



AD HOC POLICE OFFICER COMMITTEE MINUTES

October 16, 2013

Seymour Middle School

Library Media Classroom

7:30 p.m.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Yashu Putorti, Chairperson
Kristen Harmeling
Fred Stanek, 7:35 p.m.
Ed Strumello

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Christine Syriac, Superintendent
Rick Belden, Asst. Superintendent of Finance & Operations
Jim Garofolo, Board of Education
Rich Kearns, Director of Security
John Popik, Police Commissioner
Pat Boyle, Board Clerk

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Mr. Putorti called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance

II. REPORTS AND INFORMATION

A. Information

1. Discussion of police presence in Seymour Public Schools.

Mr. Stanek gave a brief overview of the last Police Commissioner's meeting; Chief Metzler has again stated that there is no budget and not enough manpower to place police presence in our schools unless the Board of Education is willing to fund it. Mr. Popik stated that in Bridgeport there are actually two separate police departments. One police department is strictly for the schools and is called Board of Education Police Department. Candidates have to pass the civil service exam with Central Office being part of the interview process. He also said that in Stratford the administration is part of the interview process for their SROs. Mr. Putorti said whether money comes from the Board of Education Budget or the Police Budget it is all tax dollars. Mrs. Harmeling stated that since working in the schools is not a full time job the money should come out of the Police Budget as we would never fund a full-time officer. Mr. Stanek felt that after Newtown there has been a shift of concern to outside threats. Mr. Popik wanted to clarify the difference between a regular police officer and a SRO. A regular police officer would patrol the school grounds and watch for outside threats, and prevent people from entering the building; a SRO would be stationed in the schools and is actually a liaison. They would be more apt to handle inside threats and to be able to stop some outside problems such as "underage drinking parties", mailbox vandalism, and things of that nature. He felt that both would be beneficial for the school system. Mrs. Syriac said that she would like to have input into the hiring process of any SRO to make sure they are a good fit for our schools. Mr. Popik made the suggestion that a beat be added to Seymour. Seymour currently is divided into three patrol beats; he would like to see a fourth beat added and have it called Seymour Schools. The officer would have mandated checks of all of the schools. The police officer could then have omnipresence at all of the schools; the officer could vary his routine so that people intent on causing problems would never know when the officer would be at a certain school. The police commission would like a clear cut plan of what the Board of Education would like to see as far as police presence. A roundtable discussion took place.

2. Possible action on police presence in Seymour Public Schools

The following 4 step plan was developed:

IN ORDER OF SMALL STEPS TO BIG STEPS

1. Put the schools on the beat – meaning there would be a requirement for the "beat officer" to visit the schools x amount of times each day - much like there is for other spots in town (like the fish ladder, skate park, etc.)
2. Officers at arrival and dismissal
3. The schools become a beat unto their own. Having an officer dedicated to patrolling the schools (the officers would know the inside of the schools, but largely monitor the outside) – with the point of providing protection from outside sources (8 hour shift – 2 hours in each school – even 4 hours a day – arrival and dismissal)
4. SRO in addition to one of the previous steps. One SRO, to serve the high school and middle school, selected with the input of the Superintendent. Job duties defined in tandem with the job duties and responsibilities of the Director of Security.

MOTION: (Ms. Harmeling/sec., Mr. Strumello) to bring before the full board the recommendation to present the 4 step plan to the Police Commission at the November 14 Police Commissioners meeting

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Strumello, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Putorti

B. Reports

1. Chairman's Report

None

2. Superintendent's Report

None

III. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: (Ed Strumello/sec., Ms. Harmeling) to adjourn the meeting

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Ed Strumello, Ms. Harmeling, Fred Stanek, Yashu Putorti

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Submitted by:
Pat Boyle