

Rutland City Police Commission
May 10, 2021

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

Also attending: Chief Kilcullen, Commanders David LaChance, Greg Sheldon and Sam Delpha, Crime Analyst Nathan Thibodeau, Union Rep Caravaggio and Officer Rosario.

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

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Romeo moved to approve the minutes of April 12, 2021. Commissioner Langston seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

Introductions/Recognition of Police Department Members

Chief Kilcullen said he is waiting to introduce and recognize police department members for in-person meetings to resume so that friends and family can attend. Chairman Sargeant discussed his plans to resume in-person meetings in July following Universal Distance Guidelines. He said Superintendent Peters has offered the gym at the Community Center. Commissioner Langston suggested using the Fox Room of the Rutland Free Library. Chairman Sargeant said he would follow up with Randall at the library.

*Commissioner Brown arrived.

Public Comment

Chairman Sargeant thanked Pat and Jeanette for their powerful statements at the April 22 meeting with the State regarding the Quality Inn.

Commander Sheldon gave an update on the follow up meeting with the State saying the State has implemented some of the requests that were made April 22 and they have seen a decrease in the call volume at the location. Chief Kilcullen added that in addition to adopting some of the action items, including education about COVID and a vaccine clinic, they were made aware of an eviction process for management of the hotels. A copy of the eviction policy was provided to law enforcement. Commander Sheldon said that health type resources are being sought through grants from the State to be made available onsite. Chief Kilcullen said he and the Mayor met with the Rutland delegation and the Mayor met again with the delegation and AHS who said there are funds to pay

for police presence at the hotels. Chief Kilcullen responded that the department doesn't have the manpower to dedicate to the hotels. However, Commander Sheldon has talked to the Sheriffs' Department about taking advantage of those resources but they weren't able to either. Chief Kilcullen added that Rob Evans did offer to reach out to the Sheriffs' Association to see if any sheriff's department in the state might be able to provide security services. Commander Sheldon said there has been a decrease in the number of occupied rooms from 63 to 42 and that is expected to decrease to 10 when the cold weather exemption expires. Commissioner Langston asked if things were also improving at the Holiday Inn. Chief Kilcullen said there was a fatal overdose there two weeks ago. Commander Sheldon confirmed there were 4 overdoses at the Holiday Inn with one fatal. He added that calls from the Green Mountain Plaza have dropped in half from 50 to 26.

Chairman Sargeant discussed an incident he witnessed regarding an armed man, who was in violation of a restraining order, that was resolved peacefully because Sgt. Dickerson had a working relationship with the individual through the police department. Sgt. Dickerson was able to successfully talk with the individual and convince him to drop the firearm, comply with police orders and find a way to get the help he needs going forward. Chairman Sargeant said it's the power of these relationships through community policing that this incident went the right way instead of a thousand different bad ways. Chairman Sargeant called Sgt. Dickerson later that day to thank him because this is the type of policing we need in Rutland and when it happens, we need to celebrate it and it makes him proud. This is exactly the type of service from the police department that this community has been asking for and was delivered. Commander Sheldon said Sgt. Dickerson did a great job and was able to end things peacefully. Commissioner Langston thought it would be a good idea to write something for the newspaper. Commissioner Calcagni discussed hearing about a "standoff" happening that a police officer waved traffic through, although he did hear later that traffic was diverted. Commander Delpha said motorists were waved through until the intersection was cleared before a detour could be established.

Communication from the Union

Union President Rick Caravaggio said he had nothing specific to address at this time.

Commanders' Report

Commander LaChance said the Eric Morgano has taken the records clerk position. Police Officer Tim Rice has been hired. There are two applicants in background, three awaiting testing and interviews at the end of the month and one interview scheduled for Thursday. Two new officers in B.C.I. Corporal Lucia and Tyler Billings. Commander

LaChance is working on getting a corporal's exam up and running. The policy review meeting is tomorrow. He also mentioned a fund raiser for retired officer Tim Tuttle who needs a liver transplant. There will be a chicken barbecue and fundraiser on June 13/14. There is also a flag raffle through Mike Hoffman. Chairman Sargeant asked that the Police Commission receive details on the fundraisers.

Commander Delpha reported that they were able to secure a Federal JAG grant to help pay for portable radios for patrol and they seem to be working out really well. Chairman Sargeant asked about the parking issue on the dead end of Edgerton with officers being asked to take a zero-tolerance policy on the parking. Commander Delpha said the zero-tolerance email was put out and one other complaint was responded to by officers, but it has calmed down.

Commander Sheldon said he met with the Boy Scouts and hopes to start the explorer post in May with a kick off in June or July called First Night. VISION sub-committees have been meeting consistently this month and the next VISION meeting is Thursday at the Calvary Bible Church and zoom. Stuff a Cruiser starts Friday May 14 from 9 am to 3 pm by the Amtrak Station to benefit BROCC and the Rutland County Humane Society. The Community Response Team (CRT) Tim Jones has been doing a lot of directed patrols of the parks and looking for wayward dogs off lease. Nate has been working with Bennington and Barre PDs noticing connections with Rutland regarding drug trafficking and other crime. Officer Rosario received kudos from Alis Headlam regarding his outreach downtown following a walk-around with him last Friday. SRO Ernest LaGuardia is going to do a presentation at the VISION meeting on the importance of the SRO program in the schools. School members will be there with staff and students who will discuss how the program works for them. National Night Out is August 3 4-7 pm at Meadow St. Park with more to come as planning continues. This is National Police Week and the International Association of Police put out a sobering video today saying 295 officers died in the line of duty in 2020 and 182 of those were from COVID complications while on duty.

Chairman Sargeant said there are some communities in Vermont where school boards have taken the action to exclude SROs in schools which he believes is an improper decision. He added that what Officer LaGuardia does for children in the schools getting them access to resources is very important. SRO officers are not there to run through the halls with drug dogs and kick open lockers and harass students. Rutland's SRO provides an invaluable service to the neediest students and he is glad Ernie is going to do the presentation. Commander Sheldon said Commissioner Langston made the suggestion to the Chief regarding having Officer LaGuardia make the presentation to educate the community about the school resource program. Chairman Sargeant asked

if the Rutland School Board has taken up the question of the SRO. Commander Sheldon said he agrees with the Chief that SROs should be a local level decision and not state level mandates. Chief Kilcullen is not sure where the proposed legislation is but there was a proposal prohibiting school districts from entering into agreements with police departments to provide a school resource officer. There was another proposal by Sen. Terenzini to specifically allow and provide funding for districts who can't afford an SRO. He added that when SROs have failed it's because they have not adhered to the principals of a model program. They are there to make connections and provide resources for individuals who wouldn't otherwise have those resources. The Rutland program adheres to the National Association of Resource Officers' guidance. He has not heard that the Rutland School Board has had any discussion regarding the program.

Officer Rosario spoke to Commissioner Romeo's question from the last meeting regarding bicyclists and skateboarders. He has not seen anyone riding bikes on the sidewalk but has heard from people regarding where skateboards are allowed to ride. There is absolutely no riding of bicycles on the sidewalk in the Downtown District and only children 12 and younger are allowed to ride bicycles on the sidewalk in Residential Districts. All other bicyclists are supposed to be in the roadway and adhere to the rules of road just like a motor vehicle. Officer Rosario said since court has been out, skateboard riders have been over there but no one has called in to the police department. If he sees anyone riding bicycles on the sidewalk, he will let them know they can not ride on the sidewalks Downtown. Chairman Sargeant asked whether there will be a public event to help kids get access to bike helmets. Officer Rosario said he believed there will be an event but, he also has some extra helmets from last year and he is more than willing to provide them. Commander Sheldon said there is a Kiwanis Bike Rodeo coming up and forwarded the email to Commander Delpha. Officer LaGuardia is working on getting helmets donated. Commissioner Langston suggested providing the helmets at National Night Out as well.

Commissioner Langston said she heard there were a lot of needles found during the recent Downtown cleanup and whether there was some coordination to make sure people are safe. Officer Rosario said he spoke with business owners who contact him to take care of any needles in the correct way. There were some complaints about needles in the Justice Square area which have been cleaned up and he is policing the area more often.

Mapping Update

Nate Thibodeau presented the Rutland City Police Department April YTD comparison with previous years. The top five repeat locations are 253 South Main, Quality Inn, Shopping Plaza, RRM, EconoLodge. He said call volume has decreased 32% from March

which is the first decrease since October 2020. From Jan 1st to April 30 2021 as compared to all years going back to 2016, the call volume for 2021 is 3,234 which is below YTD average. We are seeing an increase in larcenies across the board with 40 so far and the YTD average 26. Robberies have gone down since a recent arrest. Larceny from motor vehicles has gone up at 46 right now with a 5-year average of 64. There have been 30 arrests this year so far. The call volume for the week mostly takes place during the middle of the day with the busiest day on Friday. The average overdoses for years 2016-2020 is 15 and in 2021 there have been 20 so far mainly taking place in sector 1. Theft from motor vehicles mainly take place in sector 1.

Budget Report

Chief Kilcullen reported that as of 83% of the year expenses are at 74% of the budget.

Chief's Report

Chief Kilcullen said Commander Delpha, Cpl. Chris Rose, Sgt. Jason Williams, Sgt. Elias Anderson and Officer Timothy Rice will be introduced in person in July. Since the last Commission meeting there was a vicious dog hearing that occurred on April 15 at the recreation center and on April 16 there was a meeting of the Center Street Stakeholders to discuss the reconfiguration of Center Street for outdoor dining. This will be similar to last year and the timeline is for the end of May. On April 20 there was a meeting with the courts regarding a new role they would like the police to play when people are arrested on warrants. Commander Delpha put out some direction to personnel in response to the court. Chief Kilcullen said a lot of agency changes have an adverse impact on the police department because we do not have the resources to do what is asked. On April 22 the Vision Meeting was held with the State. Chief Kilcullen continued saying Fridays are typically his outreach days and he goes to the Allen Street School in the morning with SRO LaGuardia to do activities with the kids. April 27 was the first follow up meeting with Rob Evans and AHS. On April 28 Commander Delpha and the Chief met with a group of students at RHS to discuss changes to traffic issues during arrival and dismissal and what they are looking to alleviate the congestion. They joined the group in a walk through to see what they had in mind which included traffic counts and grant funding support. There was concern about adding traffic directly onto Woodstock Avenue but some changes were also proposed on campus. There will be some internal discussion before a letter of support is given. On April 29 Cpl. Lucia and the Chief participated in a PSA at the hospital to encourage vaccinations. There was a meeting on April 30 at the Dismas House and on May 3 there was a check-in regarding the hotel issue. On May 7 he met with Jeanette and there was a follow up meeting with the Quality Inn and AHS. Going forward, there is a meeting on May 11 with Superintendent Bliss involving student victims and how their safety can be enhanced.

There is a How to Respond to Overdose roundtable on May 14. Chief Kilcullen said on May 2 Officer Delhanty resigned.

Trainings

April 20-22 – Detective Maguire attended an Advanced Forensic class

April 20-22 – Taser Recertification

May 26 – Handgun skill training at the Academy for Officer's Rosario and LaGuardia

Chairman Sargent asked about what looks like a bike course being built at the Allen Street school. Chief Kilcullen said it is a bike course. Chairman Sargeant said he would not be in favor of any proposal adding morning or afternoon school traffic onto Woodstock Avenue without a traffic control device.

Executive Session

Chairman Sargeant said there will be an executive session scheduled for the June meeting.

Adjournment

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

Meeting called to a close at 7:06 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