PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, MARCH 21, 2022 VIA WEBEX

1. Chairman Ford Calls Meeting to Order at 7:06 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councilman Darnell Ford, Chairman
Councilman Philip Pessina
Councilwoman Linda Salafia
Councilman Anthony Mangiafico
Councilwoman Meghan Carta

STAFF PRESENT: Erik M. Costa – Chief of Police

2. Approval of Minutes – FEBRUARY 28, 2022
Councilwoman Salafia made a motion to approve the PSC Minutes for February 28th, 2022:
Seconded by Councilman Pessina. Third, by Councilman Mangiafico. There being no further
discussion or objection, Motion passed.

3. Public Hearing – Matters on the Agenda Only
None

4. Correspondence
   a. Officer’s Accolades
Chief Costa stated that on March 17th, Officer Arroyo enlisted a car stop on Ferry St of a vehicle
traveling the wrong direction. Once the vehicle was stopped, the suspect fled on foot and Ofc.
Arroyo engaged in a foot chase. The suspect was caught shortly after. Ofc. Arroyo found a firearm
and narcotics on said suspect. Chief Costa then reported that we have seized well over fifty guns in
the past six months.
Chief Costa also wanted to bring attention to a burglary incident at Sal’s Package Store. Officer
Murphy (Midnight shift) later located the suspect linked to the burglary. An Investigative stop was
conducted and the suspect was found to have multiple warrants.

5. Monthly Reports (Attached)
   a. Overtime Balances
Chief Costa reported the overtime comparison is elevated through the fiscal year of 2021 & 2022.
He stated the department’s replacement overtime looks like it will be in the red as of the following
week. Significant months are October, November and into December due to retirements, injuries,

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and being short in manpower. Chief Costa stated the department is a couple days away from being at “full staffing” levels which should result in a decline of replacement overtime. Investigative overtime has also gone up due to unfortunate shootings and the latest homicide this past summer. The Department is hoping to get to the end of June without asking the (Common Council) for additional appropriations. Additional funds may be necessary to cover the compliance date of July 1st for body worn camera and additional training (under the Police Accountability Act).

b. Community Reports

Chief Costa reports that Ofc. Bodell & K9 Bear has been spending time at all of the schools. One of them being Moody school where he worked with students with special needs and who are non-verbal. Chief Costa pointed out the importance of K9 Bear and how special it is to have him form relationships with these students.

c. Incident Statistics Reports

Chief Costa brought up the partnership with River Valley Services and the CIT program. Since the implementation of the program, CIT has serviced forty-eight people face-to-face and about one-hundred follow-ups from officers Peer Reports. The Chief stated that he is seeing a reduction in Use of Force and will be doing a study on how much that reduction actually is. The Chief expects that number to keep reducing. Chief Costa then reported that for the month of February the Department had about 2,529 calls for service where a report was generated. A breakdown of that number went as such: 125 Criminal Investigations; 71 Criminal Arrests; 122 Motor Vehicle Accidents; 5 DUI’s (up from last month); 17 Narcotics Arrests and 207 Verbal/Written Warnings. Chief Costa then stated that there were 23 officers “ordered in” 4 of them being Sergeants for the month of February. Councilman Pessina requested maybe having a separate weapons category to see/recognize the work the department is doing monthly. The Chief agreed. He also added that they are proactively seizing weapons to prevent future crime.

Chairman Ford then asked where we stood before, presently and what the future looks like with CIT’s involvement. The chief reported that River Valley Services has posted to fill evening positions within the department. He stated that once those position are filled it will increase the ability for CIT to respond to more face-to-face incidents. Training is part of the certifications within de-escalation training which is done continuously. Also the department takes part in leadership trainings through an outside vendor called “Shining the Badge”. The Chief stated that it is a little early to tell where we will be statistically but is in the process of figuring out new processes. For instance; collecting data within CAD and transporting that data into NexGen. The Chief again assured the commission that he was working to get a “weapons” category up and running.

Next, Chief Costa reported that he employed a “Community Service Division”, which is a new division within the department. He also mentioned the Staffing Coordinator being moved to work with the Patrol Division to identify how officers are being utilized and it should affect things such as overtime, calls of service, and sector division. Chairman Ford questioned CIT’s schedule of only 1st shift, Monday through Friday. He then asked if there was concern over the weekend hours. Chief Costa responded that there absolutely is concern over the weekend, and for now, the Department relies on Mobile Crisis. They do a wonderful job as well, but he stated that there is a different dynamic with Mobile Crisis vs. CIT who has working relationships with the Officers and affects the follow-through with the clients. Chairman Ford asked if getting that data would help the process of filing those positions sooner than later. Chief Costa stated that he agreed.

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Chairman Ford asked Chief Costa if it would be possible to add a topic of Police Accountability Bill as a standard item under “Old Business” in future meeting agendas, as suggested by Councilman Pessina. Chief Costa agreed and thought it was a good idea.

6. Old Business
   a. Civilian Complaints
Chief Costed reported that we do not have any current civilian complaints to report. He then moved on to Body Worn Cameras. He reported that the department has some officers that are already wearing them. Also he is working on getting the rest of the department trained, with hopes of having everyone on board by end of May, early June. He reported that they are still working out kinks such as placement of the cameras on the uniforms, which will be added to the final department policy.

Chief Costa reported being in the process of hiring an Accreditation Manager. The Chief went to a General Counsel meeting to move the job description forward in hopes it will be presented in April’s meeting. Accreditation will have many duties including: facility: paperwork flow; current infrastructure; documenting use of force and criminal analysis. He stated the position is good to have, especially for the size of the department.

Next Chief Costa reported that the department is working with other committees to focus on racial profiling/data collection. This is providing training which would include empathy and de-escalation techniques, classes are given by POST. LGBTQ trainings are also being put on by POST & Elliot Spector. These accountability trainings are being completed to by every officer.

Councilman Ford asked for a confirmation date for body worn cameras. Chief Costa replied, end of May early June, based on training of all 114 officers. Councilman Ford asked if technology and storage for data was all set, to which the Chief confirmed it is.

7. New Business
Chief Costa reported having a meeting with Vanessa Cardella who is an Executive Director of Psychiatric Review Board, through Whiting (Forensic Institute). The Chief pointed out that Councilmen Pessina & (Chamber of Commerce President) Larry McHugh also sit on the board. The chief spoke about bill 450, which is a bill that focuses on the transitioning of people from maximum security into Whiting and then transitioning to less restrictive areas to being released into the public and it has to be presented to the board. Chief Costa noted that since Whiting Forensic Institute is located in Middletown, it would most likely have the greatest impact on the city. Chief Costa expressed his concerns over a past stabbing incident which took place on Main St in Middletown. This incident resulted in the death of a little girl named Jessica Short by a CVH patient on a day pass. Councilman Pessina spoke at length about the incident and how the Police Department handled the situation at that time when patients were released into the community. Councilman Pessina mentioned that Larry McHugh would like to set up a meeting to discuss article 7c of the bill.

Chairman Ford asked Chief Costa if these changes have already. The Chief stated that it is currently being argued by State Senator Sommers of Stonington on March 28th. Chairman Ford asked if anyone had any questions for Chief Costa. Seeing none, Chairman Ford moved to the next topic.

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8. Public Hearing Re-Opened - Other Matters
Chief Costa reminded the PSC of Coffee with the Chiefs community event at the Free Center on March 28th at 6:00 PM.

9. Meeting Adjourned
Councilman Mangiafico made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Pessina. There being no discussion or objection, Motion approved unanimously. Meeting adjourned at approximately 7:37 PM.

Next Public Safety Commission Meeting, Monday, May 16, 2022 at 6:30 pm. (April 18, 2022 meeting was canceled).

TO VIEW THIS MEETING IN ITS ENTIRETY, PLEASE VISIT THE FOLLOWING WEBSITE:
www.cityofmiddletown.com
Public Meeting Videos
Available Archives
2022
Public Safety Commission (PSC)

Respectfully Submitted,

[Signature]

Stacey Wilson
Recording Secretary

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