

REGULAR MEETING OF WESTFIELD POLICE COMMISSION

WESTFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

February 13, 2023

The Westfield Police Commission meeting was called to order at 59 Court Street, Westfield, MA, at 5:30 pm.

Commissioner Sypek introduced the Honorable Retired Judge Peter Velis as the newest commissioner for the Westfield Police Commission. Commissioner Sypek said that Judge Velis was a judge from 1999-2012. Prior to that he practiced law from 1969 on. Commissioner Sypek said he has known Judge Velis for most of his carrier and he has the utmost respect for him. He said he is a great addition to the police commission and that the entire City of Westfield is fortunate to have him.

Roll Call: Richard Sypek – Present
James Irwin - Present
Peter Velis – Present

A. Approval and release of minutes dated January 11, 2023

Commissioner Irwin made a motion to approve the minutes dated January 11, 2023. Commissioner Sypek seconded that motion.

Commissioner Sypek - Yes
Commissioner Irwin - Yes

B. Open participation: None

C. Old Business: None

D. New Business:

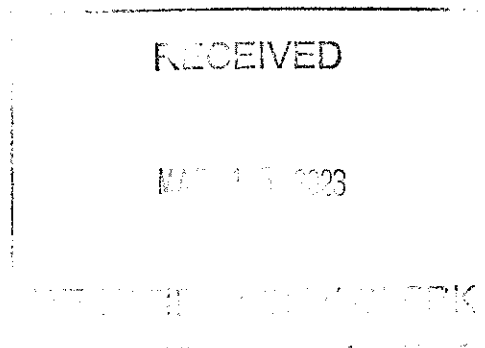
1. Recognition of retired Police Commissioners: Felix Otero and Leonard M Osowski: Commissioner Sypek said he wanted to recognize that former Chief John Camerota and former Westfield Police Commission Chairman Karl Hupfer are present tonight. He welcomed them both. Commissioner Sypek said that only 3 years ago, he was the rookie appointed to the commission. Commissioners Osowski and Otero welcomed him and made him feel comfortable from day one. He said they both have served the City of Westfield for many years. He said he wants to personally thank the both of them and wish them both many happy years in their retirement.

Chief Valliere said he considers both former commissioners to be his friends. He said they have both had to make difficult decisions during their time as commissioners and they have made them fairly and in the best interest for the City of Westfield.

Mayor McCabe said he agrees with Chief Valliere. He said he worked with both of the commissioners during his time at the Westfield Police Department. He said the Police Commission is phenomenal.

Mayor McCabe presented citations to Retired Commissioner Otero and Retired Commissioner Osowski.

Chief Valliere presented plaques to Retired Commissioner Otero and Retired Commissioner Osowski. He thanked them for their years of service.



2. Appoint a second commissioner as an authorized signatory, replacing Ret. Commissioner Otero: Commissioner Irwin made a motion to appoint Commissioner Sypek and Commissioner Velis as authorized signatories for the Westfield Police Department. Commissioner Velis seconded that motion.

Commissioner Sypek - Yes
Commissioner Irwin - Yes
Commissioner Velis - Yes

3. Appoint two reserve patrolmen – These candidates have been previously interviewed for full-time positions but wish to stay part time to learn more about the profession:

Eduard Chekhovskiy: Commissioner Irwin made a motion to appoint Eduard Chekhovskiy as a Reserve Officer for the Westfield Police Department. Commissioner Velis seconded that motion.

Commissioner Sypek – Yes
Commissioner Irwin – Yes
Commissioner Velis – Yes

Matthew Taylor: Commissioner Irwin made a motion to appoint Matthew Taylor as a Reserve Officer for the Westfield Police Department. Commissioner Velis seconded that motion.

Commissioner Sypek – Yes
Commissioner Irwin – Yes
Commissioner Velis - Yes

4. Interview for one full-time police officer:

Christopher Gage:

Commissioner Irwin asked Christopher what he has been involved in since graduating High School. Christopher said he currently is employed as a UMass Amherst Police Cadet. He is also a Westfield Police Cadet. He has been a Westfield Police Cadet since 2014. He is the Captain which allows him to work with the department on numerous events in the community. Commissioner Velis asked Christopher why he wants to become a police officer. Christopher said he has always wanted to become a police officer. Joining the cadet program solidified that. He said he enjoys helping people and giving back. He said his father passed away when he was 2 years old and he doesn't think there's another job out there that would have made his father any prouder of him. Commissioner Velis asked Christopher how he feels about meeting the challenges that exists today with some of the public who would like to see the police defunded. Christopher said he wants to pride himself on making as many positive interactions with the community as possible. He said hopefully, as a police officer, he can make a difference in someone's life who may not have the best opinion of a police officer. Commissioner Sypek asked Christopher to give his opinion of a good police officer. Christopher said a good police officer is someone who carries themselves with honor, respect, integrity and a good attitude. He said the way you treat people is a reflection of yourself. Commissioner Sypek asked Christopher how he feels he could recruit amongst his peers. Christopher said that they have a hard time recruiting cadets. He said in the past, there used to be a waiting list, but they are down cadets now. He said the Westfield High School now has a criminal justice program and kids are being introduced to the profession at a younger age. He thinks that is a good thing. He thinks that having that opportunity in high school is a great way for younger kids to be able to see if this might be a career choice they would be interested in. He said having the cadet program is also another great tool to allow insight into the policing field. Commissioner Irwin asked Christopher where he sees himself in 5 years. Christopher said he sees himself being a police officer for the City of Westfield.

Chief Valliere said Christopher has been in the cadet program for a few years. He said that Christopher is only 20 years old and the department cannot hire him until he is 21. He has to be 21 to attend the academy. He will be 21 by August which is when the academy that they are looking to enroll him in will begin. He said he would like to see the commission appoint Christopher this evening. Captain Pitoniak and Captain Dickinson agreed with Chief Valliere. Captain Dickinson said that Christopher is a great example of the good work that Detective Mazza, Detective Coach and Officer Kelley are doing with the cadet program.

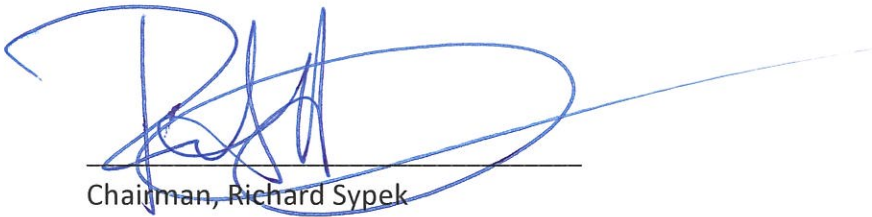
Commissioner Irwin made a motion to appoint Christopher Gage as a Patrolman for the Westfield Police Department effective August 14, 2023. Commissioner Velis seconded that motion.

Commissioner Sypek – Yes
Commissioner Irwin – Yes
Commissioner Velis - Yes

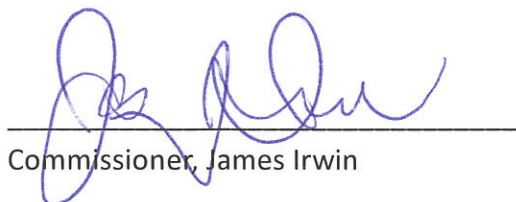
E. Announcement of next meeting: Monday, March 13, 2023

F. Motion to adjourn: At 5:55 p.m. Commissioner Irwin made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Velis seconded that motion.

Commissioner Sypek - Yes
Commissioner Irwin - Yes
Commissioner Velis - Yes



Chairman, Richard Sypek



Commissioner, James Irwin



Commissioner, Peter Velis

APPROVED FOR RELEASE ON _____