

LOWELL METROPOLITAN POLICE COMMISSION
May 8, 2014

The Lowell Metropolitan Police Commission met in regular session on May 8, 2014 at the Lowell Town Hall.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

I. Roll Call

Commissioner Keith Kilmer, absent
Commissioner Sharon Patterson, absent
Commissioner John Piper, present
Commissioner Ray Borchert, present
Commissioner Michael Mears, present
Chief Erik Matson, present
Attorney Bennett, present

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited followed by a brief moment of silence.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Mears made a motion to approve the minutes from the April 14, 2014 Regular session, seconded by Commissioner Borchert. 3 ayes, motion passed.

IV. APPROVAL OF CLAIMS/EXPENDITURES

Commissioner Borchert made a motion to approve the Claims/Expenditures, seconded by Commissioner Mears. 3 ayes, motion passed.

V. CHIEF'S REPORT AND THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEES OR MEMBERS

Chief Matson announced that on April 25th, Officer Nicholas Kaczmarczyk and Officer Christopher Thompson graduated from the Northwest Indiana Law Enforcement Academy, and that both are back into Field training. He further stated that it is his goal to have both Officers ready by mid-June, on the street, and on their own.

Chief Matson stated that Sergeant Hornickel and Officer Knight spoke with the Junior and Senior classes at Lowell High School about the dangers of Drinking and Driving. The presentation was well received by both the students and the faculty.

Chief Matson reminded the community that they can bring in their expired or unwanted prescriptions to the Lowell Police Station 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and deposit them in the receptacle in the lobby. He also stated that the DEA recently picked up 174 pounds worth of unwanted prescription drugs from the Police Department, accumulated over a six month period.

Chief Matson requested that the Commission approve the Promotion list from the recent testing. This list will be active for two years.

Chief advised the Commission that he compiled information on the Police Departments need to add more Officers in the near future. His list includes statistics on population

growth, calls for service growth, the F.B.I. statistics, comparisons to how many Officers other area Departments have, and things that have happened and will happen in the future that will show the need for growth in the department.

Chief Matson stated that Attorney Bennett has reviewed and requested changes be made to the Pursuit Policy, and that he has made those changes. He requested that the Commission approve of adding the amended version of the Pursuit Policy to the S.O.P.'s

VI. INTRODUCTION AND ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS

There were none.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

Commissioner Borchert made a motion to approve the Promotion list which will be active for 2 years, retro-active to April 14th, seconded by Commissioner Mears. 3 ayes, motion passed.

Commissioner Mears made a motion to approve the amended Pursuit Policy and added to the Lowell Police Department Standard Operating Procedures, seconded by Commissioner Borchert. 3 ayes, motion passed.

Commissioner Mears asked Attorney Bennett if she felt that the Pursuit Policy was solid and covered as much liability as possible. Attorney Bennett stated that the Policy is solid and that it is in line with the Indiana Training Academy, but that Officer discretion is always important.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

Staffing Exploration

Chief Matson stated that he was able to compile records beginning in 2002 to compare with records from 2012. He stated that the call volume over the last 11 years has gone up to 4400 calls and 1,600 citizens added to the population. He stated that the F.B.I. recommends 2.2 officers for every 1,000 citizens and according to those numbers the Lowell Police Department should be staffing 20 full time Officers. The Chief said he understood how that number can be a challenge to reach, but that he would like to begin the process of adding Officers to be prepared for the growth that will continue to take place. Some of the areas of growth he mentioned include the annexation of the 117 acres West of town, the possible annexation of 165th to 41 and the addition of the toll road. He also mentioned the town wide annexation to I 65 East, 153rd North, 205th South and State Line Road, West. Commissioner Piper also added that Lowell is continuing to increase as new neighborhoods are being built, as well as the new Lowell Health Care Campus. A Commissioner asked how many full time Officers were employed and the Chief stated 14 all together, including himself, and the two most recent Officers hired. A Commissioner asked how many Officers were on the road and the Chief replied that he tries to have 3 a shift, but realistically there are only two a shift. Some of the difficulties in two Officers per shift include housing prisoners and transporting prisoners, while trying to answer calls. Chief stated that soon dispatch will be moving to County and will be unable to keep a watch out for prisoners while Officers are out of the building. He advised the Commission that another difficulty in being short staffed is trying to cover

vacation and training times. A Commissioner asked if the Chief had talked to the Clerk about expanding the budget to pay for additional Officers. The Chief replied that he has spoken to the Clerk and that she stated that the money is not there, but hopefully after the budget is reviewed, money can be found. A Commissioner asked if the Chief had the statistics on one Officer calls verses violent two Officer calls within the past two years. The Chief replied that with the system we have, tracking the calls is difficult and it is hard to nail the specific numbers. However, he stated that after going through old hard files, he was able to see that there has been a rise in more serious offenses. He also said that no matter what the call, except for minor things such as lockouts and VIN checks, both Officers are encouraged to go for back up. A Commissioner asked the Chief to explain how the investigatory department works for the Lowell Police Department. The Chief replied that 12 officers work the street including the Assistant Chief and one Detective. The Detective handles all investigations and has to regularly be pulled out of his investigative work to assist on the streets. The Detective is handling all the felony investigations and Officers are stepping in pulling their resources to assist him in any way they are needed, which in return takes their time off the streets. A Commissioner stated that as far as liability is concerned, it is important to make sure there are enough Officers on the street. Commissioner Borchert asked if there had been any projections on the county income tax and how much is coming here for County Income tax for Public Safety. A citizen in the audience stated that it was \$192,000. There was a discussion on how much it would be to hire a new Officer. A Commissioner asked Attorney Bennett if she could draft up a letter that all the Commissioners can sign that shows the statistics and liabilities that the Chief has compiled and present it to the Town Council for consideration. A Commissioner stated that he knows it will not be for full staff, but at least manageable. Attorney Bennett asked if these statistics included every call, including traffic stops and Chief Matson stated "yes", and that everything an Officer does is documented in the system. It was concluded that the Commission would like to make a recommendation for hiring additional Officers for the purpose of safety for both the community and Officers. Attorney Bennett asked if the Commission was going to request a certain number and the Commission replied as of right now they were just requesting for additions and not a certain number. Commissioner Mears made a motion to approve making a recommendation for the hiring of additional Officers, seconded by Commissioner Borchert. 3 ayes, motion passed.

IX. PETITIONS, REMONSTRANCES, AND COMMUNICATIONS

There were none.

X. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Commission will meet in regular session on June 12th beginning at 7 p.m.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Borchert made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Mears. 3 ayes, motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

Keith Kilmer, President

John Piper, Secretary