



## SEYMOUR POLICE DEPARTMENT

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### MINUTES-REGULAR MEETING BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2013 7:00 P.M. 11 FRANKLIN STREET SEYMOUR POLICE DEPARTMENT

**Members present:** Lucy McConologue, Steve Chucta, Frank Conroy, John Popik. (James Simpson absent). Also in attendance: Chief Metzler, LT. Satkowski, Det. Sgt. DeNigris, Officer Jasmin, Sgt. D'Antona, First Selectman Kurt Miller, members of the Board of Education, the public and the press.

1. **Meeting was called to order** at 7:00 p.m. by Chairwoman McConologue.
2. **Pledge of allegiance:** was led by Commissioner Chucta.
3. **Public Comment:**

**Kristen Harmling**, 27 Patrick Drive, read into record her letter stating that she would like to see an officer at each school for arrival and dismissal and also an SRO in the schools.

**Kristin Jasmin**, 21 Forest Rd Ext., presented a 14 page petition asking to have an SRO in the schools.

**Michael Jasmin**, 21 Forest Rd Ext., stated that a nightly check of the high school is done when no one is there but no checks are done when there are people there during the day.

**Carol Donofrio**, likes an SRO as do the students, it's all about the children and keeping them safe.

**Mike Oulette**, 8 Forest Rd Ext., would like to know how did the BOE and the Chief of Police come to the decision to not have an SRO/officer in the schools.

Frank Conroy/John Popik motion to move item 7, New Business, to the next item on the agenda. **Motion: 4:0**

4. **New Business:**  
Letter was read into record from Yashu Putorti.

**Mr. Putorti** stated that the BOE did state publicly that they do not need four officers just one. Feels that the public does not realize the difference between an SRO and an officer at the schools. SRO handles programs with the school but does not stand guard at the front door-he works in the school, where an officer would be doing security detail. 75% of people who voted did not want an officer(s) in the school and spend \$ 377 thousand to cover the costs.

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Mr. Putorti states that the BOE will not employ someone who carries a gun-someone carrying a gun should be supervised by the Chief of Police. Any officer in our schools would be an employee of the police department not the schools. From the Boards point of view we would like an SRO to handle all four schools. The Board of Ed has not budgeted for any extra money to help pay for an officer.

**Chief Metzler** states that there was an SRO for many years and under the previous administration it was removed and therefore no SRO has been in the schools since 2009-2010 school year ended. After the Sandy Hook tragedy, the Chief made the decision to place officers at the schools for drop off and pick up costing the department \$ 56,000 in overtime. The police budget is a disgrace to law enforcement. The BOE stated they did not want SRO's in the school. The vote was rejected to have SRO's in the school and the BOE was told that at the end of the school year, the SRO was done. The Board of Finance keeps cutting the police department and there was no surprise that the SRO was done at the end of the school year. The police department has no problem putting an officer in the schools, however, there is no money in the budget nor is there enough man power. The town wide security committee was behind having four SRO's in the school and the newspapers did not print the correct information.

**Commissioner Conroy** thanked Mr. Putorti for defining SRO as the public has a mixed impression and wanted to know in the near future what is it that the school board needs. What the SRO is doing has to be defined. It's a minimum staffing of 5 officers on shift.

**Commissioner Popik** asked the BOE if they explored the idea of retired police officers? He feels it is comforting to see an officer there when dropping off his children at the schools. Would like to see an officer in the schools or at least an officer doing strategic patrols. Having one SRO for all four schools is a very tall order. An SRO is very similar to a Community Police Officer, just that they are in the schools. If we were to staff this position, it would cost us overtime pretty much every day. If we were to be provide an officer, would the Board of Ed be able to reimburse us a part of that? The BOE can look into grants that would help pay for an officer in the schools. Id' rather see an officer dedicated to the schools.

**Ed Strumello**, 188 Mountain Road, feels a police officer should be at the schools where the most people are at the most time of the day. So the only way to staff this position is with overtime and that until March you may then be receptive of the change of assignments? Why did we need a police officer from the school assignment to respond to a bank robbery? Can we have a non-police officer directing traffic?

**Chairwoman McConologue** when we put the officer in the school system, the Chief came to the BOPC and said I want to do this even though the assignment would be temporary and cause over time. We were looking to put four officers in the school system and develop a model program that other towns could look at, however, the proposal was voted down and our hands were tied. There was to be a separate line item in the police budget for an SRO but it was taken out. Our concern is all phases of security of the town. It was no surprise to any of us that we were not going to be placing an officer in the school come September, this was a temporary position that was assigned until June. We have to work together but right now we don't have the manpower to put someone in there. If an SRO does get into the schools, the BOE needs to let the parents know exactly what that position is.

**Kristin Harmling** stated that this was the first time she was learning that a plan had been established for an SRO, feels there is miscommunication between boards and that the town wide security committee said that they did not support four SRO's in the school. If there were four line items on the vote and the residents were able to check off how many SRO's they wanted in the schools, it would have been a totally different story. She cannot understand how schedules cannot be re worked to have an officer there for arrival and dismissals. Feels that the defining what is needed cannot be kicked back to the BOE, they are not police officers, the BOE needs to work with the police chief to find a creative way to define a roll of police officer in the schools.

**Kurt Miller** stated that \$ 80,000 has been put into the school infrastructure and he feels, as a parent with kids in the school system 100 % confident that his kids are safe in the Seymour Public schools without any police presence in there now. He is in favor of having a police officer in the schools and would not want anyone in the school except a Seymour Police Officer carrying a gun. The BOE needs to define exactly what they need and then we will take the steps needed to secure the monies.

**Christine Syriac** agrees that for a few years there has been no SRO and a youth officer in the school and the grant monies ran out and yes it is a tall order but one SRO would be utilized.

**Fred Stanek**, the BOE appreciated the fact that one officer was assigned to the schools. We don't have the resources for four officers but one officer that will travel between the schools and will give comfort to the staff and students.

John Popik/Steve Chcuta motion to table this item to review the police department budget and manpower allocation. **Motion: 4:0**

Chairwoman McConologue states that the public should not get the false impression that this will take place immediately, we have some major constraints right now to fill these shifts, even though we are taking a look at it, we have to take a good hard look at protecting the whole community.

**5. Approval of minutes of regular meeting on August 8, 2013**

Steve Chucta/Frank Conroy motion to accept the minutes.

**Motion: 3:0 (John Popik abstain).**

**6. Commissioner's Comments:** Commissioner Popik wanted to know the status of officers carrying tazer's. LT. Satkowski commented that the administration is the process of reviewing the department's procedure as well as the states procedures.

**7. Old Business:**

**7a. Report from Patrol Division** – Board accepted report as handed out. One arrest has been made on the multiple larceny from motor vehicles, radar trailer is out, mass casualty drill done, pumpkin fest around the corner, five officers out on workers compensation and plate reader put into service.

**7 b. Det. Division** - Board accepted report as handed out.

**7 c. K-9** – Board accepted report as handed out.

**7 d. Fleet Maintenance** – Board accepted report as handed out.

Duty Manual: Section 14 handed out.

**8. Management Report:** Chief Metzler reports that DUI check went into overtime, income doing good, two accounts handed out, letter from Priscilla Altoreli thanking Officer Jasmin for his help in a matter, letter from Mr. McDougal thanking officers Holland, Martin and Desiderato for saving his life, letter from William J. Hagen Law Offices thanking Det. Anderson for his help.

**9. Correspondence:** Commissioner Conroy feels that he was profiled in the FOI complaint. Did the FOI people call for the minutes of the meeting, and if they did they should have included the five commissioners because it was unanimous, why did just three of us get named. A little concerned that only three names showed up on the complaint and not five. This violation is being done every day until someone challenges it, this system has been in existence and has been used.

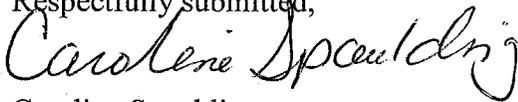
Chairwoman McConologue said it was a unanimous vote by the Board, three people should not have been the accused as it was the full board that participated in the motion. I did not like the idea that our three names were accused and that the three of us did not adhere to FOI, it was the full Board that did not adhere. FOI should specify in the process of interviewing that no one is allowed to remain in the executive session.

Commissioner Popik stated that he does not have FOI training in public meetings, he has FOI training in public reports. The way the newspaper wrote this article, I don't see it as a violation, it's not like anybody broke the law here.

**10. Other Business:** None.

**11. ADJOURNMENT** Steve Chucta/John Popik motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:40 p.m. **Motion: 4:0**

Respectfully submitted,



Caroline Spaulding  
Recording Secretary