

Rutland City Police Commission
April 12, 2021

Present: Chairman Sean Sargeant, Commissioners Luther Brown, Tony Romeo and Jeanette Langston.

Also attending: Acting Chief David LaChance, Commander Greg Sheldon, and Crime Analyst Nathan Thibodeau.

Call to order by Chairman Sargeant at 6:18 pm due to technical difficulties.

Chairman Sargeant asked for a moment of silence for the accidental shooting of Daunte Wright.

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Romeo moved to approve the minutes of March 8, 2021. Commissioner Brown seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

Public Comment

Commissioner Romeo discussed the good comments he has heard from business owners about Officer Emilio Rosario as the Downtown beat cop. Commissioner Romeo asked for a review of the bike ordinance because of bicyclists traveling fast on the sidewalks downtown. Chairman Sargeant asked that either Commander Sheldon or Officer Rosario provide a summary of the bike ordinance at the next meeting.

Chairman Sargeant said he had a meeting with Chief Kilcullen and Alderman Davis regarding several complaints regarding parking on the dead-end of Edgerton. Acting Chief LaChance confirmed there is a zero tolerance policy and tickets will be issued.

Commanders' Report

Commander Sheldon said his first full week upstairs in the Vision Center was last week. Sgt. Jon Dickerson is looking into starting a Citizens Academy mid to late summer after he creates the program and gets approval from the Chief. This will be opened up to Vision partners first, most likely the people on the Community Policing subcommittee. The Cadet program will also be re-started which is part of Youth Leadership in the Pillars 21st Century Report. There is a meeting tomorrow with the Boy Scouts to start the Cadet Post back up again facilitated by Vision, not patrol, but patrol will be asked for help. Stuff-a-Cruiser will be May 14 and Tom Donahue of BROCC will be doing a lot of advertising for that event and also it will be put on the list-serve. There will be a meeting

with the state on April 22 at 2 pm to discuss the Quality Inn. He will send out emails to interested parties to see if they want join.

Chairman Sargeant asked that Commander Sheldon explain the purpose and outcome of the meeting in case Commissioners Romeo and Brown want to attend. Commander Sheldon said the purpose of the meeting is community outreach to inform the state of the difficulties at both the Quality Inn and Holiday Inn. The crime, violence and drug use going on is overshadowing the good people there being housed. The meeting agenda will allow time for the Mayor to speak, Selectboard Chair from Rutland Town, Chief Kilcullen, Rutland Town Chief of Police and Police Commissioners. Co-chair of Vision committees will also have a chance to speak to outline how this is affecting their committee work and the people they serve. This will be followed by impact statements, either verbal or written from the neighbors of the hotels including the businesses in the plaza that are experiencing high amounts of shoplifting and finding needles near their dumpster. This meeting will give these people a platform to speak to the state, governor's office and DCF who oversees the program, Sean Brown and decision makers that can give action, results and answers. Commander Sheldon said young children are witnessing the violence and crime happening there. Chairman Sargeant said both he and Commissioner Langston want to speak and asked that time also be made available to Commissioners Romeo and Brown if they want to participate.

Commissioner Langston asked what resources are needed from the state. Commander Sheldon said FEMA provides the funding for this program and it will be going away mid-summer. The funding for all hotels in the state is \$6 million dollars a week to cover hotel rooms, meals and resources. Commander Sheldon said it has been pointed out to the state that there are no resources being provided, no job services, no checks on who is in the rooms and some of the rooms haven't been cleaned for a year. There is no oversight so drug dealers are moving into the vacated rooms. We are looking for oversight and resources by taking over one of the hotel rooms to provide services. Acting Chief LaChance said we don't have enough police to cover the streets let alone police these hotels. These problems for the City and Town were created by the state. He added that DCF has stopped placing families at the Quality Inn, but for those still there a plan is needed. Commissioner Romeo suggested that DCF put an outpost at the Quality Inn or a state trooper. Commander Sheldon asked where people go when these funds end. The state has dropped the ball on this, there is no contingency or maintenance plan. The state needs to hear there have been two homicides, 14 overdoses, multiple stabbings and continuous thefts and some of the people are there just to sell drugs. He discussed a sewage backup that was not reported to the City health officer or the state until an ex-employee reported it and Mike Brookman investigated finding raw sewage in the rooms. Commissioner Langston asked if the hotel owners have issues with the

program. Commander Sheldon said they are getting paid and did not seem concerned. Commissioner Langston asked if their business licenses could be revoked. Commander Sheldon said the Mayor has talked about that but it would be a last resort to close down a business and tax dollars may play a part in that decision. He added that this meeting should have been held last fall. Commissioner Brown asked if there was a way to identify the drug dealers. Commander Sheldon said the state will not give up the names of who is supposed to be housed in the hotel rooms as a confidentiality rule. The state is the only one who can go in and verify who should be in there. When hotel industry standards were enforced at other hotels participating in the program, there was less crime. Commissioner Langston asked who could be called at the state to apply pressure for this meeting. This program falls under the direction of DCF Commissioner Sean Brown or call the Governor's office directly. Commissioner Romeo said he was told by Aldermen that if the hotel was shut down the people would have nowhere to go. He asked if the City Attorney could petition the Court to make the state provide information of the inhabitants. Commander Sheldon said at this time the program would be over before Atty. Bloomer had a chance to get the petition through the court.

Acting Chief LaChance spoke on behalf of Commander Delpha saying as commander of patrol he has implemented some changes in patrol and meeting with the shifts and going over those changes. He reiterated that the shifts are working short and doing a good job filling in for each other and covering the overtime. He thanked the officers who came in to cover the homicide investigation and stayed past their normal shifts. The spring firearms training provided by Sgt. Williams was very good. The two new vehicles are running behind schedule due to COVID but almost 100% complete.

Mapping Update

Nate Thibodeau presented the Rutland City Police Department March YTD comparison with previous years. He said there have been 136 calls at 253 South Main Street from January to March 31. As of April there have been over 20 calls there already. Last year there were a total of 295 calls for service at the Quality Inn so we are already half way in the first quarter of 2021. In the comparison for March 31, with the first three months of each year, larcenies are up 33, shoplifting is 26, aggravated assaults are down, breaking an entering with force is up at 12, the average 8.8, and B&E no force is down by 1. Robbery is also way up. He reviewed the larceny breakdown. The 2021 arrests show 6 arrests out of 33 calls, shoplifting 17 arrests out of 26 calls, aggravated assaults had 6 arrests out of 7 calls, breaking an entering 4 total with 3 arrests and robbery 3 arrests. He reviewed that most calls are occurring Friday afternoon followed by Wednesday. The mapping shows breaking an entering in section 1 and thefts occurring in section 1 and 2. There are a large amount of overdoes with 4 at the Quality Inn this year and in section 1. He discussed the HIDTA map that alerts when drugs are moving and where overdoes

may be happening. Nate provided detail and stats at the Quality Inn at 253 South Main Street. He said from March 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021 the RCPD has received 424 calls at the Quality Inn which is a 631% increase in calls at the RCPD. Considering year to year information, the average five year calls for service at the Quality Inn was 56. In 2020, RCPD received 295 calls for service or 2% of all 2020 calls for service. In the first quarter, RCPD has received 136 calls for service or 5% of all 2021 year to date calls. The 2020 analysis of calls at the Quality Inn shows 24% overdoses, 9% drug sale, 8% medical assist, 6% aggravated assaults, 5% welfare checks, 5% simple assault, 3% of suspicious complaints and 3% citizen disputes. The first overdose of 2020 at the Quality Inn occurred on April 27, 2020. In the past 5 years RCPD has responded to 3 overdoses at that location with a total of 11 overdoses in 2020. Acting Chief LaChance added that out of 46 total overdoses, 11 were at the Quality Inn. Chairman Sargeant asked if this was the type of data that Commander Sheldon would lead with at the April 22 meeting and would it be made available to participants. Commander Sheldon said Nate would have a section of time to provide data to the State of Vermont and citizens at the meeting. Chairman Sargeant said this data drives home the depth of the issues that we have at that location. Commissioner Langston added that the bleed over from the Quality Inn is affecting all the other numbers as well. Commander Sheldon said there are people that bounce back and forth between the Holiday Inn and Quality Inn, as well as the Economy Inn & Suites although the call numbers there are not near the Quality Inn. The collateral damage is spread out through the City and Rutland Town.

Budget Report

Acting Chief LaChance reported that as of the three quarters of FY21 expenses are at 65.23% of the budget.

Chief's Report

Acting Chief LaChance said one officer is in background and should be complete in the next couple weeks. There is a candidate applicant to be interviewed tomorrow and 8 or so applicants that still need to take or re-take the entrance exam. The records position is still open with one letter of interest from within the department. The Sargent promotional process was held on March 11 and Cpl. Jason Williams and Cpl. Elias Anderson were both promoted to Sgt. Commander Delpha was assigned to Patrol Commander and Commander Sheldon to Vision Commander. Sgt. Lorman is now the Operations Sgt. and Cpl. Plemmons is assigned to patrol night shift 2. Officer Rose was promoted to Cpl., Commander Prouty retired. Sgt. Anderson officially started today and Sgt. Adam Lucia is now Detective Cpl. assigned to B.C.I. along with Officer Tyler Billings as Detective. The new Union president is Rick Caravaggio. Detective Ashe's deployment has been cancelled. The Sgt. lawsuit has been settled and LaChance is still working on the policy directives review. There was a City Department head meeting on April 8th to

discuss the federal COVID dollars to be received by the City. The Mayor wants department heads to determine how to use the money in each department. There will be a follow up meeting at a later date. Rules for coordinating the opening of events on May 1 for non-vaccinated people are being discussed.

Trainings

April 20-22 – Taser training for the department

April 22-23 – ARIDE training for a couple officers

Commissioner Brown asked for an updated organizational chart.

Commissioner Langston said they have done a great job with all of the personnel moving pieces. She asked about the qualifications for the records' clerk position. LaChance replied that it is a civilian position that has to be posted internally to City government and within the department before opening to the outside. He believes that someone in-house will be taking the position. Commissioner Langston said if it happens to be posted to the public, CEDRR has a job board that is an awesome resource through Kim Rupe.

Old Business

Chairman Sargeant discussed the action item from the last meeting saying that Commissioner Romeo was to re-edit the memo that the City Attorney asked the Commission to send to the Chief explaining how the charter prohibition on political activities were to be managed in the department. Commissioner Romeo was unable to get the City Attorney to respond to the proposed edits and suggested that the Commission move forward with the memo. Commissioner Romeo added that the Board of Aldermen will be taking up the issue in July and Alderman Gillam plans to invite the Police Commission to the discussion.

Chairman Sargeant clarified that the memo that the City Attorney asked the Commission to author clarifies how we expect the Chief and the Department to manage, educate and enforce the prohibition of political activities in the Charter. Commissioner Brown moved to authorize the Chair to sign the version of the memo presented to the Commission on March 8, 2021. Commissioner Langston seconded. Motion carried 3-1 with Commissioner Romeo voting nay.

Chairman Sargeant reminded Commissioners Brown and Langston that there is a meeting of the Animal Control Board on April 15 at 5 pm for a vicious dog hearing. The

hearing will be held in-person at the Rutland Recreation Community Center at 71 Clement Road. Masks and social distancing will be enforced even if vaccinated.

Executive Session

At 7:16 pm Commissioner Romeo moved to go into Executive Session under Title 1 Section 3134 to hear a disciplinary or dismissal action against a public officer or employee. Commissioner Langston seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

Members of the Commission received a second email with the link for the executive session.

7:36 pm Exit Executive Session.

Adjournment

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

Meeting called to a close at 7:36 pm.

Submitted by: Barbara Spaulding

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