

Rutland City Police Commission
March 8, 2021

Present: Chairman Sean Sargeant, Commissioners Luther Brown, Tony Romeo and Jeanette Langston.

Also attending: Chief Kilcullen, Commander David LaChance, Sgt. Sam Delpha, Crime Analyst Nathan Thibodeau and John Atwood.

Call to order by Chairman Sargeant at 6 pm.

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Langston moved to approve the minutes of February 8, 2021.

Commissioner Romeo seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

Public Comment

Chairman Sargeant provided copies of the draft memo to Chief Kilcullen regarding Guidance on Enforcement of Charter Section 9-22.13 (Political Activities). The draft memo has been approved by the City Attorney and provides instruction to the Chief on how to enforce the provisions of the charter given what was learned about 1993 case. The draft memo includes comments from 3 Commissioners and the City Attorney. He asked for a motion to authorize the Chair to sign the Guidance on Enforcement of Charter Section 9-22.13. Commissioner Romeo suggested making a couple changes to the wording in the memo based on the 1993 court case. These include using “non-sworn, non-uniform employee” as opposed to “dispatcher;” remove “select board” to not distinguish between any non-partisan political office; and replace “community” with “municipality other than Rutland.” Commissioner Romeo had hoped there would be more opportunity to discuss with Atty. Bloomer before signing.

Chief Kilcullen confirmed there are 11 non-sworn positions within the police department, 6 of whom are dispatchers.

Chairman Sargeant said he is not in favor of the proposed changes because the document is not meant to change the charter language, it is meant to advise the Chief on how to enforce the current charter language in light of a very narrow decision issued in court in 1993. The proposed expanded language needs to be reviewed by the City Attorney. Commissioner Langston agreed saying a rewrite or expansion should be done with the Board of Aldermen. Chairman Sargeant confirmed that this prohibition is enumerated in City Charter specifically for employees of the police and fire departments. Commissioner Brown supported the draft as written unless the City

Attorney agreed to the expanded language. Commissioner Romeo said he would check with the City Clerk regarding the charter language following the 1993 court case on the ballot that failed. Chairman Sargeant tabled the discussion for the next meeting in April to give Commissioner Romeo the opportunity to meet with Atty. Bloomer.

Commanders' Report

Chief Kilcullen said both Commander Sheldon and Prouty are not present so he reported on patrol. Commander Sheldon has been spending time with Sgt. Delpha getting him up to speed with administrative tasks and patrol, while also spending time with Commander Prouty getting acclimated with Project VISION and the Community Response Team. Patrol has been busy with a number of robberies at convenience stores over the past few months. An arrest was made last week for a robbery that occurred the week before and other arrests are expected. Sergeants Dickerson and Delpha have been coordinating the final session of Implicit Bias Training. The final session is scheduled for tomorrow for anyone that has some challenges. Commissioner Langston asked if there would be follow up to build on the initial bias training. Chief Kilcullen said they are discussing how to translate the awareness into reducing bias and if there is curriculum available.

Commander LaChance thanked the Commission for their stance on the Response to Resistance problem and the Legislature is considering those changes. The stance for the safety of the officers means a lot to the Department and the relationship with the Commission. He continued saying there are 3 applicants in background and testing at the Academy will be March 30. Several applicants will be tested followed by more interviews. He has been setting up the Policy Review Committee. Due to employee changes there will be an opening for Detective that will need attention. Thursday there will be sergeants testing. Commissioner Langston would like to talk about recruitment and retainment to help diversify the force to look more like our community. She asked if the hiring advertisements are being sent to any organizations or groups to publish through their networks. Sgt. Delpha said ads are posted on Indeed, which generated quite a few responses and applications, on the RPD website, Academy website and Corporal Williams was also using his contacts to spread the word. There are fees associated with some hiring platforms but Indeed provided a free trial period. Chief Kilcullen said he will take advantage of Project Vision List serve and that he will follow up with Commissioner Langston over the next couple weeks.

Mapping Update

Nate Thibodeau presented the Rutland City Police Department February YTD comparison with previous years. He said there have been 41 larcenies which is above average with shoplifting up and robberies up from 1 to 6. Chief Kilcullen said he believes

one person is largely responsible for the robberies. He explained how the graph relates to the 5 year average which accounts for different anomalies. Nate continued with the larceny breakdown saying shoplifting is slightly above at 17 and all other larcenies were above with motor vehicles way up and pickpocketing up. The mapping update shows robberies that primarily happen on South and North Main Streets. Burglaries have spiked at the hotel area on South Main Street, shopping plaza and Sector 1. Overdose maps, which are tabulated through HIDA, High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area, shows what is occurring with drugs in other areas. Most of the overdoses have occurred on South Main Street and Sector 1. This also shows the surrounding states of New York and Mass. If there is a spike in other states this data allows Nate to give police officers a heads up. Chief Kilcullen added that this information is only as good as who inputs their data. HIDA has a reporting portal used all across the country that Rutland is using but not many other places in Vermont. It predicts trends to the east and south of Rutland which is a benefit. Nate said as time goes on the more people that use the system the more accurate it will be. He said sharing this information helps us prepare for spikes in our area. Chairman Sargeant found it interesting that the spikes are happening almost simultaneously. Chief Kilcullen said in response to Commissioner Langston's request for information, more data is needed in terms of cases for human trafficking. He said there were a total of 30 cases and more data is needed.

Commissioner Langston asked about the status of the Legislature's decision mentioned earlier by Commander LaChance. Commander LaChance said the exception has been added but it has not been voted on yet. Chief Kilcullen said the testimony can be seen on YouTube channel or the Legislative Homepage and that the Department of Public Safety added additional language. Commissioner Langston asked if the Legislature voted on the school resource officer topic. Chief Kilcullen said none of these bills have been passed. Chairman Sargeant suggested contacting Rep. William Notte for an update.

Commissioner Brown asked if the increased larceny from automobiles was consistent with leaving home and car doors unlocked and suggested a public service campaign to remind people to take more responsibility and lock their doors. Chief Kilcullen said the numbers don't justify a PSA at this time. He added that they did meet with store owners a couple weeks ago in response to the burglaries. Commissioner Langston said such a PSA could be done once a week on social media through Facebook.

Budget Report

Chief Kilcullen reported that as of the two thirds of FY21 expenses are at 58% of the budget. He said the budget is in good shape but he would prefer to spend more money by filling more positions. Commissioner Langston suggested that new employees connect with Stay to Stay Rutland's concierge service through the Chamber of which she

is a lead concierge. Having relocated to Rutland herself, she found this service to be a huge benefit to integrating quickly in the community. Currently the service is contacting people who had been interested in relocating prior to COVID and working through the backlog to connect them through marketing efforts. The service helps connect people with real estate agents and anyone else they want to meet or learn about Rutland. She would be interested in helping any new folks coming into the area and it would be great to have a police officer as a concierge.

Chief's Report

Chief Kilcullen said April 11-17 is National Public Safety Telecommunications Week to show appreciation for our dispatchers. Officer Rosario has been assigned to the Downtown. Officer Rosario has been writing tickets downtown and that will create more compliance with the parking. Chief Kilcullen said he would rather have compliance than write tickets. Compliance is increased through environmental design by having the right signage. Commissioner Langston asked if there are other issues in terms of compliance besides parking. Chief Kilcullen said there has been some complacency as a result of COVID but with increased tickets there will be increased compliance. Commissioner Langston asked if there is a 15 minute grace period on the meters Downtown. Chief Kilcullen said no. Commissioner Langston said she would like to see the short-term parking spaces established during COVID continue after COVID. Chief Kilcullen said those are driven by one of the groups Downtown. Chairman Sargeant discussed the solicitation of bids by the City for a formal and permanent redesign of Center Street. He added that there might be an opportunity for Commissioner Langston to participate in that process. She suggested that Officer Rosario be included in that design process. Chief Kilcullen concluded his report saying the Firearms Training for all sworn officers will be in April.

Commissioner Langston asked about vaccination status. Chief Kilcullen said all personnel who wanted the vaccine have had the opportunity and today it was opened up to everyone within public safety including administrative staff and dispatchers. The hospital has a list of individuals they can call to receive the vaccine to prevent vaccines from going unused.

Executive Session

Chairman Sargeant said there will be an executive session for the April meeting to review all IAs.

Adjournment

Commissioner Brown moved to adjourn. Commissioner Langston seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

Meeting called to a close at 7:08 pm.

Submitted by: Barbara Spaulding

cc: Chief Brian Kilcullen
Mayor David Allaire
Police Commission
City Clerk Henry Heck
Board of Aldermen
Union President Elias Anderson