

Rutland City Police Commission
July 12, 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.

Call to order by Chairman Sargeant at 6:03 pm.

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Romeo moved to approve the minutes of June 14, 2021. Commissioner Brown seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Introduction/Recognition of Police Department Members

Chief Kilcullen administered the oath for the following officers:

Commander Sam Delpha was promoted Patrol Division Commander on March 28.

Cpl. Elias Anderson was promoted to Sgt. on April 11.

Sgt. Heath Plemmons was promoted to Night Shift Sgt. on July 4.

Cpl. Nathan Harvey was promoted recently, Cpl. Chris Rose and Sgt. Jason Williams were promoted on March 28; all were unable to attend in person.

New officer Timothy Rice from Baltimore, Md., was also administered the oath.

Public Comment

Chairman Sargeant introduced Kelly Green of 40 Cleveland Avenue in Rutland. Mr. Green described several situations over the past year during which he felt that the actions of Rutland City police officers emboldened and escalated his neighbors' harassment toward him and subsequently led to his arrest. Chairman Sargeant asked if there was anything in the police report that shows an unlawful arrest was made.

Commander Delpha said the arresting officer made the arrest based on the victim's phone video and the defendant's wife's recorded video. Chairman Sargeant said the Police Commission can only control the level of service or incorrect behaviors in the police department. Mr. Green said he is disabled and further discussed how he was poorly treated during his arrest and while being detained following his arrest. Chairman Sargeant asked Commander Delpha if there was anything about the arrest that violated our Use of Force Policy. Commander Delpha said no. Chairman Sargeant said he has had discussion with the Chief and the Commander on this specific case regarding whether anyone on our force violated any of our policies, procedures and trainings and the answer is no. He added that it doesn't mean that those policies, procedures and

trainings are as good as they could be. Commissioner Langston asked to review the Detention Policy with regard to a medical issue. Chairman Sargeant said he would add it as an action item for the next meeting. Commissioner Romeo asked Mr. Green if he had recorded any unusual activity since installing surveillance cameras at his property. Mr. Green said the cameras were installed after the first encounter with Officer Rose and he doesn't know if anything has been recorded since. Chairman Sargeant thanked Mr. Green for bringing his concerns to the Commission. Chief Kilcullen said we are unable to respond due to pending criminal charges and threatened litigation by Mr. Green.

Commissioner Romeo discussed an interaction with a woman who asked if he was Police Commissioner. The woman asked why the RCPD hired a non-citizen as a police officer. Commissioner Romeo said he was unaware they had but he had no issue with it personally and gave the woman a history lesson. Chief Kilcullen said an applicant is not required to be a citizen to be a police officer in the State of Vermont. Commissioner Romeo asked if any tickets were issued by officers responding to complaints regarding fireworks on First Street last Thursday or Friday night. Chief Kilcullen said it is not illegal to possess fireworks and in order to cite someone we have to observe them lighting off the fireworks because that requires a permit. Commander Sheldon said the incident involved Diablos Motorcycle Club and officers did respond explaining they did not want the attention from the RCPD and they agreed. He added there were 21 calls received. Commander Sheldon added that he spoke to his neighbor on Bellevue Avenue regarding fireworks. Chief Kilcullen said the law is ambiguous adding that the seller isn't allowed to sell fireworks to someone without a permit. The person who possesses the fireworks can't light them without a permit.

Chairman Sargeant said he received a call from Mike Perry who resides in the River Street area. He had concerns regarding the safety of two officers pulled over on the side of the road with no flashing blues on. Mr. Perry spoke to Sgt. Anderson who said they were staged in support of another officer. Chairman Sargeant did not agree it was a safety issue and invited Mr. Perry to this meeting. Chairman Sargeant did follow up with the Chief and Commander Delpha to confirm that what the two officers were doing was in line with our policies and procedures. Commissioner Langston asked what Mr. Perry thought was a safety issue. Chairman Sargeant said one of the cruisers was partially in the traffic lane and cars had to wait for clearance before going around. Chairman Sargeant received a call today from Mark Foley Jr. who is his landlord at 77 Grove Street regarding issues with local youths loitering in the parking lot. Officer LaGuardia had volunteered to respond to the situation. Chairman Sargeant asked Commander Delpha if he could put Officer LaGuardia in touch with Mark Foley Jr. Commander Delpha said Officer LaGuardia is away until the last week in July at a training but agreed to having him put in touch with Mark Foley Jr.

Chief Kilcullen discussed two requests for medical purposes that were approved for exterior load bearing vests. These vests aren't always the appropriate equipment for certain injuries and it has the potential to impact the shoulders and other issues. There are alternatives that are rarely considered. Commander Sheldon discussed hearing from an Australian doctor who specializes in the study of exterior load bearing vests and it is not a one size fits all. Dr. Orr also discussed body zones and how we regulate heat. Officer Rice gave a presentation on the Blauer exterior vests worn by police officers in Baltimore, MD that are less tactical in appearance, as well as, the shirt and pants worn under the vest. Chairman Sargeant asked Officer Rice to send him the research on this package by Blauer and he will send Officer Rice the package he got from the State's Fair and Impartial Policing Commission on the best leading research about police acceptance and impression in a community when they show up on scene wearing this type of uniform. Chairman Sargeant said when he received the research from Officer Rice, he will send everything to the Commissioners. He added that he would like to continue this discussion about this type of technology. Commissioner Langston said it was about time the technology for these uniforms caught up to the job. Chief Kilcullen said it does appear to be a reasonable balance between a tactical vest and what is practical. Commissioner Langston suggested limiting the quantity of objects on the vest.

Commanders' Report

Commander LaChance said two employees are retiring Melissa Sharkis and Laurie Walters. One of the positions has been interviewed and the applicant is in background now. The other position is being posted in-house and once that is done, we have other applicants for the position. There is no real change to the officer hiring which leaves us with 3 in interview, two that are testing tomorrow at the Academy and one needs to take the PT test. If they all pass, there will 6 candidates in background. Commander LaChance said they are down 9 positions. Commissioner Langston asked if the candidates were all local folks. Commander LaChance said no. Commissioner Langston asked how they were recruited. Chief Kilcullen said there is a question on the application as to how they heard about the position. Commissioner Romeo suggested looking into part-time officers. Chief Kilcullen said he has looked into it but it has its issues with availability.

Commander Delpha said since the last meeting graduations had no issues. He sat down with Rutland Mental Health employees for a Q&A segment on June 23. There has been a good working partnership with them and they have been helpful with the RCPD staff shortage. When the RCPD takes someone involuntarily into custody someone at the hospital will babysit them in a secure room while Rutland Mental Health applies for the warrant. This frees up an officer from having to sit at the hospital for 5-8 hours waiting

for a judge to sign a warrant. Commissioner Langston asked if they also go out on calls with the police. Commander Delpha said sometimes they will and if they can't immediately the police initiate the process until they can arrive on scene. Commander Sheldon discussed the Team Two Response which is county-based. There has been someone assigned to work with us for the past 7-8 years but she was scheduled at the hospital. The MOU has since been worked out and she will be available through the grant. It has been a learning process. Commissioner Langston suggested that a story be done to let the public know about this partnership. Chief Kilcullen said there hasn't been one recently but RCPC is one of the first to have embedded crisis clinicians. He has received a call from a criminal justice professor at Tennessee State University who has a podcast and asked to have a conversation with the host about this topic. Commissioner Romeo asked about the time it takes to get a warrant and suggested that there needs to be a relationship with judicial. Commander LaChance reviewed the warrant and search warrant timing.

Commander Sheldon said we have two interns from Stafford and one started today. She is a 17-year-old senior and granddaughter of former Police Chief Bob Holmes. She will be paid through a grant from the State of VT. The second intern is a junior and will start in two weeks. The Citizen Academy draft is complete and being reviewed by Sgt. Dickerson. The Neighborhood Watch program will piggy back the Citizen Academy and training will be set up in a couple months. Commander Sheldon and Sgt. Dickerson attended the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design class in Binghamton, NY and will bring it back to Rutland in late August. Once that is set up, he will invite the Commission. The class is 3 days with a 3-hour class followed by field work. Commissioner Langston asked if the Development Review Board and Zoning Boards will be invited. Chief Kilcullen said yes. Commander Sheldon said Rebecca Mattis of the Planning Commission will be attending. He continued his report saying there are four local kids camp visits scheduled for the Recreation Department for Officers Dickerson and Rosario. Commander Sheldon concluded saying the hotel meetings are going fine with the Quality Inn being shut down. Commissioner Langston said she has met Kareem Chapman the resource coordinator hired by the state to help with the hotel issues. Chief Kilcullen said the RCPD asked for a resource desk and Kareem is coordinating that for us now through his non-profit.

Chairman Sargeant reminded the Animal Control Board members there is a new vicious dog hearing scheduled for this Thursday at 5:30 in the Community Room.

Mapping Update

Nate Thibodeau presented the Rutland City Police Department June YTD comparison. He said the 3peat percent of call volume is 8%. The busiest time of day is between 10 am

and 1 pm. The YTD comparison for June 30, 2021 call volume is 5,178 with the average 5,416, directed patrols is 508 with the average 410. Larceny (all other) the 5-year average is 45 and this year is up at 57; Aggravated Assault is down 19 with the average 45; Breaking Entering Force is up 36 with the average 18; No force is down at 7 with the average 11; and Robbery is at 11 with the average at 5. Chief Kilcullen said back in March/April there were several robberies related to a single individual who was arrested. Nate continued with Motor vehicle larceny is at 70 with the average 30; Larceny from Building is at 23 with the average 23. Overdoses are at 34 and the four-year average is 25. Fatal overdoses 1 this year and 5 last year. Arrests for Larceny (all other) total cases is 57 with 11 arrests; Shoplifting is 63 cases with 36 arrests; Aggravated Assault total cases is 18, Breaking Entering Force 36 cases with 5 arrests, B&E no force is 7 with 2 arrests; Robbery is 11 cases with 4 arrests. The Map Update YTD shows thefts from motor vehicle in Sector 1 and along the edges of Sector 3, 70-80% being unlocked vehicles; Breaking Entering in Sector 1; and Overdoses mainly in Sector 1. Commissioner Langston asked if a lot of ground was lost in the Northwest Neighborhood due to COVID. Commander Sheldon said it is situational based on the hotels and money being given out. Commissioner Langston asked if there is anything that can be done by the community to help in Sector 1. Chief Kilcullen said there are fewer owner-occupied homes in that area and there is difficulty to evict anyone.

Budget Report

Chief Kilcullen reported that as of the end of the fiscal year, expenses are at 87.45% of the budget. The underutilized budget is mostly due to the job openings.

Chief's Report

Chief Kilcullen said on June 15 he and Officers LaGuardia and Rosario attended the ribbon cutting ceremony at the Allen Street Campus Pump Track, he discussed the Broadband installation going on throughout the City with the idea to sell access to the fiber through subscriptions and on June 16 he attended a summer concert meeting about a series at the Royce Mandigo Area. On June 18 he attended two meetings, a traffic committee meeting and a motel meeting. The Boys & Girls Club held its summer celebration in Meadow Street Park on June 19 and there was a vicious dog hearing on June 22. Chief Kilcullen attended union negotiations meeting and a second vicious dog hearing both on June 29. In July, he will attend the Chiefs' Association meeting in Barre on the 14th, a vicious dog hearing on the 15th and the re-opening celebration of the Amtrak Station on July 19. On July 21 he will attend union negotiations and a shopping cart committee meeting. On July 27 he will attend union negotiations and on July 29 there will be a vicious dog hearing.

July 2 – District Binder Policy Manuals were distributed throughout the department. Sgt. Bartlett retired after 20 years and Melissa Sharkis resigned as communications operator. She will be a hearing officer with the Agency of Transportation.

July 8 – Laurie Walters retired after 30 years as a dispatcher.

RCPD entered into an agreement with the Union to provide additional compensation through the summer as an appreciation for the increased workload for patrol and dispatch.

Commander LaChance solicited interest in the Corporal Promotion Process and the deadline to submit letters of interest is July 16.

Detectives Ashe and Maguire offered to reactivate the honor guard for ceremonies.

Trainings

June 8 – Detective Billings completed Use of Force and Tactic Update.

June 9 – Sgt. Whitehead and Detective Ashe attended a Responding to an Unexplained Child Death training.

June-14-18 - Detective Billings attended a Death and Homicide Investigation class in Columbus, Ohio.

June 23-25 – Commander Sheldon and Sgt. Dickerson attended a Crime Prevention through Environmental Design training in Binghamton, NY.

Officer Rice is completing his VPA training requirements.

July 12-14 – Officer LaGuardia is attending National Association of School Resource Officers School Safety Conference in Orlando, Fla.

Sept. 27-29 - Officer Caravaggio will be attending an Officer Field Training.

Adjournment

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

Meeting called to a close at 8:40 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