

**MINUTES OF THE STROUD AREA REGIONAL POLICE COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING OF AUGUST 10, 2022**

The regular meeting of the Stroud Area Regional Police Commission was held on Wednesday, August 10, 2022, at 7:00 p.m., in the Stroud Area Regional Police Meeting Room. Commission members in attendance were: Armand Martinelli, Daryl Eppley, Joanne Kochanski, Brian Bond, Mary Pat Quinn, Sonia Wolbert (arrived 7:02), and Tarah Probst. Absent was Rod Baechtold. Also in attendance were: Chief Jennifer Lyon, Captain Scott Raymond, Tracie Kresge and Solicitor John Prevoznik. Commission member Rick Staples, attended via Zoom.

**SPECIAL NOTE**

Mr. Martinelli announced that due to the COVID-19 pandemic and to meet the requirements established by the Office of Open Records for virtual meetings, this meeting was being audio and video recorded via Zoom from the initial announcement of the meeting until its end. The meeting Zoom link was posted on the SARPD's website where the public could join the Zoom meeting, interact, and ask questions in real time.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Martinelli called the August 10, 2022 regular meeting of the Stroud Area Regional Police Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. and called roll.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Solicitor Prevoznik reported that executive session was held prior to the meeting, which began at 6:32 p.m. and ended at 6:57 p.m. Members of the commission present were Mr. Martinelli, Mr. Eppley, Ms. Kochanski, and Ms. Quinn. Mr. Bond arrived at 6:39 and Ms. Probst arrived at 6:56. Mr. Staples participated via zoom. Discussed were three personnel matters, a litigation matter, and a security update. No decisions were made.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mr. Martinelli led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**MINUTES OF JUNE 8, 2022 AND JULY 13, 2022 COMMISSION MEETINGS**

Motion made by Ms. Wolbert, seconded by Mr. Eppley to accept the of June 08, 2022 Commission Meeting Minutes. All voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion made by Ms. Kochanski, seconded by Ms. Wolbert to accept the July 13, 2022 Commission Meeting minutes. All voted aye. Ms. Probst abstained based upon her absence from the last meeting. Motion carried.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS – AGENDA ITEMS**

None.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

The Chief reported the Department received a letter from Stroudsburg Borough Council requesting better enforcement of its ordinances as well as requested the number of citations issued for fireworks violations on or around July 4, 2022. The Chief responded that she has added a new item to the Agenda called Chief's Report. The purpose of the Chief's Report is to keep the Commission informed on: i) current issues; ii) update on previously reported issues; and iii) address any concerns or issues which the Commission or owner municipalities would like to address.

**CHIEF'S REPORT**

Fireworks. The Chief spoke in detail about how the fireworks calls were handled by the Department. She stated that she did not believe the situation was handled correctly by the Department from the top to bottom. The Chief took responsibility for the Department's response and stated that she is actively addressing the issues discussed to ensure the Department is held accountable to the highest standard. As to the Department's response, the Department responded to 18 fireworks calls from 7/1-7/5. During that time, a total of one citation was issued, that being in the Borough of Stroudsburg. The Chief acknowledged that the Department was not staffed properly for the holiday and officers did not follow up with callers to gain additional information in order to prosecute. She reported the entire situation was exacerbated by the Department's computer systems being down which affected computer systems in the cars and the phones. The Chief outlined a future plan to address fireworks which will include the following:

proactive patrols in unmarked cars, targeted enforcement in all three municipalities for known fireworks hotspots, seeking residents' assistance to set up temporary cameras to obtain video evidence of violations, and pushing a media campaign.

The Chief addressed a complaint made by a Stroudsburg resident Keith Swiatkowski at the last Commission meeting. She indicated that Captain Raymond had been in contact with the complainant multiple times to discuss the situation he experienced. The Chief stated that she also spoke to Mr. Swiatkowski about the Department's failures regarding the fireworks and acknowledged her responsibility and apologized.

Municipality Meeting Requested. The Chief reported she also believes that a bigger issue is that the municipalities believe that the Department is non-responsive to certain quality-of-life complaints. The Chief reported that she is investigating that issue to determine the cause. She acknowledged receipt of the letter from Stroudsburg Borough referenced previously in the meeting and acknowledged the importance of quality-of-life issues for the community. The Chief thanked Mayor Probst for bringing this to the forefront of her attention. As a result of the letter and the fact that the Department covers three municipalities, she would like the opportunity to address everyone's issues and concerns in order to develop an actual plan for the Department under the current limitations (staffing shortage, inability to hire, and increased mandates). The Chief requested that she meet with representatives from the three municipalities to discuss what issues are important to them. She indicated that she would email the Township and Borough Managers with some dates to set a meeting. She stated she will report back to the Commission on the progress next month.

Ms. Probst thanked Mr. Martinelli for addressing this situation and stated that she has been complaining about the quality-of-life issues in Stroudsburg since 2016 and the issues have gotten worse during the day. She stated that she doesn't know what the community would do without the police, that she has respect for what the Department does and how we do it but that we need to figure out different ways to police. She stated she sees cops driving around but not walking. Ms. Probst opined that if the police can drive, they can walk as well. She also stated that officers do their jobs at bar closing but also need to do it during the daytime with open drunkenness as she is the one receiving all the calls and complaints. She indicated that she appreciated the Chief's report and the efforts the Chief proposes on the behalf of the Borough of Stroudsburg.

#### **DEPARTMENT REPORT FOR THE MONTH OF JUNE AND JULY 2022**

Motion made by Ms. Wolbert, seconded by Mr. Bond to accept the June 2022 monthly report as submitted. All voted aye. Motion carried unanimously. Motion made by Ms. Kochanski, seconded by Ms. Wolbert to accept the July 2022 monthly report as submitted. All voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

##### **Operations Committee**

No meeting.

##### **Personnel**

No meeting.

##### **Safety**

Mr. Staples reported they had a meeting on 8/9/22. The committee discussed issues involving the building. The caulking for a window in the detectives office is being scheduled. No mold was found in the ducts but cleaning is being recommended. The rear of the building will eventually need to be graded due to water runoff concerns. There was a concern with the alarm system at HQ involving additional alarm pull stations and audio and visual aids for the building interior. An estimate is being generated for this for next years' budget. Several smoke detectors were repaired. There were reports for six officers who sustained minor injuries while at work requiring no time off and seven minor vehicle accidents most resulting in no damage.

##### **Police Pension Board**

No meeting.

##### **Non-Uniform Pension Board**

No meeting.

**Budget/Finance**

First meeting for the 2023 SARPD budget scheduled for 8/18/22.

**Negotiation Committee**

No meeting.

**SARPC Foundation**

No meeting.

**Solicitor**

No report.

**OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Motion by Ms. Wolbert, seconded by Mr. Eppley to accept the unaudited Treasurer's Reports as submitted. All voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

**BILLS PAYABLE THROUGH AUGUST 10, 2022**

Motion by Ms. Kochanski, seconded by Ms. Wolbert to accept and pay the bills payable through August 10, 2022 as submitted. All voted aye. Motion carried unanimously. Mr. Eppley inquired about the status of 2 new vehicles. Chief reported that the vehicles are not on the road and in the process of being upfitted.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Officer Matthew Gallagher Resignation**

Motion made by Ms. Kochanski, seconded by Ms. Wolbert to ratify the Chief's acceptance of Officer Matthew Gallagher's resignation from the SARPD effective 7/19/22. All voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

**Gallagher Ballistic Vest Purchase**

Motion made by Ms. Wolbert, seconded by Mr. Eppley to allow former Officer Matthew Gallagher to purchase his fitted Vortex ballistic vest, serial #AEXPG2-A-IIA, in its original purchase amount of \$1,164.24. All voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

**Officer Tyler Mitchell- Extend Probation Period**

Motion made by Ms. Wolbert, seconded by Mr. Eppley to accept Chief Lyon's recommendation to extend Officer Tyler Mitchell's probationary period from 8/23/22 to 2/23/23, subject to any further extension for time off during that period based on the need as reflected by the Chief for additional review of conduct and to provide added training contingent upon Mitchell's and Union's written acceptance prior to 8/23/22 or else be deemed a termination. All voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

**Car Computer Purchase**

Motion made by Ms. Kochanski, seconded by Ms. Wolbert to purchase 1 unbudgeted Patrol PC Rhino Tab M1 Computer from P&D Emergency Services (costars) utilizing funds from the DEA Seizure Account for an amount not to exceed \$6,800.00. All voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

**Portable Radio Purchase**

Motion made by Ms. Kochanski, seconded by Mr. Bond to purchase 5 unbudgeted Tait TP9405 Portable UHF radios from TuWay Communications (costars) utilizing funds from the DEA Seizure Account for an amount not to exceed \$14,300.00. All voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

**Taser X2 Package Purchase**

Motion made by Ms. Wolbert, seconded by Mr. Eppley to purchase 5 unbudgeted Taser X2 packages from Axon Enterprise Inc. (costars) utilizing funds from the DEA Seizure Account for an amount not to exceed \$13,300.00. All voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

**Advanced Endpoint Protection Purchase**

Motion made by Ms. Kochanski, seconded by Ms. Wolbert to purchase security service in the form of advanced endpoint protection from Arete Advisors which includes SentinelOne Complete endpoint protection software, Ranger Network Visibility and Control and Arete monitoring and response service for a 12-month term at a total cost of \$11,016.00. All voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

**Stroudsburg Area School District- School Resource Officer 7<sup>th</sup> Addendum**

Motion made by Ms. Wolbert, seconded by Ms. Quinn to approve the 7<sup>th</sup> Addendum of the SRO Agreement, establishing costs for part-time SRO's to work in the Stroudsburg Area School District facilities with the payment terms for the 2022/2023 school year being modified to allow for per diem use of an SRO due to the current SARPD staffing levels, a copy of the 7<sup>th</sup> Addendum to be attached to minutes and authorize Solicitor to finalize 7<sup>th</sup> Addendum. All voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

**2022 Operations Lieutenant Position**

Motion made by Ms. Quinn, seconded by Mr. Staples to set the 2022 Lieutenant Salary at \$112,500.00 and approve the Chief to begin the process per policy to fill the vacant Operations Lieutenant position. All voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS – NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

Ms. Probst inquired about how the Department recruits to hire police officers. Captain Raymond stated that the Department currently advertise on the Department's Webpage and social media, at all the police academies (to which he also goes out and speaks in person to the current cadets) and emails are sent to all the minority contacts and stakeholders of the Department.

Ms. Wolbert inquired about all the recent turnover in the Department and the reasons for it. Chief Lyon spoke about the police staffing crisis currently affecting police departments nationwide due to the current state of policing and negative media attention. Chief Lyon spoke about how almost every department in the State is short right now which allows officers to easily get hired by departments that they could not get hired for previously due to no openings and officers who are eligible for retirement are leaving. Contractual issues and amount of OT required by officers were also discussed.

Ms. Probst asked about the new hires and being trained in ordinance enforcement due to the complexities with three municipalities with three different ordinances. She suggested each municipality give the department their top ten ordinances for training and enforcement for new hires as some are more important than others.

Ms. Probst asked about the recent incident in which kids broke into the Ramsey School and set off fire extinguishers. Chief Lyon reported that the detective unit was working on that incident, suspects have been identified, and arrests are anticipated.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Ms. Wolbert, seconded by Ms. Kochanski to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 p.m. All voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.