept the minutes PASSED 2 – 0.

4. OLD AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

5. NEW BUSINESS

A. Policy Standard 26.1.1.2 Uniform Appearance. Chief Toussaint said this is a housekeeping change that gives leeway time when we change from summer to winter uniform and from winter to summer uniform. This allows for a flex month where officers can choose which uniform (long or short sleeves) depending on the flux in temperatures. This essentially memorializes what we talked about last month.

Comm. Stevens asked if they are required to wear a tie.

Staff advised they are not, and haven't been required to wear a tie for several years. This came about when we added the option for the mock turtleneck shirt under the uniform. This was something that took place even before the change to the outer vest carriers.

Comm. Peters placed Policy Standard 26.1.1.2 Uniform Appearance into a first reading by title only.

B. Monthly Reports

1. **Operations:** Ward meetings remain on hold during the pandemic. Capt. Thomas said the investigations bureau had 28 cases sent up from patrol or that were Detective generated. The total open cases is 60. There was one call out for a suspected overdose death.

K-9: This month the Rochester K-9 Unit responded to four calls; one of those was canceled before he arrived. One track was good track although the person wasn't located, and two were successful in that we located who we were looking for. One wanted person and one missing person.

COMPSTAT: There were 330 traffic stops for the month, which is down from the previous month. Arrests from traffic stops doubled.

There were 81 accidents. Twenty-two of them in parking lots. Of the ten hit and run accidents, nine hit and runs were in parking lots. We also had 10 DWI's. Five from accidents and five from traffic stops or welfare checks called in.

There was nothing that stood out, and no patterns or trends related to property crime. We are down 12% year to date. There were a couple of major decreases this period. Year to date we are down 57% in thefts from motor vehicles and down 52% in burglaries. The biggest increase in property crimes is motor vehicle thefts, up 37%. However the vast majority of those are actually unauthorized use. Someone borrows a vehicle and doesn't bring it back, the vehicle owners reach out to the police to help get the car back. So not a true stolen car.

We had 17 possessions of drugs which is down from the prior month. Year to date possessions are up 25%. The vast majority of our possessions are search incident to arrest. Overdoses remain the same as the prior month at nine. Drug incidents or events are down 5% year to date.

Violent crime is down 2% year to date. We had two robberies this period. One was domestic violence related and the other was the last robbery of the spree from Citizen's Bank where the same suspect did multiple robberies. That suspect was arrested in the month of September, so the closure rate you see under robberies of 80% is an increase over the prior month and directly related to arresting him for those robberies.

Comm. Peters commented that now is a good time to remind the public to lock your vehicles, even while in your driveway. And to not leave items that can be seen to make someone want to break into the vehicle.

Dep. Chief Boudreau added that the pandemic has increased on line shopping so people are encouraged to have packages delivered to safe and secure locations to reduce being victimized by people stealing items sitting on a porch.

Chief Toussaint added that the decrease in closure cases from arrests is noticeable. Most of that decrease is in shoplifting. Increase in mask use impacts our ability to identify people shoplifting from stores.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OFFICER/PROBLEM ORIENTED POLICING UNIT: We have seen a decrease in activity in the downtown with the onset of colder weather and closing of outdoor dining. The POP and CEO have been doing weekly enforcement work with other agencies, sharing information and being out in the community including with the City of Somersworth, the State Police MET team, and deputies from Strafford and Rockingham Counties.

COMMUNICATIONS: Our senior dispatcher, Andrew Neal retired this period. We held a final salute for him this week. The staff continues to work on the paging system that sends push notifications to all fire commanders that need notices of calls.

PROSECUTION. We have no update on juvenile or adult prosecution. Court is moving slowly, which is a reality of the pandemic.

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS. There is not much to report from the school resource officers, as the schools went remote due to COVID restrictions. Officer Porfido has been assigned to patrol, which is a help to patrol.

HOUSING. Housing had 29 calls and 4 background checks. There have been no major concerns. There has been an increased presence of Officer Mundy and Sgt. Babine, working with the managers of housing to promote positive quality of life within the complexes.

2. Administrative. Dep. Chief Boudreau advised all of the external vest carriers have been received. The initial feedback overall has been positive.

The front line cruisers are arriving this month. We are scheduled for the first of the year for the installation of equipment.

Dep. Chief Boudreau said the renovations to the Detective bureau are underway. We started this project last fiscal year but it got put on hold due to COVID. The entire set up in there is original to the building in 2004, and even then was repurposed from the former Cabletron. So they are getting a full facelift from paint to carpeting and workstations. It is scheduled to be complete at the end of next week.

The radio project is still moving forward. We had mentioned last month having difficulties getting trades people, including electricians out there. They have been working on site and 2-Way is set to switch all the equipment on by December 15. There is a lot going into this as Fire is switching from an analog system to digital so it will be all hands on decks as they spend the day reprogramming radios.

The vendor updated us on the status of the mobile dispatch center. It is scheduled to be built on December 15 and we should be receiving it in January.

Comm. Stevens asked where it will be stored.

Dep. Chief Boudreau said it will be stored, for now, outside at DPW on Old Dover Road.

The FY22 budget build has begun. Direction from finance is no more than a 2% increase in O&M budgets. Our O&M budget is \$660,904.00. Two percent equates to approximately \$13,218.00. That being said with our IMC maintenance costs projected to increase by 5% on each module that will quickly be depleted. This increase doesn't include salaries, benefits or any issues and options we may present to the City Manager. Our overall budget is approximately 8.3 million.

TRAINING: Training remains light due to limitations from the pandemic. Officer Rummo has completed 13 weeks of the Academy and is scheduled to receive his certificate on the 18th of December.

6. CORRESPONDENCE:

The following correspondence was received this period: Officer Eric Bilodeau, Officer Aaron Garneau and Sgt. Thomas Powers are recognized for their professionalism and compassion in dealing with a suicidal subject. Officer James Murphy is thanked by Training Sgt. Cost for commendable work for the Department's in-service training as it pertains to defensive tactics.

7. INFORMATION:

Comm. Peters, on behalf of the Police Commission wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. He wished all safe travels as they enjoy the holidays with family.

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

Commissioner Stevens MOVED to enter a nonpublic session at 7:23 P.M. pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, paragraph II, section A (personnel) and section E (legal.) Comm. Peters SECONDED the motion. The motion PASSED by roll call vote 2 - 0 with Comm. Peters and Comm. Stevens voting in the affirmative.

The non-public session closed at 7:54 P.M. on a MOTION by Comm. Stevens, SECOND by Comm. Peters SECONDED the motion. The motion PASSED by roll call vote 2 - 0 with Comm. Peters and Comm. Stevens voting in the affirmative.

Comm. Stevens MOVED to seal the minutes indefinitely. Comm. Peters SECONDED the motion. The motion PASSED by roll call vote 2 - 0 with Comm. Peters and Comm. Stevens voting in the affirmative.

9. MISCELLANEOUS:

Comm. Stevens MOVED to accept the evaluations as presented for Officer Eric Ball and Officer Robert Frechette, and to award a merit track advancement to Sgt. Jacob Benjamin to Sgt. Merit Track 2. Comm. Peters SECONDED the motion. The motion PASSED unanimously.

10. ADJOURNMENT:

Comm. Stevens MOVED to adjourn. SECOND by Comm. Peters at 7:55 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted

Rebecca J. Warburton
Secretary

APPROVED BY COMMISSION: 01/06/2021