

**MADISON DEPARTMENT OF POLICE SERVICES
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

5:30 PM

In-Person

July 8, 2021

Attendees: Chairman Ed Dowling; Vice-Chairman Marietta Lee; Commissioner Thom Cartledge; Commissioner Ann Rumberger; Commissioner Christina Cewe.

Also Present: Chief John "Jack" Drumm; Captain Joseph Race; Captain Douglas Harkins; Lt. Neal Mulhern; Al Goldberg – Board of Selectmen liaison.

CALL TO ORDER - REGULAR SESSION

Chairman Dowling called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m. and all rose for the Pledge of Allegiance.

ACCEPTANCE – MEETING MINUTES

MOTION by Dowling, second by Cartledge to approve the minutes of the June 10th Regular meeting of the Madison Board of Police Commissioners. All in favor; none opposed. So moved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Nancy Karas of 14 Willard Avenue spoke on behalf of neighbors from Seaview, Waterbury and Barberry Beach Associations, comprising approximately 150 households, concerning car thefts and vandalism in town. Her family has had their car stolen from their driveway two years ago, and since has had tires slashed and multiple vehicles ransacked multiple times. They are formally requesting Board of Police Commissioners act with speed to take steps to increase Madison Police Department presence in vulnerable neighborhoods from approximately 11:30 p.m. to 5:30 a.m.

Jim Ferenci of Seaview Beach Association spoke. He confronted the scary problem head-on three weeks ago in his driveway with his family.

Kathy Marsh of Knob Hill subdivision spoke. A backpack with Yale ID cards was found in her yard and she had 2 cars stolen. She feels a lot of the town is not going to wake up until it happens to them.

Lynn Gagliardi of Fairview Avenue spoke. She had 2 cars stolen last year and last week 2 cars were rummaged through.

CHIEF DRUMM: COMMENTS

He spoke with members from Seaview, Waterbury and Barberry Beach Associations regarding things we can control such as neighborhood watches, Ring cameras, private security, patrol techniques. Madison Police Department is a 30-person force and we are currently down to 25 officers. This is a phenomenon we have not seen in suburbs before. Dealing with kids under 17 years of age, living 3-5 in an apartment. The kids are bold; they know there are no consequences. There is not a criminal justice system in place for repeat offenders. We cannot chase them by statute. Very frustrating for Madison Police Department. We are trying to put funding in

place for overtime positions for officers between 11:00 p.m. and 4:00 a.m. Statistically, most cars taken Tuesday-Wednesday, 11:00 a.m.-4:00 a.m.

Captain Doug Harkins: 2021 there were 12 cars stolen. On July 6, 2021 there were 4 stolen in our area. The common denominators are unlocked cars and key fobs in cars. They are not breaking into locked cars. They rarely smash windows. Locked cars could drastically smash thefts. This is where the public can help police solve the problem.

Lt. Neal Mulhern: Our detective unit is a 3-man unit. We itemize everything in the car looking for fingerprints and DNA evidence. It takes an average of 4 hours to process a car and another 3 hours for report writing. We battle against reforms made to the juvenile justice system. We are not allowed to interview minors. There is not a juvenile offender database for DNA or fingerprints. The way the legislation is we cannot prosecute the offenders when we identify them. Flood lights due work as deterrents.

Chief Drumm: Asked for public's support when it comes to the budget process. Share your letters with the Governor's office and with your representatives.

Chairman Cartledge: Asked the public to support what the Chief has said about needing police officers by attending Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance meetings.

Chairwoman Lee: Homegrown solution we can implement quickly is to have a public action committee educating the public to take their key fobs out of the car, put in secure compartment and lock the cars.

Chairman Dowling: We will come back with broader action plan including education, security issues and patrolling.

Chairwoman Cewe left at 6:34 p.m.

Public comments ended with a break in the meeting for 3 minutes.

Meeting resumed at 6:45 p.m.

CHIEF'S REPORT

Budget / Financial Report: Chief Drumm provided an update on the budget. \$51,859 returning to the town. Next meeting will have new budget.

Chairman Dowling: It costs about \$3.5 M to run a police department of our caliber with very little resource flexibility.

Activity / Statistics: April-May-June 398 false alarms. These take about 20-30 minutes for two officers to go to the house. On average, amounts to 2 weeks of labor, or \$6,000-\$8,000 month to respond to false alarms. We had 210 911 hang ups, 109 burglar alarms, 50 suspicious vehicles, 28 suspicious people, 87 animal nuisances, 95 fingerprints, 134 assists to persons, 55 assists to other agencies, 84 motor vehicle accidents. There were 514 generated motor vehicle stops and 2, 391 total calls for service.

Training Report: Captain Race provided the training update. Training typically very light in June with vacations. Police Department participated in a total of 64 training hours. Training consisted of 48 hours SWAT training and 16 hours K-9 training. Training will pick up in July.

Monthly Traffic Report: The monthly report for June was not discussed. See attached report.

Community Calendar: Captain Harkins and Captain Race: Parade on July 4th and Fireworks on July 5th. The parade was well attended with big crowds. The fireworks were rescheduled from July 2nd due to rain and were uneventful as pertains to crowd control. There was less activity at the Surf Club than usual, but larger proportion of teenage attendance. We utilized mutual aid from State Police, Branford and North Branford.

The Summer Breeze Ride for Autism will take place on Sunday, 7/11/21 to benefit Sarah, Inc. The ride will start in Guilford and come through Madison shoreline. No change in community calendar until Madison Jaycees Triathlon and Closer to Free Ride which are both scheduled for July 11, 2021.

CHIEF'S CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence from neighbors of Bayberry Association, Seaview Association, Waterbury Association and Middle Beach Road regarding increase in car thefts.

TRAFFIC ISSUES

Chief Drumm: Need to update traffic log. In one week, there should be signage on Island Avenue similar to what we have on Neck Road; Share the Road, Pedestrians. Going to put back the two arrows by the Beach Club that went missing; designated curve that is required by the DOT. There will be a three-way stop sign by West Middle Beach and Island Avenue.

Chairman Dowling: We have some challenges with traffic issues where the Chief has addressed residents' concerns and we cannot get signs up in a reasonable amount of time. The challenge is with the Town's Engineering Department. We should have an inventory of signs we can put up within 48 hours.

Chairwoman Lee: Possibility of circumventing the Engineering Department, that is over worked and under staffed, with items meeting a certain threshold and going directly to Public Works.

Chief Drumm: Request for a 3-way stop sign on Copse Road where it meets Bradley Road. Chief will look at this next week and possibly add signage that can slow the speed down. Request to address speeding on East Wharf Road by curve. This deals with sightlines.

Finishing the paving on Route 1 and putting in the two crosswalks (by car dealership and by West Wharf and Route 1). We are hoping to get all signage we requested; audible device and strobe light costs approximately \$25,000 each. This should help give access coming from downtown heading to the beach. Will be able to cross safely at the intersection with enough warning East and West.

NEW BUSINESS

COVID Updates: Commissioner Dowling: possible hybrid of future BOPC meetings with Zoom to give the public more awareness and engagement. We will comply with FOI regulations.

Selectman Al Goldberg: Each board is able to decide on how it's meeting will be held through April 2022.

LIASON WITH STATE AGENCIES

Chief Drumm: two meetings next week; sub-committee on racial profiling and Accountability Task Force.

Marijuana legalization puts a burden on law enforcement. Regulation will take some time and testing is not secure. We face the challenge of seeing a lot of mandates for training before September and October.

CORRESPONDENCE

None.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Chief Drumm: Need date from Attorney General Tung to attend awards ceremony in August at Clinton Country Club, along with Dr. Henry Lee.

Commissioner Rumberger: Endorses everything said by fellow commissioners. Need for multi-prong public relations campaign without using Facebook.

Commissioner Dowling: Part of what makes us successful is connecting with neighborhood associations. We select our officers on their ability to articulate and listen as a means to engage with the public. The Chief started this process 10 plus years ago.

MOTION TO ADJOURN by Dowling; second by Cartledge. All in favor; none opposed. So moved. Meeting adjourned by 7:30 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.