**BERLIN POLICE COMMISSION**

**MONTHLY MEETING**

**PUBLIC SESSION**

**ZOOM MTG ID: 860-2801-2737**

**DATE: THURSDAY, MAY 7, 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 and Tremblay were present at the PD; Comm. Morin participated via conference call from his home. (All motions and decisions are hereby noted to be made from these respective locations.)

**Others Present:**  Chief Morency, Deputy Chief Buteau, Jenn Cloutier, and Officer Mike Pearson

**Recorded by:** Lisa Arguin

**III. Acceptance of Minutes of April 9, 2020:**  Minutes were unanimously accepted as printed, on a motion by Comm. Morin, seconded by Comm. Tremblay.

**IV**. **Monthly Financial Report:** Reports were reviewed and unanimously accepted on a motion by Comm. Morin, seconded by Comm. Tremblay. The budget is still running ahead, but there are several anticipated expenses moving forward, including the second portion of the contractual evaluation-based pay.

**V. Old Business**

1. **Budget:** Chief Morency met with the mayor who readily agreed there is no place to cut in the PD operating budget. CIPs were reviewed, and the chief agreed to reductions to the line items for uniform jackets/coats and car computers.
2. **Drug Task Force:** The chief received confirmation that the DTF grant funds are in place. As most of the State’s grant accountants are currently handling Covid-related programs, he is still awaiting confirmatione that there will be flexibility to cover Milan administrative costs,. The Milan member will hopefully be in place for the month of June. The grant term is two years, and the team will exist as long as grant funding is provided.
3. **Jericho Power Donation:** The donation was accepted by the Council, and the designated purpose for the funds remains broad. As donations to the PD exceeding $25 are also brought before the Commission for acceptance, the Commission unanimously accepted the $5,000 donation on a motion by Comm. Tremblay, seconded by Comm. Morin.
4. **COVID-19 Task Force:** Meetings have decreased to 2x/week and now include discussion on reopening and getting businesses back to work. FEMA will assist with the PD’s time-related costs, and the CARES Act will cover equipment and stipends. The chief noted that while the stipend idea originated from good intentions, he is not a fan. He is concerned about the animosity it has created as well as the public’s perception and would rather have seen the stipends go to those who are inherently at risk.

Discussion ensued and shifted to the OHRV trails. The Task Force will make their recommendation to Council Monday night as to the reopening of trails, and Chief Morency requested the Commission’s input. It was the Commission’s general consensus that people using the trails will need to continue social distancing to mitigate risk, and they have the right not to use the trails if they are uncomfortable doing so.

1. **NHPSTC Changes:** The BPD currently has two candidates enrolled in the Academy. At this time, all training is conducted on-line with remote participation, but the final 5-6 weeks of training will be completed at the Academy.
2. **Officer Michael Pearson:** The Commission welcomed Officer Pearson on board and congratulated him on his graduation from the Academy. He was one of the top students in his class but unfortunately graduated without a formal ceremony or fanfare due to Covid-19 concerns.
3. **On-Line Forms:** Forms have been developed for the PD website which can be completed on-line, and the capability to have them digitally submitted is being researched. There are security-related issues involved.
4. **Other: Call-to-Duty Scholarship**: Applications are being reviewed by individual Committee members, and decisions will be made shortly.
   * **Highway Safety Grants**: The BPD’s award has again decreased; this has been the trend for the last three years, since Highway Safety’s administration changed. This year, the PD’s award is $1,800 for bike patrol only with no funding for other areas. Awards are being issued based on fatality statistics, with no funds provided for prevention. Not much has been allocated to communities north of Concord, and preference is being given for highway patrols of major routes. Highway Safety funding has been key to keeping accidents down in our area, and unfortunately, less enforcement will eventually equal more accidents.

**VI. New Business**

1. **Phone Contract:**  To prevent a recent issue with the voice mail system from reoccurring, Arcomm recommends they login monthly to restart and perform system health monitoring. The fee for this service is around $100 per month, and it is necessary. The PD will try to absorb the cost.

1. **Novel Coronavirus**: (refer to Old Business, D.)
2. **Zoom for Commission Meetings**: Mayor Grenier received positive feedback regarding last month’s Commission meeting on Zoom, and he asked if the PD will continue using it once the virus concerns are relaxed. Chief Morency noted that while there are some positives to using Zoom, meeting with the public face-to-face is important. Since Zoom has a history of being hacked and abused, he recommends to continue using it through the virus phase and resuming in-person meetings afterwards. Discussion ensued. Comm. Nault agreed with the chief, expressing additional concern regarding the increased opportunity for non-community members to weigh-in on Berlin issues; Commissioners Tremblay and Morin agreed. It was the unanimous consensus of the Commission that Zoom use is appropriate for the time being, but once the pandemic concerns have subsided, meetings open to the public will require personal appearance.
3. **First Net Tower:** There is a new tower on Cates Hill which provides priority, preemptive AT&T cell service to emergency services during system overloads and during emergency incidents.
4. **Juvenile Court Diversion**: Renee DePalo, Alternative Sentencing Director at the Grafton County Department of Corrections, will be taking over Coös County’s diversion program. She will be a great addition to the juvenile justice restorative program.

1. **Call-to Duty Scholarships**: (see Old Business, H.)
2. **NHPSTC Training:** (see Old Business, E.)
3. **Statistics:**  Statistics were reviewed and discussed.
4. **Correspondence**: As follow-up to a letter to the editor regarding the PD having “cameras throughout the City”, Chief Morency corrected and clarified that: In 2006, prior to the PD having in-car computers, grant funds were used to acquire a wireless MESH network; the grant was heard and accepted at a public meeting; cameras are positioned to monitor the City’s critical infrastructure, not to monitor throughout the City; and the PD’s armored vehicle does not have a 50 caliber mount.
5. **Other**: Restorative Justice: The program customarily involves a detective, and one will be assigned in the future.
   * ERT training is critical and on-going, but in-person training has been temporarily postponed.
   * The WMCC is looking for a board member who can hopefully relate to students.
   * Skywire has purchased new lights and will install them on the Dummer Yard tower next week. Mr. Dawson requested a longer-term contract in light of his outlay, but no contract has been signed.
   * BHS and the Berlin and Gorham PDs are working on a plan to honor this year’s championship athletes; they were robbed of recognition by the pandemic.
   * The PD has received numerous complaints from a woman on upper Main Street and has been doing everything it can to address her concerns.
   * Comm. Tremblay asked Officer Pearson for his point of view on the unfortunate turn of events during his last few weeks of training. Officer Pearson stated the transition in training from in-person to on-line was flawless, and other than defensive driving and simunitions, he was able to receive essential training.
6. **Public Comments**: None.
7. **Adjournment of Public Meeting:** At 8:40 a.m., the meeting adjourned to Non-Public Session per RSA 91-A:3, II (c), by roll call vote on a motion by Comm. Tremblay, seconded by Comm. Morin. Public Session reconvened at 8:50 a.m.; there were no decisions made in Non-Public Session, and minutes were sealed on a motion by Comm. Tremblay, seconded by Comm. Morin, as their release could adversely affect the reputation of a person other than a member of this Commission. The meeting adjourned unanimously on a motion by Comm. Tremblay, seconded by Comm.Morin. The next meeting will be held on **Wednesday, June 3 at 7:30 a.m**.