

---

---

# **MIDDLETOWN POLICE DEPARTMENT**

City of Middletown  
222 Main Street  
Middletown, CT 06457  
860.638.4100 FAX 860.638.4104  
jessica.dipasquale@middletownct.gov

## ***PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES***

***March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025***

***Hybrid/In-person Meeting***

### **1. Councilman Ford called the Meeting to Order at 7:02pm.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Councilman Darnell Ford, Chairman  
Councilman Anthony Gennaro  
Councilman Anthony Mangiafico  
Councilwoman Kelly Sweeney

**STAFF PRESENT:** Erik Costa - Chief of Police  
Dave Albert – Fire Chief

**MEMBERS/STAFF ABSENT:** Councilwoman Linda Salafia  
Rich Davis – Deputy Chief

### **2. Approval of Minutes – December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

Councilman Ford made a motion to approve the PSC Minutes for December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025 as Councilwoman Sweeney so moved, seconded by Councilman Gennaro. There being no further discussion or objection, Motion passed.

### **3. Public Hearing – Matters on the Agenda Only**

- None

### **4. Correspondence**

#### **a. Officer's Accolades**

***Chief Costa reported on Officer Accolades;***

- Chief recognized the passing of Lt. Smith. Our agency came together to honor him. The support from the community was amazing: Chief thanked South Fire, Westfield Fire, Middletown Fire, Pipes and Drums and Tate's restaurant.

### **5. Monthly Reports**

#### **a. Overtime Balances**

***Chief Costa reported on Overtime Balances;***

- Chief shared his Annual report
  - Dropped 12.8% in crime rate in 2025. The year prior we were down 18.4%. Which is about 30% crime rate reduction in two years which is significant.

- We attribute this to our commitment to proactive policing with community engagement and outreach. We have Ofc. Santostefano function as our downtown patrol officer, patrolling Main St and downtown, deals with homeless issues and opioid addiction services and the soup kitchen.
  - We have a significant number of youth in our pal program, especially on school days where school is out and the summer. We are seeing crimes decline.
- Staffing level is 115, authorized for 120. We have an officer going to academy in April, potentially three more in July.
- Civilian staff is 13 down from 16. One position frozen, records clerk who would have been responsible for CIS – a program that sends reports to the GA, the states attorneys and the courthouse digitally. We are compliant with CIS and working with States Attorney to get program up. There's only 20 agencies with the capabilities. This is significant for us because we are one of the first larger agencies to participate. Another frozen position is crossing guards, we currently have 5-6. Councilman Ford asked if the department decided on these freezes. Chief answered no, it came from the mayor's office. 2 positions looking to go through budget cycle and be put in place, scheduling clerk and custodian. Councilman Ford asked about NexGen Power Bi. Chief answered yes we are working on that and are forward facing. Chief will be prepared to talk about this next meeting.
- Total personnel is 163.
- Overtime issues with CT40 sick, it causes significant increase to overtime. Uptick also in regular time used. Had a few on FMLA and workers comp. We did some mitigation to save money by restricting some training for our marine unit and tactical unit, but have resumed.
- We are going to be training on our new weapons platform starting in March. Old weapons sold back to the company, they were ten years old. Money was budgeted, no extra funding required.
- 71,000 Calls of service last year, increase due to social workers using case numbers for calls they go to. Also our community resource officer being proactive on incidences on Main St and beyond.
- Part one crimes: crimes of serious nature are down 11.02 percent. Which is significant.
- Burglaries down 55%
- Motor vehicle thefts down 33%
- No homicides
- Two fatalities, waiting for determination, both may be medicals. 1 fatality on the bridge in a scooter accident. 1 pedestrian strike on Main St. ext. continuously working on ways to mitigate risk.
- 77 events that Community service and Police Dept. were involved in 2025. We plan to increase that outreach to more than 77 events due to the 250<sup>th</sup> Celebration events.
- The Chiefs report documents events attended last year, hours of training, de-escalation techniques, crisis intervention, use of force policies, implicit bias and cultural awareness, active threat response, mental health crisis cable training.

- Internal affairs complaints are down, totaling 30 last year. Out of the 30, 23 were exonerated, three were unfounded. One corrective action and two investigations that required suspensions. 6 negative SOR's – four had counseling, one was a retraining.
- Looking to expand Drone program and enhance our LPR. We are not a flock LPR city. We are closed loop, we own all our own data, data does not go to a third party.
- MTAC is advancing. We just brought on the town of Clinton.
- VIF – database for public to register if they have intellectual disabilities, dementia, autism etc. the residence or person will be flagged in the system if involved in a call and will allow officers to properly respond.
- Current challenges: recruitment and retention

## **Community Reports**

### ***Chief Costa reported on Community Reports;***

- Attended:

### **c. Incident Statistics Reports**

#### ***Chief Costa reported on Incident Statistics;***

- None

### **d. Accountability Report**

#### ***Chief Costa reported on Accountability;***

- None

## **6. Old Business**

### ***Chief Costa reported;***

- None

## **7. New Business**

### ***Chief Costa reported;***

- a. Flock DFR Program
  - GC is working to put in provisions with stronger language so data is protected. Its imagery, no different than body worn cameras etc. FOIA is currently in legislation. We will wait to see how that plays out in regards to how data is shared through FOIA.
  - The drone itself is a first responder. It is eyes in the sky that give us a better idea of what we are responding to.
    - The drone determined the size of a forest fire and identified the edges and scope of the fire quickly without putting anyone in harm's way. Susan Bysiewicz was there and praised the drones for their safety.
    - For multiple suicide attempts recently, the drone gets deployed and we find locations faster, our divers get in the water faster. Drone can identify if party is in the water or landed on land. Costs of the drones is not to the taxpayer, it is grant funded.

- Councilman Mangiafico mentioned there are concerned residents in town that data from the drones could be used by ICE or federal agencies. Chief Costa answered that it is not a true statement, the drone data cannot be used or searched by ICE. It is owned by us and in our secure cloud. They are allowed to however go through judicial means to subpoena it, FOIA it, search warrant, etc. They can't just jump into our data.
- Councilman Ford clarified that the government or anyone will not have access to that information and it is owned by our police department. The use of the drones are meant to provide safety to our first responders and individuals who need that response. In no way will anyone have any backdoor or back ended way to take or record data and then utilize or sell that information to any 3<sup>rd</sup> party. Chief confirmed that is correct. General Council is strengthening that language going forward.
- Councilman Ford asked if we end up liking this program, is this a reoccurring grant or will this eventually be part of our budget. Chief answered it's a shared budget item with Fire that costs \$50,000/yr. For our \$25,000 we would plan on using asset forfeiture monies. If not we will look for funding through various entities. We would like to maintain through non-tax dollars. If so we would have to budget into our budget or cancel the program.
- Councilman Ford asked if we can partner with surrounding towns to share costs. Chief Costa answered no we can't the drone has a radius of three miles from its cradles. That radius includes our critical risk point such as CVH, Middlesex hospital, Downtown, the North End, the Bridge, NRG and Wesleyan.
- Councilman Sweeney commented that she reached out to both Chiefs that if we took out Flock type drones how do our other drones compare, what do we have for data collection on those, how are the policies managed and what manufacturer are they. She stated she had the answers in minutes, was reassured we are following statewide guidance and the compliance that's established for us as a safety department using drones. She was reassured the fact we even knew the manufacturers dates that these drones cam online for us. It is a very well managed program. Councilwoman Sweeney stated as someone who works in technology day to day, she feels comfortable with the program.

b. Revision of Ordinance 31-11

- The ability for the PSC to set rates for the police department. Councilwoman Blackwell has asked for the revision to change the authority to go in front of council for approval. Councilman Mangiafico asked if the only change would be that it'd be approved by PSC then approved by GCC then approved by the Council. Chief answered the new ordinance says it will be recommended by the PSC and shall be recommended to the Common Council for approval the rates and fees to be charged for special police work including any private jobs. Councilman Gennaro asked if anything has to be changed in the charter. Chief

believes General Council was consulted on this and was decided the Charter does not need to be changed, but this would be a question for Counsel.

- Councilman Ford suggested to move this to GCC to confirm the charter does not need to be changed on the record. Councilman Gennaro needs more information before voting. Councilman Ford asked if this doesn't move forward to GCC where we are as far as determining rates. Chief answered we are losing money on every job we take. Councilman Ford asked if we have any figures as to what we are losing with the rates not being changed. Chief answered we charge 70\$ an hour, looking to change to \$95/hr. Councilwoman Sweeney would like to understand better how this is framed in the charter before deciding. We don't need the PSC vote, GCC can put this on their agenda and come back to PSC for vote. Councilman Gennaro would like to vote on the rates tonight, then take time figuring out the ordinance change. Councilman Mangiafico read the Charter section 23-13 for fees for special police work and it states the Chief of Police with the Public Safety Commission shall establish the rates and fees to be charged for special police work. Without a charter revision the Council cannot supersede what the charter says. The council voted to pass the revision of the ordinance to GCC. All in favor with no abstentions, the matter passes the revision of the ordinance of section 31-11 forward to GCC.
  - Councilman Ford asked why we haven't changed these rates already. Chief answered because we haven't had a meeting to change the rates because of the storms. But based on the vote tonight, we can change the rates tomorrow and start that process.
- c. Private duty rates
- We are looking to change the rates from \$70/hr to \$125/hr based on the contract signed by 1361. Rate change covers everything in regards to wear and tear on vehicles and officer wages. Non profits will only be charges 112.50 from \$65.
  - Councilman Ford made a motion to approve the private duty rate change, as Councilman so moved, seconded by Councilman Gennaro. There being no further discussion or objection, Motion passed.
  - Councilman Ford Sked if with these new rates are we in line with the average over the course of five years of private duty rates with comparable towns and services. Chief Costa answered absolutely, we were behind but now in the same range.
  - Councilman Ford asked if we are able to change the rates at any time I becomes too costly for us? Chief Costa answered yes, we can change at any time. This rate change is stemming from the increase in the contract to protect the city and the cost of inflation of vehicle maintenance.
- d. Budget
- With the \$946,000 increase asked, covers the known of OT replacement with the current issues we are seeing, current increase of pay for officers and civilians in 466 and pending Upsue contract. We feel our budget is flat with just inflation and contractual increase. If we have cuts we will have to go into service reduction.
  - Our roof is in need of repair, it's significant. We may have to do a study on the roof. We do not have the financials on that yet. We have to compare a full replacement compared to a repair. The air handler is failing and needs to be

replaced too. Initial estimates are about half million, could be less or more. Solar panels need to be removed while the roof is repaired then added back in.

- Generator parts are ordered and hope to be fixed in the next few weeks.
  - Significant issue with traffic control signal Parts. Everett electrical are really trying to get the parts but they are delayed. Looking at a year and a half. Councilwoman Sweeney asked if in the meantime is there any way to get a salvage light, or are there any spares? Is it possible to move a light from a less busy intersection? The Chief will look into that. They are DOT regulated but will ask.
- e. Trust Act
- Common Council has passed the resolution to the Trust Act. Chief Costa has nothing else to add. We are in compliance with state and federal laws and we understand the needs of the community and what they need from the police department and we will be transparent and maintain a high standard of deployment in our officers in support of any immigration enforcement required of us.
  - Councilman Ford asked Chief Costa and Chief Albert if we are responding to anything regarding ICE or immigration that you report to Commission members.

## **8. Public Hearing Re-opened -- Other Matters**

- None

## **9. Meeting Adjournment**

Councilwoman Ford asked for a motion to adjourn. Motion so moved by Councilwoman Sweeney, seconded by Councilman Mangiafico. There being no further discussion or objection, Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 8:00pm.

Next Public Safety Commission Meeting, Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm. TO VIEW THIS MEETING IN ITS ENTIRETY, PLEASE VISIT THE FOLLOWING WEBSITE:

**Public Meeting Videos  
Available Archives  
Public Safety Commission (PSC)**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jessica DiPasquale  
Recording Secretary