

Rutland City Police Commission
August 9, 2021

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

Also attending: Chief Kilcullen, Sgt. Lorman, Commanders Greg Sheldon, Sam Delpha and David LaChance, Crime Analyst Nathan Thibodeau, Officer Tim Rice and Union President Rick Caravaggio.

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

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Calcagni moved to approve the minutes of July 12, 2021. Commissioner Romeo seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Introduction/Recognition of Police Department Members

Chief Kilcullen administered the oath for the promotion of Police Officer Nathan Harvey to Corporal.

RPD Uniform Comments and Discussion

Chairman Sargeant said he has received a lot of communication from both officers and the public regarding a new uniform standard for the Rutland Police Department. He emailed copies last Friday of everything that has been collected but, received another comment prior to this meeting that was not included. The feedback was assembled by officers, VISION committees and Administration. The feedback from officers is in favor of a load carrying vest. The biggest disagreement was about which vest to use between a medically necessary vest and the street crimes unit vest. Chairman Sargeant suggested forming a working group over the next month that includes a member of the Police Commission and a member of the Union to decide on a proposed specification for a duty vest that removes items from the duty belt. This will be followed by pricing to take to the Board of Aldermen. Commissioner Calcagni asked about budget timing and if the four-way stretch fabric for all uniforms would also be included. Chairman Sargeant said the budget has been under spent for the past 13 years, due to staffing issues, so there has been money that could be allocated to uniforms. He added that the Aldermen have been very understanding about the issues in trying to maintain morale during COVID and maintaining staffing in the current political climate by signing two additional MOUs with the Union in the past 30 days. Chairman Sargeant said he feels that if a fully fleshed out presentation is taken to the Board, they will find a way to get it done without waiting for the FY22-23 fiscal budget, but the next City budget will be discussed in

November. Commissioner Brown said he is in favor of a working group and the makeup should include someone from major crimes. Commissioner Romeo suggested getting professional medical feedback. Chairman Sargeant said that Officer Rice supplied a number of studies that were forwarded to the Commission, as well as, a couple department members who have had medical evaluations for which this technology was recommended. He added that an additional professional opinion may slow the process down and add a cost. Commissioner Romeo reiterated his concern for the military style vest. Chief Kilcullen said there is no one size fits all and there may not be medical opinion that this will work for everyone. He wants to see consistency with any changes to the uniform. Chairman Sargeant said the working group should focus on the specifications for the load bearing vest and uniformity. Commissioner Langston is also in favor of the working group and asked if a member of the Community Policing Subcommittee should be involved. Commander Sheldon said he did not think they needed to be involved but they did appreciate being asked for feedback regarding a new uniform standard. Commissioner Langston suggested rolling this out to the community in a positive way that supports the officers. Commissioner Calcagni volunteered to be a part of the working group and to serve as Chair. Chairman Sargeant asked Union Rep Caravaggio and Chief Kilcullen to let him or Commissioner Calcagni know who they chose for the working group.

Public Comment

Patricia Garcia who resides on Baxter Street in Rutland spoke to the Commission regarding concerns about the drug problem on Baxter Street. She described 24/7 drug activity on the street. Ms. Garcia said she has been told that unless officers witness the activity there is little that can be done. She asked the Commission if there is anything that they could do. Chairman Sargeant asked Chief Kilcullen if this is an address that comes up during the sergeants meeting. Chief Kilcullen said it is not but, he met with Ms. Garcia and explained that the activity is indicative of drug activity and it would be helpful if when things are observed, despite her and neighbors' reluctance, the police are called so information can be collected and build intelligence which helps the police potentially in a criminal investigation. There is a new sergeant assigned to that sector who will be tasked with reaching out to the landlord as a starting point. There is a meeting every two weeks to identify every address in the City that the police have responded to at least 3 times, suggesting there is a problem there, and then we try to determine the underlying issues and get some resources to that address. Chief Kilcullen reiterated that the police are not getting the calls for Baxter Street which is problematic so no information is being collected but, they will try to be more proactive despite the staffing shortage. Commissioner Calcagni suggesting moving to the Mapping Update so that Ms. Garcia can see how data is collected and how it focuses response by officers. Chairman Sargeant agreed to move the mapping update and added that

resources are assigned based on the calls for service with repeat calls getting priority. He added that it is possible for calls to be made to the police department anonymously so the dispatch is not over the police band but, instead by cell phone so there is nothing over the airwaves that a neighbor complained. Chief Kilcullen confirmed that a caller can profess their desire to be anonymous and should make that clear to dispatch.

Mapping Update

Nate Thibodeau presented the Rutland City Police Department July YTD comparison. He said the 3peat percent of call volume is 9%. The busiest time of day is between 1 and 3 pm and the busiest day is Friday. The YTD comparison for July 31, 2021 call volume is 6,244, with the YTD average 6,559, directed patrols is 605 with the average 485. Larceny (all other) the 5-year average is 58 and currently there is 71; Larceny Shoplifting the average is 64 and 2021 at 73; Aggravated Assault the average 30 and 2021 at 27; Breaking Entering Force the average is 25 and 2021 at 45; No force the average 14 and 2021 is 8; and Robbery the average at 4 and 2021 at 15. Chief Kilcullen said several robberies were related to two individuals. Nate continued with Motor vehicle larceny the average 37 and 2021 at 82 which is mostly from unlocked vehicles. Larceny from Building the average 29 and 2021 at 8 and Larceny Bicycle the 5-year average is 9 and 2021 is 11. Overdoses the average is 32 with 42 in 2021. There have been 4 fatal overdoses this year and 38 non-fatal with Narcan being used in 24 cases. Arrest information for Larceny (all other) total cases is 10 with 14 arrests; Shoplifting is 73 with 24 arrests; Aggravated Assault total cases is 27, Breaking Entering Force 45 cases with 5 arrests, B&E no force is 8 with 2 arrests; Robbery is 15 cases with 4 arrests. The Mapping Update shows thefts from motor vehicle mainly happening in Sector 1 with one following in Sector 2 and then Sector 3 and back to Sector 1. Nate suspects that it is more than one individual involved in these thefts. Breaking Entering and Aggravated Assaults mainly in Sectors 1 & 2 and robberies occurring in the same place more than once. Chief Kilcullen said the sergeants meet every two weeks to discuss the addresses where they have been to at least 3 times over the course of a month. Chairman Sargeant reiterated that calls for service are how services are allocated at the current time.

Communications from the Union

Union President Rick Caravaggio thanked the Board of Aldermen for recent gestures and support that have improved morale and staffing.

Commanders' Report

Commander LaChance said another academy was added in October due to everyone's staffing storages. The plan is to get the two new hires into the full-time academy in October. There are more interviews this week with the potential to have two more

candidates in the February academy. Chairman Sargeant said we do need to cast a wider net and participate in some national data bases for job seekers. Commissioner Romeo asked about recruiting by an officer at universities. Chief Kilcullen said an officer has showed interest in recruiting. Commissioner Langston suggesting connecting with the LYFT Marketing and CEDRR who are investing in recruiting folks to move to the area. Commander LaChance talked about updating a recruiting video through Stafford Tech that was halted due to COVID. Chief Kilcullen agreed that the RPD could be involved in the CEDRR marketing and asked Sgt. Lorman to reach out to Lyle Jepson regarding the campaign and how it could include attracting officers to the area. Commander LaChance discussed how the academy is making changes to the hiring process to make recruiting from out-of-state easier and less expensive for candidates. Officer Rice discussed the need to increase the benefit package for “pre-certs” to come here. Commissioner Langston asked about the process for creating sign-on bonuses and moving expenses. Chief Kilcullen said the recently signed MOU addressed the sign-on bonus.

Commander Delpha said coverage is planned for the VT State Fair next week.

Commander Sheldon said they are making some adjustments upstairs and prioritizing some tasks. The Community Policing and Neighborhood Engagement Committee are very active and getting a lot done with goal setting and action steps with a lot of momentum. The first in-person/hybrid meeting will be Thursday at the church. The Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design class will be held later this fall and winter with 25-30 attending. SRO LaGuardia will be returning to school resource in August. National Night Out was a great success and he thanked Officer Rosario for his role.

Budget Report

Chief Kilcullen reported that as of the first month of the new fiscal year, expenses are at 8.3% and 7.3% of the budget.

Chief's Report

Chief Kilcullen said on July 14 he attended a Chiefs' Association meeting in Barre during which he reported on the Department of Public Safety survey results. There was a vicious dog hearing on the 15th and on July 19 the re-opening celebration of the Amtrak Station was held. On July 21 there was a meeting regarding shopping carts. On July 21 and 27 there were negotiating sessions with the Union and a neighborhood walk on July 28. On July 29th there was a meeting with the State's Attorney following the arraignment of the individual who struck Officer Harvey back in 2020. There was a second vicious dog hearing on July 29 and the Chief met with Ms. Garcia on July 30. Proctor Gas provided a police appreciation barbecue at the station on July 30. On

August 2 there was an executive session with the Board to discuss the second MOU and August 3 was National Night Out. On August 6 the Chief met with a candidate that will be sent to the Academy for a PT test on October 1. He added that there is an Intermunicipal Committee meeting on Route 7 Pedestrian Safety at 6:30 on August 9 and on August 11 at 7 pm at the recreation community center there is public meeting regarding how to use the ARPA funding. There is a union negotiation session on August 10 and 27. A new dispatcher was hired on August 6. Sgt. Jason Williams separated on August 8 but will stay on part-time to conduct some training. The MOU addressing BCI on-call pay, shift differential and recognition bonus was signed since the last meeting. There is still one communications operator position open that may be filled internally.

Trainings

July 12-14 – Officer LaGuardia attended the National Association of School Resource Officers School Safety Conference.

Sept. 27-29 - Officer Caravaggio and Wright will be attending an Officer Field Training in South Burlington.

Commissioner Brown asked about the Officer Award Event. Chief Kilcullen said it was rescheduled last year to May but cancelled due to COVID. Discussion is ongoing on whether to hold it in December or May. Commissioner Langston suggested holding it in September when it is less cold outside. Commander LaChance said it would be difficult to find a venue in such a short time. Commissioner Langston asked if the ceremony is open to the public and what size of a venue is needed. Chief Kilcullen said it is open to the public and at least 125 seats are necessary.

Commissioner Langston asked if the Chief discussed the making of the PSA video. He said it was mentioned last month. Commissioner Langston said the video file is large so she suggested to Nate that he upload it to YouTube and then it can be showed wherever. Chief Kilcullen said there will be another video called “Chief’s Corner.” Commissioner Romeo suggested that the videos air on Channel 15 to get it out in the community.

RPD Temporary Detention Policy Comments and Discussion

Chairman Sargeant said he distributed 3 policies in response to Mr. Green’s comments at the last meeting. The policies include one that is in effect, one that is proposed and an example provided by the Vermont State Police. He will take an action item to re-draft the proposed policy to bring it up to date and then he will bring it back to the Commission. Chairman Sargeant did want to ask the Commission if checking on a detainee every 10 minutes was too frequent. The VSP policy is a face to face check every 30 minutes unless the detainee has expressed an interest in harming themselves then it is

every 15 minutes. The Commission agreed to the 30/15 check but Commissioner Calcagni asked to add “extenuating circumstances beyond the suicide watch.” Chairman Sargeant said he will hold that question until executive session. Commissioner Langston asked if there are cameras on the cells that can be viewed from anywhere. Commander Delpha said they can be viewed from dispatch but not from patrol. He added that the cameras are a web-based system that can be pulled up on any officer’s computer. Commissioner Romeo asked if the cameras have audio. Commander LaChance said dispatch does not have audio.

Executive Session

At 7:26 pm Commission Brown moved to go into Executive Session citing Title 1 Section 313 paragraph 4 disciplinary or dismissal action against a public officer or employee. Commission Romeo seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

Executive session exited at 7:52 pm.

Adjournment

Commissioner Calcagni moved to adjourn. Commissioner Langston seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

Meeting called to a close at 7:53 pm.

Submitted by: Barbara Spaulding

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