**BERLIN POLICE COMMISSION**

**MONTHLY MEETING**

**PUBLIC SESSION**

**DATE: THURSDAY, MAY 4, 2017**

**TIME: 7:30 A.M.**

**PLACE: BERLIN POLICE DEPARTMENT CONFERENCE ROOM**

**I. Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Comm. Nault at 7:30 a.m.

**II. Roll Call:** Commissioners Jerry Nault, Marc Tremblay, and Pierre Morin were present.

**Others Present:**  Chief Morency, Deputy Chief Buteau, Jenn Cloutier, and Councilor Roland Théberge

**Recorded by:** Lisa Arguin

**III. Acceptance of Minutes of April 6, 2017:** Minutes were unanimously accepted as printed, on a motion by Comm. Morin, seconded by Comm. Tremblay.

**IV**. **Monthly Financial Reports:** The report was unanimously accepted, on a motion by Comm. Tremblay, seconded by Comm. Morin.

**V. Old Business**

1. **COPsync:** The April meeting was postponed by COPsync to May 22. This is the State’s sole-sourced vendor, and Chief Morency will speak with Pam Urban-Morin to find out if other departments have also had issues with them.

1. **Body-Worn Cameras:** The AG’s policy has new language surrounding the wiretapping statute which may result in officers being held civilly or criminally liable if their cameras are inadvertently left on without permission. The chief is waiting for a return call from Ann Rice for clarification.

1. **Concord Police Memorial:**  The State’s memorial ceremony will be held on May 19. Family members will be escorted by Lt. Godin and Officer Marsh. The PD’s memorial statue is on schedule to be refinished sometime after July 1, and the mulch surrounding the memorial will be replaced this month.
2. **Telephone System**: The city manager is working on the bid. The process has been delayed because the City’s current phone system contract ends this year, and he is looking into the possibility of getting the same system for City Hall.
3. **Budget:** Chief Morency met with the mayor, who was looking for $100,000 from each department’s FY’18 budget. The PD will get credit for turning back approximately $50,000 in benefits from this year’s budget; in addition, reductions were made to the windows, building maintenance, AEDs, rifles, and radios CIP requests to achieve the mayor’s goal. The chief will purchase four radios from this year’s budget, to assist with the reduction. Reduced CIP funding will still provide for replacement of some AEDs and windows in three of the coldest offices, as well as completion of the downstairs project. The chief brought special enforcement funding to the mayor’s attention, noting that the City’s special events have increased the PD’s budget. Chief Morency recommended removing those funds, letting each department cover their own costs; but the mayor prefers to leave the appropriation where it is, and have the PD oversee the expenses.

The chief was also approached by two additional councilors for cuts, but he explained what he and the mayor had arrived at for reductions.

1. **IEA Training:** Frank Harris will continue working on training. The chief spoke with the governor and found him to be very aware of the importance of resources for mental health.
2. **Gorham Study for Police Services**: The Town agreed to have MRI conduct a study. The chief had the opportunity read MRI’s feasibility review; he also looked into the MRI study of Berlin that was done years ago and found that it includes statements and recommendations about the Gorham PD. He provided copies to the Gorham town manager and police chief. The town manager previously approached Chief Morency about sharing the cost of the review; he declined, noting that it is a study of Gorham at this point. Comm. Nault thanked the chief for sharing Berlin’s report with Gorham.
3. **School Court Diversion Program**: Project Aware received $60,000 for a court diversion program. Bob Thompson is handling the project and will team up with the North Country Consortium to create the program. The school has done very well incorporating mental health needs but now needs to include a drug counsellor.
4. **Repeater Frequency:** The Fire Department was approved by the FCC for a repeater frequency. Once the radios are reprogrammed, the PD’s tactical repeater will be returned.
5. **Safety Committee: ATV Ordinance:** The ordinance was reworked; connector trail language remains, and youth operator language was updated. The City’s operator age restriction is now 25. The House passed language including the age of 25 as well, but the Senate is considering 21. Regardless of the State’s decision, the City’s ordinance will remain at 25. Gorham, however, will follow the State’s decision, which may create difficulties in consistency in rules between communities if the age of 21 passes. In that case, Berlin will need to educate the public on its more restrictive rules.

**Stop Sign:** A stop sign will be placed at the intersection of Memorial/Madison. This is one of several intersections where motorists are already required to stop, and the chief hopes this does not open the door to everyone requesting a sign.

**Hillside/Jericho Intersection**: Original roadway plans included a flashing light at this intersection, but it was somehow omitted; a crossing guard has been placed at the intersection since. Mike Perreault advised that adding a light now would cost $10,000. Two years of a crossing guard at the intersection has already covered the cost of a light, but the chief was asked to return to the Safety Committee with alternative options. He since came across signs with flashing lights that operate on solar power. The cost for two signs is approximately $7,000, and he is now researching competitors’ pricing. He should have a solution before the end of this fiscal year. If the best price is $7,000, he intends to pay $2,000 from this and $5,000 from next year’s crossing guard budgets.

1. **Rifle Sight Replacement:** Sights are being replaced, once the officers qualify on them.
2. **Other**: Dispatch Training: The conference went well and provided a good opportunity for networking. Comm. Nault extended kudos to Jenn for all she does and for her article on life after dispatching. Comm. Tremblay expressed the same sentiments, noting that dispatchers are right in the thick of things with other first responders.

**Friendship House**: AVH has opted out of being part of the Friendship House.

**DRED** has not returned the chief’s call with regard to patrolling the Nansen Ski Jump area.

**VI. New Business**

1. **Groveton PD Assistance**: Special Enforcement Officer Pete Pelletier has been hired as Groveton’s police chief. The department is apparently in complete disarray, and he is meeting many hurdles. The Berlin PD has been helping however possible, and he is very appreciative.
2. **Roger Williams Degree Program**: Roger Williams is offering on-line associates and bachelor’s degree programs at discounted rates for NEACOP members, $2,500-$7,500. PD contract terms currently provide reimbursement for education expenses to employees who further education in their field, provided there are funds available in the budget, and they reach a certain grade.
3. **Accident Information Release:** In light of the Privacy Act, the PD has gone from releasing to currently not releasing accident information. People are being referred to the State for the information. If the language changes, the PD will change as well; the issue is being monitored.
4. **Highway Safety Grant Resolution:**  The annual resolution allowing the PD to apply for and accept grant funds has been postponed to May 15, due to scheduling.
5. **Granite Hammer Meeting:** The meeting is tomorrow, and hopefully new grant funding amounts will be disclosed.
6. **“Call to Duty” Scholarships:**  $500 scholarships will be awarded to Braeden Cooney, Emily Theriault, Katlyn Coulter, and Noah Dumas. These applicants will be furthering their education in the criminal justice field. Comm. Morin volunteered to be on the next selection committee; he also recommended reclassifying the scholarships as a book awards, in order to prevent them from impacting other scholarship or grant awards.
7. **Monthly Statistics**: Statistics were reviewed. Felonies have been knocked down, but calls for service have risen considerably. The rise in assists to the ambulance service is attributed to their calling for help with disorderly mental health patients and drug-related calls.
8. **Correspondence**: The chief received notification of the AVH 5k Race; Kiwanis Bike Rodeo; CHaD Fisher Cats Game; Special Olympics Torch Run on May 20; and Chiefs Golf Tournament on June 2. The PD’s “Call to Duty” Golf Tournament is scheduled for September 8.
   * The chief also received numerous training notifications, including sobriety checkpoint training.
   * Jenn Cloutier will attend the upcoming North Country Interoperability meeting;
   * Thank you notes were received from an anonymous citizen for ensuring the safety of the community; Gary Peters for assisting the Fire Department; and Cpl. Joe Priest for the PD’s fundraising efforts for his family.
   * NHPSTC is changing its protocol on class absences.
   * Lt. Riendeau will represent management at Officer Eric Benjamin’s graduation from Roger Williams University.
   * The Public Safety Trade Show will be held July 1.
   * Comm. Morin recently noticed an officer assisting two kids and a woman who had been riding their bicycles near the Marketplace. One of their bike chains had fallen off, and the officer fixed it; the woman was extremely happy. The commissioner was unable to see who the officer was but asked that the chief relay kudos on his behalf.
   * School Incident: A man recently stormed into school past three teachers who tried to stop him; he was heading for the principal’s office. SRO Arsenault was off duty at the time but happened to be in the gym when he heard people yelling for help. The PD has dealt with this person in the past. Although the SRO tried to avoid it, he ended up taking down the subject, detaining him at school but not arresting him. The subject filed a complaint and sworn statement against the officer but wanted to retract them once he realized the incident had been captured on the school’s video system. This individual created an emergency response, school lockdown, and made a false accusation against an officer; a retraction will not be allowed. If someone is going to file a complaint, it had better be the truth.
9. **Other**: Drive In the 50’s is June 1.
   * The animal case mentioned at last month’s meeting is still being worked out, and the PD is currently awaiting the decision on custody of the animals. Their removal was the right thing to do, and the bill for their care may be substantial.
10. **Public Comments**: Councilor Théberge asked if the increase in accidents is related to the PWD not responding to calls for road conditions; he asked for clarification of the PD’s policy. The chief advised that the PD is not responsible for monitoring road conditions. The only agreement the PD has with the PWD is that it will notify the PWD if officers notice the roads getting bad. Officers are handling calls and are not routinely available to check the roads; the PWD’s on-call supervisor is responsible for monitoring and addressing road conditions. With regard to an incident a few months ago when the PWD waited until morning to send out a crew, the chief believes the PWD’s contract terms surrounding a four-hour call-in came into play.

Councilor Théberge then noted that the roadway bump-outs on Cambridge and Sessions will be completely removed**,** and some of the others will be scaled back.

1. **Adjournment of Public Meeting:** Comm. Morin motioned to adjourn at 8:50 a.m. The motion was seconded by Comm. Tremblay and carried unanimously by Comm. Nault. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 1, 2017 at 7:30 a.m.