

Town of Auburn
AUBURN POLICE COMMISSION PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES
March 5, 2024

D. Dion – calls the meeting to order at 6:48 PM and leads with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: David Dion, Police Commissioner, Patrick Bergeron, Police Commissioner, Joseph Rossino, Commissioner, Chief Pelton, Lt. Chabot, and Lillian Deeb.

Absent: Steve Grange, Neighborhood Watch Leader.

D. Dion - motion to go into non-public pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (2). **J. Rossino** – seconds and polled the members having received the affirmative from all. **Motion passes.**

D. Dion – at 6:54 pm reconvenes public meeting and Town Administrative, Chris Sterndale arrives.

D. Dion – motions to seal the minutes of the non-public session. **J. Rossino** – seconds. All in favor. **Motion passes.**

Also Present: Town Administrator, Chris Sterndale.

REVIEW MINUTES

P. Bergeron – motion to accept Public Minutes of February 6, 2024, as presented. **J. Rossino** – second. All in favor. **Motion passes.**

P. Bergeron – motion to accept Non-Public Minutes of February 6, 2024, as presented. **J. Rossino** – second. All in favor. **Motion passes.**

CHIEF’S REPORT

Chief – comments K9 officer will be starting drug school in April for eight weeks for certification and doing great job on patrol. He mentions Awards night is March 21st, again with FD. He mentions the PD’s participation in the Town Wide yard sale on May 11th here at the Safety Complex. He mentions the April 27th Durg Take Back event and department’s Taser and Less Lethal training on March 28th. He also explained to the commissioner that the Felony First Program is now obsolete and mentions Probable Cause hearing will now be back at the District Court level which will increase the Auburn Prosecutor’s time and impact the witness fee line for officers now having to attend those hearings.

LIEUTENANT’S REPORT

Lt. Chabot – comments on the 230-motor vehicle stops and 15 arrests. He mentions the uptick in Domestic related arrests the department experienced. He mentions the 14 investigative reports and the 975 calls for service.

OLD BUSINESS

D. Dion – comments Chris the Town Administrator is here to discuss Personnel Policy and opens discussion.

C. Sterndale – speaks on the overhaul being done of Personnel Policy. He explains about the three boards and HR stuff coming under the policy and how over the years things were simply added to the old policy. He explains changes with FD personnel really prompting these changes. He comments on meeting with each board to discuss some changes, mentioning he has some things wants to address and comments commission can ask whatever they have questions on. He further explains the existing policy tried to be a policy manual, employee handbook and procedural manual all wrapped into one and he worked on slimming down. He mentions Section 2 Written Complaint and deleting language about first giving complaint to employee the complaint is made about. Section 4.1.1 deals with Step Increases. He mentions in 2022 changes were made and by updating this section to reflect what happens when an employee is no longer on the Wage Scale a merit increase would be considered. **L. Deeb** – questioned the difference in color related to the changes being offered. **C. Sterndale** – mentions those are different edits by himself and town counsel and asked if that prompted a question. **L. Deeb** – refers to Section 4.1.1 B about when step increase will be implemented and questions the reason for language change to pay cycle following anniversary date. **P. Bergeron** – explains it is a payroll nightmare. **L. Deeb** – suggested payroll before. **P. Bergeron** – suggested language of anniversary date following within pay period. **J. Rossino** – questions that on page 25, Step Increase being subject to available. **C. Sterndale** – explains the funds would need to be budgeted. **P. Bergeron** – comments on the principle of awarding increases prior than a pay period following and suggests language change. **C. Sterndale** – comments on Section 6 Holidays, proposing a floating holiday, dropping Columbus Day allowing the town to pick a more convenient day like a Monday when the 4th of July falls on a Tuesday. **P. Bergeron** – comments if town picks it's not really a floating holiday. **C. Sterndale** – comments the town's intent is to make one day employees aren't getting things done or want a day off, let public know building is closed. He mentions the Chief discussed with him the department heads making he decision. **D. Dion** – clarifies when the decision gets made for this floating holiday. **L. Deeb** – mentions language was taken out as to when a holiday is used. **C. Sterndale** – mentions the departments can adjust in the same year. **D. Dion** – mentions maybe just keeping Columbus Day to simplify because banks and such are already closed. **R. Pelton** – asked what the staff at town hall thinks of the floating. **C. Sterndale** – comments on a clarification on earned time, mentioning the accrual rate is muddy related to first year and looked to clean up language. **P. Bergeron** – makes the suggestion to use months, giving the example of 0 to 48 months, employees realize 49th months accrual changes. **C. Sterndale** – mentions it's practiced correctly that it changes upon completion of first year but looked to clear language. He further mentions earned time usage. He's looking to limit allowing employees to take earned time that is not already earned, limiting it to 3 days. **L. Deeb** – mentions scenario of new hire had preplanned vacation and was short some time. **C. Sterndale** – comments time can be given off but without pay. **P. Bergeron** – questions why a limit then. **C. Sterndale** – gives an example of 10-year employee. **L. Deeb** – mentions recalling a letter to an employee about owing for taking unearned time. **R. Pelton** – comments on the complication if an officer is hurt broken leg two months on job. **C. Sterndale** - comments exceptions can be made with Board approval. **J. Rossino** – suggests adding language to that effect. **P. Bergeron** – comments earned time is a compensation and questions whether that falls under the powers to commission under RSA. **C. Sterndale** – comments unsure of answer and mentions also under earned time is a minimum usage, commenting changes were made to prevent massive payouts upon retirement. He also mentions the minimum usage can be waived if employment

circumstances prevent someone from using time. **J. Rossino** – questions whether this Board or Selectboard votes the exception. **C. Sterndale** – comments commission can draft the exception and have Selectboard approve. He further mentions taking out much of the details about insurance because insurance is benefits which is driven by budget. He explains doesn't want a tri-board meeting for little changes. **P. Bergeron** – mentions these changes are related to compensation and the PC board is responsible for that. **L. Deeb** – refers of the changes made to the health insurance last year and those changes were made without authorization from the Tri-Board so why have a policy that can be violated. **Lt. Chabot** – comments policy is not enforceable. **J. Rossino** – comments on the change and the financial impact on employees when there was a policy that regulated health insurance. **P. Bergeron** – comments employers can make changes. **L. Deeb** – questions again why have this policy. **C. Sterndale** – comments the policy is only speaks to when employee gets insurance and when it kicks in. **D. Dion** – questions who decides on plan. **C. Sterndale** – comments on Section 10.5 Reporting of an accident with town vehicle must be reported in 24 hours and he's suggested reporting be done immediately. **P. Bergeron** – mentions from HR standpoint 24 hours allows for drug testing and such and immediate might a liability impact on town but comments if the town's counsel signed off must correct. **C. Sterndale** – comments on the section dealing with exit interviews where exiting employee would meet with board members from opposing departments. **D. Dion** – mentions participating in exit interviews for employees leaving another department but defers to Mr. Sterndale. **L. Deeb** – questions why for example language for budgeting in now being added to the section dealing with Longevity when the language was never there in all the years. **C. Sterndale** – explains there are just specific things driven by the budget. **L. Deeb** – comments the Personnel Policy listed longevity as a benefit given to employers. **C. Sterndale** – comments there is no guarantee for COLA, Step or anything else unless it's budgeted and trying to clarify that, commenting this is not a union contract. **D. Dion** – questions when the decision for the longevity budgeting is made. **C. Sterndale** – comments during the budget season the Selectman approve setting aside those funds. He mentions there are other semantical changes. **D. Dion** – clarifies these changes will be presented again to the Tri-Board. **C. Sterndale** – explains this presentation will not occur again. **P. Bergeron** – explains why he included the wage study changes within the proposed changes. **C. Sterndale** – suggests Mr. Bergeron or Chief come before the Selectboard ahead of time because due to resistance and for justification of change. **L. Deeb** – reminds Mr. Sterndale the issue was already brought to members at the board and was supposed to be heard after new year. **P. Bergeron** – confirms this was already supposed to go before the Tri-Board from their last meeting. **C. Sterndale** – agrees these changes need to go before the Tri-Board. **L. Deeb** – comments on the Study being performed based on discussions from an even earlier meeting in the previous year. **P. Bergeron** – comments on the wages are currently based on a 2011 study. **L. Deeb** – comments this was initially discussed in 2021 and now sounds like decision won't be made for town wide study till 2025. **P. Bergeron** – reviews the proposed changes, commenting that it looks like everything was addressed. **C. Sterndale** – comments on getting a clean version of Personnel Policy wherein all the changes proposed have been made. He further mentions changes made to sexual harassment section and crime victim. **P. Bergeron** – mentions making addition of family medical leave changes. **C. Sterndale** – comments checking with town counsel. **L. Deeb** – asked about the language removing over 40 hours made under Overtime Section if it becomes assumed. **C. Sterndale** – confirms things covered under the law are covered and mentions a stripped-down social media policy.

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH UPDATE

Chief – updates the commission Melissa has been working with Steve and they will be looking into a new communication with National Chain with the Neighborhood Watch that's called Next Door. **L. Deeb** – comments Melissa is trying to see if this is a viable option. **D. Dion** – comments he's seen advertisement for this but hasn't click into the comments when some neighbor has posted.

NEW BUSINESS

D. Dion – comments the budget looks good. **Chief** – mentions the overtime line and mentions this is new for the department and expects a surge come summer. He further mentions wages are running a little under but proposed wages were created using an average and come the second half of the year when increases have been awarded this may not be the case.

D. Dion - motion to adjourn at 8:02 PM. **J. Rossino** - second. All in favor. **Motion passes.**

Meeting closed at 8:02 pm.

Minutes approved by _____ on _____.