

**BERLIN POLICE COMMISSION
MONTHLY MEETING
PUBLIC SESSION**

DATE: Wednesday, February 3, 2021
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 7:33 a.m.

II. Roll Call: Commissioners Nault, Tremblay, and Morin were present.

Others Present: Chief Morency, Deputy Chief Buteau, Captain Jeff Lemoine, and Jenn Cloutier.

Recorded by: Kimberly Bijeau

III. Acceptance of Minutes of January 7, 2021. Chief Morency advised that under section III it should indicate Nashua and Lebanon and not Nashua and Claremont. There was also an issue with the use of the word predecessor with reference to the discussion on the chief's position. It was determined that the word successor would be more appropriate. Minutes were unanimously accepted as amended on a motion by Comm. Tremblay seconded by Comm. Morin.

IV. Monthly Financial Report: There was discussion in reference to overtime expenses. A separate line item has been created to more accurately show Covid-19 related expenses; the Covid-19 overtime expenses are also still included in the overtime line item within the budget. Chief Morency advised on a number of quarterly payments that are showing in the overall budget but haven't reflected in the revenues yet. There was discussion in reference to a number of contractual time-in-grade promotions that will affect the patrol line item totals. The financial report was unanimously accepted on a motion by Comm. Morin, seconded by Comm. Tremblay.

V. Old Business

A. COVID-19 Task Force: Chief Morency advised on the new Covid-19 flow chart. Discussion ensued with reference to quarantine as it pertains to employees that either have or have not been following the CDC/DHHS guidelines. Workman's comp will cover the cost for employees that are out due to Covid-19 related illness (whether contracted on or off the job) but will not cover illness resulting from the vaccination. Officers have been covering details at the Brown School vaccination site and it has been going smoothly with no security issues.

B. NHPSTC Department Certification: Chief Morency has received a letter in reference to the president's order pertaining to officers meeting certain standards through the department's policies on choke holds and neck holds. The letter confirms that the department has met the minimum standards.

- C. **Tower grant:** The department only had about six days to put the grant together. There is an issue pertaining to the tower being on leased land. This will need to be resolved before the department can move forward with the grant. The department has a year to work on the issue. Options include extending the current lease or looking into the city purchasing the property which is located on Cates Hill. There is a plan B involving the use of a different tower but the plan would involve a lot of additional work and the tower doesn't have the height and therefore wouldn't provide the PD with the coverage needed.
- D. **Hiring Process:** The background check has been completed on the new dispatcher and she has a start date of February 21st. Wade is meeting with a candidate for the officer's position today to finish up on her background. She has been issued a conditional job offer which is customary prior to the start of the background check. She will then have to complete a polygraph and psych evaluation test. This would fill Jon Imperial's position. There is still a certified, out-of-state officer that is in the process and possibly one other candidate. The increase in out-of-state interest is contributed to the job postings through Indeed. February 13th there will be an additional physical fitness and written test.
- E. **Dish mount antenna:** The department has received payment from the insurance company but the equipment is backordered to March. Once the equipment comes in the department can schedule the installation with OME.
- F. **LEACT training:** Officers normally have 8 hrs. of additional training on top of the firearms and regular training that the department does yearly. The council's plan is to go with 6 hrs of training with an additional 4 hrs of training the first year. The following year, 2022, there will be a total of 16 hrs and by 2023 there will be a total of 24 hrs. The council has been specific on the training courses they want. There was discussion in reference to the additional training hours and the impact it will have on the budget. The additional training hours will pertain to both part-time and full-time officers. There is a full day training on Tactical Medic coming up next week in Bethlehem.
- G. **Other:** The PSTC subcommittee determined that state-wide only approx. 30 % of departments were doing psych evaluations on new hires. A portion of state forfeiture money will now go towards grant funding for departments to put towards psych evals. The cost for a psych eval typically runs between \$175 and \$500. Cost is based on whether the eval is completed in person or the written portion is just reviewed by a psychologist with no in person meeting. Testing is similar to the Myers-Briggs test.

VI. New Business

- A. **Outside overtime rate:** The current rate of \$65/hr has been in place for a number of years. During this time there have been insurance increases and wage increases among other things. Based on that rate the department is now losing \$1.91/hr. The average current rate is \$76.57. Discussion ensued pertaining to the difference in overtime pay and the outside detail rate. The department also charges \$25/hr for the use of a cruiser. It was proposed that the rate be increased to \$70/hr. The new rate was unanimously accepted on a motion by Comm. Morin, seconded by Comm. Tremblay.

- B. Call to Duty Scholarships:** There was no golf tournament last year due to Covid-19. The department still intends to do scholarships totaling \$2,000 and the applications have been sent out to area schools and colleges. The department is hoping to hold the tournament fundraiser this year. Discussion ensued reference securing the date in September sooner rather than later.
- C. Budget and CIP meetings:** Chief Morency advised the Commission on his meeting with the mayor and discussion with a few council members with reference to the budget. It was apparent that a good portion of the department's budget increases come from training, position changes, and a significant increase in insurance and retirement deductions. Discussion ensued comparing the department's budget increases with that of other departments and with reference to the chief's meeting with the city manager on the capital improvement plan and some of the definitions that may provide more flexibility within the line item. One of the potential capital improvement plans involves changes with the recreation department.
- D. Contract negotiations:** There have been a couple of meetings and there is another planned for tomorrow. Discussion ensued with reference to the current proposed changes including a number of changes in the language of the contract.
- E. Cruiser Accident:** Chief Morency advised the Commission on the accident involving Rachel striking another vehicle while pulling out of the PD. Discussion ensued with reference to the challenges pertaining to pulling out from the PD. There has also reportedly been issues with two windshields having to be replaced. One believed to have cracked from the cold weather and the second was struck by a rock.
- F. Grant authorizations:** Chief Morency advised the Commission that it is the time of year that the department renews their grants for Highway Safety and Fish and Game. Commissioner Nault entertained a motion that the department move forward with the grant application process and accept the grant money. Motion was seconded by Comm Tremblay and was unanimously accepted.
- G. Statistics:** Statistics were reviewed and discussed. A number of the statistical changes were believed to be due to Covid-19.
- H. Correspondence:**
- A letter of appreciation was received from a woman with reference to the dedication and sacrifices that the officers make.
 - Mike Gentili thanked the department for allowing him to be a member
 - A letter from Lisa Arguin was read to the Commission.
 - Vaillancourt and Electric submitted an estimate for the heating tape reference the ice buildup above the rec department door
 - Training opportunity through Roger Williams University; Internal Affairs Investigations
 - Barnett's holding conference (Rachel)

- Highway Safety Partners offering 50% off on speed radar trailers and radar units
- A 'need request' for floatation devices
- \$6.28 phone cord for Hollie
- First amendment summit: \$25 cost (virtual)
- \$200 for software
- Crowd management / Civil rights training
- Governors auction
- Talk about putting dispatchers in Group II
- Purchase from Amazon; cones for cruisers
- Jane Young filling in for Attorney General. Gordon McDonald has been appointed as Chief Justice to the NH Supreme Court.
- Number of forfeiture bills
- Request from the library for Dennis Gale and the K9 to do community policing event
- Cyber security training
- Thank you from the fire department in reference to a fire at Carl Mercier's house

I. Other: Discussion in reference to how busy the drug task force has been and a number of arrests made over the last week involving large quantities of fentanyl, guns, and cash. Charges will be federally and will result in a number of forfeitures for the department.

- Chief Morency advised on a subject that has made a request to speak with the Commission with reference to the return of a firearm. The Commission unanimously agreed that since the weapon is evidence in a case it should not be released until such time as the case is resolved.
- The department has received reimbursement from UPS in reference to two suppressors that were lost.
- SPOTS will now be providing NH drivers license photos; was scheduled to be online this week but has been delayed.
- Berlin EMS has been bought out by Butler Transport out of Maryland. Jenn had a meeting with the fire chief and the assistant fire chief to discuss changes with dispatching procedures. The ambulance service has a new operations manager that comes from Conway Fire. Jenn has another meeting next week to discuss the changes further and the city is in negotiations to renew the contract.
- JOne training: Jenn advised that the department went online with e-citations and e-complaints at the end of last week. Traffic citations and complaints will now be electronically sent to the courts and DMV.
- A contract has been signed with the Conway Humane Society and there were no changes.

VII. Public Comments: None.

VIII. Adjournment of Public Meeting: 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 (a), (b), (c), and (e) with each commissioner voting in the affirmative. There were no decisions made in non-public session. Public session reconvened at 09:45 a.m., at which time minutes were unanimously sealed on a motion by Comm. Nault, seconded by Comm. Tremblay, as the divulgence of information would adversely affect the reputation of a person(s) other than a member of the board. The public meeting then adjourned on a motion by Comm. Nault, seconded by Comm. Tremblay.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, March 4, 2021 at 7:30 a.m.