

EAST WINDSOR POLICE COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING: May 12, 2010

East Windsor Town Hall

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ATTENDANCE:

Meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Chairman Sinsigallo. Commissioners Sauerhoefer, Sherman and Stremper were present as well as Chief of Police Edward DeMarco. Commissioner Nelson was excused due to illness. Deputy Chief Roger Hart arrived at 7:10pm, as he was in attendance at another meeting.

2. ADDED AGENDA ITEMS:

None

3. PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:

The minutes from the April 14, 2010 regular meeting were reviewed by all commission members. Commissioner Sauerhoefer noted that within item #13 Adjournment, "Nelson" should be omitted from voting, as he was not in attendance at that meeting. Correction acknowledged by recording secretary and change will be made. **MOTION** made by Commissioner Sherman to accept the regular meeting minutes of 4/14/10, with above noted correction. **SECONDED** by Commissioner Sauerhoefer. No further discussion.

VOTE IN FAVOR: Sherman/Sauerhoefer/Stremper

ALL VOTING IN FAVOR, MOTION CARRIED.

4. BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES:

A) Police Department – Monthly Billing: **MOTION** made by Commissioner Sherman to accept the monthly billing as of 5/6/10 in the amount of \$ 7,982.65. **SECONDED** by Commissioner Sauerhoefer. No discussion.

VOTE IN FAVOR: Sherman/Sauerhoefer/Stremper

ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION CARRIED.

B) Police Department – Financial Statement: **MOTION** made by Commissioner Sherman to accept the monthly financial statements dated 5/6/10, as presented. **SECONDED** by Commissioner Sauerhoefer. No discussion.

VOTING IN FAVOR: Sherman/Sauerhoefer/Stremper

ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION CARRIED.

C) Police Commission – Monthly Billing: **MOTION** made by Commissioner Sherman to approve the monthly billing dated 4/30/10 in the amount of \$ 125.00. **SECONDED** by Commissioner Sauerhoefer. No discussion.

VOTING IN FAVOR: Sherman/Sauerhoefer/Stremper

ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION CARRIED.

D) Police Commission – Financial Statement: MOTION made by Commissioner Sherman to accept the police commission monthly financial statement dated 4/30/10, as presented. **SECONDED** by Commissioner Sauerhoefer. No discussion.

VOTING IN FAVOR: Sherman/Sauerhoefer/Strempfer

ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION CARRIED.

5. PUBLIC INPUT #1 – Comments and Discussion (5 minute maximum per subject):

1. S.D. Broder (38 Highland Ave, Broad Brook) commented that the commission may want to consider placing “public input #1” closer to the end of the agenda to allow comments/discussions/questions to be made about issues (i.e. new business) discussed at the meeting. Commissioners Sinsigallo and Sherman replied that it is something that the commission should consider and agreed it needs to be further discussed.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

A) Circle of Merit Awards –

Chief DeMarco presented a handout of candidates that the commissioner may want to consider for the Circle of Merit Award. Chairman Sinsigallo stated that the commission will review and discuss all candidates during Executive Session and make a decision at that time.

7. TRAFFIC AUTHORITY:

Chief DeMarco – nothing new to report.

8. PUBLIC INPUT #2 – Comments only – NO DISCUSSION:

The issue of where to place “Public Input” on the agenda was again discussed. Commissioners discussed the reason for two public input items, which is historically how the agenda was laid out. Brief discussion followed. Chief DeMarco recommended using the approach that if the commission needs to research or discuss an issue, to tell the public they will take the information/recommendation under advisement and then address at a future meeting. Chairman Sinsigallo expressed concern over any potential altercations – Commissioner Sherman commented that the 5 minute time limit is important to keep public input under control. Commissioners agreed to further discuss and address the placement of public inputs #5 and #8 at the next meeting.

9. NEW BUSINESS:

None

10. COMMUNICATIONS:

A) Chief DeMarco stated that the department is finishing up a comprehensive study on the fleet, including mileage of each vehicle. He will forward it to all commissioners upon completion of it. Chief DeMarco did remind the commission that most of the cars are coming out of warranty now

and that if vehicles are not properly maintained to a certain standard, it could mean millions for the town down the road (referencing the ramifications of the Officer Dingwall case for the town of Middletown). Chief DeMarco informed the commission that because we're many months away from that budget and using that money, any numbers seen are actually going to be even bigger than it currently is. Chief DeMarco also added that he will have Deputy Chief Hart comment with more information and the danger of not maintaining vehicles when he arrives tonight after the public hearing on the budget.

11. MONTHLY REPORTS:

- A) Chief of Police – Submitted written report to commission
- B) Commission Members

Chairman Sinsigallo commented that she had hoped that Selectman Burnham would be in attendance at tonight's meeting to answer questions to his quoted comment (cutting \$200K from budget) in the *Journal Inquirer*. Chief DeMarco did comment that sometimes numbers are recommended but do not understand the ramifications of what that number means. He continued to state that the department's salary compared to the operational is around 93-94% - to achieve that type of number would mean a minimum of 2 1/2 -3 police officers that would no longer be employed. Chief stressed that a cut like that would ravage the department and would create costs somewhere else (i.e. variable O/T). A special meeting was called today by the Board of Selectman, including all department heads, to further discuss reductions, recommendations and that quoted amount. Chief DeMarco stated that during the meeting, potential reductions of cruisers and the budget in general were discussed and specific reductions identified. Areas were identified (of the town budget) to be reduced, however that quoted amount for the police department was not within those cuts.

Deputy Chief Hart joined the meeting from the Public Hearing/Town Meeting and shared his comments on the meeting. He stated that many people were standing to speak their mind and express their opinion. Due to some heated discussions, Deputy Chief instructed that a cruiser wait until the meeting ended.

Deputy Chief Hart took a moment to comment on the issue of the vehicles. He stated that the department has still not recovered from the 2007 vehicle cut and the (4) 2008 cars have over 45,000 miles with no warranty. Cost cutting on purchasing cars has and will increase the vehicle maintenance costs, as reflected in the financial information. Deputy Chief Hart also reiterated the potential risks the town takes when it fails to properly maintain its vehicles.

Commissioner Stremper asked if the department could potentially buy used cars. Chief DeMarco commented that a viable potential option would be a leasing program (for admin and detective cars), but used cars may not work for the town. If the town could get into a rotation system before the vehicles are worth so little, then a trade-in process would allow the vehicle to have some trade-in value. There are still currently some 2003 vehicles in the fleet.

Commissioner Stremper also inquired about assigning cars to officers as they may be more likely to maintain the cars better. Chief DeMarco responded that that is good for small departments and has worked for other agencies, but would not work well for East Windsor, as it is extremely expensive. Deputy Chief Hart went on to stress the rotation system: a police vehicle at 70-80K miles could be a viable vehicle for town office use (i.e. Park & Rec, Building Dept, Highway Dept.). Discussion continued of the vehicle situation and the issue that the town can open itself up to liability if it has an unsafe vehicle that can potentially breakdown.

Discussion moved back to the topic of tonight's public meeting and the budget. Deputy Chief Hart stated that some residents spoke that "the town has to work at cutting bills". Deputy Chief commented to the commission that that is what the town has been doing, for some time – the police department and other town entities have been chipping away at their budgets. Commissioner Stremper asked how can we (the commission and police department) get that message out. Chief DeMarco responded that the residents want to always see costs cut and under control and for the department to do what they do but even better. Chief DeMarco

commented that the department has strived for transparency, fairness and lower costs in everything (vehicle cuts, staff allocation, variable O/T, equipment/gear purchases, officers). Commissioner Sinsigallo added that the “average person on the street” doesn’t know about all these cuts and what efforts have been made. Chief commented that residents who are involved with the meetings and attend them are the ones who see what is being cut. Chief also commented that he does not feel that the police department is being inundated with the negative. He added that the department has a solid management team and is meeting every goal and objective presented by the Police Commission.

Chairman Sinsigallo expressed frustration and Commissioner Stremper added that he never realized what was involved until he became a member of the commission and got more involved. He agreed that it is a difficult message to get out to the public. Chief DeMarco added that it seems that people sometimes forget that there is a cost to running this business (police department). Deputy Chief Hart also added that it seems society in general sees the police department as an entity – if you need them, they’re there – but there is no tangible, measurable “product”. Commissioner Stremper added that people may feel there is a waste of money at the town level because they do see it at the federal and state level; therefore a message needs to get out that we all need to work together. Discussion continued with Chief DeMarco stating that the police department has always provided a safe community and presence so people don’t see effects of the cuts.

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

MOTION made by Commissioner Sherman to go into Executive Session (7:30pm) to include the Chief and Deputy Chief. **SECONDED** by Commissioner Sauerhoefer.

VOTE IN FAVOR: Sherman/Sauerhoefer/Stremper

ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION CARRIED.

Executive Session ended (8:50pm).

MOTION made by Commissioner Sauerhoefer to promote David McNiece to the rank of Corporal, effective immediately. **SECONDED** by Commissioner Stremper

VOTE IN FAVOR: Sherman/Sauerhoefer/Stremper

ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION made by Commissioner Sauerhoefer to promote Andrew Tudryn to the rank of Corporal, effective as of July 1, 2010. **SECONDED** by Commissioner Stremper.

VOTE IN FAVOR: Sherman/Sauerhoefer/Stremper

ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION CARRIED.

13. ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Sherman made a **MOTION** to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:56pm. **SECONDED** by Commissioner Sauerhoefer.

VOTED IN FAVOR: Sherman/Sauerhoefer/Stremper

ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Pellegrini

EWPC Recording Secretary