

ST. JOHN POLICE COMMISSION

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING FEBRUARY 13, 2012

The February 2012 Regular Meeting of the Board of Metropolitan Police Commissioners of the Town of St. John was held on February 13, 2012 at 7:00 P.M., as advertised, pursuant to law. Commissioner Dodaro called the meeting to order promptly at 7:00 P.M. 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, Rose Hejl, Robert Long, and Ron Vale. Also present was Chief of Police Fred Frego. Commissioner Donald Farris was not present due to recently having surgery. Town Council Liaison Kenneth Gembala was not present. No legal representation was present at the meeting.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Commissioner Hejl made a motion to table the Election of Officers till the March meeting. With a second by Commissioner Vale, the motion carried unanimously (4-0).

ANNUAL TOW MEETING

The following tow firms had representation at tonight's Annual Tow Meeting: Emerald Towing, Kubiak's Towing, and St. John Auto. When asked for comments, suggestions or complaints, Mr. Tim Rosinko, representing St. John Auto, stated he felt when there is an accident on Wicker Avenue (Highway 41), the tow firm that is closest in proximity to the accident should be contacted for the tow. He feels this would speed up the clearance of traffic congestion due to the accident. Mr. Joe Kubiak, representing Kubiak's Towing, stated he was in agreement and felt that this new procedure would help clear up traffic in a timelier manner. Some discussion ensued. Commissioner Dodaro stated logically speaking, the officer(s) on scene, depending on the time of day and how much traffic there is, could make a decision at that particular time as to which tow firm should be contacted. Chief Frego stated he understood the suggestion and since the Police Commission has no problem with it, and as long as there are no complaints received from any of the tow firms implying they were not getting their fair share of tows, it could become a new procedure. Chief Frego said the Police Department could try to balance out the tows with all three (3) firms. More discussion ensued. Chief Frego and Commissioner Dodaro stated this was a logical suggestion, and it made sense to call out the nearest tow firm.

The representative from Emerald Towing advised the Commission that Emerald recently purchased a trailer that is basically a flatbed trailer, and it is 53 feet long. The Commission was showed a photo of the trailer.

Chief Frego advised he was in receipt of a request from Tom and Ed's Auto Body, located in Schererville, requesting to be added to the St. John Police Department's tow rotation. Chief Frego stated that per Town Ordinance, the maximum number of standard tow firms allowed is three (3), and we currently have three (3) tow firms for standard tows. Therefore, this request will be denied.

ST. JOHN POLICE COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – FEB. 13, 2011 – PAGE 2

All tow firm representatives commented on the fact that they need to know from the dispatcher, at the time of the call, the type of vehicle they will be picking up, and the nature of the tow (if it's something other than an accident). Mr. Rosinko stated he has been called during the middle of the night, and the dispatcher has no idea as to what kind of car was being towed. Commissioner Dodaro stated this could be remedied by informing the officers on the street to be more descriptive as to the type of vehicle being towed, and the nature of the problem with the vehicle if other than being involved in an accident.

Mr. Kubiak stated he has been hearing the term "personal tow" lately, and he was not sure what that meant. Chief Frego stated it means a vehicle has broken down or ran out of gas, and when the officer arrives on scene, the driver requests a tow firm. Some discussion then ensued as to whether that registered owner has to obtain a tow release from the St. John Police Department if the tow was a "personal tow." Some discussion ensued. Chief Frego stated if it is an accident, then a tow release is required. However, if the subject ran out of gas, or their vehicle broke down and they requested a specific tow firm be called, then a tow release is not required. Mr. Kubiak was concerned that "personal tows" affected their turn in the tow rotation. Mrs. Gorcos stated when a subject requests a personal tow, then the tow is coded in the Spillman as a "customer request," which does not affect the tow rotation. More discussion ensued.

The Commission thanked the tow providers for their input and for attending tonight's meeting.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MONTH'S MINUTES

January 9, 2012 Regular Meeting - Commissioner Hejl made a motion to approve the minutes as written from the January 9, 2012 Regular Meeting. With a second by Commissioner Long, the motion carried unanimously (4-0).

CORRESPONDENCE / COMMUNICATIONS

Commissioner Hejl read a letter addressed to Mr. Steven Kil, Town Manager, dated January 28, 2012, from Colonel Richard J. Hucker, of 8761 Sheffield Avenue in Dyer, Indiana. Included with the letter was Colonel Richard Hucker's personal check, #1370, in the amount of \$100.00, which was made payable to the St. John Police Department. Said letter stated the \$100 donation was a token of the Hucker family's appreciation and recognition of the highest quality of service to the community by the St. John Police Department officers. The Huckers sent their heartfelt thanks for the courteous and efficient manner in which the St. John officers respond to a call. In response to Commissioner Dodaro's question, Chief Frego advised the monies from this donation will be deposited into the Police Department's Gift Fund.

Commissioner Dodaro advised he was in receipt of correspondence from Town Councilman Ken Gembala advising that he would not be able to attend tonight's meeting due to his being in attendance at another meeting, along with the Fire Chief, another Town Councilman, and the State District #1 representative. Councilman Gembala stated he wished he could be present at tonight's meeting, but it was necessary for him to attend the other meeting.

2011 YEAR END REPORT

The Commission advised they were all in receipt of the 2011 Year End Report. Their comments indicated it was a good report and very impressive.

Some discussion ensued at this time regarding the number of tows each tow provider had for the Year. Chief Frego stated he would like to have the number of "grant" tows provided. Commissioner Dodaro agreed and stated for next year's report, the Commission would like to have the number of tows provided by Stan's Towing for the grant. Some discussion ensued regarding the Grant and tows. Chief Frego stated this matter should be reviewed and the grant tows should be provided by all tow providers so that the numbers will be more even.

POLICE DEPARTMENT'S MONTHLY REPORT

Chief Frego read the monthly report for January 2012. Chief Frego stated that from January 1, 2012 through January 31, 2012, the members of the St. John Police Department logged 16,536 miles and responded to 474 incidents. The investigation of these incidents led to 27 adult arrests with 37 charges being filed, and 1 juvenile arrest with 1 charge being filed. There were 271 traffic citations issued along with 31 written warnings for a total of 302 citations being issued during the month of January 2012 by the officers of the St. John Police Department. Also during the month of January, vehicle thefts totaled \$0.00, and all other thefts totaled \$7,526.00. The total value of recovered property was \$11,400.00.

OLD BUSINESS

There were no items of "Old Business."

HUMAN RESOURCES

Chief Frego requested the Commission's authorization to hire one (1) police officer from the Final Register of Police Officer Candidates and present them with a conditional offer of employment. Commissioner Hejl made a motion to authorize Chief Frego to make a conditional offer of employment to the next candidate on the Final Register of Police Officer Candidates, and to continue down that list until the position is filled. With a second by Commissioner Vale, the motion carried unanimously (4-0).

NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Dodaro stated he was aware there was tentative approval for the Chief to purchase three (3), maybe four (4), cars, and he would entertain a motion that once the final approval is received, the Chief could proceed with the purchase without waiting to return to the Commission for approval. Commissioner Vale made a motion to approve the Chief of Police's

purchase of four (4) cars when the funds become available, and pending the approval of the fourth car. With a second by Commissioner Hejl, the motion carried unanimously (4-0).

CHIEF'S COMMENTS

Chief Frego stated regarding the monthly report, this was the first month where the Department recovered more stolen property than was actually stolen from Town during the month. Chief Frego went on to discuss a particular burglary that occurred in Town on the date he was leaving for the Chief's conference in Indianapolis. Chief Frego stated the officers, namely, Sergeant Michael Fryzel, Corporal James Turturillo and crew, did a fantastic job. In a matter of five (5) hours, the officers were able to identify the offender and locate where the offender was staying, which was a hotel in Merrillville. The officers went to the hotel in Merrillville, and arrested the suspect. Through this arrest, they were able to clear up probably six (6) other burglaries (theft of air conditioners, burglaries from businesses and homes, etc.) in surrounding towns. The officers really did a great job and deserve recognition. Commissioner Dodaro agreed the officers did a tremendous job.

Chief Frego advised that later during the same week, there were some out-of-towners who came into Town and tried presenting fake bank cards for cash at the Chase Bank. These subjects took the Chase Bank in Cedar Lake for \$4,800. Our officers were called by Chase Bank when their employee did not go for the fake card, and they responded rapidly and caught three (3) offenders who were charged. The U.S. Secret Service came in and confiscated all the cards. The suspects were responsible for similar thefts locally in Indiana, as well as in Chicago, and in Wisconsin. Chief Frego then explained the scam that the suspects were conducting. The Commission said "kudos to the officers!"

ANY AND ALL

Commissioner Hejl stated she wished to thank the Town Council for her re-appointment to the Police Commission. Further, Commissioner Hejl stated that she, as well as her fellow commissioners, have really had a good run, and she is really happy with what they have accomplished. Commissioner Hejl said that most importantly, the 5% decrease in Reported Crimes, as indicated in the 2011 Year End Report, is due to all the police officers doing a great job! She stated she is very proud of the officers. Commissioner Dodaro stated the officers' effort is there, and it has not gone unnoticed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments made under "Public Comment."

MEETING SCHEDULE

The next Regular Meeting will be on Monday, March 12, 2012. The Regular Public Meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. There will be a Work Study Session only if deemed necessary. Any and all Executive Sessions will be advertised pursuant to law.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Hejl made a motion for adjournment. With a second by Commissioner Long, the meeting was adjourned at 7:19 P.M. (4-0).

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

Rose Hejl, Secretary

ATTEST:

Joan M. Gorcos, Recording Secretary