



POLICE COMMISSION

Manchester Police Department
405 Valley Street
Manchester, NH 03103

MINUTES OF AUGUST 12, 2020 REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

The Regular Monthly Meeting was held at Memorial High School on August 12, 2020, at 09:00 hours, attended by: **Commissioners** Scott Spradling (Chairman), Steven Spain, Charlie Sherman, Manny Content, Eva Castillo **Police Department Staff** Chief Carlo Capano, Chief Ryan Grant, Capt. Mark Sanclemente, Capt. Sean Leighton, Capt. Allen Aldenberg, Capt. Brian O'Keefe, Captain Steven Mangone, PIO Heather Hamel and Kim Demers (Secretary);

1. COMMISSION CHAIRMAN OPENING COMMENTS

- Comm. Chairman Scott Spradling opened the meeting at 0902 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.
- On motion made by Comm. Sherman, seconded by Comm. Spain, Commissioners voted unanimously to approve the minutes for the meeting held June 3, 2020.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Comm. Chair Spradling acknowledged the presence of the one member of the public. The individual declined Comm. Spradling's invitation to address the Commission

4. DIVISIONAL REPORTS

Community Policing Division – Capt. O'Keefe:

- Sgt. Fred Gillis retired August 9, 2020, after serving MPD for 15 years. Sgt. Tom DuBois will fill the CP sergeant vacancy effective August 13.
- Officer Emmett Macken was promoted to sergeant on August 9.
- In July, Officer Hardy was reassigned as the Manchester Police Athletic League Coordinator, replacing Officer Levasseur, who was reassigned as an Area Officer.
- MPAL closed during the months of March through May and the first two weeks of June, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since reopening, there have been limited numbers, but it is important to continue to provide services for city youth, to keep them engaged in positive activities during this time of limited school interaction. During the time MPAL's doors were closed, Officer Levasseur worked the majority of his shifts at COVID-19 testing sites and occasionally helped out in Patrol.
- The Mounted Unit has been training with a nine-year-old quarter horse named Enzo for the past several months. On August 25, 2020, Enzo will replace Valor, after having served for 17 years.
- Area officers assisted with Neighborhood Enhancement Team checks over the past few months, though primarily monitoring multiple homeless camps that have increased in size due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Crime Prevention Officer Nate Linstad has been extremely limited in his activities due to COVID, but has implemented classes via Zoom.
- The Youth Leadership Academy was cancelled in April in response to the pandemic, but the Gang Prevention Unit officers have been active assisting in multiple investigations.
- The Citizens Police Academy scheduled for April through June was cancelled, as was the spring series of Senior Walks. It is hoped the walks will resume in September.
- Officers Devereaux and Whelan continue to work with the MHRA property managers to ensure all needs are being met. The annual MHRA contract that recently went into effect now coincides with the city's fiscal year rather than the federal fiscal year.
- A substation at the corner of Merrimack and Elm streets opened in mid-July. It is small, but practical for the walking beat officers to stop in to complete paperwork. The goal is to install a key-card access system so other officers can utilize the facility.

Patrol Division – Capt. Aldenberg:

- Officer Colburn has been selected as a new K9 officer, replacing Officer Tucker who resigned from the K9 Unit. Officer Tucker's canine partner, Sabre, has been reassigned to Officer Colburn and is being renamed Duke. Officer Colburn and Duke will attend the 14-week Boston K9 Academy beginning September 14, 2020, to receive basic Patrol training.
- K9 Officer Tennis will be retiring his canine partner, Ace, effective September 1, 2020, after 8 years of service.
- K9 Colt, retired in September 2017, will be put to rest today. He served as partner to both K9 handlers Detective Brandreth and retired Sgt. Biron over an 8.5 year period.
- Officer Jered Maguire is on extended military leave until July of 2021.
- Currently there are 4 officer on light-duty and 4 officers out on injury status.
- Newly promoted sergeants Emmett Macken and Mark Harrington have been assigned to Patrol as Street Supervisors; Sgt. Macken assigned to the midnight shift and Sgt. Harrington to the 4 to 12 shift.
- 14 officers hired November 2019 and 2 pre-certified officers hired March 2020 have completed their field training program and have been assigned on their own to patrol duty.

Special Enforcement Division – Capt. Sanclemente:

- During the months of June and July, the full SWAT team participated in monthly tactics training, and the Sniper Unit participated in firearms qualifications. The SWAT team responded to a couple of barricaded subject calls.
- Tryouts for the SWAT Team will be held at the end of the month: 14 officers have signed up to participate.
- Several members of the Division participated in various online trainings throughout the two months.
- 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.
- Congratulations to Street Crime Unit Detective Mark Harrington, who was promoted to Sergeant on August 9 and began his new assignment as a Patrol Street Supervisor.
- 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 as to how many of the 14 individuals trying out for the SWAT Team would be selected. Capt. Sanclemente advised that the Team currently has 4 openings to fill. Of those who pass the rigorous tryout process, 4 will be selected to fill the vacant positions and any others will be placed on a list for one year, to be drawn from in the event positions become vacant over the course of the year.
- Comm. Spradling enquired as to what attributes are looked for to fill SWAT vacancies. Capt. Sanclemente stated the MPD SWAT team follows the national and New Hampshire tactical officer associations' guidelines. The tryouts consist of four parts: Physical Test (1.5 mile run, situps, pushups, pullups); Firearms Skills; Decision Making (via scenarios); Oral Boards. Of the 14 candidates trying out, all but one are patrol officers.
- Comm. Content commented on a recent SWAT call out reference a barricaded subject call on Walnut Street. A victim reported how pleasantly surprised she had been with MPD's / SWAT's response to the incident and praised their efforts. She appreciated a female officer speaking with her and providing a seat within a cruiser while the incident unfolded.

Investigative Division – Capt. Leighton:

- One of the School Resource Officers for Central High School, Tom Ouellette, resigned from MPD effective August 1, taking a position with the Weare, NH, PD. Officer Lisa Callahan has been selected to fill the vacant SRO position, but school assignments are still being ironed out. The SROs who were assigned to Patrol for the summer will stay in Patrol pending school opening due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Detective Kevin Jusza was activated for military deployment, effective August 6, 2020 to August 2021. His contributions to Detective Squad investigations will be missed.
- Patrol Officer Max Rahill was selected to fill the detective position and begins his assignment August 13. Detective Rahill did 3-months of career development with the investigative division and should be a good fit.
- Isaiah Rivera-Perez, suspect in the murder of Jaden Connor on Central Street, on July 14, was arrested in Tewksbury, MA, on August 11.

Questions/Comments/Discussion:

- Comm. Sherman enquired if the retirement or resignation of investigative personnel is disruptive to ongoing investigations. Capt. Leighton advised that there is usually a smooth transition as the detective leaving the agency knows ahead of time and has time to close out cases. No further cases are assigned to that detective, and in the event the case needs further investigation, the case will be assigned to another detective. Often times two detectives work on the same case, so the one remaining will take over full investigation.
- Comm. Sherman further enquired as to how someone is selected to fill an investigative position. Capt. Leighton stated that Chief Capano announces that a position is vacant and requests any officer interested in assignment to the position to submit notes of interest during a certain time frame. Once all notes have been compiled, a review is done of the each candidate's work as an officer and then a selection is made of the candidate who would be the best fit.

Legal Division – Capt. Mangone:

- Working to identify a candidate to fill an open Records Specialist position created by the resignation of Amanda Goodwin on July 24.
- Records Unit personnel have been working diligently during the COVID crisis to assist residents in obtaining the records they request. The MPD lobby has been open to the public throughout the crisis, however quite a few requests have been made and handled via mail or e-mail.
- Legal Unit personnel are working on administrative changes with the Hillsborough County Attorney's Office and Manchester District Court, attempting to make operations move smoother as all entities deal with the COVID crisis. It is expected that phone conferencing to start in September will begin to chip away at backlogged court cases Working with the HCA office getting paperwork to them via scanning.

Questions/Comments/Discussion:

- Comm. Sherman enquired as to the number of staff in the Records Unit and what public requests do they have to deal with. Capt. Mangone advised there are 9 staff members, including 1 supervisor and 1 assistant supervisor. The Records Unit receives requests for accident reports from citizens, attorneys, as well as insurance companies. They also process gun license applications.
- Comm. Sherman further enquired if providing copies of reports generated revenue. Capt. Mangone informed him that the department does charge a nominal fee for copying.
- Chief Capano advised that the Legal Division gets inundated with right-to-know requests that consume a great deal of time.

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

- The recruits hired March 23 are currently finishing up at the NH Police Academy, scheduled to graduate August 21. Due to COVID concerns, there will not be a public ceremony. Upon returning to MPD, the recruits will have one week of in-house training before heading into the field training phase at shift change on September 1.
- Five recruits hired July 23 currently attend the PD's in-house academy, preparing for their start at the NH Academy on August 31.
- An entry-level police officer test will be administered on August 22. To date, HR has reported 60 applications have been submitted. There is usually a surge of applications in the 7 to 10 days prior to the exam date, we certainly hope that is the same case this time.
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- The Training Unit continues to reach out to certified officers and currently there are 8 certified officers in the beginning stages of the hiring process.
- There are currently 3 dispatcher openings, with an additional opening coming at the end of the month with the retirement of one of the communications supervisors. Filling the positions is currently in process, as well as conducting the promotional process to fill two communications supervisory positions.
- The department has taken delivery of 6 new Ford Explorers, which are being outfitted for police duty and should be in service in early October. Additionally, the department has taken delivery of 3 out of 6 Ford Fusions that were ordered earlier in the year. These also are being outfitted and should be in service shortly. The Explorers and Fusions will replace older marked and unmarked vehicles currently in service.
- There are facility issues.

Questions/Comments/Discussion:

- Chief Capano advised that PIO Heather Hamel does a great job posting the police officer exam on social media and other venues.
- Comm. Spain enquired if the COVID pandemic a contributing factor in the number of resignations. Chief Capano advised that the resignations are due to officers getting fed up with the current negative public view of law enforcement. Should those in law enforcement be taken to task for abusing their power? Absolutely, but it is not okay to demean all law enforcement. Officers are expected to take any abuse from the public without retaliating. No matter how well an officer does his/her job, it will never be enough to satisfy some.

5. COMMENTS FROM ASSISTANT CHIEF GRANT

- During the COVID pandemic it has been business as usual for the PD. COVID precautionary procedures of wearing masks on calls for service, using hand sanitizer, social distancing have become the norm for everyday life.
- Recruiting is in full swing; encourage the commissioners to spread the word that we need officers and to take the test on August 22. So many from the public are interested in letting us know how we can improve the department – to them I say come on in and change from the inside.
- Will be increasing the PD's fleet of vehicles a bit to accommodate the increase in sworn complement.
- The first quarter crime stats have been posted on the PD's website. Trying to keep up to date with the quarterly postings. Fireworks complaints, which often are reported as gunshots heard, increased the Aggravated Assault stats category.

Questions/Comments/Discussion:

- Comm. Castillo commented that school resource officers play an important role in the schools. They develop positive relationships with the kids, indirectly teaching kids that officers are good guys. Assist. Chief Grant responded that there is a subset in society that won't focus on all the good officers do, they prefer to concentrate on a few adolescent arrests, one that involved one student attacking another.
- Comm. Castillo stated she sees her role as a commissioner as a bridge between the public and the city police. She promotes the cops at every opportunity and encouraged fellow commissioners to do the same.
- Comm. Spradling stated that there is a nationalized cry for reform covering all police departments. The movement is promoted by critical groups and rabble rousers who offer no productive discussion.
- Chief Capano commented that PD's attempts at doing something nice in the community get criticized. He referred to the department sending a car to do a drive-by for a kid's birthday and for that good deed the department received a 91-A right to know request how much it cost to do that, how it affected the number of cops actually patrolling the streets.
- Comm. Spain enquired what was being done to reach out to other ethnics and religions to encourage becoming police officers. Chief Capano advised the SROs talk to kids at school, officer attend church functions, Training officers attend job fairs, they reach out to the military. We post on Monster and Indeed. The department has done as much as we know how to do. People are just not applying in the numbers of years past.
- Comm. Content stated that residing in NH is just not attractive to blacks, yet just 30 miles south it is a melting pot of ethnicities.

6. COMMENTS FROM CHIEF CAPANO

- The Records Management System training is wrapping up and getting close to going "live," probably early September.
- Capt. O'Keefe mentioned the opening of the new substation on Elm Street; looking at also opening one in the millyard.
- As of July 1, the PD's authorized complement of sworn officers increased to 257; however the department is down 16 officers. Thanks BMA approving funding in 2019 for a three-year plan of adding 10 officer per year, the department will see an increase of approved complement to 267 officers in FY2022
- The department was approved for Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) funding for patrolling homeless camps in neighborhoods, or wherever they may be set up. The camps are causing health concerns and there has been an increase in violent behavior. We work with the Mayor's office and the Health and Fire departments to control the situations.
- The School District contracts with MPD and other city department for certain services. At a recent school board meeting, all contracts were approved except for the School Resource Officer contract. They want to define the job of the SROs and put together a list of dos and don'ts. They are not happy with the cost of providing SROs.

Chief Capano explained that the PD charges entry-level salary rate to the schools so the department can't go any lower. Currently there are 9 SROs: 2 at Central and 1 at Memorial, West and MST and 1 at each of the 4 middle schools. A study was done a couple of years ago and determined that Central has the highest number of incidents and MST the least. It was therefore decided to move the MST SRO to Central and then hire a part-time reserve officer to cover MST.

Due to increased violence at West and Memorial High Schools, with fights occurring in the cafeteria and bathrooms, the school board unanimously approved having an additional officer presence at each of the schools each day for a four-hour period between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., in the form of paid details. Now the school board wants to remove SROs from the schools due to national issues.

The issue will be further discussed and voted on at meeting of the full school board on August 25. The new current contract will remain in place until a new one is established. Schools are not expected to go into live session until November, although MST may begin sooner.

- With the increase in sworn complement, Chief Capano advised he has decided to bring back the Bike Patrol in the Patrol Division. There are still some issues to be worked out.
- He would also like to maintain the downtown walking route for as long as the SROs remain in Patrol due to the delayed opening of schools, and assign 3 permanent officers for walking so they can get to know the neighborhood.
- Chief Capano commented on the cry for police reform and stated he is a firm believer MPD being accredited through CALEA standards. Only 15 departments in N.H. have achieved accredited status, and nationally, only 5% of all agencies are accredited.
- During this unrest involving police reform there is a lot of inaccurate information being given out which has caused a national trend and public cry for defunding police programs. Thankfully, this has not been seen coming from our local government. At the same time the people are calling for police programs to be defunded they are also demanding that cops receive additional training which costs a lot of money. Even if a training session is "free" for an officer to attend, the department would have to pay overtime to another officer to backfill that officer's spot while at training.

Questions/Comments/Discussion:

- Comm. Sherman enquired if there was any movement on the bail reform issue. Chief Capano advised the police departments and county attorneys continue to be frustrated. The old system that was in place worked, though it had a few issues. Rather than fix the few problems, the ACLU took issue against the whole bail system. The flight risk and danger to the community factors are coming back into play to hold someone without bail. Chief Capano cannot understand how bail commissioners make decisions to let dangerous people back out on the street. The same people keep committing the same crimes over and over again.
- Comm. Sherman enquired if there is any end in sight or plan in place to end the homeless camps. Chief Capano advised there is a long-term plan to redirect camp inhabitants to housing and services, however the space where camps are located is a green space and requires a court injunction to remove the camps. In order to obtain an injunction, all negative activity going on in the camps needs to be documented. As has been discussed at previous meetings, there are some camp inhabitants who don't want services and don't want to live inside.

7. RETIREMENTS / RESIGNATIONS

Comm. Spradling acknowledged the following:

- Brian Caldwell, Sergeant/Training Director, retired effective 07/15/20, after 20 years with MPD.
- Brian Bovyn, Communications Supervisor, retired effective 07/31/20, after 32 years with MPD.
- Matthew Pettengill, Communications Supervisor, will retire effective 08/31/20, after 17.5 years with MPD.
- Amanda Goodwin, Records Specialist, resigned effective 07/24/20, after 4 months with MPD.
- Thomas Ouellette, Police Officer, resigned effective 08/01/20, after 17 years with MPD.
- Matthew Comeau, Police Officer, resigned effective 08/03/20, after 5 years with MPD.
- Fred Gillis, Sergeant/Community Policing, resigned effective 08/07/20, after 15.5 years with MPD.
- Jeremy Millan, Police Officer, resigned effective 08/07/20, after 8 months with MPD.

8. COMMISSION ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

- Comm. Spradling commented on his appreciation of PIO Heather Hamel posting promotions and new hires on social media, keeping Commissioners informed.
- There was no Commission Administrative Business that required a vote.

9. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING / MEETING ADJOURNED

The date of the next commission meeting was set for Wednesday, September 9, 2020, at 09:00 hours. The location of the meeting has yet to be determined.

There being no further business to discuss, on motion by Comm. Sherman, seconded by Comm. Spain, the Commissioners voted unanimously to adjourned the Public Session of the meeting at 10:25.

10. NONPUBLIC SESSION

There was no Non-Public Session.

Respectfully submitted by:
Kim Demers, Secretary

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