

**MADISON DEPARTMENT OF POLICE SERVICES
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
5:30 PM
Held via Zoom Video Conference
October 14, 2021
SUBJECT TO APPROVAL**

Attendees: Chairman Ed Dowling; Commissioner Thom Cartledge; Commissioner Ann Rumberger; Commissioner Christina Cewe.

Also Present: Chief John “Jack” Drumm; Captain Joseph Race; Lieutenant Neal Mulhern; Al Goldberg – Board of Selectmen liaison.

Absent: Commissioner Marietta Lee.

CALL TO ORDER - REGULAR SESSION

Chairman Dowling called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m. and all rose for the Pledge of Allegiance.

ACCEPTANCE – MEETING MINUTES

MOTION by Commissioner Cartledge , second by Commissioner Cewe to approve the minutes of the September 9th Regular meeting of the Madison Board of Police Commissioners. Commissioner Rumberger had an adjustment to page 3 towards the bottom of the page where it says Commission Lee this was Commissioner Rumberger’s comment. Motion by Commissioner Cartledge to accept the minutes as adjusted and second by Commissioner Rumberger. All in favor; none opposed. So moved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Jim Ferenci of Seaview Beach spoke. He had follow-up questions to the Board of Selectmen Special meeting held on September 21, 2021. He stated there were approximately 190 views on YouTube coupled with about 42 people on the meeting. There are a lot of people showing up to the meetings that are interested in on-going discussion of public safety. First question, I would appreciate the Board of Police Commissioners and or Chief Drumm commenting on their take of the Board of Selectmen Special meeting. What actions, if any, have been taken since then to address the issue of car thefts. Second, the game plan going forward would be very helpful. My takeaway is the Board of Selectmen kicked it back to Board of Police Commissioners and Chief Drumm. Want to make sure this group is doing everything they can to drive towards some solutions including budgetary matters that will be addressed at Board of Finance.

Chairman Dowling from our perspective it was a strong reinforcement of an issue we identified earlier in the year, particularly residents concern. One of our roles as Police Commissioners is to try to support the Police Department as governance and oversight and also to support the budget needs as they are articulated by the Chief and his leadership staff. That is the process we are in now where we have had specific discussions regarding two major areas. One is the operational area that involves staff i.e. the number of staff, how staff is assigned, what is the focus of staff on dealing with everything from speeders to chronic intrusions into a neighborhood. We are also trying as some of these occurred pay attention to the statistics and not being in a

position where there is a reaction from a rumor mill but in fact we are looking at hard numbers, whether they are car thefts or other areas where people feel their safety has been compromised. Part of it is the budget process we are in. Our target is to have this complete by the December budget review process. We plan to discuss in a very engaged way with the Chief so we look at both the operating budget and the capital budget. This includes potentially looking at interactive signage, looking at some very contemporary investments including cameras that would monitor key intersections. May allow us to look at patrolling in a more technology driven way. These are the broad areas we are looking at. Our target is to have our budget process vetted by the Police Commission for the December submission calendar. The Chief has already put in some significant time going through some analysis and talking with vendors so that when we come forward with a budget request it is a firm number that we know what the costs are going to be, how those dollars will be used. When we sit in front of the Selectmen or Board of Finance we are not going to be in a position to ask for something and hopefully get half. We are going to ask for what we need to deliver basic services to the community and then argue strenuously to get that support as we go through the budget review process.

Jim Ferenci stated Bruce Wilson he believes was the only person who floated the concept for the Board of Selectmen talked about the concept of a special appropriation. Is that something you are considering; do you need a special appropriation? Is that one of the avenues on the table?

Chairman Dowling: I do not think there is anything that is off the table. I think if we and the Chief determine that some immediate infusion is needed and is available then we would certainly consider advancing that request. One of the things the Chief talked about in a very knowledgeable way is how to do find capable, professional MPD candidates on the short-term. We have an ongoing process that we are trying to source officers, not just for the Academy but also individuals who are experienced as "lateral" transfers. If it looks like we identify some individuals who can provide some immediate help and meet some of the operational needs, we would not hesitate to put that request in front of the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance.

Jim Ferenci stated that if there is anything in the public domain can do to be helpful you should let us know because you guys are an import voice for the Board of Selectmen. That's one of the reasons why coming out of the Special Board of Selectmen's Meeting on September 21st, it's one of my reason why in my next email I copied the Board of Finance because I want them in the loop so they know there is broad community support for addressing this issue. In whatever way the Board of Police Commissioner's, Chief Drumm and his colleagues decide it is the way to go.

Chairman Dowling: You have been helpful in making this a broader community issue. It is a current, on-going issue. The participation, both over the summer and those with expanded video participation, has been very helpful in conveying to the Selectmen and indirectly to the Board of Finance that this is a current problem that needs to be addressed.

Chief Drumm: We have engaged in special patrols into the wee hours and also doing it with conjunction with the Town of Clinton. We are working with out mutual partners. I myself have worked some of those nights. We have engaged with some of the people stealing cars. We had a brief pursuit with one of them, where once we got to the highway we broke it off. We still have had cars stolen during the month. That is the immediate response we talked about in the earlier meeting. As far as having additional resources right away, I can't immediately find a police officer to fill the rank right away even if I were given a special appropriation. We do have some overtime

available, but once again I am back-filling three positions and soon a fourth due to retirements and resignations. There are challenges to filling those spots just for basic patrol functions. That is what we are doing right now. One additional thing is I have requested bid for various camera projects that a lot of communities are using throughout Connecticut in response to how they can better mitigate auto thefts. A company emailed me today a bid for up to 24 cameras and as little as one. I am pursuing that for some of the control points going into the various neighborhoods.

Jim Ferenci stated that in one of his many emails he had an out of the box suggestion for the potential for hiring private security to supplement your feet on the ground. Is that an applicable concept from a public standpoint to give you more manpower?

Chief Drumm: The use of private contractor can be used in private property associations. In the use of municipal application, it is very limited by State statute.

Commissioner Cartledge: Chairman Dowling reviewed all of the work we are doing prior to the December budget review. That still leaves time in November for the Board of Finance and the Board of Selectmen. You and the members of your organization have been very proactive and well-spoken in relation to the Board of Finance and the Board of Selectmen. The suggestion is that you do not stop doing that while we put together the numbers for December. Continue to speak as residents of the Town and look for some of the requirements you feel are necessary for your own safety.

Jim Ferenci: If you could give us a heads-up as to which Board of Finance meeting we should show up at and I will get the word out. We will try to make sure the Board of Finance understands the community support for solutions here so you get the dollars that you need to do your job.

Chief Drumm: Responded to a question from Maureen Lopes asking if the public will get a copy of the quarterly report. The quarterly statistics will be available with the minutes of this meeting pending the conclusion of this meeting on the Town's website.

End of Public Comments.

CHIEF'S REPORT

Budget / Financial Report: Chief Drumm provided an update on the budget. We are where we should be in terms of the budget. A lot of the upfront encumbrances have already taken place. There is a change to the handout the Commissioners receive. At the request of Chairman Dowling to Stacy Nobitz in Finance, Stacy has somewhat abbreviated the report for an easier approach to reading the monthly budget. We are down three officers and soon a fourth. We have one young lady in the Academy right now for position one. We have two more to follow that we have to fill. We have a lateral position from another community that we will probably be joining us in the middle of December. We are going to request to fill those slots in our regular budget presentation. I will also be asking with the documentation and predication of why I am asking for those positions based on what we have seen over the last year or so with the request for police presence. I am going to be asking for three more police officers and a psychologist position. I am going to put in the budget to the First Selectman, the Selectmen's Office and the Board of Finance. It is predicated on need and where we should be based on resources we do have and a trend that is changing. Where we were in the past, worked for us in the

past. Where we are today, we are going to have to bring our ranks up so we are able to give basic service and some special additional service, traffic enforcement and things of that nature into the community.

Chairman Dowling: Responded to Chief saying he thinks the specific position requests are premature. We have not talked about it as a Commission. Whether we are asking for one or four officers, and or a psychologist position we need to have that discussion among ourselves first so this Commission is engaged in that level of support.

Chief Drumm: The latter part of my discussion to finish this conversation was that the Chairman will be working with me on the presentation of the budget.

Activity / Statistics: Chief Drumm: The Chief briefly reviewed the key statistics detailed in the attached quarterly report.

Commissioner Cartledge: Something we have discussed over the years with the Commissioners is the incidence of false alarms and repeat offenders. Now that the department is operating right on the cusp of their staffing parameters, is there anything we can do in relation to fines or any punitive measures for repeat offenders that use our resources on a regular basis for something other than what it was intended for? Do we charge repeat offenders enough?

Chief Drumm: We are at the maximum fine that was allowed by the ordinance. We allow up to 3 and we remove someone from the alarm system if we have to. We charge people after the third offense, and remove them if they are chronic. We set the charge by ordinance through the Board of Selectmen.

Chairman Dowling: We have heard about the increase of speeders on certain roads. Is it your sense we are seeing more speeders in certain areas, some of the areas that have been cited in the past, Route 1, Hammonasset Connector, up Route 79? How would you compare it to what we have seen in the past?

Chief Drumm: Due to COVID the trends were down for a period of time. A lot of people are going back to their daily business which brings us to the pre-COVID numbers that we have seen in the past. For example, there are anywhere between 4,800-7,800 people that exit the highway ramps into the Town of Madison in a 24-hour period. That is putting people on our roads. We did a pretty aggressive radar enforcement on the Hammonasset Connector, on Route 79, on Route 80, in the school zones, and north of the circle, where they fly. We have not seen a marketable decrease; to us it is the same. If I had more resources I would hope to decrease by having special teams versus one or two officers in select locations.

Training Report: Captain Race provided the training update. 150 total hours for the month. Our SWAT and K-9 teams did their usual two days of training. Our most significant training for September that everyone completed was the Civil Liability Training where the officers had one component (2 hours) and the supervisors had another component (3 hours).

Community Calendar: Captain Race: Trunk or Treat is scheduled for October 31, 2021 on the Green. We do have a plan to spread the cars out for social distancing. We are working with the Chamber of Commerce and are expecting a good crowd this year. The Turkey Trot is scheduled on the Green for November 25, 2021. We are expecting a good turnout. This will cause significant traffic delays in the center of town on Thanksgiving

morning. We will probably have the detours set up similar to what we do for parades keeping traffic away from the Green. From West Wharf, Middle Beach, Middle Beach West, Island all the way to Seaview there will be some disruption from 10:00 a.m. to about noon. We will work hard to get the word ahead of time.

Chief Drumm: The monthly traffic report was included in the quarterly statistics report.

Regional Shared Services: Chief Drumm: Nothing to report at this time.

CHIEF'S CORRESPONDENCE: A lot of the folks that we spoke with in previous meetings had follow-up questions and conversations; nothing new.

TRAFFIC ISSUES: Commissioner Cartledge: Nothing in addition to the log. He has received questions from people in town about what we are doing about speeding and the Chief is addressing our best efforts to negate that. It is a problem because people do not pay attention to the signs.

NEW BUSINESS: Chief Drumm: Regarding the K-9 program, there have been changes in the laws with the decriminalization of some of the previous narcotic laws, changes to what is allowed for primary and secondary stops under the new laws according to the Police Accountability Transparency Act. The use of K-9 for probable cause search has been greatly diminished. The time has come for us to consider reducing or eliminating the program.

Chairman Dowling: From a resource point of view if we do need to access a missing individual or part of a tracking for some event that has occurred periodically, are there K-9 resources we could utilize for these emergency situations?

Chief Drumm: Yes, we could make an appeal to the Connecticut State Police for a body dog, tracking dog, or other. There is also going to be the applications of dogs for civil unrest as part of the requirements in the Police Accountability Transparency Act. Dogs will no longer be used as the caveat.

Commissioner Cewe: A follow-up question to Chairman Dowling, how long will the request take from the State, God forbid we do need a dog if something happens?

Chief Drumm: Depends on where the dog is. Troop F which is 6-7 miles away would come out of the troop. May come off duty, or from one of our mutual partners in Guilford, Branford, East Haven, New Haven, North Haven or North Branford. Comp time is part of the contract for the officers to be utilized in lieu of the training. Comp time takes the officer away from general patrol time sometimes 2-3 days a month. I am trying to get all hands-on deck back on the road.

Commissioner Rumberger: You mentioned being able to access dogs from other agencies nearby. Are they also considering getting rid of their canine programs?

Chief Drumm: Some have, yes. The State Police will continue with the program. They are not going to reduce it.

Commissioner Cewe: Ideally where we will go to if there is a situation would be to the State Police?

Chief Drumm: Yes, they are generally the quickest response. They have tracking dogs at different regions throughout the state.

Commissioner Cartledge: Will our dogs be retired or will they be passed onto the State?

Chief Drumm: The dogs will be repurposed through other agencies, if they deem that can happen, and if not, they will be retired to the handler.

Chairman Dowling: They have been a very helpful component of the department; they have been a resource. On the other hand, as resource needs change we need to adjust. Chief, if you can keep us tuned into how the process is being managed, and at what point we will have some transition milestones that would be helpful. If you talk about a shared service this kind of fits it in many ways.

Chief Drumm: The majority of time utilized with the patrol function dogs, most certainly with the narcotic canine, has been diminished greatly by the change in the laws and the reduction in the justice system in the state.

Lieutenant Mulhern: From having a narcotics canine I can tell you with the changes in the legislation, my dog, I will relate him to being a flashlight. He is a tool. I can only use him when I have the legal right to use him. I can no longer use him to establish probable cause. I can only use him if I have probable cause, i.e. something in plain view. There is no more walking my dog around the car to see if he indicates. I have to have the legal right to search the car by hand and at that point I can use the dog.

Chief Drumm: The second discussion which is on the cameras. We put in the portable cameras on pole structures within the critical infrastructure of the town; choke point roads going into different neighborhoods, and putting in signage. A deterrent to auto theft or other people bent on committing a criminal act. I would like to get your feelings as the Police Commission.

Commissioner Cewe: We have spoken with Lt. Mulhern before about how motion flood lights deter. Do any of these cameras have motion flood lights attached? At my house in Madison I have the Ring camera and motion detected flood light. When the light goes on, the camera also picks up what is going on. Are the cameras going to be placed in areas that are well lit, or can they be placed in areas some of these criminals tend to go around, but can deter them with the light as well?

Chief Drumm: Those are different applications of cameras. The ones that we seek for the neighborhoods that don't have the lights are infrared. A bright light would diminish its ability.

Commissioner Cewe: Questioned whether we can use different types of cameras for different areas?

Chief Drumm: Something downtown, that would defeat it. Something on a road along the beach with a lot of light, that would enhance it with that type of camera system, without having bright spot lights.

Commissioner Cewe: I do not think there is one type of camera that is going to apply to all areas. Wondering if we can utilize something to help the situations going on right now.

Chief Drumm: This company in particular, a governmental company that worked in surveillance, they migrated from the original license plate readers. Because of what is happening with crime on a juvenile level, they came up with neighborhood cameras, but not as sophisticated as those fixed, tilt pan, zoom run by a communications center. Similar to something you would have in your home that is monitored by a monthly service. We

download the information to the cloud, we have access to them, they record up to 60 days, they are driven by solar with a battery back-up, they have a static IP. That's how they operate those.

Chairman Dowling: This is reminiscent of a conversation we had about two-three years ago when we started to explore the advantages of having a camera at different key intersections downtown, both for traffic monitoring, and follow-up to certain incidents. As the Chief is describing this, we could consider a camera being placed at the Route 80 traffic circle, at the intersection of 79 and Route 1, a key intersection coming off of Route 1, where you will want to monitor and get a license plate read because of an incident. I think there are some real advantages. It is getting back to how do we invest in technology to be a force multiplier because the skills of the officers are continually focused on training and new concepts are being added. We also have access to the Town technology that can store information that allows us to investigate incidents and do it in an absolute objective way that we are looking at a car incident, or traffic pattern, or traffic volume. I think it makes sense for us to explore. We are learning that with some of this technology, 5 or 10 years ago the cost was maybe too much to swallow, but we are now getting to the point where this makes sense. The applications have been tested among multiple communities. The Chief was a forerunner when we had a discussion approximately ten years ago about body cameras and now it is a key part to one of the services we provide to the community. When we put together the budget request package these are the kinds of things we should consider.

Commissioner Cewe: I think the application for cameras is great. What I am thinking about is the security concerns for a lot of us in areas that are not well lit. My car has been broken into three times. Ever since using the motion light, I have not had an issue. Are there certain areas where we can use motion detected lights as well as have cameras in certain areas? I am thinking of things we can do that are pretty low cost to deter some of these people from coming into our neighborhoods.

Chief Drumm: The beauty of the cameras I speak of are that they are not on a connected system other than Wi-Fi; they don't need a power source. They can be deployed anywhere. The cost is a fraction of a fixed camera with a conduit to it from a power source back to a central station. When technology improves it will probably be less money. As far as lights, a lot of folks are putting on their property the lights you speak of. Some folks have asked Eversource to put a light on a pole outside their house and they pay the monthly bill. The Town has a couple of such lights that the Town pays for. These are some alternatives people can do if they seek those types of lights.

Chairman Dowling: Christina, I think it is a legitimate question. My suggestion is to give the Chief the opportunity to do additional research and give him the opportunity to have a focused discussion.

Commissioner Cewe: I am all for better technology. That is the business I am in.

Commissioner Cartledge: I have had several conversations with residents and have had off the book recommendations for motion sensor lights. We have them here because we live on Boston Post Road and anything that comes by in the evening and encroaches on the driveway, the whole driveway is lit up. This is tied into the electrical system of the house. The purchase of the light and maintenance is on us. For a little more peace-of-mind it is a small investment.

Commissioner Cewe: They even have those that you do not need conduit that work just as well.

COVID Updates: Chief Drumm: Personnel that are not vaccinated are doing weekly testing.

LIASON WITH STATE AGENCIES

Chief Drumm: Recommendations are working their way back to legislative committees and they will vote up or down to put them into law on the date stated on the Police Accountability and Transparency Act.

Lieutenant Mulhern: Two significant case updates. The first of which was back on August 26th. We had a serious MVA involving evading a gentleman on a scooter hit by a car and suffered significant injuries. The Patrol Division in conjunction with the Detective Bureau, worked relentlessly on it, located and recovered the vehicle, interviewed the subject and got a full confession. A warrant is in the process of being drafted as we speak. Old school, diligent police work solved that one. The second is the case on Lantern Hill that was previously discussed at a meeting where a car was taken out of a garage. A suspect has been identified, 17-year old from Waterbury, through the work of the Detective Bureau in conjunction with other agencies and they anticipate submitting an arrest warrant.

Chairman Dowling: There must a level of satisfaction in resolving these incidents. Thank you and your fellow officers for their work.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Rumberger: Reinforce what was discussed earlier, if the public would like to support the Police Department in achieving more resources, then please show up to meetings and please advocate. Not just the people who are immediately affected, but rally other people from around town because the more voices the better.

Chairman Dowling: This has been a public issue, not related to one area. The speeders can affect wherever you are in town. It is a good reminder to say we need to continue to address and make sure we are meeting our public safety responsibility.

MOTION TO ADJOURN by Cartledge. All in favor; none opposed. So moved. Meeting adjourned by 6: 24 p.m.