

TOWN OF PLAINFIELD
POLICE COMMISSION
MINUTES

Received For Record At Plainfield CT

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APPROVE: *Cynthia Dattico*
Town Clerk
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The Police Commission for the Town of Plainfield held a meeting on Tuesday, December 28, 2021 at the Plainfield Town Hall. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 P.M. by Chairman, Daniel Hutchinson.

Roll Call:

Members present were: Daniel Hutchinson, Bruce Dawley, Colleen Lugauskas, Ken Sheldon, and Joe Sangermano. Chief Mario Arriaga and Deputy Chief William Wolfburg were also present. There were no absentees.

Acceptance of Minutes:

Commissioner Sangermano moved at 6:01 P.M. to accept the minutes of the November 23, 2021 meeting as presented. Commissioner Sheldon seconded. All in favor, motion carried.

Citizen Participation:

At 6:02 P.M. citizens were given the opportunity to participate.

The First Selectman, Kevin Cunningham, discussed the Town Meeting, requesting research be done by the local Traffic Authority regarding a light on Black Hill Road, that rumble strips be reinstalled on Black Hill Road, that he has been provided with 1,890 rapid test kits which he plans to allocate to Fire, Police, and EMS. First Selectman Cunningham also addressed how he would be budgeting for a new Records Management System for the Department, a Generator, and a Storage Building.

Timothy Lavallee discussed how he was at the forefront of a petition regarding Black Hill Road. The petition requested that rumble strips are not reinstalled in the center of the roadway. The petition stated that if necessary for reinstallation they be installed only on curbs. The petition also request that curbside delineators be installed. Lavallee discussed the disturbance the current rumble strips cause due to the excessive noise. Lavallee stated that he is concerned due to increasing traffic based on new businesses in the Town of Plainfield. Lavallee requested statistics for the average speed and daily traffic flow on Black Hill Road. Lavallee also asked if there were currently delineators on Black Hill Road and if signage was up to date. It should be noted that Lavallee was supported by two fellow community members regarding this issue.

The Commission granted the Deputy Chief of Police to discuss this portion of Traffic Authority in rebuttal of Lavallee. Deputy Chief read his findings regarding this issue citing nationwide statistics of how the rumble strips decrease motor vehicle crashes and assist in navigating in poor weather. The Deputy Chief further discussed that the Department since January 1, 2018 has responded to only 18 motor vehicle crashes on Black Hill Road with the majority of which having no injuries sustained. It was mentioned that fatal did occur in which two vehicles collided while traveling in opposite directions. The Deputy Chief sated he did not have the average speed or daily traffic flow statistics but did know that no delineators were on Black Hill Road. Commissioner Hutchinson reaffirmed stating the only delineators were within the guard rails. Deputy Chief further stated that the signage was inspected by the Department of Transportation

during the recent paving project, which resulted in the speed limit and signage being found to be appropriate.

The Commission addressed the issue, wishing that the following questions be answered and following to be done prior to a determination.

- Have DOT delay installation of rumble strips.
- Find out when rumble strips were installed.
- Research all crashes in Department's system history, what type of crash it was, and how many occurred prior to and after the rumble strips installation.

Commissioner Sheldon moved at 6:22 P.M. to put a hold on the decision until further information is gathered. Commissioner Dawley seconded. All in favor, motion carried.

Issue will be addressed at January 2022 meeting.

Correspondence:

At 6:26 P.M. the Commission discussed previously received correspondence from a citizen regarding an unlawful traffic stop. Citizen requested a policy change regarding everyone with "a white light" illuminating their license plate cannot be stopped if the other is out.

It was discussed that an additional letter was received requesting policy change again and given an ultimatum to take action by January 10, 2022. The Commission discussed with the Administration the state statute that requires the rear registration plate shall be illuminated with a white light as to render it clearly legible from a distance of fifty feet to the rear. It was discussed that the citizen continues to leave out the fifty feet portion of the statute. The Commission also cited the citizen's failure to attend the meetings to further discuss.

The Commission decided upon that no further action would be taken regarding this matter.

Executive Report:

At 6:32 P.M. Chief Arriaga discussed the following topics:

- Recruits Hubert and Conway graduated Police Academy on December 23rd and have started Field Training.
- One Officer is out due to COVID and another due to a work-related injury. Both should return in the future.
- The Budget Expense sheet was discussed with concerns regarding the Dispatcher line item due to the inability to fill vacant positions/shifts.
- New Fiscal Year Budget was discussed highlighting the request for a new officer. The Chief stated that by adding a new Officer over the next three years it will put the Department at the ultimate goal of 22 Officers, which is still far below state and national averages. The Chief spoke further reminding the Commission that the Officers currently being hired are to fill vacant positions not to add additional manpower. In addition, the Chief discussed major improvements that need to occur which include a Records Management System, Generator, Evidence Storage Building, and Dashboard/Body Cameras. The Chief stated he is working with the First Selectman to acquire these items, many of which are necessary for day to day activities. In addition, some of which are required by law.

- The hiring process has been completed and that one candidate, Ian P. Fischer, will be presented for an interview during executive session. If hired, The candidate will replace one of the recruits that resigned while in the academy.

Training:

At 6:51 P.M. Deputy Chief Wolfburg discussed the following:

- Detective Hailey Griffin attended Interview and Interrogation Training
- Deputy Chief William Wolfburg attended Internal Affairs (Professional Standards) Training to receive national certification.
- Part-Time Dispatcher James Esposito has begun his training. Esposito is a retired Connecticut State Trooper and former Plainfield Police Officer.

Traffic:

At 6:52 P.M. Deputy Chief Wolfburg discussed the following:

- During COVID testing Reservoir Avenue has been overflowing onto Community Avenue and Railroad Avenue. Deputy Chief has been trying to contact the company regarding hiring an Officer for traffic control. The First Selectman will be providing the Deputy Chief with the contact information. The traffic was split into two lanes and mill street closed in order to prevent traffic buildup, however the issue still persists. The issue is being addressed and will be resolved.

Executive Session:

At 6:53 P.M. Commissioner Sangermano motioned to enter Executive Session, Commissioner Lugauskas seconded. All in favor, motion carried.

At 7:25 P.M. Commissioner Sheldon motioned to exit Executive Session, Commissioner Sangermano seconded. All in favor, motion carried.

At 7:25 P.M. Commissioner Lugauskas motioned that the Board of Police Commissioners hire Ian P. Fischer for the position of Police Officer with the assigned badge number of 200 at a date later determined by the Chief of Police. Commissioner Dawley seconded. All in favor, motion carried.

Commissioner Comments:

At 7:26 P.M. Commissioner Lugauskas commented on praise she has received regarding Officer's response to families with mental health issues. Commissioner Lugauskas stated families made several comments regarding Officer's abilities to deescalate and understand the needs of the involved children.

Adjournment:

At approximately 7:26 P.M., Commissioner Sangermano motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Dawley seconded. All in favor, motioned carried.