
MIDDLETOWN POLICE DEPARTMENT

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PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION MEETING
MINUTES
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2020
6:30 P.M.
VIA WEBEX

1. Chairman Darnell Ford Calls Meeting to Order at 6:58 P.M.

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

STAFF PRESENT: Michael Timbro – Acting Chief of Police
Captain John Lozefski – Administrative Commander

2. Approval of Minutes – August 17, 2020

Councilman Pessina made a Motion to approve the PSC Minutes for August 17, 2020; Seconded by Councilwoman Salafia. There being no discussion or objection, Motion approved.

3. Public Hearing – Matters on the Agenda Only

None.

4. Correspondence

Chief Timbro read the following:

1. July 25th – Stanley Newkirk

Mr. Newkirk's vehicle broke down at a busy intersection on Washington Street and Route 9. Officer (*Jeremy*) Tavares pulled up and asked what the problem was; and once he was informed, he parked his cruiser behind Mr. Newkirk's vehicle so it wouldn't get hit. Unbeknownst to Officer Tavares, Mr. Newkirk had already called AAA; and Officer Tavares offered to call a towing service for him. While waiting for AAA, Officer Tavares showed Mr. Newkirk how to download the Uber App so he could get home.

Mr. Newkirk was very impressed with the humanity that Officer Tavares displayed, saying that he went above and beyond his duties as a Police Officer to make sure he was safe; that with all of the negative stories in the press about Police Officers shooting unarmed black men, Mr. Newkirk hadn't worried about that. However, on that occasion, he found himself a little apprehensive about a Police Officer pulling up to his vehicle; but Officer Tavares took his apprehension away with his calm demeanor and professionalism, adding that Officer Tavares is an outstanding Police Officer and a wonderful human being. He ended by saying that the Middletown Police Department should be honored to have such an amazing representative on their team.

2. August 26th – Christopher Michael Derham

Mr. Derham and his wife were at the Police Station completing their Pistol Permit applications and were assisted by Officer Jason Bodell. He said Officer Bodell was personable, informative, and engaging; that, thanks to him, they had a great experience. He also thanked the Department for keeping them safe in this challenging environment.

NOTE:

Officer Bodell is slated to be the new Community Relations Officer (*CRO*) upon Officer Anthony Knapp's retirement later this year.

4. Correspondence

3. September 1st – Larry McHugh, Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce President
Mr. McHugh thanked Chief Timbro regarding the Panhandling Meeting with Mayor Florsheim; adding he was glad Chief Timbro brought up the Beat Police as well as following it up with the cost.
4. September 1st – Attorney Mark Balaban Esq. thanked Officer David Stead for helping him after his fall while Officer Stead was working on a construction detail. He stated that not only did he leave his cruiser; he lifted him up, helped him become reoriented, and offered to call for medical attention. He closed by saying that Officer Stead went above and beyond the call of duty and it didn't go unnoticed.
5. September 8th – Jillian Brodie (*Yorktown, VA*)
Ms. Brodie is an 18-year-old who started her note by apologizing on behalf of her generation, adding that she was raised to believe Police Officers are here to help & protect her; and that she wholeheartedly believes this. She went on to thank each & every officer for continuing to selflessly serve their community in the face of so much adversity; that no one deserves to endure what the Police Officers are enduring; and that she firmly believes there are millions of officers that offset those officers who have lost their way. She ended by thanking the Police Officers' relentless commitment to their communities and their country; and to stay safe and healthy.
6. September 18th – Evelyn Yantosh (*Higganum, CT*)
Ms. Yantosh explained that she called the Police, regarding a theft. She said the Police Officers arrived immediately, were all patient, kind, and attentive in getting detailed information. She said Middletown should be proud to have Police Officers as she saw at work on that particular day, adding that everyone is facing a difficult and trying world and must all work together.

A brief Q&A followed regarding Panhandling. Chief Timbro explained that the MxCCC and the DBD brought this to the forefront, that it's been ongoing for a few months; that this initiative is coming through the Mayor's Office; and they want to set up a meeting and involve the State's Attorney, who will oversee this should the Police take enforcement action. He added they want to ensure the Ordinances that are in place are constitutional. He also added that this is a Patrol issue. A brief discussion followed.

5. Monthly Reports

Chief Timbro reported that the Regular Overtime is slightly up due to the storm; a couple of protests that they had to cover; and a couple of major cases being investigated.

6. Old Business

a. Animal Shelter

Captain Lozefski advised that the building is up, the floor has been poured, and the kennels are there; that it's just a matter of getting everything, hopefully, put together by the end of October.

Chairman Ford added **Body Cams**. Councilman Mangiafico asked when the Body Cams were supposed to be in place, and Chief Timbro replied he believes it's by July of 2022; that he will check his notes. Captain Lozefski also advised he's not sure if the law states just Body Cams; but he wanted to make sure everyone knew that the quotes he gave does **not** include Cruiser Cams. Chief Timbro said the law currently states Body Cams **and** Cruiser Cams; that if it doesn't change, it will be an additional cost. A brief discussion followed.

Chairman Ford added **Wearing Masks, Social Distancing, and the New Fines**. He wanted to know how the Police Officers are handling having to enforce that. Chief Timbro replied that in extreme, problematic circumstances, with the wearing of masks and social distancing in very large group gatherings, the Police would address it while still advising the Health Department.

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6. Old Business (cont'd)

However, he still believes the Health Department should be addressing the routine calls, the smaller scale gatherings, etc., to keep things consistent with the way they've been handled. A brief discussion followed.

7. New Business

a. Grant Appropriation – \$30,000.00 from DOT for Distracted Driving

Chief Timbro explained that he needs approval to accept a \$30,000.00 Grant from DOT (*Department of Transportation*) for Distracted Driving Enforcement, adding that it's 100% funded by DOT. Councilman Pessina made a Motion to approve this Traffic Safety Grant; Seconded by Councilman Mangiafico. There being no further discussion or objection, Motion approved.

b. LoCIP Funds for Police Building Upgrades & Repairs

Captain Lozefski explained that the Riverview walkway is leaking water over to their garages, down the side of the building, and rusting out the doors, resulting in the doors needing to be removed and replaced; adding that some of the sinks and countertops in the locker rooms also need to be replaced. As a result, they applied for LoCIP Funds which will cover them, providing they have the approval. He also said they added the cost of placing bollards in front of the building to prevent any motor vehicle from attempting to drive through the front doors. After a brief discussion, Councilman Pessina made a Motion to approve the LoCIP Funds to go forward to Finance & Government for their approval; Seconded by Councilman Mangiafico. There being no further discussion or objection, Motion approved.

8. Public Hearing Reopened – Other Matters

Councilman Ed McKeon spoke about the importance of wearing masks; that everyone should do it as is required. He stressed that this is not just a Police issue, it's a City Employee (*Police, Fire, and Public Works*) issue; that they need to understand how much public employees and elected officials are symbols to everyone else; adding that they can't expect people to abide by the regulation to wear a mask for public safety, if the aforementioned parties aren't doing it themselves; adding that wearing a mask is a very important public safety preventative issue; and City & Government Employees are all walking symbols of the City. He urged the Chief, the Fire Chief, and the PSC to encourage everybody to wear a mask; that it's a serious health issue.

9. Meeting Adjourned...

Councilman Mangiafico made a Motion to adjourn; Seconded by Councilman Pessina. There being no discussion or objection, Motion approved. Meeting adjourned at 7:33 P.M.

Next Public Safety Commission Meeting: Monday, October 19, 2020, 6:30 P.M.

TO VIEW THIS MEETING IN ITS ENTIRETY, PLEASE VISIT THE FOLLOWING WEBSITE:

www.cityofmiddletown.com

- Community Videos
- Granicus
- Available Archives
- 2020
- Public Safety Commission (PSC)

Respectfully Submitted,



Rosa B. Perichi
Recording Secretary