

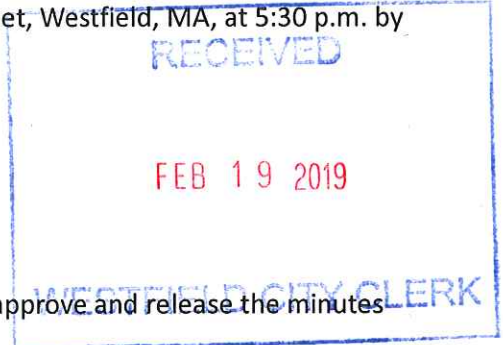
REGULAR MEETING OF WESTFIELD POLICE COMMISSION

WESTFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

JANUARY 14, 2019

The Westfield Police Commission meeting was called to order at 59 Court Street, Westfield, MA, at 5:30 p.m. by Commissioner Hupfer.

Roll Call: Karl Hupfer – Present
Leonard Osowski – Present
Felix Otero – Present



Approval and Release of Minutes: Commissioner Osowski made a motion to approve and release the minutes dated December 10, 2018. Commissioner Otero seconded that motion.

Karl Hupfer – Yes - Leonard Osowski – Yes – Felix Otero - Yes

Open Participation: Recording tonight’s meeting is Peter Courier of the Westfield Evening News.

City Councilor, Matt Emmershy addressed the Commission. He wanted to let the Commission know that he is happy to see that Sergeant Steve Dickinson is listed on the agenda for appointment to a Lieutenant. He said he is a landlord in town and came to know Sergeant Dickinson back in 2006 while participating in the Westfield Landlord Association. That association was founded by Sergeant Dickinson. It is a huge asset to the City. He stated again that he is pleased to see Sergeant Dickinson’s name on the agenda for a promotion.

John Bowen, of 38 Pinehurst Street, addressed the Commission. He wants more information on the hiring process for the upcoming Chief’s position. He said that he looked online to read the minutes of recent Police Commission meetings however, the most recent posted meeting was from September. He is only aware that the Commission is looking for someone within the rank of Sergeant, Lieutenant or Captain and that the candidate must have 15 years experience within the department and a Criminal Justice Degree. He wants to know what other criteria the Commission is looking for. Commissioner Hupfer said that the Commission is opening the position up to current Captains, Lieutenants and Sergeants within the Westfield Police Department only. The candidate must have their resume and letter of intent submitted to the Commission by February 1, 2019. The interviews will take place the first Commission meeting in April of 2019 and an appointment will be made that evening with an effective date of June 27, 2019. He said other than that the candidate should have 15 years experience within the department and 4 years in a supervisory capacity. Mr. Bowen asked if this process will be public. Commissioner Hupfer said it is. The public is welcome to attend that meeting.

City Councilor Mike Burns suggested that the April 2019 meeting be held in City Council Chambers. He would like this meeting televised on Channel 15 for transparency purposes. Chief Camerota said that due to the potentially large turnout, he doesn’t see why they couldn’t do this. Commissioner Hupfer agreed this would be a good idea.

Old Business:

- A.) Officer Timothy Fanion and Officer Jeffrey Vigneault – Leave of Absence Request (2 Weeks) – State Police Academy: Chief Camerota noted that the Commission had previously discussed this and spoken to both

Officers at the last Commission meeting. He notified both Officers that they did not need to be present at tonight's meeting. He is looking for confirmation tonight that the Commission will allow both Officers the requested leave. Commissioner Hupfer said that the Commission does approve the request from Officer Fanion and Officer Vigneault to take a 2 week leave from the Westfield Police Department to attend the State Police Academy.

- B.) Annual Appointment of Special Police Officers: Commissioner Osowski made a motion to appoint Dennis Hall, Michael A Chechile, Timothy O'Malley, Dennis O'Connor, D. Paul Kousch, Paul Miller, Dennis Donovan, Richard Rix, Vincent Santiago, Brian Boldini, Michael Curran, Michael Lacroix, Paul Byrne, James Fournier, Paul Beebe, Steve Griffin, Timothy Sicard, Edward Murphy, Kerry Paton, Michael Gamache, Albert Distefano, Kevin Hanna, David Beauchemin, Donald Day, Peter Albano and Ken Moriarty as Special Police Officers for the Westfield Police Department. Commissioner Otero seconded that motion.

Karl Hupfer – Yes - Leonard Osowski – Yes – Felix Otero – Yes

New Business:

- A.) Interview and Appoint One Full-Time Lieutenant to Replace Lieutenant Michael Ugolik – Retiring in February

- Active List – Sergeant Steve Dickinson: Chief Camerota said the original intended date of hire would have been in February however Lieutenant Ugolik has now said he may not retire until March 2, 2019. The Lieutenant hired this evening will need to be made aware that the promotional date could be either date.

Commissioner Hupfer asked Sergeant Steve Dickinson how he sees himself in a Lieutenant's position within the department. Sergeant Dickinson said he would go wherever the Chief would want to put him. He said he would use his 27 years experience to try to best instill that in others. Commissioner Hupfer asked if there is anything that would affect him going from a Monday – Friday schedule to a rotating schedule. Sergeant Dickinson said he has always done whatever shift is asked of him and he will continue to do so. He understands he may be asked to work mid nights. Chief Camerota said that Sergeant Dickinson has his full support. Commissioner Otero made a motion to appoint Steve Dickinson as a Lieutenant for the Westfield Police Department effective February 16, 2019 or March 2, 2019. Commissioner Osowski seconded that motion.

Karl Hupfer – Yes - Leonard Osowski – Yes – Felix Otero – Yes

- B.) Interview and Appoint One Full-Time Sergeant :

- Active List – Officer Juanita Mejias: Commissioner Hupfer asked Officer Mejias what she brings with her to the rank of Sergeant that will make her the best qualifying candidate for the position. Officer Mejias said she brings enthusiasm and a love for her job and what it stands for. She said she also brings a lot of experience. She said she has learned day by day as a Patrolman. She said she hopes to be able to teach others through her experience. She said she speaks, writes and reads fluent Spanish. She said she continues to better her education through taking classes that have become available to her. She said her biggest weakness is public speaking, including speaking about herself.
- Active List – Officer William Cavanaugh: Commissioner Hupfer asked Officer Cavanaugh what he brings with him to the rank of Sergeant that will make him the best qualifying candidate for the position. Officer Cavanaugh said he brings a level of devotion to the department that's hard to

match. He is also a Field Training Officer and there are overlaps there with interacting with the trainees. Commissioner Hupfer asked Officer Cavanaugh what shift he currently works. Officer Cavanaugh said he is working 4pm-12am. Commissioner Hupfer noted, if appointed, Officer Cavanaugh would potentially have to switch shifts and work from 12am-8am. Officer Cavanaugh said he has no problems with this. He feels each shift has its unique circumstances. He worked this shift in 2015 and works this shift when overtime is needed. Commissioner Hupfer asked Officer Cavanaugh if he has any other skills he feels would help the position of Sergeant. Officer Cavanaugh said he has a degree in law which he feels would be a benefit. He also said he feels being a Field Training Officer has also helped him with training skills. Commissioner Otero asked Officer Cavanaugh how long he has been an Officer for. Officer Cavanaugh said he has been an Officer for 5 years now.

- Active List – Officer Seth Florek: Commissioner Hupfer asked Officer Florek what he brings with him to the rank of Sergeant that will make him the best qualifying candidate for the position. Officer Florek said he has been an Officer with this department for 13 years. He has had a lot of accomplishments during that time. He said he believes he is an accomplished and dedicated Law Enforcement professional. He has demonstrated problem solving and decision making skills with the ability to develop and implement effect plans of action. He attended HCC for approximately 1 year and then went on to Westfield State University for another 4 years. During that time, his wife became pregnant. He needed to support his family so he stopped attending college, so he could work more overtime and took online college courses instead. It took him approximately 8 years, but he earned a Master’s Degree. Unfortunately, since the degree was not from a Massachusetts accredited school, Civil Service will not accept it and he was unable to get any points for it. He served 4 years with the Coast Guard and spent over 2 years on an anti terrorism team. In 2013, he had an injury and struggled with walking. He was out of work while recovering. During that time, he did some research and approached the Chief about changing the uniform to include a load barring vest. That vest takes all of the gear and moves it from the hips to the shoulders. Chief Camerota agreed and there are current approximately 20 - 25 Officers who now use the vest. In 2014, Chief Camerota approached Officer Florek regarding a boat that had been donated to the department by a resident of Hampden Ponds. They had a problem with jet skis in the area and up until that point the department did not have a way to patrol that area. Officer Florek took a 36 hour course during his own time and from there was able to train 29 Officers who can now use the boat for patrol in the Hampton Ponds area. It has been a great Policing tool. From 2016 to present, Officer Florek has been a Field Training Officer. He has trained just about every new Officer that is here tonight. Also, in 2016, he went back to Chief Camerota regarding the dress uniform. He has made it a point when an Officer is killed while on duty and during this time, he noticed that Westfield was one of the only Departments that didn’t have a side arm. Chief Camerota agreed and the uniform was changed. Officer Florek also helped design an honor guard uniform which the department did not have. In 2013 he spent some time assigned to the Community Police Department. From 2011 to present he has been a member of the Special Response Team. He feels extremely lucky to have been a part of that team. Officer Florek said for the last 5 to 6 years he has been the go to guy for the Detective Bureau. When they need a vehicle stopped for drug related activities, they have him take care of it. He said he has also learned through his SRT training, when the time is right to go after a suspect and when to hold and avoid potentially causing harm to not only the suspect, but other civilians and even other Officers. Commissioner Hupfer said through his own experience, he knows exactly what Officer Florek is speaking about.

Chief Camerota said that there are 3 outstanding candidates before the Commission this evening. He thinks candidate 1 and 3 stood out the most and it’s too bad there isn’t more than

1 opening. He said knowing and working with these Officers over the years, his recommendation would go to Juanita Mejias. Captain McCabe agreed. Captain Valliere said this is a tough decision. There are 3 great Officers and the department is lucky to have all of them. He said Officer Florek has been with the department the longest and has been involved in professionalizing the department. He said Officer Florek stands out the most to him however Officer Mejias would be a great choice as well.

Commissioner Hupfer said over the course of his career, he does not recall having 3 candidates going for the same position with such outstanding qualifications. He said he has been through many promotional interviews and knows not getting selected can be difficult. In this case, as stated by Chief Camerota, there are 3 extremely well qualified candidates and there's no way to make a decision based on just qualifications. Commission Hupfer feels the best option would be to make the appointment according to the placement on the civil service exam. Therefore in his opinion Officer Mejias should be appointed to the position of Sergeant. Commissioner Osowski agreed that they are all good candidates, but he is selecting Officer Mejias as well. Commission Otero said his vote will also be for Officer Mejias. He feels Officer Mejias has been with the Department for a long time and has a lot of experience. He feels she will be an asset to the department. Chief Camerota said he feels Officer Mejias would be a great choice. Captain McCabe said that both Officer Mejias and Officer Florek have been with the department for about the same amount of time and that it would difficult to decide based on just their accomplishments within the department alone. He agreed that the appointment should be made based on the placement of the civil service exam. Chief Camerota said that he believes the Commission can ask for an extension on this list. He will be retiring shortly and the Commission may then have the list before them again.

Commissioner Otero made a motion to appoint Juanita Mejias as a Sergeant for the Westfield Police Department effective either February 16, 2019 or March 2, 2019. Commissioner Osowski seconded that motion.

Karl Hupfer – Yes - Leonard Osowski – Yes – Felix Otero – Yes

C.) Interview and Appoint 7 Full-Time Pre Academy Police Officers from Existing Roster of Reserve Police Officers – Effective Date Contingent Upon Starting Date of MPTC Waivers: Chief Camerota informed the candidates that, in the history of the Westfield Police Department, the staffing levels have never been so dangerously low. Due to this, the department has the blessing of the Mayor's Office and many City Councilors to hire 7 Full Time Pre Academy Police Officers. There will be different starting dates and other factors that will come into play. For example, Officer Fanion and Officer Vigneault are attending the State Police Academy. If they decide to return, 2 Officers hired tonight will be removed from appointment. There are also some disability retirements that might happen and the Chief's retirement, Lieutenant Ugolik's retirement, Officer Fanion's retirement and Officer Pellan's retirement. All of these retirements are going to happen over the course of the next few months. The Chief is waiting for the waivers from MPTC. This will allow the Officers hired tonight to work. The Officers hired tonight will then go to the Police Academy on June 10, 2019. He asked the candidates if they have any issues with anything he has just stated. None of the candidates did.

Zachary Coderre: Commissioner Hupfer asked Zachary what he has learned through his experiences as a Reserve Police Officer. Zachary said that in addition to being a Reserve Officer with the Westfield Police Department, he has also been a Full Time Police Officer in the Sutton Police Department. Over that time he has learned a lot of things. He feels it's important to

know how to talk to people. He said that as a Police Officer you have to be able to talk to people. It can get the job done and talk people into compliance. He said he has also learned about discretion, responsibility and hard work. Commissioner Hupfer asked Zachary what incident stands out to him, if any, during the course of his time being a Reserve Officer. Zachary said there has been a lot. The worst incident he has come across was a motorcycle accident. It was something he won't forget. That was from his patrol with the Sutton Police Department. During his shifts being a Reserve Officer here in Westfield, he said he once responded to a male that didn't want to comply and force was necessary. They were able to get the suspect to comply, but that was one of the more serious calls he has responded to. Commissioner Hupfer asked Zachary if he sees any problems leaving his present employer. Zachary said he does not. Commissioner Otero asked Zachary if he lives in Westfield. Zachary said he does not, but he is prepared to move back. Zachary said he is a firearms instructor. He is also a District 7 fire investigator. He has graduated from both the Fire Academy and the Lowell Police Academy where he graduated with the outstanding student officer award. Chief Camerota said that since Zachary has already attended the Police Academy, if he is hired tonight, they will look to put him right on the street to work patrol after his 2 week notice to his current employer.

Kevin Gabryel: Commissioner Hupfer asked Kevin if he has any problems leaving his current employer. Kevin said he does not. Kevin said he is only working for the Westfield Police Department at the present time. Commissioner Hupfer asked Kevin what he has learned through his experiences as a Reserve Police Officer. Kevin said that he has learned that every call is a learning experience. There are a wide variety of calls and it's important to learn from each call and absorb as much information as you can from your supervisors. Commissioner Hupfer asked Kevin what incident stands out to him, if any, during the course of his time being a Reserve Officer. Kevin said he is not sure if one specific call stands out to him. He said he feels it's as he stated before. You have to learn from each call. Every call is different.

Robert Reyome: Commissioner Hupfer asked Robert what he has learned through his experiences as a Reserve Police Officer. Robert said he has gained knowledge of the streets. He has learned how to communicate and de-escalate situations. Commissioner Hupfer asked Robert what incident, if any, stands out to him during the course of his time being a Reserve Officer. Robert said there have been a few parties they have had to break up and he has learned from other Officer's how to react to the situations. Commissioner Hupfer asked Robert if he has any problems leaving his current employer. Robert said he does not.

Steven Wood: Commissioner Hupfer asked Steven what he has learned through his experiences as a Reserve Police Officer. Steven said he has learned to be more receptive to the veteran Officers and their knowledge. He has learned every call will be different and to always be open to what might happen. Commissioner Hupfer asked Steven if he sees any problems leaving his present employer. Steven said that he does not. Commissioner Hupfer asked Steven what incident, if any, stands out to him during the course of his time being a Reserve Officer. Steven said when he was field training with Officer Cavanaugh, they had an OUI they responded to. He said he was able to observe Officer Cavanaugh conduct a field sobriety test. Captain McCabe said Steven has been a stand out on both his field training and his physical fitness.

Joseph Kelley: Commissioner Hupfer asked Joseph what he has learned through his experiences as a Reserve Police Officer. Joseph said that he has learned how to talk to people and to be able to understand the situation of the call through that. Commissioner Hupfer asked Joseph what incident, if any, stands out to him during the course of his time being a Reserve Officer. Joseph

said that the mental health calls can be a no win type of situation and those stand out to him. He said he would like to be able to do more. Commissioner Hupfer asked Joseph if he sees any problems leaving his current employer. Joseph said he is currently only working for the Westfield Police Department so there would not be any issues.

Brian Turgeon: Commissioner Hupfer asked Brian what he has learned through his experiences as a Reserve Police Officer. Brian said that he has learned a lot. He said he learns something new every shift. He said he has learned how to deal with the public and also how to handle certain calls. Every call is about the Officers demeanor and presence to help someone in their time of need. Commissioner Hupfer asked Brian what incident, if any, stands out to him during the course of his time being a Reserve Officer. Brian said he responded to an unattended death of a young girl. The family was also on scene. It was an emotional situation for them and had to be handled properly. As an Officer, you have to know the right things to say and the proper way to say it during someone's time of grief. Commissioner Hupfer asked Brian if he sees any problems leaving his current employer. Brian said he does not. Chief Camerota reminded Brian that he is in the area of potentially being un-appointed if anyone drops out of the State Police Academy. Brian said he understands.

Patrick Lusteg: Commissioner Hupfer asked Patrick what he has learned through his experiences as a Reserve Police Officer. Patrick said he has learned a lot. He said he's learned anything can happen with any call. Commissioner Hupfer asked Patrick what incident, if any, stands out to him during the course of his time being a Reserve Police Officer. Patrick said that during his field training, while learning how to write his first report, they received a call for a barricaded suspect. Officer Florek was his Field Training Officer and is part of the SRT. Patrick was able to help set up the parameter with Officer Florek. Commissioner Hupfer asked Patrick if he sees any problem leaving his present employer and also asked if he understands the position he may be in. Patrick says he has no problems leaving his present employer and he also understands the position he is in. Chief Camerota said that Patrick and Brian are in the same situation. They can both be potentially un-appointed if anyone drops out of the State Police Academy.

Andrew Harris: Commissioner Hupfer asked Andrew what he has learned through his experiences as a Reserve Police Officer. Andrew said he has learned a lot about people and how a situation can escalate quickly. He went on a call that was a simple noise complaint and turned into an A&B on a Police Officer. Commissioner Hupfer asked Andrew what incident, if any, stands out to him during the course of his time being a Reserve Police Officer. Andrew said he was on a call once with Officer Williams where the victim had no pulse. Andrew was able to do a hard sternum rub and the victim came to. Commissioner Hupfer asked Andrew if he sees any problem leaving his current employer. Andrew said he does not. Chief Camerota said the Commission is only looking to hire 7 positions this evening. Andrew is the 8th on the list. He said while he doesn't know how the Commission will vote, he wants Andrew to know that things happen quickly and things can change. He told Andrew to stay positive.

Commissioner Hupfer said he thinks the Commission should vote according to the Civil Service List. Commissioner's Osowski and Otero both agreed.

Commissioner Otero made a motion to appoint Zachary Coderre as a Full Time Police Officer for the Westfield Police Department effective February 2, 2019. Commissioner Osowski seconded that motion.

Karl Hupfer – Yes - Leonard Osowski – Yes – Felix Otero – Yes

Commissioner Otero made a motion to appoint Kevin Gabryel as a Full Time Police Officer for the Westfield Police Department. The effective date is pending MPTC waiver approval. Commissioner Osowski seconded that motion.

Karl Hupfer – Yes - Leonard Osowski – Yes – Felix Otero – Yes

Commissioner Otero made a motion to appoint Robert Reyome as a Full Time Police Officer for the Westfield Police Department. The effective date is pending MPTC waiver approval. Commissioner Osowski seconded that motion.

Karl Hupfer – Yes - Leonard Osowski – Yes – Felix Otero – Yes

Commissioner Otero made a motion to appoint Steven Wood as a Full Time Police Officer for the Westfield Police Department. The effective date is pending MPTC waiver approval. Commissioner Osowski seconded that motion.

Karl Hupfer – Yes - Leonard Osowski – Yes – Felix Otero – Yes

Commissioner Otero made a motion to appoint Joseph Kelley as a Full Time Police Officer for the Westfield Police Department. The effective date is pending MPTC waiver approval. Commissioner Osowski seconded that motion.

Karl Hupfer – Yes - Leonard Osowski – Yes – Felix Otero – Yes

Commissioner Otero made a motion to appoint Brian Turgeon as a Full Time Police Officer for the Westfield Police Department. The effective date is pending MPTC waiver approval. Commissioner Osowski seconded that motion.

Karl Hupfer – Yes - Leonard Osowski – Yes – Felix Otero – Yes

Commissioner Otero made a motion to appoint Patrick Lusteg as a Full Time Police Officer for the Westfield Police Department. The effective date is pending MPTC waiver approval. Commissioner Osowski seconded that motion.

Karl Hupfer – Yes - Leonard Osowski – Yes – Felix Otero – Yes

D.) Call for List to Fill 5 Reserve Officer Positions at the Scheduled February Meeting of the Westfield Police Commission: Chief Camerota said he has the list now and is waiting for the candidates to sign it. The Commission will interview and appoint the Reserve Officers at the February meeting.

Chiefs Report:

- A.) Motor Vehicle Report: The motor vehicle fleet is in excellent condition.
- B.) Sick & Injury Report: Chief Camerota said there are still 8 Officers out on injured on duty status.
- C.) Building Maintenance Report: Overall the building is in good shape.

Announcement of Next Regular Meeting: The next meeting of the Westfield Police Commission will be Monday, February 11, 2019.

Motion to Adjourn: At 6:45 pm Commissioner Osowski mad a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Otero seconded that motion.

Karl Hupfer – Yes - Leonard Osowski – Yes – Felix Otero - Yes



Commissioner, Karl Hupfer



Commissioner, Leonard Osowski



Commissioner, Felix Otero