

LACONIA POLICE COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 21, 2021
3:00 P.M.

4/21/2021 - Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Whittum called the meeting to Order at the above date and time.

2. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Chairman Whittum lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. RECORDING SECRETARY

Executive Assistant Lori Marsh.

4. ROLL CALL

4.A. Chairman Whittum recognized Commissioners present - Chairman Douglas Whittum, Commissioner Frank Mello and Commissioner Scott Davis.

4.B. Chairman Whittum recognized Staff present - Chief Matthew Canfield.

4.C. Chairman Whittum recognized a quorum has been established and there are three Commission members present.

5. PERSONNEL MATTERS

5.A. Hirings

Chief Canfield introduced Officer Eric Cote, who is our latest hire and will bring us up to one vacancy short of full staff. He advised Eric grew up in Norfolk, Massachusetts and went to Sal Ve-Regina University where he obtained a Bachelors in Administrative Justice and a Minor in Business Administration. He indicated Eric worked at Meditech as an Implementation Specialist, teaching hospitals how to use their software prior to coming to Laconia. In his spare time, Eric enjoys the outdoors with hiking, fishing and skiing. He will be attending the Police Academy in a couple of weeks on May 3rd.

5.A.i. Swearing in Patrol Officer Eric M. Cote

City Clerk Cheryl Hebert conducted the swearing in of Officer Cote.

5.B. Commendations & Awards

Chief Canfield advised the following:

Police Week is scheduled for May 9th to the 15th this year. In keeping with the National Law Enforcement Memorial Foundation, which runs National Police Week, this will be a virtual event due to COVID; however, they will be doing in-person events in Washington, D.C. the week of October 13th through the 17th. He advised we will be recognizing employees in May for National Police Week and do something special for them, and then during the Week of October 13th through the 17th we will hold our Annual Awards Ceremony that we always do. Hopefully in October we will be back to normal and be able to hold that event.

5.C. Resignations/Retirement
No discussion.

5.D. Promotions/Classification Change
No discussion.

6. **COMMAND STAFF REPORTS**

6.A. Chief - Support Division

Chief Canfield advised the following:

Captain Graton has been working on the bid process for the command post vehicle, which was funded 100% by a Homeland Security Grant. The bid process has been completed and has been awarded to a company out of Arizona. The chassis for the vehicle is being ordered and then it is being custom built. We are working on the specifications for that and hope to take delivery in about 265 days from now. This was identified as one of our goals during our last active shooter drill, as we did not have the communications capacity or the ability to run a command post and we are very fortunate to get this through Federal grant money.

We are wrapping up the multi-year radio system and are trying to get final FCC approval for the second radio frequency.

Lieutenant Hubbard is wrapping up spring training with spring firearms training next month.

Chairman Whittum inquired if we actually submit a blueprint for the command post vehicle with the layout and all of the equipment on board. Chief Canfield advised yes and indicated that they custom build the vehicle. There will be a room inside for a command room and will have a spot for a dispatch station and computer work area/radio system.

Commissioner Davis inquired how big the vehicle will be and Chief Canfield advised it will be an 18 foot box, being a little bigger than an ambulance, but not enough to require a CDL drivers license. He stated it is basically a Ford 550 4-wheel drive chassis. Commissioner Davis inquired if it runs on diesel and Chief Canfield responded it will run on gas.

Commissioner Mello inquired if it will have it's own generator and Chief Canfield responded yes.

6.B. Chief - Operations Division

Chief Canfield advised the following:

They have been busy implementing the schedule software that we purchased last year and it should be up and running shortly.

They have been planning for Motorcycle Week operations, which seem to change by the day. They have been working on a number of contingencies to make that happen. We are not doing the annual Motorcycle Week breakfast that we normally do and will do a meeting via Zoom.

The summer schedule it out.

6.B.i. Hirings

7. COMMISSION ACTION

7.A. Acceptance of minutes from previous meeting

On a Motion by Commissioner Mello, seconded by Commissioner Davis, and passed unanimously, the meeting minutes of March 17, 2021 were accepted as distributed.

7.B. Out-of-State School(s)

Chief Canfield advised Lieutenant Kevin Butler has requested to attend the Out-of-State school, which is required every two years to keep current as a registered polygraph operator.

7.B.i. American Association of Police Polygraphists - Lt. Kevin Butler

On a Motion by Commissioner Mello, seconded by Commissioner Davis, and passed unanimously, the Out-of-State School, American Association of Police Polygraphists, requested by Lt. Kevin Butler, was approved.

8. REVIEW OF MONTHLY ACTIVITY REPORTS

8.A. Department Monthly Highlights

Chief Canfield reviewed the Department Monthly Highlights report.

Chairman Whittum inquired if there is an explanation for the increase in calls for service between last year and this year. Chief Canfield advised it is much higher, albeit a snippet in time, being a one month period, but he is watching it. He indicated it's his assumption that it may be people getting out after being cooped up with COVID.

Commissioner Mello inquired about the increase in accidents with injury and if we know the majority cause. Chief Canfield indicated that we responded to a total of 43 crashes, 10 of which had injury, which is up slightly, where as in February there were 8 accidents with injury. He indicated the number one cause was driver distraction, followed by unsafe backing and failure to yield the right-of-way. He advised the number one spot for motor vehicle accidents was Union Avenue, which accounted for 17 accidents, followed by Parade Road and Veteran's Square with 2 accidents. He indicated they do typically vary as far as accidents with injury, but it was up slightly.

8.B. Criminal Investigative Unit Statistics

Chief Canfield reviewed the Criminal Investigative Unit statistics. He stated they have been busy and, in addition to that, with good weather, they were out last night targeting hot spots for drug dealing throughout the City. He indicated they have been hitting several different areas very hard and doing a lot of extra work with targeted enforcement by the Drug Unit.

8.C. Budget Reports

Chief Canfield advised we are right on track and actually trending a little below, so we are certainly within our means at 71.15% for the year.

Commissioner Davis inquired if there is anything more to do with presentations with the City. Chief Canfield responded that as far as the budget presentation, it will be done by Zoom like it was done last year, as they don't expect the City Council meetings to be in-person until probably sometime in August. The date has not been announced yet, but will probably be late May or early June.

8.D. Monthly Traffic Statistics

Chief Canfield reviewed the Department Monthly Highlights report. No further discussion.

8.E. Monthly Fleet Report

Chief Canfield advised last month there was a question on the cost of the vehicles. He indicated apparently the formulas were off one line in the Excel spreadsheet and that is why the vehicle maintenance was showing so high, which was inaccurate, and it has since been corrected.

9. CORRESPONDENCE TO AND FROM THE DEPARTMENT

Chief Canfield advised a nice letter was received resulting from a welfare check we conducted and another note thanking us for our assistance with a medical issue.

Chairman Whittum noted these are always nice to see.

10. CHIEF'S REPORT

Chief Canfield reviewed the Overdose Statistics report, noting overdose calls are down significantly. He indicated we are seeing a lot more meth use, for which we typically don't see overdoses, but it does create a rise in violence and staying up all night. He advised we are experiencing that at some of the 24-hour convenience stores and night time traffic is pretty incredible, so that is one of the goals of detectives being out at night and targeting those locations.

He advised the following:

The department has completed training in verbal de-escalation techniques, as well as Surviving Verbal Conflict and Confronting Bias in Law Enforcement. As an accredited police agency, we have been doing this training for a long period of time. The Law Enforcement Accountability Commission that was created by Governor Sununu instituted these guidelines for New Hampshire police departments, ultimately out of what happened in Minneapolis, and we have been doing it all along. It does speak very highly of CALEA and accreditation, as we went through the training again and took our training and submitted it to the New Hampshire Police Standards and Training Council for certification and we were done with that. It is certainly something to be proud of with being accredited.

As far as COVID, City leadership met last week regarding COVID precautions in City buildings. The decision was made to continue wearing masks inside City buildings when moving about, except when employees are at their individual workstations. Our department will continue to comply with that; however, we have changed the traffic pattern within the police department, which was one way only in stairways and exit doors, to allow two way traffic. We will also eliminate the temperature station so as to not require employees to monitor their temperature upon entering the building, but will continue with the mask usage and continue to keep the community room closed for the time being.

In the spring we will make a concerted effort to conduct some more extra patrols either on bike or foot of certain areas of the WOW trail and the downtown area, as well as targeted traffic enforcement of different areas to set a tone before summer.

Commissioner Mello noted that when the theater downtown and everything else is completed, crowds will start increasing and we will need to increase patrols. Chief Canfield agreed, but indicated he doesn't believe there will be any issues, indicating there is a crowd that attends the theater "per se", but we will certainly look to increase our presence in the downtown area.

Chairman Whittum advised he noticed a couple of cruisers a few days ago conducting enforcement on South Main Street. Chief Canfield noted we have some younger officers who are pretty motivated. Commissioner Mello noted we have seen a lot more on North Main Street also.

Commissioner Davis inquired if Dolan Consulting Group is an independent consulting group. Chief Canfield advised they are police liability attorneys and that he and his son both conduct training.

11. OLD BUSINESS

No discussion.

12. NEW BUSINESS

No discussion.

13. OTHER BUSINESS

14. CONFIRMATION OF NEXT MEETING DATE

The next Regular or Special Meeting date of May 19, 2021 was confirmed.

15. CITIZEN COMMENTS

16. NON-PUBLIC SESSION (According To RSA 91-A:3,II)

17. ADJOURNMENT

On a Motion by Commissioner Mello, seconded by Commissioner Davis, and passed unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 3:25 pm.