

Wilton Police Commission



240 Danbury Road
Wilton, Connecticut 06897
Tel: (203) 834-6260
Fax: (203) 834 6258

**DRAFT
POLICE COMMISSION MEETING
22 MAY 2012**

CTO

Chairman Commissioner Chris Weldon called the meeting to order at 5:07 p.m. In attendance were Commissioner David Waters, Commissioner Don Sauvigne, Chief Michael Lombardo, Captain John Lynch and Alissa Smith (The Daily Wilton).

MINUTES

Commissioner Sauvigne made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 9, 2012 meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Waters. Motion carried 3-0.

DISCUSSION OF MONTHLY REPORTS

Monthly reports were reviewed and discussed. The number of MV Stops continues to be higher than in prior years. Chief Lombardo and the Commissioners expressed their pleasure with staff and patrol, particularly in light of staffing challenges resulting from the unavailability for duty of a number of officers. "Click it or Ticket" starts this week. There is no grant from the state for this. However, approximately 75% of DUI enforcement is paid for and this enforcement is often done on major holidays, including Memorial Day weekend. There is a possibility that by working with another town this funding could be enhanced in the future.

The Activity Report was reviewed. The Commission noted the increase in DUI stops and the reduction in MVAs; Chief Lombardo pointed out the direct correlation and the demonstrated importance of patrols on the streets. The Commission also noted the potential correlation in the drop in motor vehicle accidents with the increase in MV Stops. The patrols provide a needed presence and help to deter crime. The town has approved another fixed location digital radar sign, which will be the third, and this equipment has been very useful in slowing down vehicles in sensitive areas. It will be available after July 1, 2012, and the Commission and staff will discuss and approve an appropriate location for installation. In addition, the trailer is a fourth digital radar sign, and it will be deployed now that the weather is appropriate. The new police cars will

have more obvious markings than the current silver ones, and this will add to the visibility of patrols.

The MAC Report was reviewed and discussed. Commissioner Sauvigne asked whether the use of warnings rather than actual tickets was sufficient deterrence; Chief Lombardo noted that the officers have discretion whether to issue a ticket or not and their decision depends on the circumstances, such as the type of offense, the actual speed, whether prior warnings had been issued, etc. Chief Lombardo further noted that contact with motorists is an important part of deterrence of crime – if you don't obey the laws in Wilton then you will be stopped. The officers are diligent at making appropriate stops.

The SRO Report was reviewed and discussed. An article publicizing the financial needs of the Explorer program was published in the local paper. The annual trip alternates between a regional location and a national one; this year the regional trip is to Hartford, but next year the expenses will be more significant due to the national location.

REPORT OF CHIEF LOMBARDO

Letters of thanks and jobs well done and other miscellaneous matters were reviewed.

- Letter to Chief Lombardo thanking him and Officer Fridinger for Officer Fridinger's assistance with Taser recertification training, from Trumbull Police Chief Kiely.
- Letter to Officer Dolenk thanking him for a job well done, from Suzanne Hammond.
- Letter from Michael, Susan and Oliver Celuch praising Officer Frenndt for giving a tour of the PD, with explanations and demonstrations to Oliver.
- Letter from Monroe Police Chief Salvatore thanking Captain Lynch for participating in a Sergeant Interview Panel.
- Email from Lt. Lynch to Sgt. Tunney and Officer Tornello recapping a phone call from Mrs. Katie Marchese in which she praises the two for their efforts and a job well done in handling an ongoing neighbor dispute.
- Letter of thanks from Chief Lombardo to Stamford Police Chief Nivakoff for the assistance of Canine Officer Seth O'Brien while participating in an interview panel for the selection of a canine officer.
- Letter to Chief Lombardo from Mr. Richards expressing his appreciation for Detective Robert Cipolla's presentation at the *Forum on Fraud*, to the "Stay At Home In Wilton" group.
- Memo from Chief Lombardo congratulating Officer Gregg Phillipson on his graduation from the Fairfield County Detective Conference.
- Announcement from the Wilton Youth Council Task Force to Reduce Substance Abuse about a Community Conversation being held on April 25th, along with the highlighted results of their most recent student survey.

- Email from Phillip Cohen of CTDOT concerning Dr. Elihu Rosen's request to consider the danger in the lane drop on Route 7 in front of 465 Danbury Road for those making a left turn North onto Route 7.
- Memo to Officer Steven Rangel from Chief Lombardo advising that he has been selected for the Canine Officer position, along with memos to Officer Frank Razzaia and Officer Robert Smaldone about the Chief's selection.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Discussion on Canine Program.

Chief Lombardo reported that Officer Rangel had been selected to the assignment of Canine Officer. The selection process included the participation of two dog handlers, one of whom is a specialist who trains dogs for this type of work. The Commission and the Chief want to publicly recognize the anticipated significant donation from a member of the community that will help to fund the start up of the Canine Program, and that will be scheduled for early June when all parties can be present. A training session starting in August has an opening, and if possible Officer Rangel will be in that program; otherwise, he will be in the next available session. Once the significant donation is received, it is hoped that other donations to support the program financially or in kind may be received and would be recognized.

B. Discussion on Merwin Meadows.

Commissioner Weldon observed that frequently there are a significant number of nonresidents at Merwin Meadows in the evenings Thursday through Sunday, consuming alcohol, with dogs and loud music, particularly in the field outside of Merwin Meadows. Chief Lombardo stated that this is already a regular patrol location and that the frequency of those patrols could be looked at. The situation is not unworkable now but there is concern it will get worse as the weather improves. Commissioner Weldon reported that he had spoken with the Chairman of Parks and Recreation and that they will not be able to address this issue this year, but that they would not be opposed to further action to enforce appropriate behavior. The Commission requested that Chief Lombardo seek the advice of Town Counsel as to possible alternatives that might be considered, and that the matter be placed on the Commission's agenda again for discussion next month.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion of Manpower Issues.

Chief Lombardo reported that there are four officers currently on long term disability, three of whom are on the Patrol Division and two of those are from the

same shift. Three of the officers are on indefinite leave. With this loss of manpower, combined with two significant storms and a homicide investigation all of which occurred during this fiscal year, overtime costs are significant. The Department has already reached its budgeted amount for overtime, and there are four pay cycles remaining in the current fiscal year. The First Selectman is well aware of the circumstances. The loss of manpower means that officers have to be taken out of the shifts that they bid; the union has been very cooperative on this. Productivity remains high, but officers will wear down eventually and there is also an impact on services provided to the community, including the bike patrol and crime prevention. Chief Lombardo noted that the car seat program is too important to cut back.

REPORTS OF THE COMMISSIONERS

The Commissioners commended Chief Lombardo and the entire Department for the superb and professional job done, and the significant amount of work performed, in the recent homicide investigation.

PUBLIC COMMENT

At 6:13 p.m., Commissioner Weldon opened the meeting to the public.

There was a question on how the manpower issue would be handled. Chief Lombardo answered that on a short term basis the Department will rely on overtime work by the officers, but these circumstances are difficult to plan for.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 6:18 p.m., the meeting went into Executive Session to discuss ongoing Labor Issues. No action was taken in the Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:20 p.m., the Commission came out of Executive Session and a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Commissioner Waters seconded by Commissioner Sauvigne and passed 3-0.

Respectively submitted,
David F. Waters, Acting Recording Secretary