



NEWINGTON POLICE COMMISSION MEETING



There was a meeting of the Newington Police Commissioners on **Tuesday, March 2nd, 2021** at the Newington Police Department.

PRESENT: Chairman Brenda Blonigen, Commissioner William Wright, Commissioner F. Jackson Hoyt, Chief Michael Bilodeau, Captain Brandon Smart and Admin Assistant Keri Wareing. Selectman Michael Marconi and Resident Derek Wilson also attended the meeting.

I CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Blonigen **called the meeting to order at 4:01 pm**

Chairman Blonigen started the meeting with a public apology to resident Derek Wilson regarding the RSA on video and recording public meetings.

II MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING(S)

On a **MOTION** by Chairman Blonigen and **seconded** by, Commissioner Hoyt the **Commissioners voted unanimously to accept the minutes from the February 3rd** meeting with a **change** to the minutes as to why Chairman Blonigen feels the Bike path is controversial and political and that all of the Police Commissioners are for safety.

III POLICE COMMISSION INFORMATION

A. Staff Update –

1. Captain Sullivan has Retired. Sergeant Smart has stepped up to the Captains positions as Acting Captain and will be evaluated for 6 months. The Chief has requested that all officers complete a SWOT training exercise to submit to the Chief to be discussed at the next department meeting and to provide to the Commissioners.
2. As of today, we do not have any member on the SERT team, but the Chief is hopeful that officers will be on the team next year.
3. On a **MOTION** by Chairmen Blonigen and **seconded** by Commissioner Wright the Commissioners voted unanimously to post the new police officer position.
4. The Chief informed the Commissioners that they had two applicants for the Admin Position and believes that both are very qualified. The interviews will be held on March 12th. The Commissioners set a time to meet the candidates on March 16th at 4:00pm.

B. Other Police Commission Information

1. The Commissioners reviewed expenditures to date.
2. The Commissioners reviewed and signed the purchase order file.

IV OLD BUSINESS

A. Legal Letter BOS- At a previous town meeting there had been discussion that the Board of Selectman would write a letter that would allow the Department Heads to seek legal advice of their choosing and that the total Legal Line item will remain with the town. Present at the meeting was Selectman Marconi and when asked by Chairmen Blonigen if we would be allowed to seek advice



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from a lawyer of our choice Selectman Marconi stated “yes, to an extent.” He continued that the RSA’s will not allow us to have a legal line in our budgets by law and that is why the selectman took out the proposed legal line budget. Selectman Marconi stated that the Board of Selectman “have the fiduciary responsibility of the town and it’s up to them to furnish legal counsel for all departments, boards and committees.” Chairmen Blonigen requested the RSA, in which he responded, “I’ll have Martha send it to you”.

- B. Accreditation Update** – The Accreditation team is currently in Phase 5 of our accreditation plan. Everything is on track and going well. All polices have been reviewed.
- C. Recording of Meetings** – this topic was not discussed as it was addressed at the beginning of the meeting.
- D. Bike Lane** – The Chief informed the Commissioners that he reached out to other departments who had bike lanes in their town. He stated, “I reached out to 3 different departments and the Police Departments were not involved in them” The Chief explained that the reasons had to do with the political aspect of the project as well as the naming of the lane “Safety Lane”. The other agencies said with the name “safety Lane” you could be running risk of lawsuits if anyone were to be injured in that lane. Selectman Marconi told the Chief “they don’t sue you Chief so don’t worry about it.” Commissioner Wright added that “it is a legal opinion made by a non-legal person, so I don’t take, put too much stock in it.” Commissioner Wright stated that the motivation for the name “safety lane” was because it wasn’t just a bike lane and in working forward to write the grant application it would “contribute to a more sellable package” and that all the project is, is widening (putting a shoulder) the road. He stated, “the term safety lane could be dropped, you know, as soon as we win the grant, if we win the grant.” Commissioner Wright expressed to the chief that at the previous meeting regarding the safety lane there was a resident who wanted to know the Police Chiefs input. The Chief acknowledged and added that he sent all the requested statistics and studies to the committee. The concerns explained to the Chief by Commissioner Wright was, if you widen the road you will encourage speeding, secondly, do we have the statics to gain the support we need to put this lane in. Commissioner Wright stated that as a committee, they feel that there would not even be a committee if they felt that there was not an issue on Nimble Hill Road. He said that there was a “prove a negative” question of “if we haven’t had five people killed on Nimble Hill Road in the last five years, does that mean it’s safe?” The Chief replied with that he cannot answer a hypothetical question like that. A town resident, Derek Wilson spoke about the path being a “multi-use path” and that Nimble Hill Road has had injuries. He stated that in 1999 a person in the town was hit by a car and another incident that happened a couple year ago in which another person was injured. He stated that these are real injuries that the Police Department was not accounting for. The Chief stated that the committee had only asked for the last five years’ worth of statistics and that he would go back further to validate the events, accidents, and injuries that Mr. Wilson was referring too. Selectman Marconi stated that he feels that Nimble Hill Road is a safety issue in which he added that “I’m a little disappointed to see the Chief doesn’t want to be involved with the safety issue.” The Chief interrupted him to state that he had never said that he did not want to be involved. Selectman Marconi said that “I didn’t make it political somebody who’s running for office made it political, not me, Sir! And I am going to tell that individual which I did down at the recycle center one day, that, that is exactly what’s happened. I didn’t bring it up, but you have been involved in this from day one just like the fire chief has been.” **Chairmen Blonigen** stepped into the discussion to bring order back the meeting. To which Selectman Marconi replied “say what you want to say, go right ahead. Let’s hear it nice and loud so the camera can pick it up.” Chairmen Blonigen stated that the Police department should stay neutral to which Selectman Marconi agreed.



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V NEW BUSINESS

- A. The Chief presented the dates for the upcoming meetings for this year to the Commissioners who approved the list.
- B. Selectman Marconi discussed the Board of Selectmen's Letter that would be coming to the department. He stated that the Selectmen "are going to be sending a letter to all committees and boards to tell them that all podcast meetings will be held at the Town Hall. That's where we prefer to have the meetings. That's the Towns Building, the Towns people's building." He stated our department building is "secure" and "intimidating" for individuals to come into. He stated that they will all be "podcasted by one podcast person". Mr. Wilson corrected Selectman Marconi that when he says "podcast" he means "zoom". Selectman Marconi said that this letter will be coming to us and that it is town policy and that he hopes the department will agree with the town policy.

VI (If Applicable) Non-Public Session RSA 91-A:3 II(c) Personnel Matter

- A. The board went nonpublic at 4:40pm and reconvened Public at 5:00pm. No final decisions were made during the non-public session.

VII NEXT MEETING DATE/TIME/LOCATION

The next meeting is **scheduled for April 6th, 2021 at 4:00 p.m.** at the Newington Police Department.

VIII ADJOURNMENT

On a **MOTION** by Chairman Blonigen and **seconded** by Commissioner Wright, **the Commissioners voted unanimously to adjourn at 5:00 p.m.**

For William Wright, Secretary
by Keri Wareing, Executive Administrative Assistant