

Rutland City Police Commission
November 9, 2020

Present: Chairman Sean Sargeant, Commissioners Tom Calcagni, Tony Romeo, Jeannette Langston and Luther Brown.

Also attending: Mayor Allaire, Chief Kilcullen, Commanders David LaChance, Matt Prouty and Greg Sheldon, Aldermen Humphrey, Etori, Ryan, City Attorney Bloomer and Crime Analyst Nathan Thibodeau.

Call to order by Chairman Sargeant at 6:01 pm.

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Brown moved to approve the minutes of October 12, 2020.
Commissioner Langston seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

Public Comment

Alderman Etori expressed support for the Rutland Police Department in light of concerns in recent news stories. He spoke with Rose Kennedy and he supports the increased investment in sergeants to make a strong police force adding that he appreciates the high standards set by the Chief and patrol unit.

Mayor Allaire echoed Alderman Etori's sentiments and re-emphasized his support for all the men and women in blue and the leadership team at the RPD. He wants to see continued collaboration between RPD, Commission, the Administration and the Board of Aldermen speaking as a unified voice to make sure the department knows we have their backs and support them in their role in the community.

Chairman Sargeant discussed an Aldermen's meeting he had attended 3 weeks ago during which the City Treasurer mentioned the parking meter fund and use of the word "installment." He asked Treasurer Markowski for some history of income that goes into that fund. She provided him with 24 months of information and he created an analysis that was shared with the Chief and the Mayor. Chairman Sargeant asked whether the question of solvency was due to not selling parking permits or is it due to enforcement of parking. Parking meter revenue and parking permit revenue are down 45% year on year. There are less people parking and less people purchasing parking permits from the City. Meanwhile, ticket revenue is up 10% even during early and middle COVID. The Aldermen should consider in their budget negotiations regarding parking meter insolvency a change in rates or a change in how parking permits are sold. He will provide the analysis to anyone who is interested.

Commanders' Report

Commander Sheldon said two detectives were exposed to COVID and the Rapid Testing Protocol through the hospital was initiated. The protocol was sent to Judy Frazier, Chief Lovette and Mike Brookman for review. He is hoping the Rapid Testing Protocol will reduce the amount of time employees are out of work to 5 days.

There is a Dispatch Evacuation Drill being planned due to COVID to practice the logistics of transferring dispatch with the new phone upgrade. This will be done sometime in February with each shift being involved so all dispatchers and supervisors will be trained.

Chairman Sargeant asked if emergency housing for COVID exposure cases was still available for City employees at the Courcelle Center. Chief Kilcullen reached out to Mike Brookman, Health Officer for the City, who said that housing had been taken down. So the detectives were offered local lodging at the RPD expense. This was the first time anyone needed lodging. This may prove cost prohibitive in the future so the process is still being worked out, but there have been very few instances where lodging was necessary.

Commander Prouty reported that Nate Thibodeau is getting up to speed in his position with many tasks including working with Community Health Partners and Community Collaborative to use health outcome dashboards with overlays of crime data. This will help all the partners who provide resources to market areas where services are needed. John is doing awesome job while Commander Prouty works on the bigger Vision group which has expanded the Community Policing Subcommittee. Pat Hunter has been an incredible resource finding high quality vetted training to share with Rutland that includes community policing, history of policing and the negative impacts that have happened at the hands of police in marginalized communities. If presented in the right way, a lot can be learned to help officers understand what is happening in the moment and what's happening in policing. The investment in education is super important for the staff. Commander Prouty discussed Implicit Bias Training for new staff and his concern for the rising COVID numbers and whether they will go back to a lockdown at the Vision Center. Chief Kilcullen said in regard to the Implicit Bias Training he spoke with Nikki Fuller and the training will be remote with groups of 25 made up of supervisory personnel, staff and community groups for 3 two hour sessions. The dates still need to be finalized. Commander Prouty added that Pat found a presentation on Procedural Justice in New York State that will be shared with a working group with the Subcommittee on Community Policing involved in training.

Commander LaChance said there are still 5 openings with 3 applicants testing on Friday and several more waiting. Additional testing won't be until January.

Mapping Update

Nathan Thibodeau presented the mapping for 2020 YTD statistics on the impact of COVID. Chief Kilcullen said Part 1 crimes or index crimes are those that occur regularly and are reported. Nate reviewed the statistics and in most cases crimes are down. Chief Kilcullen discussed the difference between the "nature" column and the bronze column being the nature is how the call comes in initially and the bronze column is how the investigation may change the call.

Commission Langston asked for explanation on what is a directed patrol. Chief Kilcullen said a majority of those are directing personnel to a particular area for a particular reason or DDACTS approach, Data Driven Approach to Crime and Traffic Safety. Mapping out crime and crashes and identifying the time these are occurring and putting personnel in those areas to conduct traffic enforcement to reduce crime. The NHTSA contracts with an organization to conduct this training across the county at no expense but we are hard pressed to send Nate somewhere right now with COVID, but once this training occurs we will be able to produce a quarterly analytical product for DDACTS.

Commander Prouty discussed littering as a code to track needle pickups. This information is shared with our health partner.

Budget Report

Chief Kilcullen reported that as of the first quarter of FY21 expenses are 29% of the budget as is typical. The FY22 budget was presented to the Mayor. The overall budget is up \$283,000 with the bulk of the increase due to the significant increase in health insurance costs of \$219,000 and workers comp up \$45,000. City Hall worked diligently to try to reduce health insurance costs but unfortunately weren't able to do so to a significant degree. Therefore the budget reflects an increase in health insurance costs from \$800,000 FY21 to \$1,020,000 FY22. The portion of the budget is the Parking Meter Fund which had an overall reduction of \$8,000 and the overall budget for that fund is \$180,000. This fund carries life insurance costs for retirees of the parking meter position.

Commission Brown asked if there was a wellness program in the department. Chief Kilcullen said yes, a city-wide committee with representatives on it. Officer wellness is one of the pillars of 21st Century Policing. The aspects of that are physical wellness, emotional wellness and mental health. There is a peer support group at the department that is specific to the police department. The wellness committee was able to take

advantage of a \$2,500 grant from BC/BS to purchase a treadmill which was delivered a few weeks ago. It was no cost to the City.

Commissioner Langston asked if the peer group touch on officers' mental health. Chief Kilcullen said in addition to the peer support group there is a separate psychologist that helps with mental health issues. Commander Sheldon said the peer group has existed for a number of years. However after last year's officer involved shooting and the police station being shot at, it was determined that the peer support group needed to expand from 3-4 officers to 9 members. Five of which took training last year that is offered once to twice a year. Lori Gurney is the law enforcement counselor and she works exclusively with State Police and law enforcement and works closely with us and responds when we call her. There is a great working relationship with her. Commander Sheldon is currently working on a PSA panel with her putting together a PSA for EMS, fire and law enforcement around the state. These will go out in the next month or two to all first responder agencies. Lori has built trust with the officers.

Commissioner Langston followed up asking about the mental health stigma with the younger officers and if they are able to reach out for help. Commander Sheldon said he believes they are but the Peer Support Group has had training to recognize when an officer is starting to struggle. The Peer Support Group is active in reaching out to an officer involved in an incident or who shows signs of stress on the job. EAP counseling is also available but trust hasn't been established with that counseling so that is difficult because officers need to feel that the person understands law enforcement.

Commissioner Langston said she is concerned with officers' overtime and working many hours. Commander Sheldon said he is working with the patrol officers to create resiliency programs to combat the stressors of COVID, the pandemic, civil unrest across the country and local issues. The culture of looking out for each other is very good here.

Chief's Report

Chief Kilcullen said the State is involved in a national lawsuit in suing several pharmaceutical companies for the opioid issue. The Rutland PD has been subpoenaed for records going back to 1994. It is a massive records request so there have been internal conversations to figure out our responsibility. One of the first things Nate was asked to do was to look for reports that may satisfy what is being requested. It is a work in progress.

Much of our activity over the last month have been related to the issues that Alderman Etori mention and it is on-going with Attorney Bloomer.

Chief Kilcullen thanked Veterans for their service in light of Veterans Day.

The records clerk position was filled on Oct. 15. Hats off to Nora who has been on her own for quite some time and done an incredible job.

Trainings

September 2 to Nov. 2 - Domestic Violence Update, mandatory for all sworn officers, completed.

Nov. 10-12 – CRP and First Aid Training.

Dec 8 & 10 - Use of Force & Tactics Training for all sworn personnel.

Chief Kilcullen said his contract allows him to request permission to carryover two days of vacation he was unable to use. Commissioner Calcagni moved to approve the request. Commissioner Romeo seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

Chairman Sargeant said he does not prefer to meet virtually but on the basis of consultation, comments from the community and understanding the COVID infection rate is rising, he moved this meeting back to virtual so he is not in a position to go into executive session tonight. He expects the next meeting in December will also be virtual with an executive session that will be set up with separate call-in for members of the Commission and Board to participate.

Chairman Sargeant said he provided three policies at the last meeting. The Response to Resistance Policy or Use of Force Policy model has had language updated that is consistent with S119 and there are now differences between what is allowed and our policy. Atty. Bloomer has been conducting a legal review of newly proposed policy that is not ready for tonight. Chairman Sargeant may have to call a between month meeting of the Commission to review the model policy once it is through legal review because it needs approval to be consistent with S119 and out to our frontline employees. Chief Kilcullen said the new policy reflects the ban on choke holds and it's important to get it out as soon as possible. There will be more work on the development of another policy over the next 8 months to incorporate changes that go into effect July 1. But this needs to get out sooner rather than later and he doesn't want to wait until next month.

Chairman Sargeant said as soon as he has the proposed language from the Attorney's office he will distribute it to the Commissioners and schedule a special meeting of the Police Commission before the next December meeting. Attorney Bloomer added that there are four different policies based on how VLCT has set it up, Response to Resistance is the main policy but then there is a Duty to Intervene, Ethics and CEW/Taser policies. Attorney Bloomer said it would be helpful if the Chief have officers look at the CEW policy and give feedback.

Commissioner Langston said after reading the policies she noticed on the current policy page 11 there is a section on the last page regarding the Removal from Duty, but in the new 2020 model policy there wasn't anything about that. Chief Kilcullen said it is addressed in the Critical Incident Policy. He offered to email a copy tomorrow.

Chairman Sargeant said he has thumb drives for each commissioner with all current directives. He offered to mail them or the Commissioners can stop by his office at 77 Grove Street to pick up. Commander Prouty asked whether the directives were policies or going to be statutory. Chief Kilcullen said there will be statutory requirements within certain policies.

Chairman Sargeant asked if any of the Commissioners read through the links he emailed regarding policies on external vests, how they are viewed nationwide and the public's response to police depending on how the police are dressed when they show up. He asked if there was an appetite to discuss uniform policies for frontline officers. Chairman Sargeant said he will resend the links provided by Captain Scott regarding how officers dress changes the public's perception for discussion in December. Commissioner Romeo said he did skim through them and agrees with the perception. He said the vest could be intimidating.

Chief Kilcullen said except for accommodations for medical conditions only two vests have been authorized.

Adjournment

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

Meeting called to a close at 7:06 pm.

Submitted by:

Barbara Spaulding

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