



# POLICE COMMISSION

Manchester Police Department  
405 Valley Street  
Manchester, NH 03103

## MINUTES OF AUGUST 6, 2014 REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

The Regular Monthly Meeting was held at Police Headquarters on August 6, 2014, at 09:00 hours. **Present** were Comm. Richard Bunker (Chairman), Comm. Woullard Lett, Comm. William Clifford, Comm. Eva Castillo-Turgeon, Comm. Mark Roy, Chief David Mara, Capt. Shawn Fournier, Capt. James Flanagan, Capt. Carlo Capano, Lt. Maureen Tessier, Sgt. Brian O'Keefe, and Kim Demers (Secretary). **Absent** were Assistant Chief Nick Willard, Capt. Jonathan Hopkins and Lt. James Soucy.

### 1. NOTICES POSTED / APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

- The Commission was advised that the notices had been posted at City Hall, the City Library, as well as on the MPD's website homepage, event calendar, and blog.
- Commissioners unanimously approved the minutes of the June 4, 2014, meeting.

### 2. PUBLIC COMMENT

- No one from the Public was present.

### 3. DIVISIONAL REPORTS

#### Legal Division – Lt. Tessier:

- Lt. Tessier explained that she was assigned as the Interim Commander of the Legal Division on July 1, following the retirement of Capt. Mello.
- Records staff has been doing a great job keeping up with court demands, working diligently during the season of vacations. Lorraine Martel, an admin assistant assigned to Traffic but working within the Records area, has assisted the Records staff.
- Cross training for all Records staff continues. The hardest duty to train is dealing with right-to-know requests and the issue of redacting information.
- Officer Rick Brown of Community Policing has been covering Juvenile Court during times the regular prosecutor has been away. Additionally, the two officers assigned to the Sex Offender Compliance Unit have attended prosecutor school and have been filling in at court as needed.
- Meeting with District Court staff today to discuss issues with Child in Need of Services (CHINS) petitions.
- Effective July 1, 2015, a new State law goes into effect that 17-year-olds will be prosecuted as juveniles, which will greatly affect the operations at court. Working with the court to ensure a smooth transition.

#### Questions, Comments, Discussion:

- Chief Mara advised that the department has several times requested that the City Solicitor's office take over the prosecution of juveniles, as was done in the 1980s. The most recent request spearheaded by Assist. Chief Willard was once again denied. Budgetary issues was the given as the reason for the denial.
- Comm. Bunker inquired if the Mental Health Court was working well. Lt. Tessier stated she has not yet had much experience with the court, but it seems to be running well. Comm. Bunker advised that other places have instituted a Homeless Court and wondered if Manchester would consider something like this. Chief Mara stated that a few places have a Veterans' Homeless Court. The City currently has a Mental Health Court, Family Court, and Drug Court, adding another specialized court would require further financial and manpower resources. Generally speaking, homeless legal issues filter down to the Mental Health Court.

#### Special Enforcement Division – Capt. Fournier:

- Capt. Fournier provided details on two multi-agency undercover operations that began in 2012. One recently resulted in 8 arrests for illegal gambling and the seizure of poker machines and cash. The illegal operation had ties to organized crimes and drug sales. The second operation resulted in the arrest of 9 subjects involved in a drug ring which had been trafficking drugs from Canada into the city for years. Twenty-seven pounds of marijuana, other drugs, firearms, vehicles, and cash were seized.
- In the past quarter, SIU has executed 37 search warrants, made 29 arrests, and seized quantities of heroin, cocaine, marijuana, cash and a number of firearms and vehicles.
- The owner of Pigeon's Market was arrested for selling the illegal product Spice. Three large U-Hall containers of the product were seized.

- Based on information received of drug trafficking between Massachusetts and Manchester, a woman was recently arrested who had hidden 82 grams of heroin in her clothing.
- SWAT team members have been assigned to weekend gang details, initiated in response to the 180 and OTL gang activity. Four officers are assigned to monitor the neighborhoods in which the gangs are known to operate.
- The Street Crime Unit has also been involved in monitoring the gangs. They have also been making use of the Bait Car at the Mall of New Hampshire, which has been identified as a Hot Spot crime area for thefts from vehicles.
- SWAT team members have been undergoing firearms training during their monthly training sessions.
- Street Crime detectives Aaron Brown and Mark Harrington were selected the department's Officers of the Month for May. Capt. Fournier expressed his pride for the men assigned to his division.

**Questions, Comments, Discussion:**

- Chief Mara stated he saw the need for the Gang Detail initiative due to escalating violence between the gangs. The Gang Details run Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights, and seem to have had an impact on reducing the activity; however, there is not enough money to sustain the initiative.
- Comm. Roy inquired as to what constituted a "dose" of heroin. Capt. Fournier stated there is no set dose amount as it is purely subjective. However, he estimated that an ounce of heroin could equal 3-4 doses, at a cost of \$80-\$100.
- Comm. Lett inquired if heroin usage had pushed meth usage out of the headlines. Capt. Fournier advised that there is still a lot of one-pot manufacturing of meth going on and is still a serious concern.

**Investigative Division – Capt. Flanagan:**

- Due to recent changes in Evidence Specialist staffing, the department was required to conduct an audit of all evidence. The audit was completed of all high-risk items (drugs, guns, cash, jewelry) and all requirements and standards were met. Other MPD staff members have been trained in Evidence procedures and will be utilized as needed.
- In June and July, prior to instituting the Gang Detail, detectives were involved with investigations pertaining to the 180 and OTL gang activity. The activity has now ebbed allowing the detectives to work on other matters.
- Detectives have been investigating the shooting incident that took place on Lowell Street July 31. Two male suspects were quickly identified: one has been arrested in Florida, but the other remains at large.
- There was robbery at the Citibank on Brown Avenue and the suspect was quickly apprehended.
- Pleased to report that the number of burglaries in July of 2014 (69) was significantly down from July 2013 (148). The reduction is very encouraging.
- Juvenile detectives, in conjunction with the state's Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Unit and federal law enforcement brought about the arrest of a Bodwell Road resident who was dealing in online child pornography. The man will be facing local and federal criminal charges.
- Juvenile detectives are currently involved in an investigation ref a 19-month-old girl who was taken to the hospital suffering from multiple injuries. The mother and her boyfriend are suspected of inflicting the injuries.
- The Domestic Violence Unit is currently following up on the investigation of the serious sexual assault of a 21-year-old female who has the mental capacity of a 12-year-old. The male suspect has been arrested. The subject is also suspected of breaking into his ex-girlfriend's apartment for the purpose of sexual assault.
- Detectives were involved in the investigation of a man found lying unconscious on Hanover Street, in what appeared to be a case of hit and run. Investigation revealed that the victim was actually the perpetrator of a crime. While holding a firearm, the man stuck his hand into the open front window of the vehicle to threaten the driver. The driver rolled up the window while driving away and the suspect's hand became caught and he was dragged some feet before he falling to the pavement where he struck his head. The "victim" has been charged with criminal threatening.

**Questions, Comments, Discussion:**

- Comm. Clifford commented that Bank of America branches in the city were hiring armed guards and inquired how MPD felt about that. Chief Mara stated that any means that may deter bank robberies is a good thing, allowing MPD to utilize its resources on other matters. Capt. Flanagan stated that he did not believe the hiring armed guards was a sustainable initiative for the banks due to the cost factor.

**Administrative Division – Capt. Capano:**

- Dealing with facility issues, including roof leaks that have appeared since the recent rainstorms.
- The last city employed custodian will cease working at the MPD on August 15 and is being replaced by an new Aramark custodian, who will begin work on August 18. MPD will then have 2 full-time and 2 part-time Aramark custodians. They have been doing a great job.
- Communications is short two dispatchers. There are currently two candidates in the hiring process.

- Crime Analyst Krista Comrie and Officer Barter, who is temporarily assigned to the Crime Analysis Unit, are doing a great job identifying high-crime (“hot spot”) crime areas of the city. Monthly “Crime Stopper” staff meetings are held to share info and tweak the Crime Stopper initiative to better fit the department’s/City’s needs.
- Officer Barter has also spearheaded an Urban Violence Working Group consisting of City and State agencies. This was initiated in response to recent gang activity in the city.
- The 14 recruits hired in July are in their fifth week of in-house training. All are doing well and are scheduled to begin at the NH police academy on September 8.
- Five certified police officers are in various stages of the pre-employment background phase.
- The department anticipates holding another entry-level police officer test in the fall, as well as a sergeant’s promotional test.
- Training has completed the mandatory annual firearms qualifications for sworn members and is scheduling use of force training for September.

**Questions, Comments, Discussion:**

- Chief Mara stated he would like to come up with a plan to establish a job program for the city teenagers. He feels program would should the kids the benefits of earning and saving money, rather than resorting to crime. Establishing such a plan would require the assistance of a community/financial partner. Comm. Lett offered the assistance of the Commission to find such a partner. He also commented that he had read a study that associated urban health with urban violence. He advised he would do some research to find the information and pass it on.
- Comm. Roy inquired if the pay scale is attractive enough to entice certified officers from other agencies. Capt. Capano advised that Manchester is rated one of the top three highest in the state. Comm. Roy then inquired if there is a pay incentive for an officer to leave his current agency to join MPD. Capt. Capano advised that an officer with three or more years experience would come in at pay grade 3, out of 13 possible pay grades. Capt. Capano commented that it is so much easier to hire a certified officer versus a non-certified recruit. It takes 3 months to get a certified officer out on the street versus 6 months for a non-certified. Chief Mara stated that although it is nice to hire certified officer, it is best to have a mix of officers.

**Community Policing Division – Sgt. O’Keefe:**

- Capt. Reilly retired from the Manchester Police Department on June 30<sup>th</sup>. Lieutenant James Soucy was named Commander of the Community Policing Division.
- At the direction of the Chief, the downtown initiative was created and is being monitored by Sgt. O’Keefe. A two-man walking beat was established and initially staffed with Officers Shannon Jackson and Mike Abruzese, however, Officer Andre Smith was reassigned due to an injury sustained by Officer Abruzese.
- Special emphasis on the parks—Victory and Veterans—has taken the forefront of the downtown initiative. Positive feedback has been strong from area businesses and civic leaders alike. Numerous arrests, summonses and city ordinances have been issued to those not following the law in the parks.
- On Monday, June 30, the Chief, along with members of the CP Division, conducted a “cleanup” with children from the Elmwood Gardens area, followed by a pizza party. The event was well attended with approximately 30 children taking part—most from the Somali community.
- On July 10, the Chamber of Commerce annual “Lunch in the Park” series kicked off. The event is held every Thursday from 12-2 throughout the summer. Officers and Command Staff alike have been meeting in the park for lunch, meeting with area residents and office workers.
- On July 15, Chief Mara, members of the Command Staff, several alderman and officers from the Community Policing Division hosted a Community Meeting at the MPAL Center. Approximately 50 citizens showed up for the meeting to discuss various problems. There were no major issues as a result.
- On Monday, July 21, Officer John Levasseur was welcomed to the Community Policing Division. John replaces the vacancy left by retiring CP Officer Steve Maloney. Currently, all vacancies are filled and all officers have returned from injury leave.
- Efforts have been underway to deal with the homeless population camped on the west side of the Merrimack River, east of 293/Rt. 3. Officer Battistelli has been working with NHSP and DOT and will be posting and removing anyone from the area by August 11.
- CP officers have been active in the Urban Violence meetings and have been tasked with making visits to the residences of suspected gang members. CP officers on the two shifts make two home visits per day. The visits show that the police care about the children and hopefully will curb the violence. The visitations have shown that there are some good caring parents out there, but they’ve lost their children somewhere along the way.

#### **Questions, Comments, Discussion:**

- Comm. Bunker commented that he has observed a large group of people congregating on Hanover Street near the Chop House restaurant. Sgt. O'Keefe advised this is due to a church effort to pass out free food and the issue has been addressed in the past.

#### **Patrol Division – Lt. Hurley:**

- Lt. Hurley, the Traffic Unit supervisor, introduced himself to the Commission and advised he would be filling in for Capt. Hopkins, who is on vacation.
- The K-9 Unit is down one team. Officer Ardita retired his canine at the end of July, after serving with the unit for six years.
- Shift Lieutenants are preparing rosters for the September 2 shift change. School Resource Officers will be reassigned from Patrol to the Juvenile Unit the last week of August so they can prepare for their respective school assignments on September 3.
- A patrol unit continues to be a presence in the downtown area, assisting with Downtown Initiative daily. Also, a Traffic officer has been assigned downtown in the afternoon. One patrol officer has been temporarily assigned to the Community Policing Division to participate in the two-man downtown walking patrol.
- The Traffic Unit continues to investigate the double fatal crash on Goffstown Road, also busy with traffic complaints. Recently completed speed collection survey on W. Rosemont Avenue and Sagamore Street. The information will be turned over to Highway for their use.
- The Traffic Unit is busy with a number of city events. The 22<sup>nd</sup> Cigna Road Race, the largest event in NH, is scheduled for August 14. Security at this event has been increased, in response to the Boston Marathon bombing incident.
- Traffic conducted two sobriety checkpoints in July, each stopped 120 cars.
- Traffic officer Mark Aquino was selected as Officer of the Month for June.

#### **Chief Mara:**

- The Aldermen voted to rescind the Mayor's hiring mandates, thus giving hiring control back to the department heads.
- A "Hands Free" law will go into effect January 1. Capt. Capano has been tasked with devising a departmental policy to meet the requirements of the law.
- Since 2001, new officers are mandated by Police Standards and Training to pass physical requirements every three years. There has been no accountability in the past, so Capt. Capano has instituted a policy for seeing that the state mandate is followed through on and testing is done in an efficient manner.
- Lt. Soucy and Sgt. O'Keefe are initiating a Lock-It or Lose-It campaign that will include posting signs in neighborhoods reminding citizens to lock their car doors to prevent themselves from becoming victims. The Lt. and Sgt. have also been working with WMUR-TV on a public service announcement.
- Chief Mara read excerpts from an article he had found online reference heroin usage. The article stated that 80% of heroin use starts with prescription drug usage. The high number of recent overdoses attributed to the drug is due to the increased purity of the drug. This is a national problem.

#### **Questions, Comments, Discussion:**

- Comm. Bunker inquired where the heroin comes from. Capt. Fournier advised most of it originates from Southeast Asia, traveling through Mexico.
- Comm. Roy commented that heroin overdose deaths should be publicized more, which would deter usage.
- Comm. Lett stated he read a study that advised people are overdosing on heroin due to its purity, which conversely attracts people to use it rather than deterring them. People want to get the best high for their money.
- Comm. Lett asked if there was a way to track overdose deaths due to heroin so that the PD could identify areas where they are occurring. Chief Mara stated that doing this would not help fight crime as most people buy the product in one spot and take it somewhere else to use it.

#### **4. RETIREMENTS / RESIGNATIONS**

- Reserve Officer Steven Gilcreast resigned effective July 1, 2014, after serving 2.5 years.
- Officer Ryan Boyd resigned effective July 23, 2014, after serving with MPD for 1.5 years.
- Officer Michelle Toepel resigned effective July 25, 2014, after serving with MPD for 5.5 years.
- Officer Matthew Gleason resigned effective July 27, 2014, after serving with MPD for 1 year.

#### **5. SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES REVIEW**

- The minutes of the Safety Committee meeting of June 18, 2014, were reviewed. No special issues were noted.

**5. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING / MOTION TO**

The date of the next commission meeting was set for:

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2014, AT 09:00 HOURS**

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 10:10 hours.

**6. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING / MOTION TO ADJOURN EXECUTIVE SESSION**

The Commission entered Executive Session at 10:10 hours and adjourned at 10:25 hours. The content of the session shall remain confidential

Respectfully submitted by:  
Kim Demers, Secretary

PC080614