

**BERLIN POLICE COMMISSION
MONTHLY MEETING
PUBLIC SESSION**

DATE: THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2020
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 Nault, Tremblay, and Morin were present.

Others Present: Chief Morency, Deputy Chief Buteau, and Jenn Cloutier

Recorded by: Lisa Arguin

III. Acceptance of Minutes of September 3, 2020: One grammatical error will be corrected; minutes were unanimously accepted as amended on a motion by Comm. Morin, seconded by Comm. Tremblay.

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

V. Old Business

A. Drug Task Force: The most recent applicant should be on board for December 1.

B. Hiring Process: The applicant interested in part-time work is in the background investigation phase of the process. The next process is underway with two applicants.

C. COVID-19 Task Force: Trick-or-Treat with precautions is moving forward.

- Instead of River Fire, Light-Up the Sky is scheduled for October 28. The event is intended for locals and will not include vendors and large gatherings. Hopefully, the regular River Fire event will resume next year.
- Chief Morency has notified all PD employees that if they opt to travel outside of New England, they are to immediately be tested for Covid when they return, and they will be required to use their earned time until results are in.

D. K-9 Status: Officer Gale and Kodiak graduated from their first round of training. The Expedition is the K9 vehicle, and a cage is on order.

E. Vehicles: Because of Covid-related delays experienced in acquiring the Explorers ordered months ago, there is potential for some of the new vehicle equipment costs to be recoverable through Covid funds reimbursement.

F. Projects: The installation process for the new dispatch desks was extensive and is now complete. Everything is operational.

- Sewer: It was discovered that items flushed from one of the Rec Department's public restrooms have been contributing to sewer backup issues in the PD basement. The chief addressed the issue with City Hall, and the restroom has been temporarily closed. There is a possibility that the Rec Department line can be redirected; however, this will not eliminate issues with the PD's line. The chief will continue to look at options and will provide an update at next month's meeting.
- G. **Other:** Commissioner Nault signed renewal paperwork for the AVR RDD's annual contract for services.

VI. New Business

- A. **Prison Incident:** There is an individual going around to various locations who refers to himself as the "First Amendment Auditor." He acts in a manner intended to elicit a law enforcement response while a member of his "team" calls the local PD and waits at that location to video record the officers' actions. The "Auditor" then follows up with a request for all PD videos, SOPs, recordings, etc. This happened in Berlin on State Prison property. He was wearing a full ski mask, acting questionably, and not obeying the officers while someone parked across the street recorded it. The PD is currently working on his requests for records.
- B. **Records Request:** Courts are reopening. There has also been an overwhelming amount of frivolous lawsuits and requests for videos and records, and the PD is spending an extensive amount of time responding to records and SOP requests. Many agencies have found it necessary to hire an extra person because of the hours involved in researching records and determining what is exempt due to privacy laws. If this continues, there will need to be staffing changes, as the PD cannot keep up with the time frame limitations for responses. Unfortunately, the PD is no longer measured by what it does; it is measured by what others say or do.
- C. **Commission on Law Enforcement Accountability:** The governor has executed new orders, some of which include a \$24,000 price tag for training alone. These orders will affect local law enforcement agencies as well at the NHPSTC. Chief Morency has been asked and agreed to sit with the governor and attorney general to determine how these orders will be implemented. In the meantime, he will be looking for funding to supplement the cost.
- D. **NHRS Retirement Rate:** The new rate may result in an \$84,000 increase to next year's PD budget.
- E. **Threats Against Law Enforcement:** There are many things going on surrounding the safety of officers. For example, a threat was called-in to the Berlin PD that one officer will die on the 31st. There are also conversations among gangs that if you see an officer with his gun out, shoot him, because now is the time to get away with it.

- F. Budget/Negotiations:** It's time to prepare the next fiscal year budget and to negotiate a new contract. City Hall is currently reviewing new insurance plans.
- G. Promotion:** A corporal position was posted, and it was determined that Officer Adam Labonte will be promoted next week.
- H. Statistics:** Statistics were reviewed and discussed.
- I. Correspondence:** Two thank you notes were received.
- Several training opportunities were highlighted.
 - There is a possibility that the VA may be able to assist candidates who are veterans with the cost of attending the police academy.
- J. Other:** None

VII. Public Comments: None.

VIII. Adjournment of Public Meeting: At 8:45 a.m., on a motion by Comm. Tremblay seconded by Comm. Morin, the Commission adjourned to non-public session by roll call vote per RSA 91-A:3 II with all commissioners voting in the affirmative. There were no decisions made in non-public session. Public session reconvened at 8:55 a.m., at which time minutes were unanimously sealed on a motion by Comm. Morin, seconded by Comm. Tremblay, as the divulgence of information would adversely affect the reputation of a person other than a member of the board. The public meeting adjourned on a motion by Comm. Tremblay, seconded by Comm. Morin.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, November 5 at 7:30 a.m.