

ST. JOHN POLICE COMMISSION

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING ON JUNE 9, 2008

The June 2008 Regular Meeting of the Board of Metropolitan Police Commissioners of the Town of St. John was held on June 9, 2008 at 7:00 P.M., as advertised, pursuant to law. 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, and Ronald Vale. Also present was Chief Fred Frego of the St. John Police Department. Commissioner Robert Long arrived at 7:08 P.M. Commissioner Rose Hejl was not present due to not feeling well. Town Council Liaison Jerri Teibel was not present at this meeting. No legal representation was present at the meeting.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MONTH'S MINUTES

May 12, 2008 Regular Meeting - Commissioner Vale made a motion to approve the minutes as written from the May 12, 2008 meeting. With a second by Commissioner Farris, the motion carried unanimously (3-0).

CORRESPONDENCE / COMMUNICATIONS

There were no items of Correspondence and/or Communications brought before the Commission at tonight's meeting.

POLICE DEPARTMENT'S MONTHLY REPORT

Chief Frego read the monthly report for May 2008. Chief Frego stated that from May 1, 2008 through May 31, 2008, the members of the St. John Police Department logged 18,719 miles and responded to 565 incidents. The investigation of these incidents led to 36 adult arrests with 52 charges being filed and 2 juvenile arrests with 2 charges being filed. There were 377 traffic citations issued along with 88 written warnings for a total of 463 citations being issued during the month of May 2008 by the officers of the St. John Police Department. Also during the month of May, vehicle thefts totaled \$0.00, and all other thefts totaled \$1,930.00. The total value of recovered property was \$180.00. Regarding grant activity, the officers of the St. John Police Department, while working the OPO / BCC / OSS / DUI Taskforce Grants, issued 137 traffic citations and 39 written warnings for a total of 176 citations being issued on the grants during the month of May 2008. The investigation of these violations resulted in 5 adult arrests with 9 charges being filed and 1 juvenile arrest with 1 charge being filed on the grants for the month of May 2008.

OLD BUSINESS

There were no matters of "Old Business."

REPORTS

Budget – Commissioner Dodaro stated all local municipalities are in a budget crunch. Chief Frego advised the Town has been informed the tax draw for this year will be late again. Further, Chief Frego stated Sheriff Roy Dominguez is hosting a meeting on June 19, 2008 to further discuss the consolidation of Lake County's dispatch centers as mandated by the State of the Indiana. The State has mandated that there will be only one (1) Central Dispatch Center per county. Chief Frego stated discussion has also been held reference combining the County's investigation units, records, data entry, etc. Some discussion ensued.

Physical Plant – There was nothing new to report on this topic.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Commissioner Dodaro congratulated Chief Frego on his recent appointment to NILEA'S Board of Directors. Chief Frego stated his first meeting in his new capacity is scheduled for June 11, 2008.

Commissioner Dodaro commented that the Eligibility List for New Hires will be expiring in November 2008. Chief Frego stated that according to the Department's Rules and Regulations, that list could be extended by the Police Commission if they so desire. Commissioner Dodaro stated the Commission could extend the Eligibility List for an additional six (6) months. Chief Frego stated there were several good candidates on that list, and he felt it did not make sense if the Department was going to hire in 2009 to go through the time and expense of creating a new list. Commissioner Dodaro stated the Commission will consider extending this list in a few months (September or October). An Executive Session will be scheduled at a later date for this purpose. Some discussion ensued.

Chief Frego advised that Lake Central School Corporation's new superintendent was pro-School Resource Officers (SRO), and it was hopeful that the Department would be placing an officer in the high school this Fall, as well as placing an officer at Clark Middle School. The new Superintendent will be starting July 1, 2008. Much discussion ensued regarding the SRO Program. Commissioner Long suggested Chief Frego contact local police chiefs and request their input regarding the value of the SRO Program in an effort to help sell the program to the Lake Central School Corporation. More discussion ensued.

NEW BUSINESS

There were no matters brought before the Commission under this topic.

CHIEF'S COMMENTS

Chief Frego had no comments.

ANY AND ALL

Commissioner Farris stated he observed the officers at the recent Town Festival. He thought they looked sharp and did a good job. Chief Frego advised the Department was able to provide the police coverage at the Festival without any overtime being paid out by the Department. The Reserve Officers were present at the Festival and from a police standpoint, the Festival was very uneventful. There were no arrests or incidents.

In light of the budget crisis and with gas prices rising, Commissioner Long stated he has heard rumblings of the take home cars being taken away. Commissioner Long stated he was listening to the police officers speak about car issues, and he just wanted to make sure the Chief of Police was aware that the Police Commission was available to help him with administering some of the issues at hand so that they could relieve the pressure that is on the Chief regarding these matters. Regarding the take-home car policy, Chief Frego stated he cannot take the cars away; that decision would have to come from the Police Commission. Chief Frego stated the car issue really is a political issue right now, and the Police Commission would have to discuss the matter with the Town Council to determine the direction the Council wants to go with this issue. Chief Frego stated he would like to clarify that if the public sees a St. John police officer driving his squad car in Lake County while off-duty, the officer is not doing anything wrong. The Department's Rules and Regulations say that the officer can drive his car off-duty. However, with the current gas prices, the public does not look favorably upon this. Chief Frego stated he has asked the officers to use common sense when driving their cars off-duty because perception is not good right now.

Commissioner Dodaro stated he felt this issue needs to be addressed in an Executive Session. Commissioner Long agreed and stated that the Commission needs to look at the facts (i.e., the officer's mileage, who is abusing this policy, limit the amount of miles that can be driven, etc.). Chief Frego stated there are numerous options that can be considered such as limiting take-home cars to only those officers who live in Town. Commissioner Long stated if the take-home vehicles are limited to only those officers who live in Town, this may cause dissention among the officers. Commissioner Long also stated if a decision is made that only the higher ranks get take-home cars, then this too would cause dissention. Budget cuts need to affect all employees, not just the front line employee. Commissioner Long stated that right now the morale is good in the Police Department and everybody likes what the Chief does. He stated he has spoken to several officers, and they all like what is going on, and have stated the work environment is much better. Commissioner Long stated they should strategize together to make things work. More discussion ensued.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments received from the public.

MEETING SCHEDULE

The next Regular Meeting will be on Monday, July 14, 2008. There will be a Work Study Session only if deemed necessary. The Regular Public Meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. Any and all Executive Sessions will be advertised pursuant to law.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Vale made a motion for adjournment. With a second by Commissioner Farris, 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