

Old Saybrook Police Commission
Regular Meeting
January 22, 2024
MINUTES

A regular hybrid meeting of the Old Saybrook Police Commission was held on Monday, January 22, 2024. The meeting was recorded and can be viewed in its entirety at <https://youtu.be/vDJsyD9TX5s>

Present: Chairman Wilcox, Vice Chairman Shippee, Secretary Notar-Francesco, Commissioners Calle, Von Dassel, Ciliano and Prast. Chief Spera was present from the Department of Police Services.

I. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance (0:20)

Chairman Wilcox called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM for the Police Commission and led those in attendance with the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Comments from the Public (0:43)

There were no comments from the Public.

III. Discussion and Possible Action on the Meeting Minutes for:

a. Regular Meeting – November 27, 2023 (0:57)

Secretary Notar-Francesco made a motion to approve the meeting minutes for the November 27, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Ciliano seconded the motion. The motion to approve passed with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

b. Special Meeting – January 10, 2024 (1:22)

Commissioner Calle made a motion to approve the meeting minutes for the January 10, 2024 Special Meeting Minutes. Secretary Notar-Francesco seconded the motion. The motion to approve passed with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

c. Special Meeting – January 11, 2024 (1:37)

Secretary Notar-Francesco made a motion to approve the meeting minutes for the January 11, 2024, Special Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Prast seconded the motion. The motion to approve passed with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

IV. Correspondence (1:53)

Chief Spera passed around a letter received by the Police Department.

V. Executive Reports (2:15)

a. FY 25 Budget Process (2:33)

Chief Spera stated that the budget has been forwarded to the Board of Selectman. The Finance Director was listening to the January 10th & 11th meetings, and made the changes approved by the Police Commission.

Chief Spera stated that, if the Commission decides to hire the four candidates tonight, the budget will be affected. The amount will decrease as all will be starting as Patrolman Trainee.

Secretary Notar-Francesco stated that it was a well-presented budget. She stated that every increase in the budget can be explained or justified to the public.

b. FY 2024 Operating Budget (3:42)

Chief Spera stated that he had no concerns with the FY 2024 Operating Budget.

c. Off Budget Accounts (3:42)

Chief Spera stated that updated information for the Old Saybrook Police Fund and Dare fund was distributed. He explained to the Police Commission that the withdrawal and deposit line items were switched.

d. Personnel Matters (6:47)

Chief Spera stated that he did have one resignation to report. Kevin Leach, who was only with the Department for a couple days, resigned. He no longer wants to be a full-time Police Officer. Chief Spera stated that he spoke to Mr. Leach about working part time, but ultimately decided that it would not be a good return on investment for the Department.

e. Professional Development Update (7:58)

Chief Spera stated that he has begun schooling to obtain his master's degree. Chief Spera stated that his contract requires him to come to the Commission after a course is taken and completed and request reimbursement. Chief Spera stated that the University of New Haven offers 50% off tuition for law enforcement personnel. He stated that he will be looking for a little over \$8,000.00 for reimbursement for tuition and books.

Chief Spera advised the Commission that Dispatchers recently completed a training course entitled "Dispatcher Response to Active Killers" which was a more specific active shooter training.

f. Activity Report (13:18)

Chairman Wilcox commented that the Department is currently understaffed, but not under performing.

g. 2024 Executive Goals of the Chief of Police (16:32)

Chief Spera distributed his 2024 Executive Goals and reviewed them with the Commission.

-Successfully complete a Master's in Public Administration Program, with a concentration in Public Safety.

-Lead a team of professionals to prepare for an accreditation assessment and attain State of Connecticut, Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POST-C) Tier 3 Accreditation and IAED (Dispatch) Accreditation.

-Revitalize/restart the Police Explorer Program.

-Work with the Police Commission to bring the evaluation matter to resolution – one way or the other.

-Work with the Police Commission to develop the framework for a Department Staffing and Structure Plan.

-Work internally and with the Police Commission on leadership succession planning.

-Hold a Town Hall Meeting with the Public and the Department's Leadership Team.

-Have a Summertime Community Picnic.

-Continue to be a bold, vocal public safety leader, that;

***Advocates* for rightful employee compensation & benefits for all Departments employees;**

***Ensures* a work product is provided and services are delivered to the public that meet high expectations and standards established by me;**

***Prioritizes* the safety and respect of citizens and police officers alike;**

***Holds* staff accountable to the rules, regulations, policies and procedures of the Department of Police Services.**

***Protects* the due process and property rights of all employees, including me;**

***Speaks* truth to power (including to our elected officials) and;**

***Leads* a safe, transparent, effective, and fiscally sound law enforcement operation that delivers superior traditional and non-traditional services.**

Secretary Notar-Francesco stated that the Chief did a great job on his goals. She stated that she appreciates the evaluation is listed as a goal. She hopes that the Commission and the Chief can come to an agreement in which everyone is happy.

h. Police Contract Negotiations (34:55)

Chief Spera stated that the Union has reached out to the Town to begin negotiations. He also stated that the First Selectman has already met with the new union leadership and union delegates.

Chief Spera asked the Commission if any members have an interest in being part of the negotiations. Chief Spera stated that, if anyone has an interest, the Commission would need to send a communication to the First Selectman asking for a seat, or two, at the table.

The Commission discussed the interest and decided to request being a part of the negotiations.

Chief Spera stated that he can send a letter to the First Selectman requesting the Commission be allowed to attend.

VI. Discussion and Possible Action Regarding a Recommendation to the First Selectman Concerning a Bilingual Social Worker Program. (50:54)

Chief Spera stated that he is requesting the Commission send the Board of Selectman a letter stating that the Commission endorses the idea. He stated that the communication doesn't need specifics, it is just stating that the Commission supports the First Selectman looking into this idea.

After a lengthy discussion, the Commission decided to endorse the idea of a bilingual social worker program.

Secretary Notar-Francesco made a motion to authorize the Chair, to collaborate with the Chief, to draft a letter to the Board of Selectman endorsing a bilingual social worker program. Commissioner Ciliano seconded the motion. The motion passed with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

VII. Discussion Concerning Staffing and Structure (1:13:00)

Chief Spera requested the Commission table this agenda item.

The Commission agreed to table the discussion concerning staffing and structure.

VIII. Discussion and Possible Action to Enter into Executive Session for the Purpose of Interviewing Candidates for the Position of Patrolman to Fill Existing Vacancies. (1:13:25)

Secretary Notar-Francesco made a motion to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of interviewing candidates for the position of Patrolman to fill existing vacancies inviting Chief Spera to join. Commissioner Calle seconded the motion. The motion passed with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

The Commission entered into Executive Session at 7:46 PM.

Daniel DeBartolomeo entered into Executive Session at 8:10 PM.

Daniel DeBartolomeo exited Executive Session at 8:42 PM.

Daniel Fox entered Executive Session at 8:44 PM.

Daniel Fox exited Executive Session at 9:00 PM.

Charles Henry entered into Executive Session at 9:01 PM.

Charles Henry exited Executive Session at 9:18 PM.

Nicholas Tufano entered into Executive Session at 9:18 PM.

Nicholas Tufano exited Executive Session at 9:38 PM.

Jennifer Damato entered into Executive Session at 10:41 PM.

The Commission exited Executive Session and resumed Public Session at 11:16 PM.

Commissioner Ciliano made a motion to amend the agenda to conform to what actually happened. The Commission entered into Executive Session for the purpose of interviewing candidates for the position of Patrolman to fill existing vacancies and for employee matters inviting Chief Spera to join. Secretary Notar-Francesco seconded the motion. The motion passed with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

IX. Discussion and Possible Action to Appoint Individual(s) to the Position of Patrolman. (1:14:33)

Secretary Notar-Francesco made a motion to appoint Charles Henry to the position of Patrolman Trainee upon the successful completion of the hiring process at a date and time selected by the Chief of Police. Commissioner Calle seconded the motion. The motion passed with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

Secretary Notar-Francesco made a motion to appoint Nicholas Tufano to the position of Patrolman Trainee upon the successful completion of the hiring process at a date and time selected by the Chief of Police. Commissioner Ciliano seconded the motion. The motion passed with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

Secretary Notar-Francesco made a motion to appoint Daniel Fox to the position of Patrolman Trainee upon the successful completion of the hiring process at a date and time selected by the Chief of Police. Commissioner Calle seconded the motion. The motion passed with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

Secretary Notar-Francesco made a motion to appoint Daniel DeBartolomeo to the position of Patrolman Trainee upon the successful completion of the hiring process at a date and time selected by the Chief of Police. Commissioner Prast seconded the motion. The motion passed with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

Secretary Notar-Francesco made a motion to assign seniority to the individuals hired this evening. Seniority shall be as follows in descending order.

Charles Henry

Nicholas Tufano

Daniel Fox

Daniel DeBartolomeo

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Prast. The motion passed with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining

X. Discussion and Possible Action to Enter into Executive Session for an Employee Matters. (1:13:25)

XI. Discussion and Possible Action on Matters Discussed in Executive Session. (1:17:51)

Secretary Notar-Francesco made a motion to approve the suggestion made by Chief Spera concerning a stipend to be paid to the Executive Assistant to compensate her for the administrative work performed with the Off Budget account for the private duty work. The stipend of \$200.00 weekly is to be paid starting immediately. Commissioner Calle seconded the motion.

Chief Spera stated that this stipend does not come from any taxpayer dollars.

The motion passed with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

XII. Comments from the Public (1:19:16)

There were no comments from the Public.

XIII. Comments from the Chief of Police (1:19:23)

The Chief of Police had no comment.

XIV. Comments from Police Commissioners (1:19:34)

There were no comments from Police Commissioners.

XV. Adjournment (1:19:39)

Commissioner Ciliano made a motion to adjourn. Secretary Notar-Francesco seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn passed with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

The meeting adjourned at 11:22 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:

Jennifer D'Amato
Records Clerk for the Old Saybrook Police Commission