



POLICE COMMISSION

MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 9, 2020 REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

Manchester Police Department
405 Valley Street
Manchester, NH 03103

The Regular Monthly Meeting was held at the Manchester Community Resource Center on September 9, 2020, at 09:00 hours, attended by:

Commissioners Scott Spradling (Chairman), Manny Content, Eva Castillo **Absent:** Charlie Sherman, Steven Spain

Police Department Staff Chief Carlo Capano, Capt. Sean Leighton, Capt. Allen Aldenberg, Capt. Brian O'Keefe, Captain Steven Mangone, Captain Joe Mucci, Lt. Brandon Murphy, Heather Hamel (PIO) and Kim Demers (Admin. Assist.)

Others attending the Public Session: Manchester Citizen Melanie Sherman, Manchester Business owner and blogger Jeff Hastings, and Union Leader newspaper reporter Mark Hayward.

1. COMMISSION CHAIRMAN OPENING COMMENTS

- Comm. Chairman Scott Spradling opened the meeting at 9:01 a.m., welcoming all those present.

2. NOTICES POSTED / APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

- The Commission was advised by Secretary Kim Demers that the notices had been posted at City Hall, the City Library, as well as on the MPD's website homepage, event calendar, and via social media.
- Commissioners approved the minutes for the meeting held August 12, 2020.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Comm. Chair Spradling explained that each Manchester resident wishing to speak shall state his/her name and address, each will have only one opportunity to speak, and will be limited to three minutes in which to address comments on a particular subject to the Chairman of the Commission.

- **Melanie Sherman**, Manchester resident, thanked and applauded Chief Capano for his stance on the on the issue of former officer Aaron Brown who was fired in 2018 for racist comments. She expressed her hope that the NH Police Standards and Training Council will fulfill the Chief's request to revoke the Aaron Brown's police officer certification. She furthered expressed her appreciation of the way the Manchester Police Department has handled recent challenges within the city and ended her time by thanking the Commission for allowing her to speak.
- **Jeff Hastings**, owner of Frame of Mind photography, a freelance and contract photo journalist for New Hampshire and Boston, Mass., area media outlets, and maintains a public-forum blog, commented that his blog followers would like to know the name of the victim of fatal accidents and did not see the reason why the department could not release the names once family has been notified.

There was no one else present wishing to speak; Comm. Spradling thanked Ms. Sherman and Mr. Hastings for their comments.

4. DIVISIONAL REPORTS

Community Policing Division – Capt. O'Keefe:

- Sgt. Tom DuBois is doing an excellent job as he acclimates to his new role and personnel in CP.
- Ofc. Ryan Hardy completed his first month as the MPAL coordinator and is fitting in nicely to his new duties.
- The Summer Downtown Walking Patrol has been extended to possibly October. They have been spending extra time around Superior Court and both Victory and Veterans parks.
- The Mounted Unit retired Valor on August 25. Many volunteers were on hand to send him off to his retirement after 17 years of service to the PD and Manchester.
- MPAL will hold its 14th annual Footrace for the Fallen on October 3. Keeping everyone's health and safety in mind, this year's race will be a virtual 5K. Race bibs and t-shirts will be distributed via drive-thru at the MPD parking lot from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The race itself can be run at any time or location between the bib pickup date and October 5. Registering for the race can be done by visiting <https://www.runreg.com/footrace-for-the-fallen>.
- Area Officers participated in Neighborhood Enhancement Team checks at several addresses due to a variety of reasons. The officers primarily deal with the multiple homeless camps that have increased in size during the COVID pandemic. There have been issues at the old Santoro's site, which has been vacant over the past few

months. The owner closed the business, but it is littered with trash and CP is working on a clean-up effort from the owner, along with installation of no-trespass signs.

- Ofc. Nate Linstad is conducting crime prevention classes via Zoom.
- Senior Services Ofc. Steve Duquette is resuming the Senior Walks program for the fall, beginning Monday, September 14.
- Ofc. Ed Devereaux and Tom Whelan continue to work with the MHRA property managers to ensure all needs are being met.
- A new substation is in the works at 400 Commercial Street, and hoping to open the week of September 14. The substation on Elm Street is still waiting on installation of a sign, hopefully by the end of the month.

Investigative Division – Capt. Leighton:

- Four detectives recently received training in use of the NIBIN system. ATF administers the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network which is a specialized computer network in the U.S. that contains digital images of recovered pieces of ballistic evidence, which allows detectives to identify firearms in new cases which may have been used in prior incidents. The department had two detectives trained to use the system, but it's great to have four more trained.
- Interviews are being conducted today for the Investigative Division administrative assistant position, which has been vacant since the retirement of Mary Makris in March.
- Today is the first day of school. Some of the SROs have returned to their school assignments: Det. Battistelli at Central, Det. Bernard at West, Det. Abruzese at Memorial, and Det. Rich Eil at MST. The other SROs will continue in their Patrol assignments until the school district resumes in-school sessions, versus remote learning.
- The ACERT funding period was extended another year due to the months of limited activity due to the COVID-19 pandemic. [ACERT: Adverse Childhood Experiences Response Team]

Administrative Division – Capt. Mucci:

- Recruits that graduated from the 182nd N.H. Academy on August 21 and one certified officer hired July 23 are currently in the field training phase, which should conclude mid to late November.
- The four non-certified officers hired July 23 are attending the N.H. Academy and will graduate December 18.
- A police officer test was conducted August 22. Of the 58 participants, 30 candidates successfully completed the testing process. The department has 20 vacancies to fill.
- There are four certified officers in the beginning stages of the hiring process.
- Six new Ford Explorers are being up-fitted for MPD use and should be in service in early October. Six Ford Fusions have just recently completed being up-fitted and are in service.
- A Ford F250 pickup has been ordered to replace the Mounted Unit vehicle. Delivery is expected in January 2021.
- Two dispatchers, Jodiann Gleason and Kristen Wilder, were recently promoted to fill the vacancies of Emergency Communications Supervisors. The two are currently in training for their new positions.
- Two of four dispatcher vacancies have been filled. The two new hires begin training on September 14. Interviews of prospective candidates continue with hopes of filling the remaining two dispatch positions.

Legal Division – Capt. Mangone:

- The Legal Division/Records Unit personnel attended training in preparation for the implementation of the new Records Management System.
- The process is underway to identify a candidate to fill a vacant Records Specialist position. Interviews have begun and hope to have the position filled as soon as possible.
- Legal Division personnel are working with the Hillsborough County Attorney's Office and Manchester District Court to address administrative changes to make operations move smoother during the COVID crisis.
- The Ordinance Violations Bureau will have a new software system implement this month.

Patrol Division – Capt. Aldenberg:

- Ten recruits are currently in the field training program.
- Officer Tennis retired his K9 partner Ace, effective September 1.
- Officer Colburn begins the 14-week K9 handler training at the Boston K9 Academy on September 14.

- Patrol's Violent Crime Unit has been very active since its inception in July. To date, the officers within the unit have made 46 arrests and seized 9 firearms.
- Sgt. Mark Harrington and Sgt. Emmett Macken have integrated well into Patrol since being promoted.
- The Patrol Division had some officers resign over the past month, but continues to balance manning shortages. For perspective, there are 93 officers to the division, with only 85 available to fill the positions.

Questions/Comments/Discussion:

- Comm. Content enquired of the 20 additional officers the department is looking to hire, how many would be assigned to Patrol. Capt. Aldenberg advised that all 20 officers would be assigned to Patrol. Any newly hired officer spends several years in Patrol before being considered for other division assignment.
- Comm. Content further enquired if any of the 38 officer candidates from the recent testing process were bilinguals. He expressed his concern with regard to a recent arrest in which the defendant's court proceedings were delayed due to the need of finding an interpreter. Chief Capano advised he recalled several test candidates and certified officers being looked at were bilingual. He explained, though, that bilingual officers can assist the PD with interpreting on cases, but are not used in adjudication proceedings. The courts are required to hire an interpreter from a certified service.

Special Enforcement Division – Lt. Murphy:

- The Street Crime Unit continues to focus efforts on problem locations in the city.
- The Special Investigations Unit continues efforts disrupt drug sales in the city, as well as actively work multiple ongoing investigations with state and federal partners, to stop illegal drugs from being brought into city and state.
- The SWAT team is completing the tryout/assessment process of adding 5 new members to the team.
- Street Crime Unit detective Matt Comeau resigned from MPD on August 3, to take a position with a federal agency.

Questions/Comments/Discussion:

- Comm. Castillo enquired if officers volunteer for the SWAT team. Lt. Murphy advised the SWAT team holds tryouts once a year and officers sign up to take part in the tryouts, and then must go through a rigorous assessment process of physical agility, decision making, scenario-based reactions, and oral boards.

5. COMMENTS FROM ASSISTANT CHIEF GRANT

- Congratulations to Chief Capano on his pending retirement on September 30, 2020. It has been a pleasure to serve with him over the past two years. The process is underway for selecting a new Chief, but if Mayor Craig has not announced her selection by the Chief Capano's last day, it will still be business as usual for the public at the PD. During his tenure, the Chief intentionally ran the department with the command staff involved in any major decision. AC Grant advised he will not be putting in for the Chief's position.
- AC Grant reiterated a statement made at the August meeting: There are so many who criticize the actions of the department, or law enforcement in general. AC Grant invites naysayers to join the team, become a police officer. Get on the inside, learn what the job is all about, and see what changes you can make.
- The department is in the process of hiring a new crime analyst. The department works in a large part on data-based policing.
- Thank you to Steve Spain for his years of service as a police commissioner. This is his last meeting.
- Thank you to Renie Denton and MCRC for letting MPD use the facility for today's meeting.

6. COMMENTS FROM CHIEF CAPANO

- Chief Capano advised that the department will be having a public ceremony to swear in promotees and new hires that missed out due to the COVID pandemic. A date has yet to be determined.
- Chief Capano is excited to have 10 new officers in the field training phase. The second phase of the three-year plan to hire 30 officers went into effect July 1. The third phase, to hire the last 10 of 30 officers goes into effect July 1, 2021.
- Chief Capano advised this is his last Commission meeting. He expressed his appreciation of working with all the commissioners over the years.

Questions/Comments/Discussion:

- Comm. Castillo stated that she has been approached by constituents with regard to the Aaron Brown situation and wanted to know if there was any information Chief Capano could put out that clearly states that Aaron Brown returning to the PD is not the decision or choice of the city or department. Chief Capano advised he

sent out a statement to the media that he believes was crystal clear on the subject – that he does not Brown back as a police officer.

- Comm. Content suggested that PD statements should also be translated into and posted to Spanish. There is a great deal of the population that has English as a second language, and though they may speak English well, they understand the written word in Spanish better.
- Comm. Castillo stated that she works with a group who can assist with translating and posting announcements into Spanish. But in the case of the Aaron Brown issue, she is speaking of activists who should be able to understand the situation.
- Comm. Content thanked Chief Capano for his service and demonstrating the integrity of MPD, which was best shown at the Black Lives Matter protest outside the PD on May 30, 2020. Chief Capano set the right example, and the community showed its trust in the police by the activists supplying contact information to the chief.
- Comm. Castillo stated that a new chief needs to continue the open and positive community relationships. She and many other Latinos come from an environment where the police are crooks and people learn to avoid the police. When they come to the U.S. they, continue to distrust and fear police. Comm. Castillo advised she attends many activists meetings and sits on panels and promotes/supports the police at every opportunity.
- Comm. Spradling stated that Manchester is not immune to the national issues and it is important to develop the right culture. The job of the Police Chief is not just law enforcement, it also involves politics and community relations. Somehow it has become viewed that law enforcement should solve all issues, including the moral issues of homelessness and panhandling.

Comm. Spradling said he has every confidence in MPD, and no doubt the Command Staff have the ability to carry on after Chief Capano leaves. But he sad to Chief Capano go; he has a great personal connection with the troops, but at the same time is a butt-kicking task master. Chief Capano's leadership ability has been great and he has done a great job dealing with City Hall.

7. RETIREMENTS / RESIGNATIONS

- Justin Hood, Police Officer, resigned effective 08/26/20, after 3.5 years with MPD. He went to the private sector.
- Krista Comrie, Crime Analyst, resigned effective 09/01/20, after 10 years with MPD. She went to the private sector.
- Patrick Nesbitt, Police Officer, resigned effective 09/02/20, after 3 years with MPD. He went to the private sector.
- Thomas McAuliffe, Police Officer, resigned effective 09/04/20, after 10 years with MPD. He went to the private sector.
- Carlo Capano, Police Chief, will retire effective 09/30/20, after 24.5 years with MPD.

8. COMMISSION ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

Comm. Spradling congratulated Comm. Castillo on her 3-year reappointment to the Police Commission, in effect until September 15, 2023, at which time she may seek reappointment for another three-year term.

9. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING / ADJOURNMENT OF PUBLIC SESSION

The date of the next commission meeting was tentatively set for Wednesday, October 7, 2020, at 9:00 a.m.

Comm. Spradling made a motion to suspend the Public Session and enter into Non-Public Session. The motion was seconded by Comm. Castillo.

Time: 9:35 a.m.

10. NON-PUBLIC SESSION

NON-PUBLIC SESSION

MINUTES SEALED

PUBLIC SESSION INTO NON-PUBLIC SESSION: 9:40 a.m.

MOTION: Comm. Spradling asked for a motion by roll call vote to suspend the public Session and enter into non-public session as authorized by:

B. RSA 91-A:3, II (a) "The dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or disciplining of such employee or investigation of charges again him or her."

Motion by Comm. Castillo, seconded by Comm. Content.

Roll Call vote:

Comm. Spradling – yes; Comm. Castillo – yes; Comm. Content – yes

END OF NON-PUBLIC SESSION:

MOTION: Comm. Spradling made a motion to end the non-public session and return to public session. The motion was seconded by Comm. Castillo.

RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION: 10:21 a.m.

MOTION TO SEAL RSA 91-A: 3 III:

“Minutes of proceeding in non-public session shall be kept and the record of all actions shall be promptly made available for public inspection, except as provided in this section...”

- “divulgence of the information likely would affect adversely the reputation of any person other than a member of the body or agency itself,
- or render the proposed action ineffective,
- or pertain to terrorism...”

Comm. Spradling asked for a motion to seal the following minutes of the non-public session.

MOTION: Comm. Spradling asked for a motion by roll call vote to suspend the public Session and enter into non-public session as authorized by:

B. RSA 91-A:3, II (a) “The dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or disciplining of such employee or investigation of charges against him or her.”

MOTION: by Comm. Content, seconded by Comm. Castillo to seal the minutes of the non-public session as authorized above. All in favor.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: by Comm. Content, seconded by Comm. Castillo to end the public session and adjourn the meeting.

Time: 10:22 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by:
Kim Demers, Secretary

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