



Police Commission Meeting May 20, 2021 6:30 p.m. Via Videoconference

Present: Commissioner Neil Bettez, Commissioner Alex Baer, Commissioner Dan Torres, Commissioner David Brownstein, Commissioner Julie Seyfert-Lillis, Chief Rob Lucchesi.

At 6:30 p.m. a motion was made by Commissioner Bettez to open the meeting with the pledge. Seconded by Commissioner Torres, all aye votes cast, motion carried.

Agenda: Amend item #7 to “Authorize the auction of 2 NPPD vehicles”

A motion was made by Commissioner Bettez to adopt the agenda as amended. Seconded by Commissioner Torres, all aye votes cast, motion carried.

Announcements:

- The next “Conversation with the Police” will be June 16th, 10 am at Water Street Market.
- Virtual Narcan Training, May 21st
- CIT flags are up on Main St.

Public Input:

Tom Jelliffe- “I’m here as a member of U-Act and the New Paltz Coalition for Community Safety and Wellbeing I’d like to comment on the final EO203 report recommendation on aggregating data based on race, ethnicity and language. First, while we agree that this improvement in data collection should be a top priority, we urge the Town and the Police Department to move on this with due consideration, taking into account experiences gained elsewhere and best practices laid out in various reports. One report in particular, by NYU Law School and others, “Collecting, Analyzing, and Responding to Stop Data: A Guidebook for Law Enforcement Agencies, Government, and Communities,” lays out cookbook-level detail for the whole life-cycle of the project: clarifying the benefits of data collection, deciding what to collect and when, developing and testing the data collection procedures, assuring the integrity of the data, analyzing it, communicating results of the analysis, and responding to those results. It talks about the importance of involving community members and patrol officers at nearly every step of the process. I will email the link (COPS-Guidebook+Final+Release+Version.pdf) to Supervisor Bettez in case the Commission members and Chief Lucchesi have not seen it yet. As I’m sure the Chief has experienced before, this kind of project can sound easy, but it represents a significant, complex and long term change process for the Department.

My second set of comments is to indicate that, as important as stop data is, it falls well short of what is needed to gain appropriate transparency into the operations of the NPPD. Other information that should be made easily accessible to the public are:

- Index crimes data as reported to the state and the FBI to reveal crime trends,
- Arrest data by severity of offense and race/ethnicity as is currently reported to the State and FBI
- Dispositions of arrests, e.g. court outcomes, by offense severity and race/ethnicity. While dispositions occur at later times than the original crimes and arrests, comparison of trends can indicate the effectiveness of the police in resolving different types of crime. These data as well as Incident data (included in the new annual report) should be published on the Town website at least annually, while data currently included in the Chief’s monthly reports to the Police Commission should be published on the Town website monthly. Data published on the town website should be presented in formats that facilitate trend reviews and should be downloadable. This is a challenging set of tasks. As someone who has worked in government and as an instructor of public policy, I can suggest the Commission reach out to a local university to gain paid or unpaid support during implementation of these data collection, analysis, and presentation efforts.

Maggie Veve- Commended the Board on the “Compassionate New York Legislative Agenda” resolution. She spoke about the EO203 Plan as it relates to the chokeholds and carotid restraints and the Board’s consideration to create a more independent Police Commission.

Edgar Rodriguez, Town resident, strongly urged the Commission to provide a second “Public Comment” session at the end of the meetings.

Presentation-Mobile Mental Health:

Trish Tuber and Allison Burch provided information about the program and its services. The team has been in Ulster County since February 2015. One team is based in Kingston and is available M-F 10am-10pm, Sat-Sun 12pm-10pm and the other team is based in Ellenville and available Sun-Sat 10am-6pm. They will service anyone physically in Ulster County. They encourage anyone who is unsure if they should call, to call anyway. MMH often works with the Police when safety issues arise. The Commissioners had the opportunity to ask questions about the program.

Review of the NPPRRC report recommendations:

“The NPPD should immediately begin aggregating data based upon race, ethnicity, and language. There is no other means by which we as a community can hold the Department accountable for bias, or laud officers for a lack thereof. This data should be reviewed regularly, no less than once each budget year.” The Chief explained that up until 2018 they did not create incidents for Vehicle and Traffic stops. Under the County’s Records Management System, incidents are now created. In August, they began creating incident supplementals recording the person’s gender and race based on observation, during Vehicle and Traffic Stops and Field Interviews whether or not a ticket was issued. That info will be exported and included in the annual report going forward. The Chief indicated that there is an issue in accurately determining a person’s gender, race or ethnicity during these situations, just based on observations. Chief Lucchesi indicated the need for the State to somehow populate that information on a person’s drivers license/I.D. card through the barcode. The annual report will be presented once a full year of data has been collected.

“The NPPD should remove the chokehold policy from its continuum use of force policy in accordance with state law. In addition, NPPRRC recommends that carotid restraint be removed from the continuum use of force policy as well. The carotid restraint is a technique used by officers to restrict blood flow to a person’s brain by compressing the sides of the neck where the carotid arteries are located. It is recommended that chokeholds and carotid restraint training materials be removed from training programs in the NPPD.” The Chief indicated he disagrees with the findings of the Committee. The chokehold has always been prohibited in the Use of Force policy and has never been taught in any training or curriculum. Chief Lucchesi feels this recommendation is driven by one individual on the committee that wants to see the word “chokehold” completely removed from the policy and that it should not appear at all. The Chief feels that the only way to prohibit that is to define it and explicitly prohibit it in the policy.

Commissioner Bettez indicated that the Town is gathering laws from other Towns in NYS relating to all citizen Police Commissions and using them to draft a law for New Paltz.

Monthly Report-April 2021:

-Officers responded to a call for an unconscious and unresponsive 2-month old child. No foul play is not suspected but the investigation is on-going.
Commendations (3)

1. A call was received for Officer Bulson thanking him for assisting a gentleman with an issue he was having.
2. A note was received for Det. Judge thanking him for helping get a bike donated to a local child after his was lost. (Part of the Investigative Highlights)
3. A letter was received for Dispatchers Reilly and Luyando, Sgt. Fuoco and Officers James and Towne from the family of a SUNY student, expressing its' sincerest appreciation for helping locate and save their son during his suicide attempt.

Defensive Actions

1. No charges filed (Part of Lt.'s Use of Force Investigation regarding a suicidal individual)
- All members have completed the 3-day In-Service training for Medical Training, Intimate Partner Violence Initiative and Principal Policing.
 - Officer Kraus is planning a CIT course for instructors.
 - Officers are now completing incident supplements while on foot patrol, detailing businesses they are visiting.

Executive Session:

At 8:05 p.m. a motion was made by Commissioner Bettez to go into executive session to discuss personnel with the Chief. Seconded by Commissioner Baer, all aye votes cast, motion carried.

At 8:18 p.m. a motion was made by Commissioner Bettez to come out of executive session. Seconded by Commissioner Torres, all aye votes cast, motion carried.

Refer hiring of part-time police officers:

A motion was made by Commissioner Bettez to refer to the Town Board the hiring of part-time police officers Tiffany Claud, Tyler White and Michael Vespe. Seconded by Commissioner Brownstein, all aye votes cast, motion carried.

Refer hiring of part-time dispatchers:

A motion was made by Commissioner Bettez to refer to the Town Board the hiring of part-time dispatchers Matt Gallucci, Shan Vitarius and Alyssa Coonrod. Seconded by Commissioner Brownstein, all aye votes cast, motion carried.

Refer to Town Board:

A motion was made by Commissioner Bettez to refer to the Town Board authorization to auction 2 NPPD vehicles, a 2015 Ford Police Interceptor SUV with 108,504 miles and a 2015 Ford Police Interceptor SUV with 134,068. Seconded by Commissioner Brownstein, all aye votes cast, motion carried.

At 8:24 p.m. a motion was made by Commissioner Bettez to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Baer, all aye votes cast, motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rosanna Rosenkranse
Town Clerk