PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, June 22, 2022 VIA WEBEX

1. Chairman Ford Calls Meeting to Order at 6:31 PM

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

STAFF PRESENT: Erik M. Costa – Chief of Police

2. Approval of Minutes – MAY 16, 2022
Councilwoman Salafia made a motion to approve the PSC Minutes for May 16th, 2022:
Seconded 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 reported on correspondence to efforts in Community Policing and normal traffic –
no active leads to report. He stated that graffiti is being reported by business owners and
confirmed that it has been dealt with through the department’s Patrol Division. Public works
removed the graffiti.

Chief Costa reported no special accolades. He stated that there have just been the normal
appreciation comments of officers. There were a few untimely calls in the past month, to which
some officers responded to on their own time because they were neighbors.

5. Monthly Reports (Attached)
   a. Overtime Balances
As discussed last month, Chief Costa stated that the department is in the red due to pandemic and
units responding to the two cars in the river. He expects to absorb most of that with the current
budget through other contractual lines by the end of the year.
b. Community Reports
Chief Costa reported that for this past month’s events, including Pride, Memorial Day, and Cruise Night, he suspended time off requests to ensure coverage not only for the events, but for normal calls for service. The Chief commended the agency on their understanding. He also thanked the 1361 Union, as well as Officer Pete Botsacos & the Traffic Division for working to ensure those events went well.

c. Incident Statistics Report
Chief Costa reported that the numbers are pretty much the same as last month with about 3,800 calls for services in totality. The Chief also reported that he is seeing a positive impact with CIT calls. CIT responded to 31 on duty calls, 20 off duty calls, and 22 follow up cases.

The Chief then spoke about the Animal Control Department (ACO) which consists of two full time positions and 1-part time position. The ACO’s had 230 calls for service. The Chief also reported they currently are holding 10 dogs and 12 cats in the departments facility on Berlin St. ACO’s had a large seize of about 30 animals on Rapallo Ave. The Chief spoke about possibly having to change the part time position to a third full time position in the next fiscal year due to the amount of work they are actually doing. ACO’s are responsible for arrest warrants, infractions, and other involved work on top of actually responding to calls.

Chairman Ford then asked the Chief to confirm the numbers of CIT calls. Costa reported the numbers again and explained that the 20 off duty calls are calls that CIT will report to people that have been sent to the hospital for follow ups. And the 22 follow up calls are when there is a follow up after the original call to check in and see if there is a need for any further resources. Chairman Ford asked if that information is reflected on the incident report, to which the Chief stated it is NOT and they are reporting that independently. Ford then asked if there was a way to have an additional report to show those stats. The Chief reported that the calls are sometimes getting coded incorrectly starting at communications which is in a separate building. These codes are the reason the numbers are skewed in NexGen. The Chief assured Ford that they are working to find a better solution.

Chairman Ford then referred to a “suicide attempt (F)” call for service on the incident report. He questioned what the “F” stood for. Chief costa responded that the “F” stands for female.

Ford then asked if there were any programs to help assist with the large amount of animals that have been seized. Specifically, grants and/or state funding. The chief reported that the majority of the grants that come through, help to feed the animals while in the departments care. He stated that the grants normally do not cover manpower issues, but do help with purchasing materials. The Chief stated that they are able to work with surrounding towns when it comes to help and space if needed.

6. Old Business
   a. CIT
Chief Costa reported that River Valley Services has given the department Kristen as a full time employee. With Kristen being full time, Chris has left the department, leaving Kristen as the sole CIT contact for the city. The Chief stated that River Valley has just hired a CIT midnight shift
mobile crisis worker and the Chief is hoping that that worker will have influence on our overnight shift in the city.

Chief Costa then announced that he is working with Eastern Connecticut University to bring in the Police Social Worker Project. The department will have an intern who currently works for River Valley Services. That intern is working towards a Master’s degree focused on police social work. The Chief is hoping the intern will be able to help CIT with things such as; follow up calls, providing services, opioid crisis, and homelessness within the city. The Chief explained that there will be two CIT workers, two social workers, and the intern program. He explained that the overnight mobile crisis unit will be available to and based in the city, but is assigned to all of Middlesex County. Chief Costa said that he has been working with the 211 services to help provide after hour services as well.

6. New Business
   a. School Resource Officers (SRO)
   Chief Costa started by saying that the department went from having three SROs’ (two at Middletown High School and one at Beman Middle School) to now having six in light of recent events across the nation. Chief Costa reported that those officers will return to the patrol division for the summer. He also stated that he has an upcoming meeting set up with the superintendent of the schools to see what the next fiscal year services should look like. The SRO program is fully funded by the police department and is somewhere around $700,000.00 to support the SROs which contributes to the overtime balances being in the red.

Councilwoman Salafia then asked the Chief for a reminder on how many officers the department has and how many he would like to have. Chief Costa reported having one hundred and fifteen officers, but after July there will be one hundred and seventeen. He explained that if the department was to fill ALL positions, that number should be at one hundred and twenty officers. Salafia said that she was under the impression from meetings in the past, that we were supposed to be hiring two officers per year to get to the minimum amount of one hundred and twenty. Chief Costa stated that she was correct and technically the number would be one hundred and twenty-five. That would include the six SROs. Chairwoman Salafia also asked if there are any known retirements coming up in the next year. Chief Costa responded that after negotiations are completed, he expects a minimum of three to retire.

Next, Councilman Mangiafico took a second to thank Chief Costa, the police department and the fire department for the hard work they provided through all of the past month’s events. Councilman Mangiafico then asked Chief Costa where the six SROs’ are based in the schools. The Chief explained, there are two at Middletown High, one is at Beman Middle, and three split the nine elementary schools, each having three schools that they visit daily. Mangiafico then asked if the Chief knew an estimate of what it would cost to have one SRO at each school, at all times. The Chief estimated that it would be somewhere around nine hundred thousand. Mangiafico asked if the Chief would support that idea, given there was ample funding. Chief Costa responded that he would. The Chief stated that in totality, the funding to cover an SRO in each school, would be close to a million dollars, if he had to guess. Mangiafico then asked if the program is normally covered by just the department, or if the Board of Education contributes. Chief Costa responded that it normally is the departments responsibility.
b. PRIDE
Chief Costa reported having consistency with meetings. He stated that Captain Lozefski & Officer Botsacos are his main representatives on the board, but he also tries to attend as many meetings as he can. He stated that it was an impressive community effort and believes it can be built upon for next year.

c. P.A.L.
The Chief reported that there are three movie nights upcoming. Also, the basketball league will begin on June 27th at MacDonough School. He stated that they have been working with the Chamber of Commerce to help get donation to support these events. The chief added that the program is also offering music lessons, as well as a Ping Pong League at King Pong on Court St.

d. Power BI
Captain Desena and Lieutenant Hubbs have been working on developing the program with NexGen to ensure proper function between the department and NexGen. Once that kinks are worked out and the department’s command staff is added to the program, they will be working to have it put onto the city website so citizens/media can run statistics themselves.

Lastly, Chief Costa reverted back to the Accountability update, reporting that they ordered five new body worn cameras. This will ensure that the Chief of Police down, all have an assigned camera. He reported that all cruiser cameras are installed. He also reported that the Accreditation Manager posting is now closed. There are six applicants, to which Human Resources is currently processing. He stated that he hopes to have that completed by the end of July.

8. Public Hearing Re-opened – Other Matters
** None **

9. Meeting Adjourned
Councilwoman Salafia made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Mangiafico as well as Councilwoman Carta. There being no discussion or objection, Motion approved unanimously. Meeting adjourned at approximately 7:03 PM.
Next Public Safety Commission Meeting, Monday, July 18, 2022 at 6:30 pm.
TO VIEW THIS MEETING IN IT’S 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