



POLICE COMMISSION

Manchester Police Department
405 Valley Street
Manchester, NH 03103

MINUTES OF MARCH 4, 2020 REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

The Regular Monthly Meeting was held at Police Headquarters on March 4, 2020, at 09:00 hours, attended by: **Commissioners** Scott Spradling (Chairman), Steven Spain, Manny Content **Absent:** Charlie Sherman
Police Department Staff Chief Carlo Capano, Capt. Mark Sanclemente, Capt. Sean Leighton, Capt. Allen Aldenberg, Capt. Brian O'Keefe, and Kim Demers (Secretary);

1. COMMISSION CHAIRMAN OPENING COMMENTS

- Comm. Chairman Scott Spradling opened the meeting at 0905 hours, 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 February 5, 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.

- **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 the crime stats had yet to be updated on the MPD website. He reminded the Chief that he (Hastings) had mentioned this at the February meeting as well.

Chief Capano assured Mr. Hastings that updating the crime stats was being worked on.

There was no one else present wishing to speak.

4. DIVISIONAL REPORTS

Community Policing Division – Capt. O'Keefe:

- The entire division worked a lot of downtown patrols due to the crowds of people on hand for the First in the Nation Primary. Staff also worked multiple quality of life issues and problematic addresses. There were no major issues downtown during the primary. All members of the division adjusted their schedules to accommodate the event.
- The Mounted Unit officers have been working diligently on training the new horse Blue, but it appears the horse will not work out for patrol duties; he does not do well in the city setting. The Unit officers will once again be looking for a new horse.
- MPAL coordinator Officer Lefebvre and his MPAL team will be attending the Bob Baines Blarney Breakfast on March 12. That evening, he will take part in the annual St. Patrick's Day boxing events, held at the Nashua Community College. The first bout starts at 6:45 p.m.
- Area officers continue to monitor their respective neighborhoods for quality of life and criminal issues. They completed NET checks at several addresses to address a variety of issues, including homeless camps. A large encampment on Taylor Street was cleaned up, and another camp at Piscataquog River Park was dealt with, coordinating with the resident to find more suitable housing.
- Officer Linstad has coordinated dates for the spring session of Cops and Kids events at seven elementary schools. He also continues to teach a variety of classes throughout the area.
- Officer Seigle of the Gang Prevention Unit is actively recruiting students to attend the Youth Leadership Academy scheduled to run April 2 through May 14. He has scheduled the guest speakers, but cannot finalize the schedule until he secures a date from WMUR-TV.
- Senior Services Officer Duquette is coordinating the Citizens Police Academy scheduled for Wednesday evenings from April 15 through June 3. He has also posted the schedule of Spring Season Senior Walks.

- MHRA assigned officers, Ed Devereaux and Tom Whelan, continue to work with the property managers to ensure all needs are being met at the MHRA properties.
- Officers attended a variety of meetings during the month, to include the monthly Community Advisory Board, and Rimmon Heights Community Watch Group. Officer Choi and Linstad also attended monthly SWAT team training sessions.

Questions/Comments/Discussion:

- Comm. Spain enquired as to what is presented to the elementary school students during a Cops and Kids event. Capt. O'Keefe advised that the events are basically a meet & greet and show & tell format. They provide an opportunity for the kids to interact with police officers, to see what the inside of a cruiser looks like, K-9 demonstration, etc. Every division of the department sends a representative to each of the events.
- Comm. Content enquired as to whether any Coffee with a Cop events have been planned. Capt. O'Keefe advised that the events take a hiatus during the winter and summer months, but event for the spring are being planned, perhaps one at the end of March.

Special Enforcement Division – Capt. Sanclemente:

- In February, the SWAT team trained at the MTA facility, utilizing school and mass transit buses in various scenarios. Snipers completed monthly firearms qualifications.
- SWAT was on hand to provide security at the Democratic debates held at St. Anselm College February 7, and at the Trump rally in Manchester on February 10.
- Several members of SED attended various training throughout the month.
- The Street Crime Unit continues to focus efforts on problem locations.
- The Special Investigations Unit continues efforts to disrupt drug sales in the city and actively working multiple ongoing investigations with state and federal partners to stop illegal drugs from being brought into the city and state.

Investigative Division – Capt. Leighton:

- Sgt. Chris Biron is retiring effective March 31; however his last at-work day is March 10. Hopefully, his position can be filled as soon as possible. Additionally, administrative assistant Mary Makris will be retiring at the end of March after more than 30 years of service with the MPD. Her work responsibilities are being temporarily distributed among other staff until a replacement may be hired.
- Lt. Laroche will be traveling to Washington D.C. on March 9, where he will do a presentation on the ACERT program at the Comprehensive Opioid Abuse Program national forum.
- A new gun storage system was installed in the evidence area. The new system is much more efficient and will allow for more storage in a smaller space.
- Major cases continue to be actively investigated.
- On March 3, 2020, Justin Moura pled guilty to manslaughter in connection with the shooting death of Tonya Hall in 2019.
- Patrick O'Brien pled guilty to human trafficking and felonious sexual assault in connection with the assault of a juvenile in 2019.
- The Manchester Family Justice Center has closed due to lack of funding.

Questions/Comments/Discussion:

- Comm. Spradling enquired how the victims would now access the services provided by the Family Justice Center (FJC). Capt. Leighton advised that the FJC provided a central location for victims to access the services of a variety of agencies. Those services are still available to any victim, but the victim now has to go to each separate agency to request assistance.
- Comm. Content enquired as to why the funding for the FJC was no longer available. Capt. Leighton reported that initial funding for the program was provided by a federal grant, which was not renewed. Comm. Content expressed his concerns that those needing services offered by the FJC would fall by the wayside. Capt. Leighton acknowledged that that was a possibility.
- Comm. Spradling enquired who writes grants for the city. Capt. Leighton advised that the FJC was not a City related program, but a cooperative of many service providers seeing the need to offer these services at one location. The FJC is an entity on its own with its own board of directors. The idea for the FJC was originally put together by the YWCA and MPD, bringing in other partners to provide services.

- Comm. Content enquired if there is any MPD focus on grant funding, stating that there is money out there, you just have to know where to look. Chief Capano advised that someone from an MPD division is assigned to take lead on writing a grant that will benefit the specific division. The department, at times, also utilizes the AG's grant writer or the grant writer at the YWCA. Capt. Leighton advised that extensive fund raising would be needed to reestablish the FJC.

Patrol Division – Capt. Aldenberg:

- Officer Ben Foster is progressing well at the K-9 academy in Boston. He and his canine partner Hank are on track to complete their explosive ordinance detection training on April 4.
- The K-9 Unit teams will be undergoing their annual EOD/Drug certifications during March.
- Five officers have completed their field training program and are now on their own. Four other officers should be completing their field training by the end of March.
- Interview for the vacant animal control officer position have been completed and three candidates have been submitted to the training unit to begin the background phase.
- K-9 Officer Robert Megowen was named Officer of the Month for January. He and his canine partner Lynk had a very successful month and the award is well deserved.
- The Traffic Unit will be busy with a variety of events the end of March into April: the Shamrock Half Marathon on March 28; the Shamrock Shuffle & St. Patrick's Day Parade on March 29; The Stark Park Easter Egg Hunt on April 11; the MS Walk at Arms Park on April 19; and the Wesley Way 5K at Crystal Lake on April 19.
- The Traffic Unit investigated two serious crashes during February, one involving two fire department trucks and the other involving a commercial oil delivery truck that crashed into a building.

Legal Division – Assist. Chief Grant on behalf of Capt. Mangone:

- Legal/Records personnel continue to attend training in regard to the upcoming switch to a more sophisticated records management system. The training continues into March.
- A candidate to fill the Records Specialist vacancy has successfully completed the background phase and it is hoped that a hire date is in the near future.
- The Legal Division police prosecutors continue to work together with the Hillsborough County Attorney's Office and provides all assistance necessary for the Felonies First program. Although the department does not arraign the defendants in these cases, the police prosecutors review all cases that are sent to the HCAO and make any corrections as needed.
- Lt. Patterson continues his work as MPD's representative in the bail reform debate. He attends all meetings at the state house and provides updates to Administration.

Questions/Comments/Discussion:

- Comm. Spain requested clarification reference the Felonies First program. Assist. Chief Grant explained that the program, which began in Hillsborough County in 2017, involves someone arrested on a felony charge. The adjudication process for the individual begins directly at the Superior Court level, rather than being arraigned and going through a probable cause hearing at the District Court and then subsequently transferring to Superior Court for trial.

Administrative Division – Assist. Chief Grant on behalf of Capt. Mucci:

- The recruits currently at the N.H. police academy have completed their second month and are progressing well. One of the five recruits was released from training/duties for not performing to required standards.
- Nine certified officers are nearing completion of their field training and are doing well.
- There are 12 officer candidates scheduled to be sworn in on March 23.
- A police officer test is scheduled for March 21.
- The PD has taken possession of three new Explorers, which are currently being outfitted with law enforcement equipment. Six new Fusions have been ordered. The Explorers and Fusions will replace older cruisers and unmarked vehicles that are currently in service.
- With the hire of two new dispatchers on March 16, the dispatch center will be at full complement, a status that has not been achieved for many years. The hiring process is underway to fill one police services specialist (front counter staff) position.

5. COMMENTS FROM ASSISTANT CHIEF GRANT

- Welcome back to Eva Castillo as a member of the Commission.
- The Trump rally on February 9 went very well, thanks to Capt. Aldenberg and Capt. Sanclemente, who took the lead on planning and organizing security for the event. Their efforts were very much appreciated.
- There were a number of retirements and resignations this past month, with more anticipated. The Training Unit staff are putting a lot of effort into filling the vacancies.

Questions/Comments/Discussion:

- Comm. Spradling commented that the SNHU Arena manager, Tim Beckert, is good to work with. AC Grant agreed MPD has a great partnership with him.

6. COMMENTS FROM CHIEF CAPANO

- Welcome back to Eva Castillo as a member of the Commission. Mayor Craig nominated her to fulfill the remainder of the term of Mirfeta Ibisevic, who recently resigned. Eva's nomination should be made official at the March 17 BMA meeting.
- Funding has been approved for the purchase of new Tasers. The current ones are 8 years old and company will no longer repair them. The City received some funds from the state and Mayor Craig was gracious in putting MPD's needs to the aldermen, who have approved the purchase.
- The Welcome Center on Elm Street will be renovated to include a police substation. Chief Capano explained that with the department increasing its complement of officers over the next few years, it is his intent to have permanent walking patrols downtown and a substation in the area will be a benefit to them.
- The department is hiring 12 officers on March 23, and he advised the Commissioners to take note that the swearing-in ceremony is scheduled for 10 a.m., at the MPAL/Briggs Center on Beech Street. There is also a police officer test scheduled for March 21. From the testing process, it is hoped that enough candidates can be identified for hire by the end of July, which is the second phase of the three-year hiring plan.
- Chief Capano explained that he is a co-facilitator for the Criminal Justice aspect of the Chamber of Commerce's Leadership Greater Manchester program. A large part of the Criminal Justice aspect is for LGM members to participate in a ride-along with a patrol officer. Capt. Aldenberg will be organizing assignments for patrol officers to conduct the ride-alongs March through May.
- Capt. Aldenberg is scheduled to attend the 10-week FBI National Academy course beginning March 30 and graduating on June 5.
- Chief Capano advised that he has attended many of the bail reform meetings.
- He also recently attended a hearing involving changes to the retirement system that went into effect in 2011 that affect 90 officers. These officers had originally been hired with the expectation that they could retire at age 45 and completing 20 years of service. With the 2011 changes, they now are required to work to age 50 and 25 years of service and other benefits that were provided at hire were stripped from them, including detail pay not added to retirement contributions. The legislators voted not to reverse any of the changes to accommodate these officers. The department has already seen an exodus of a number of officers who were affected by the 2011 changes and more resignations are expected. These officers are deciding that jobs in the private sector have much less stress and in many instances pay better than law enforcement.
- Chief Capano stated he testified at a hearing reference cameras utilized in public. The current law stipulates that government agencies cannot utilize cameras to identify vehicles, license plates or occupants in vehicles. An amendment is now being proposed to also forbid video surveillance of sidewalks. These laws prevent law enforcement from keeping the public safer.
- Implementing the new Computer Aided Dispatch and Records Management System has been a long process, but it is finally nearing the end. Going live with the new system is anticipated by the end of June or early July.

7. RETIREMENTS / RESIGNATIONS

- Jeremy Coates, Police Officer, resigned effective 02/28/20, after 2 years with the MPD.
- Mirfeta Ibisevic, Commissioner, resigned effective 03/04/20, after completing 2.5 years of a 3-year term.
- Felipe Fagundes, Police Officer, will resign effective 03/21/20, after 3.5 years with the MPD.
- Christopher Biron, Police Sergeant, will retire effective 03/31/20, after 24 years as a law-enforcement professional; 21 of those years with the MPD.
- Robert "Duke" Harrington, Police Officer, will retire effective 04/01/20, after 35.5 years of service with the MPD.

8. COMMISSION ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

Comm. Spradling welcomed Eva Castillo's return as a police commissioner, and stated he looked forward to having her serve on the commission over the coming months.

9. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING / MEETING ADJOURNED

The date of the next commission meeting was set for Wednesday, April 1, 2020, at 09:00 hours.

There being no further business to discuss, the Public Session of the meeting adjourned at 09:40 hours.

10. NONPUBLIC SESSION

There was no Non-Public Session.

Respectfully submitted by:
Kim Demers, Secretary

PC030420