

# SPECIAL MEETING OF WESTFIELD POLICE COMMISSION

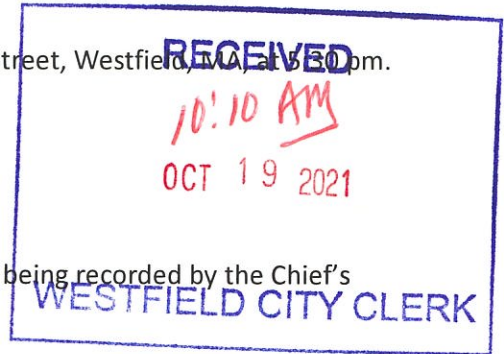
WESTFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

July 26, 2021

The Westfield Police Commission meeting was called to order at 59 Court Street, Westfield, MA, at 6:30 pm.

Roll Call: Leonard Osowski – Present  
Felix Otero – Present  
Richard Sypek – Present

Commissioner Osowski notified everyone present that tonight's meeting is being recorded by the Chief's Secretary.



Approval and Release of Minutes: Commissioner Sypek made a motion to approve the minutes dated June 14, 2021. Commissioner Otero seconded that motion.

Leonard Osowski – Yes – Felix Otero – Yes - Richard Sypek - Yes

Open Participation: None

Old Business: None

New Business:

A.) Appoint retired Officer David Racicot as a Special Police Officer: Commissioner Otero made a motion to appoint retired Officer David Racicot as a Special Police Officer for the Westfield Police Department effective August 2, 2021. Commissioner Sypek seconded that motion.

Leonard Osowski – Yes – Felix Otero – Yes - Richard Sypek - Yes

B.) Promote Temporary Full-Time Lieutenant Gibbons to Permanent Full-Time Lieutenant: Commissioner Sypek made a motion to appoint Temporary Full-Time Lieutenant Gibbons to a Full-Time Permanent Lieutenant effective July 27, 2021. Commissioner Otero seconded that motion.

Leonard Osowski – Yes – Felix Otero – Yes - Richard Sypek - Yes

C.) Promote Temporary Full-Time Sergeant Freeman to Permanent Full-Time Sergeant: Commissioner Sypek made a motion to appoint Temporary Full-Time Sergeant Freeman to a Permanent Full-Time Sergeant effective July 27, 2021. Commissioner Otero seconded that motion.

Leonard Osowski – Yes – Felix Otero – Yes - Richard Sypek - Yes

D.) Interview and appoint: 1 Temporary Full-Time Sergeant:

Officer Matthew Schultze: Commissioner Osowski asked Officer Schultze to describe himself as a police officer. Officer Schultze said he is very self-motivated. He has worked many shifts in the radar car. He said he was

always very proactive and led the department with the most stops while working in this car on numerous occasions. Commissioner Osowski asked Officer Schultze to please describe how he thinks his peers think of him. Officer Schultze said they think of him as a very squared away and organized person. He said he writes very good reports and is always willing to help out. He said others have actually used his reports as templates for how to write their own reports. Commissioner Sypek asked Officer Schultze what qualities and experiences he has that would qualify him for the role of sergeant. Officer Schultze said that he has worn many hats over the course of his career. He was a firefighter and an EMT for the Town of Southwick. He attended the MA fire academy and EMT school. He was a park ranger for the City of Springfield. He was a dispatcher for the City of Wilbraham. Lastly, he worked as an auxiliary officer for the City of Westfield before he was hired as a full-time officer. Commissioner Sypek asked Officer Schultze if he has been involved in the community policing unit. Officer Schultze said he has not. He said he worked the midnight shift primarily over the course of his career up until this last year. Commissioner Sypek asked Officer Schultze if he has any opinions on how to enhance public relations with police officers. Officer Schultze said he is a big supporter of body cameras. He thinks cameras will help with transparency. Commissioner Otero asked Officer Schultze what challenges he thinks he will face if selected tonight. Officer Schultze said the biggest challenge he sees is being a younger officer. He can't say he's already going to have experienced all of the situations that they may encounter. However, he is confident that he can resolve the vast majority of situations. Commissioner Sypek asked Officer Schultze why the commission should select him. Officer Schultze said he believes he is well rounded. He worked his way up from an auxiliary officer. He is always trying to learn new things and to progress to become the best officer he can be.

Officer William Cavanaugh: Commissioner Osowski asked Officer Cavanaugh to describe himself as a police officer. Officer Cavanaugh said he thinks of himself as a team player. He said the department has tremendous leadership and the spirit that runs through the department is one of team work. He said he tries to always have that same mindset when he comes to work. He said he also has a strong work ethic and a proactive approach to policing. Commissioner Osowski asked Officer Cavanaugh to describe how he thinks his peers think of him. Officer Cavanaugh said he thinks his peers think of him as someone who is hard working, loyal and devoted to this department. He said he works a tremendous amount of overtime. He not only works road details, but he has also worked approximately a full work year in extra days in house. He said he loves coming to work and being around his fellow officers. Officer Otero asked Officer Cavanaugh what challenges he anticipates if he is selected for this position. Officer Cavanaugh said overall law enforcement is at a challenging time. He said this department is fortunate to have really strong leadership from the top down, and preserving what the department already has will be a challenge. Officer Cavanaugh said the department already has cutting edge technology and provides excellent training to its officers. He said the department needs to just keep going what it is doing. There is no reason to reinvent the way policing is already done in this city. Commissioner Sypek asked Officer Cavanaugh about his time in law school. Officer Cavanaugh said he took the civil service test to become a police officer because his goal was always only to become a police officer. He wanted to appear before the commission for the first time with as much as he could possibly bring to the table which is why he enrolled in college. He obtained a Master's Degree in Law at Western New England College which is where he was working at the time. He wanted to be a highly educated officer. Commissioner Sypek asked Officer Cavanaugh if he has worked in the community policing division. Officer Cavanaugh said he has not. He said his time in the department has been spent in the patrol division. He does think he has a good understanding of what community policing is even without working in that bureau. He said he thinks he applies some aspects of community policing to his day to day patrol calls already. He said he tries to follow up with his callers and be proactive to go beyond just routine calls for service. Commissioner Sypek asked Officer Cavanaugh what his goals are for his career. Officer Cavanaugh said his current goal is to be promoted to sergeant. His long term goal is to continue work for the City of Westfield for the duration of his career. Commissioner Otero asked Officer Cavanaugh why the commission should chose him for the role of sergeant. Officer Cavanaugh said the commission should chose him because they need to look at the way the department currently is and what direction they want it to go in. Officer Cavanaugh said he is completely committed to the Chief and Captain's

vision for this department. He is willing to be somebody who is a unifying influence in this department. He is someone who is willing to get involved and be a part of the leadership. He feels that to be a good officer you need to do more than just work your shifts. You need to be a part of other functions within the department, whether it be the 9/11 ceremony or parades. At all times, an officer needs to know they represent the department.

Officer Jason Perron: Commissioner Osowski asked Officer Perron what he thinks of himself as an officer. Officer Perron said he thinks he is a well-rounded police officer who gets along well with his peers. He is a good communicator and very approachable. Commissioner Osowski asked Officer Perron to describe what he thinks his peers think of him. Officer Perron said he would like to think his peers think he is a decent guy. He said a lieutenant had told him a while back that he was one of the best supervisors he had ever worked with. He said he gets along well with almost everybody. Commissioner Otero asked Officer Perron what challenges he anticipates if selected for the position of sergeant. Officer Perron said his experience allows him to rely on his past experiences. He said it will be a challenge to stay educated on all the changes coming with the police reform act. Commissioner Sypek asked Officer Perron if he has seen any changes within the community. Officer Perron said he hasn't. He said public perception is the biggest challenge, but most of the people he deals with in the public have a good opinion of police. Commissioner Sypek asked Officer Perron why the commission should select him. Officer Perron said the biggest reason is because he has 22 years of experience and 4 years of experience as a shift commander and a supervisor. He ran the ATV unit for 10 years and has also been an FTO. He knows how to communicate, motivate people and lead by example.

Captain Dickinson said this is a difficult decision. He said he is recommending Officer Cavanaugh for the position this evening. He said he is recommended Officer Cavanaugh because of his education, his volunteer work within the community, his team work skills and his positive attitude. Captain Pitoniak said he agrees with Captain Dickinson. He said when you look at Officer Cavanaugh's skill set, his degree, his volunteerism and his experience as an FTO, it would be very hard not to choose him. Chief Valliere said he also agrees with both of the captains. He said Officer Cavanaugh's heart and investment within the community put him over the top. He said you have to care about what you are doing and Officer Cavanaugh is exceptional when it comes to being there for anything that is needed within the department. He is highly respected amongst his peers.

Commissioner Osowski said he agrees with the opinion of the captains and chief. Commissioner Otero said he also supports Officer Cavanaugh for this position. He said he did notice Officer Cavanaugh's appreciation for his superiors and supervisors. Commissioner Sypek said he concurs with the other commissioners. He said he thinks Officer Cavanaugh did well during his interview. He appreciates Officer Cavanaugh's devotion to the department. He is highly educated and very committed.

Commissioner Sypek made a motion to appoint William Cavanaugh as a Temporary Full-Time Sergeant for the Westfield Police Department effective August 7, 2021. Commissioner Otero seconded that motion.

Leonard Osowski – Yes – Felix Otero – Yes - Richard Sypek – Yes

E.) Interview and appoint: 1 – Temporary Full-Time Lieutenant:

Sergeant Douglas Lavalley: Commissioner Osowski asked Sergeant Lavalley what he thinks of himself as police officer. Sergeant Lavalley said he thinks he approaches his job with a lot of attention to detail, honesty and integrity. He said he thinks he has learned to listen to everyone both below and above him. Commissioner Osowski asked Sergeant Lavalley to describe how he thinks his peers view him. Sergeant Lavalley said he thinks

his peers know that he takes his job seriously and that he puts a lot of emphasis on organization and attention to detail. He thinks he is looked at as someone who gets along with anybody and has an open relationship with people. Commissioner Otero asked Sergeant Lavalley what challenges he anticipates if selected for this position. Sergeant Lavalley said personally he has to prove himself as a leader and as someone that can be counted on to be responsible with the mission of the department. He said the police reform act will also present some challenges. Commissioner Sypek asked Sergeant Lavalley why the commission should choose him. Sergeant Lavalley said he has the experience and education needed for this position. He places a lot of importance on bettering himself and educating himself.

Sergeant Michael Kane: Commissioner Osowski asked Sergeant Kane what he thinks of himself as a police officer. Sergeant Kane said he considers himself to be a good police officer. He has no problem communicating with people. He considers himself a humble officer and treats others the way he would want to be treated. Commissioner Osowski asked Sergeant Kane to describe how he thinks his peers think of him. Sergeant Kane said he believes he has a good working relationship with his peers. He said you are only as good as the people you work with and they make it easy. He has been very lucky to work with the men and woman he has. Commissioner Otero asked Sergeant Kane what challenges he anticipates if he is selected for this position. Sergeant Kane said that as being a lieutenant not only do you oversee officers, but you also oversee sergeants. He said he will have to separate himself from his role as sergeant. He has been a sergeant for 8 years and his biggest challenge will be removing himself from going on the calls. Commissioner Sypek asked Sergeant Kane how he thinks the department's relationship with the community is. Sergeant Kane said he can't speak highly enough about this community. He said he works a lot of details and members of the community will stop and offer water or food and thank him for his service. The community is very supportive of this department. Commissioner Sypek asked Sergeant Kane why the commission should choose him. Sergeant Kane said he believes his 8 years as a supervisor has opened his eyes. He has a good working relationship with the officers. He has a master's degree. He is good at reviewing reports and catching errors which will assist if the case goes to court.

Sergeant Robert Saunders: Commissioner Osowski asked Sergeant Saunders what he thinks of himself as a police officer. Sergeant Saunders said he thinks he has grown as he has been a supervisor. He said early on in his career, he wanted to advance and he did anything he could to make that happen. He was involved in the FTO program and ran the traffic bureau. He said everything he has done has been to better himself and the department. Commissioner Osowski asked Sergeant Saunders to describe how he thinks his peers view him. Sergeant Saunders said he hopes his peers know he always does the best he can for every job and hopes they think of him as a leader and someone they can work with and talk to if they have concerns. Commissioner Otero asked Sergeant Saunders what challenges he anticipates if he is promoted to lieutenant. Sergeant Saunders said that depending on which shift he may be on, there may be man power shortages or younger officers on that shift, but that his experience as a field training officer will assist with that. He is always looking to help educate his peers. Commissioner Sypek asked Sergeant Saunders why the commission should select him. Sergeant Saunders said that the commission should select him because of his experience. He said he has 11 years of experience as a sergeant and nearly 20 years as a full time officer. He was the head of the traffic bureau working closely with the Chief. He does whatever he can to help the department.

Captain Dickinson said that he is recommending Sergeant Kane for the position of lieutenant. He believes Sergeant Kane gave a great interview and has the team effort that they are looking for. He doesn't believe enough time has passed yet for Sergeant Lavalley to prove himself. Captain Pitoniak said he agrees with Captain Dickinson. He feels Sergeant Lavalley is a very intelligent person, but has hit a few speed bumps. He hasn't had enough time yet to prove he's back on track and a team player. Sergeant Kane has always been a team player. He volunteers his time and is always the first one to offer to help out anyone. Chief Valliere said he agrees with the captains. He said Sergeant Kane is praised both inside and outside of the department. He was a social

worker for 8 years which is a unique experience to have. He is a great communicator and a team player. He is dedicated to the community and the department.

All of the commissions agreed with the recommendations of Captain Dickinson, Captain Pitoniak and Chief Valliere.

Commissioner Sypek make a motion to appoint Sergeant Michael Kane as a Temporary Full-Time Lieutenant for the Westfield Police Department, effective August 7, 2021. Commissioner Otero seconded that motion.

Leonard Osowski – Yes – Felix Otero – Yes - Richard Sypek - Yes


Chief's Report:

- A.) Motor Vehicle Report: The motor vehicle fleet is in good shape. There are new vehicles that have been ordered and should be coming in soon. The budget is good for 2022.
- B.) Sick & Injury Report: Captain Pitoniak said there is 1 officer out on a long term IOD status and 2 officers out on military leave.
- C.) Building Maintenance Report: Chief Valliere said that the building is falling apart and it is not going to get any better. There are problems with the air conditioning unit and flooding in the detective bureau. Chief Valliere complimented Captain Pitoniak on all the work he has accomplished within the building, but the department is in dire need of a new building. Commissioner Sypek said he read a letter from an entity down south that builds police stations. It is outside of the normal realm of how to build police stations, but he would like to meet with the Mayor and City Councilor Adams. He cannot meet with them without the commission's permission. The commission agreed that they would like Commissioner Sypek to move forward with this.

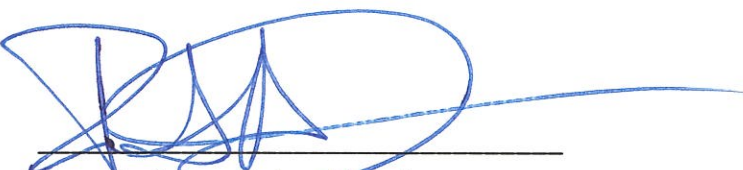
Announcement of Next Regular Meeting: The next meeting of the Westfield Police Commission will be held on Monday August 9, 2021.

Motion to Adjourn: At 6:32 pm Commissioner Sypek made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Otero seconded that motion.

Leonard Osowski – Yes – Felix Otero – Yes - Richard Sypek - Yes

  
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Commissioner, Leonard Osowski

  
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Commissioner, Felix Otero

  
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Commissioner, Richard Sypek

APPROVED FOR RELEASE ON  
8/30/21