

**Rutland City Police Commission**  
**November 8, 2021**

Present: Chairman Sean Sargeant, Commissioners Jeanette Langston, Tony Romeo and Tom Calcagni.

Also attending: Chief Kilcullen, Commanders Sam Delpha and Greg Sheldon, Sgt. Mosher, Crime Analyst Nathan Thibodeau, Pat Hunter, Mayor Allaire, Patricia Garcia and Maria Davis.

Call to order by Chairman Sargeant at 6 pm.

**Approval of Minutes**

Commissioner Calcagni moved to approve the minutes of October 11, 2021. Commissioner Romeo seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

**Public Comment**

Mayor Allaire spoke regarding the proposed Mayor's budget and of not funding positions in the Police Department knowing that it has been difficult to fill vacancies. He explained that he is not "defunding" the police and in addition to the six funded vacancies, money could be found if the remaining 7-9 positions are able to be filled. Chairman Sargeant said he feels the community's support and no one feels "defunded." Commissioner Calcagni asked what is the difference between funding all the positions now instead of looking for funding later. Mayor Allaire said there are other pressures on the budget and he could not add the burden onto the taxpayers.

Patricia Garcia, 78 Baxter Street. Ms. Garcia inquired about whether the City has a noise ordinance. The Mayor said there is a noise ordinance but it is poorly written and difficult to enforce. Commander Sheldon said enforcement is progressive and starts with a verbal warning, followed by issuance of an ordinance violation ticket of between \$50-\$500 and lastly criminal prosecution. Ms. Garcia asked about the process of federal forfeiture of drug houses. Chief Kilcullen said the process as lengthy and the US Attorney is aware of this tool and when it is appropriate to use. Ms. Garcia's final issue was with Stephen Box who she felt was being aggressive and not forthcoming with his intentions in her neighborhood. Commissioner Langston said she is working with Mr. Box who is organizing landlords in the neighborhood to deal with neighborhood issues.

Maria Davis, 48 Baxter Street. Ms. Davis discussed drug issues in her neighborhood with absentee landlords. She discussed Porch Talks that are being organized by Mr. Box, neighborhood walks with police officers and Project VISION meetings that have included

discussion of the community becoming proactive by talking through issues. She also discussed her fears with the safety of an elderly disabled neighbor who may be being held against her will in her apartment. She discussed getting little response to try to help her. Ms. Davis said she hopes the Porch Talks and neighborhood meetings will help bring new ideas on how to deal with the issues in her neighborhood. Ms. Garcia said she also hopes some good comes from this effort but the problem is the absentee owners. Commissioner Langston discussed an investors' group who is looking into home ownership in the neighborhood.

Chair Sargeant said he received an email from Bruce Howard who was the victim of an attempted mugging and who was very pleased with Cpl. Alger's response.

Chief Kilcullen said he received a thank you from the VT Achievement Center to Sgt. Mosher for attending the Special Olympics Award Ceremony. He also received a thank you note from a North Carolina couple who were visiting and on Oct. 7 became stranded on Center Street. Officer Rosario assisted them.

Commissioner Langston said that through Social Tinkering, an organization she directs, she is supporting the efforts in the northwest neighborhood which started as porch talks and is now Neighbors Helping Neighbors. This effort introduces people and gets them talking to focus on helping to identify some of the issues in the neighborhood and find help from within the neighborhood. They are working with the schools now and the VFFC. Commissioner Langston discussed a text she received from Maria about a fight regarding drugs happening in her driveway on Oct. 30. Commissioner Langston called the police and when they didn't show up, she was referred to Sgt. Dickerson who did show up. Sgt. Dickerson did not know why the officers on call had not shown up but said he would look into it. She asked for an update. Chief Kilcullen took down the information.

Commissioner Langston also discussed a welfare check call by Mr. Box for Maria's neighbor. There was some discussion on the need to update the 911 system with regard to the 44 Baxter Street location which Officer Rice saw as 135 Robbins Street. Officer Mosher discussed what happened as he was on duty when the call was made. He said that Officer Rice did get to the correct property, but no one answered the door and there was no more information found. Commissioner Langston asked who to fix the issue with the 911 system. Chief Kilcullen said Andrew Strniste is the coordinator for the State 911. Sgt. Mosher will follow up to get it corrected.

Ms. Davis asked if witnessing a big black bag is enough to call in a drug deal. Chief Kilcullen said you can call for anything but seeing the bag is not grounds for the police to

enter an apartment. Ms. Davis asked if she video tapes the bags going into an apartment and emailed the footage as it is happening, would that be enough for the police to enter. Chief Kilcullen said no, despite the bag being indicative of drug activities, but more has to be developed in order to take action. However, he encourages the calls because an officer can knock on the door and that may lead to something more. Ms. Davis asked if there is anything a community member can do to make it easier for an officer to obtain entry. Commander Sheldon explained that reasonable suspicion is not the same as probable cause which is needed for a search warrant. Discussion continued regarding the frustration on the police and the community of arrested people being quickly released. Chief Kilcullen said calls and collecting information is helpful and might lead to an arrest. He added that regular calls will create a 3peat location for an address that will be discussed and resources will be directed there. Ms. Davis said she is more trying to get help for her neighbor. Commander Sheldon offered to follow up regarding the woman through a resource at Rutland Mental Health.

Commissioner Langston asked what constitutes a 3peat address. Nate said as long as the call gets a tag it is counted every two weeks. The only things not counted are false alarms, directed patrols and lock-outs. Chief Kilcullen added that calls for information that are handled by the dispatch are not counted. Sgt. Mosher discussed how callers can prevent calls from going over the scanner and very few calls go over the radio. Commissioner Langston asked which legislators should be contacted and was told all of Chittenden County. Mayor Allaire said both his administration and the previous administration have had meetings with the legislators to explain the harm being done by releasing those arrested for drug crimes. Ms. Garcia asked if would be helpful for her to talk to the state's attorney. Chief Kilcullen said the discretion of Vermont judges is not to put people in jail. Commissioner Langston said she has been invited to speak at the legislative meeting in January. Ms. Davis invited Ms. Garcia to the Neighbors Helping Neighbors meetings.

### **Communications from the Union**

Chief Kilcullen distributed copies of the new union contract highlights.

### **Commanders' Report**

Commander Delpha said the October trainings were completed including PT/CPR, Firearms and Use of Force. Chairman Sargeant asked how patrol is doing being down officers. Commander Delpha said they are treading water and triaging calls as they come in. Chief Kilcullen said call volume has been down but officers are still handling more calls per officer. Commissioner Calcagni asked if people are taking advantage of the staffing situation. Commander Delpha said staffing shortages are well known across the country and he suspects people are taking more chances. Commissioner Romeo said he

has seen increased motor vehicle violations in Downtown Rutland. Commissioner Langston asked if using names was typical at Rut Stat meetings. Chief Kilcullen said it is important for the those in the room to hear the names so they can get resources out.

Commander Sheldon said Megan Clark, Human Trafficking Case Manager, came back to work today full-time. Commander Sheldon received numerous calls from community members following the Baxter Street search warrant issues and he is working with the Dept. of Public Safety's Human Trafficking Task Force about bringing a civilian training webinar for the community. When he has more information, he will let everyone know. Ms. Davis asked who does the training. Commander Sheldon said one is a lieutenant from the State of Police who oversees the task force and the other person is non-law enforcement liaison for the Dept. of Public Safety. They are being training now along with a case manager from Chittenden County and our case manager will also be trained. There are only 2 Human Trafficking case managers in the state. The civilian training covers what are the key signs to look for and will most likely be held late this year or early next. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design will be the first week in December and he is awaiting final confirmation of the 4-day class and how many people can attend.

Commissioner Calcagni asked how PT went. Commander Delpha said a good portion of the people passed and excelled.

### **Mapping Update**

Nate Thibodeau presented the Rutland City Police Department October YTD comparison. He said the 3peat percent of call volume is 31%. The busiest day is Friday in October. The YTD comparison for October 31, 2021 call volume is 9,210, with the YTD average 9,639, directed patrols average is 723 with the current number at 675 for this year. Commissioner Calcagni asked if the call volume was lower due to staffing shortage. Chief Kilcullen said all calls worthy of response are responded to if not right away. For the October comparison the average is 944 with the current number at 915 which is a 9% decrease from the previous year. The YTD Call volume for Larceny (all other) is 84 and currently there is 95; Larceny Shoplifting the average is 97 and 2021 at 105; Aggravated Assault the average 43 and 2021 at 37; Breaking Entering Force the average is 42 and 2021 at 73; No force the average 22 and 2021 is 10; Robbery the average at 6 and 2021 at 16. Nate continued with Motor vehicle larceny, the average 58 with 2021 at 110. Larceny from Building the average 42 and 2021 at 42, Larceny Bicycle the 5-year average is 20 and 2021 is 22. Larceny pickpocket the average is 3 with 3 in 2021 and Larceny purse snatching is 3 YTD average and 0 in 2021. Overdoses the 4-year average is 44 with 63 in 2021, the last occurred on 10/16. Fatal overdose so far is 7 this year. Commissioner Langston asked whether there is a group discussing the overdoses. Chief

Kilcullen said Sgt. Dickerson was tasked with an OD Response Team a few years ago but due to staff shortage the program is being coordinated through HYDA and using Turning Point Recovery for non-fatal overdoses. Commander Sheldon said that Jim Downs of HYDA reported that Vermont has the highest increase of overdoses in the country per capita. He believes, as does the Chief, it is a lack of accountability and treatment. Commissioner Calcagni suggested that Nate change the title of the YTD Fatal Overdoses so that it reflects both fatal and non-fatal.

Nate continued with Arrest information for Larceny (all other) total cases is 95 with 18 arrests; Shoplifting is 105 with 60 arrests; Aggravated Assault total cases is 37 with 37 arrests, Breaking Entering Force 64 cases with 7 arrests, B&E no force is 10 with 3 arrests; Robbery is 16 cases with 4 arrests. In some instances, there was one person arrested associated with several cases. The Mapping Update shows thefts from motor vehicle mainly concentrated in Sector 1, Breaking Entering in Sector 1 and Aggravated Assaults in Sector 1. It was suggested

### **Budget Report**

Chief Kilcullen reported that as of a third of the fiscal year, expenses are about 29% of the budget.

### **Chief's Report**

Chief Kilcullen said since last month he has been attending the regular department head meetings and a vicious dog hearing on Oct. 21. The month was occupied with budget preparations which was presented to the Mayor on Oct. 28. There were a number interviews with VT Digger and Rutland Herald on staffing. The union contract was ratified and copies were provided. The Corporal promotions of Richard Caravaggio and Elizha Heter as of Oct. 31 and the oath will be administered on Dec. 13. The new hire ultimately passed the pre-academy PT, developed non-COVID systems over the weekend and after a day at the Academy decided it was not for him. Officer Plakas and Corporal Harvey resigned. There is one open communications officer position and Emily is preparing a flyer to post and we expect some trained dispatchers to apply. Commissioner Langston suggested Emily also send the flyer to CEDRR for their website. Chief Kilcullen agreed saying after a meeting with Lyle, there was a request to be added to the CEDRR website for hiring. Chief Kilcullen said the award ceremony is still being planned for December with date, location and time to be determined. The CPR/First Aid, Use of Force & Tactics and Firearms trainings were all completed in October but there are some make-ups that need to be scheduled.

### **Trainings**

DUI Certification for Officer Rice to complete the waiver process.

Commissioner Langston asked about the status of the Neighborhood Watch Program. Commander Sheldon said he is working on the paperwork and training. Commissioner Langston asked if the City has an emergency response manager. Mayor Allaire said that is the fire chief. Commissioner Langston suggested looking into the CERT Program, Citizens Emergency Response Team. Commander Sheldon said most Neighborhood Watch training teaches what is “suspicious”, when to call and how to be a good witness. He will be working with each quadrant of the community to establish a “Block Captain” who will coordinate for their block. Commander Delpha discussed liability and increased scrutiny nationwide and suggested the city attorney look over any training program.

### **Executive Session**

At 7:42 pm Commissioner Romeo moved to go into Executive Session citing Title 1 VSA Section 313 paragraph 4 - disciplinary or dismissal action against a public officer or employee. Commissioner Calcagni seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

Executive session exited at 9:04 pm.

### **Adjournment**

Commissioner Calcagni moved to adjourn. Commissioner Romeo seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

Meeting called to a close at 9:04 pm.

Submitted by: Barbara Spaulding

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