

**Police Commission Special Meeting Re:  
Reorganization of Copake P.D.  
June 22, 2006  
Draft Minutes**

Commissioner Blass indicated that the Town of Taghkanic would like to use our speed sign.

Commissioner Ritchie moved that we lend it to them seconded by Comm. Gabaccia, so moved  
by unanimous vote of all three Commissioners

Comm. Gabaccia presented an application from Chris Gardina who wishes to be sponsored for the upcoming Police Academy in September. Copies were given to Commissioners Blass and Ritchie to review for consideration.

Comm. Gabaccia again inquired about the status of the Commission Office at the Police Dept. and was told that it had not been set up yet. Comm. Ritchie indicated that the new office should be in former Deputy Chief Lopez' office.

Commissioner Gabaccia then announced the resignation of Chief Thomas Kane which is to be effective at the end of the month. "After conferring with Sheriff David Harrison, the Commission is here to report that Chief Thomas Kane will be leaving his position as Chief of Police for the Town of Copake to move to a new job as Court Officer." Commissioner Gabaccia then moved that the Commission go to Executive Session.

Upon return from Executive Session, the Commission reiterated that Chief Kane would be moving to a new job. Commissioner Blass indicated that he would have Chief Kane's letter of resignation which would be effective July 15th. A question was raised from the audience by Shawn McLean as to why the Chief was really leaving and he said, "It seems to me that there's more to it." He also questioned the abolishment of Officer Lopez' position as Deputy Chief..

Discussion then ensued as to the rate of pay for Chief Lopez. Commissioner Gabaccia stated that the abolishment of the position was no reflection on Officer Lopez. Commissioner Blass said, "I'd pay these men like troopers if I could, but the town wouldn't go for it." After 15 years the rate of pay is \$16.50. A beginning officer makes \$13.50.

Commissioner Gabaccia indicated that a letter of apology would be sent to Officer Lopez for not informing him of abolishing of his position prior to its announcement at the June Town Board Meeting.

Discussion ensued as to whether or not the Commission would be seeking an Officer in Charge to replace Chief Kane or a Chief of Police. Commissioner Blass stated that we would need to keep the position as a Chief of Police, otherwise the sergeant would outrank the Officer in Charge. Comm. Blass said that the status quo should remain as regards the title of the position. Commissioner Blass then indicated that the job description for Chief of Police would be based on Civil Service requirements and that we could add items to the description which would make it more specific to Copake. Commissioner Blass also made reference to the fact that he is working for free as Commissioner and putting in many hours. He also suggested that we might want to present Chief Kane with a plaque for his years of service and that a letter should be drafted thanking Chief Kane for his service. Commissioner Gabaccia indicated that she would do so.

Commissioner Ritchie again raised the issue of defibrillators. It was suggested that Jeannie from the rescue squad could put on an open class for CPR certification.

Commissioner Blass inquired as to what Commissioners Ritchie and Gabaccia thought of the new hiring policy he had drafted. Both indicated that they had not received a copy of it yet.

Officer Lopez inquired as to the new class at the Police Academy.. He indicated that we should not sponsor a lot of people because then the candidates can use their certifications elsewhere. Commissioner Blass said we are under no obligation to pay the new candidates unless they are sworn in as officers.

Shawn McLean inquired from the audience as to whether or not the Police Department would be going full time. The Commission indicated that they are looking into all possibilities.

Commissioner Blass informed the audience about Officer Near's felony drug bust which involved 65 grams of Copake making it one of the largest busts ever in the county. The Commission commended Officer Near for doing a great job.

Commissioner Gabaccia responded to a question as to why there had been no meeting between the newly formed Commission and the officers yet and indicated that she would still like one to be set up. The Copake Day meeting which had been scheduled had been cancelled due to scheduling conflicts for Commissioners Ritchie and Gabaccia.

Commissioner Ritchie commented that it was nice to see an audience at this special meeting and to see that people have an interest in their police department. "It's a good thing", he said.

The Commission raised the possibility of building a new police station since we are limited on space in the current one and are paying \$850/month in rent when we could easily be applying that money to a building the town would own. Wayne Miller suggested from the audience that the Commission might want to look into the West Copake Firehouse as a possible location for the station. Commissioner Blass said it would cost \$500,000 to redo that building. Commissioner Gabaccia said that the Commission needs to begin investigating the possibility of a new station, because space is so limited in the current station. Commissioner Gabaccia also stressed the need for everyone to "work together".

Commissioner Blass mentioned a DOT session to be held at the old Roelif Jansen School Building and said that anyone who would like to attend is welcome to. Commissioner Gabaccia indicated that she would like to attend.

Commissioner Blass said that while training is important it is up to the Town Board to see that the department has the necessary funding. Commissioner Gabaccia indicated that she and Commissioner Ritchie as members of the Town Council would address the budget issues of the department.

Commissioner Blass also indicated that we are extremely fortunate to have a fine investigator like Jan Near on duty.

Commissioner Ritchie moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Gabaccia. The Commission unanimously voted to adjourn.