

ST. JOHN POLICE COMMISSION

MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING ON MARCH 26, 2004

A Special Meeting of the Board of Metropolitan Police Commissioners of the Town of St. John was held on March 26, 2004 at 6:00 P.M., as advertised, pursuant to law, for the purpose of posting the Examination Register. Commissioner Dodaro called the meeting to order and then led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll call was taken with the following members of the Police Commission being present; namely, William Dodaro, Donald Farris, Rose Hejl, Robert Long, and Ronald Vale. Also present was Town Council Liaison Charles Pearson. Representing the Law Firm of Austgen, Decker and Phillips P.C. was Attorney David Austgen, as well as Attorney Tim Kuiper.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Hejl made a motion to accept the minutes as written of the Executive Session held on March 19, 2004 and prepared by the Law Firm of Austgen, Decker & Phillips, P.C., as well as the minutes of the Special Meeting held on March 19, 2004 and prepared by the Law Firm of Austgen, Decker & Phillips, P.C. With a second by Commissioner Long, the motion carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

There were no matters of old business addressed by the Commission at this meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Dodaro stated the Commission was in receipt of a resignation letter from Chief Joseph Guzik on March 19, 2004. Commissioner Dodaro read the resignation letter. Commissioner Vale then made a motion to accept Joseph Guzik's letter of resignation. With a second by Commissioner Farris, the motion carried unanimously.

At this point in the meeting and at the advice of Attorney David Austgen, Commissioner Vale made a motion to amend the agenda wherein the reference to the meeting being a work study session of the St. John Town Council be removed. With a second by Commissioner Long, the motion carried unanimously.

COMMUNICATIONS / CORRESPONDENCE

Regarding the resignation of Chief Joseph Guzik and the matter that the Commission's Special Meeting held at 6:00 P.M. on Friday, March 19, 2004 was not properly advertised and posted, Commissioner Dodaro read the following statement:

The Police Commission meeting tonight is being held to clarify the circumstances regarding the resignation of former Police Chief, Joseph Guzik, and to clear up any misunderstandings reported regarding this matter.

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The Police Commission members, all public servants, are responsible for ensuring the general safety and service of St. John and its residents.

The Police Commission held an executive session on Friday, March 19, 2004 at 5:30 p.m., as advertised and posted. There was an unintentional omission on the notice because a box was not checked that should have been. All discussions that occurred in the Executive Session, however, were proper according to the Indiana Open Door Law and specifically, Indiana Code 5-14-1.5-6.1.

At the Executive Session on Friday, March 19, 2004, the Police Commission offered Mr. Guzik the opportunity to resign his position as Chief of Police. Mr. Guzik was provided information as to why it would be in the best interest of all parties that he tender his resignation. From the information discussed, the police commission felt that a change in leadership within the department was necessary. Mr. Guzik was then presented with a letter of resignation. Upon his receipt of the letter and after full discussion, Mr. Guzik signed the letter of resignation and presented it to the Police Commission. Then, the Police Commission issued a directive to Mr. Guzik that acknowledged the receipt of resignation, and requested all Police Department property be returned and further stated a press release would be issued.

The following is a quote from that directive:

"The Police Commission will issue a public press statement reporting that the Chief of Police has resigned to pursue other interests, that the Police Commission wishes him luck in his future endeavors, and that after his ten (10) plus years of dedication and service, he will be missed. Further, please be advised that you can make any statement to the Press that you deem appropriate, including resigning to pursue other interests. In the event that your Press statement does not conform to the above or deviates into topics that have not been discussed, the Police Commission will respond appropriately and accordingly."

We are making this statement tonight as Mr. Guzik has chosen to ignore information brought to his attention prior to his resignation. This was only a part of what was presented to him in specific detail at last Friday's meeting.

When the presentation was completed, Mr. Guzik voluntarily signed the resignation letter. He was further assured at his request that details of additional information that led to his resignation would not be released.

We would like to further state, that the comments made by the Police Commission were in accordance with the understanding with Mr. Guzik to protect his public image.

The Police Commission will adhere to the original agreement with Mr. Guzik, provided he conducts himself as a professional in any other actions regarding this matter.

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The Commission will appropriately respond to any additional inaccurate statements should that be necessary.

This matter is now closed, and we will move forward to finding a qualified candidate for the position of Chief of Police. This will allow us to provide the best possible service to the residents of St. John.

ADJOURNMENT

With the conclusion of reading the above statement, Commissioner Dodaro stated the meeting is adjourned. Commissioner Vale made a motion for adjournment. With a second by Commissioner Hejl, the meeting was adjourned.

Town of St. John, Lake County
Indiana, Board of Metropolitan
Police Commissioners

Rose Hejl, Secretary

ATTEST:

Joan M. Kolodziej, Recording Secretary