

POLICE COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

OPEN SESSION

October 11, 2013 9:00 a.m.

PRESENT: Mayor Richard Meehan, Council President Lloyd Martin, Commission Chairperson Doug Cymek, City Manager David Recor, Council Member Dennis Dare, Chief Ross Buzzuro, Director of Emergency Services Joe Theobald, Captain Kevin Kirstein, Captain Michael Colbert, Captain Gregory Guiton, Lt. Scott Harner

ABSENT: City Solicitor Guy Ayres

1. Call to Order 9:03 a.m.
2. The September 9, 2013 Minutes unanimously approved as written.
3. Chief Buzzuro reviewed the September Crime Statistics. There has been an increase in officer-initiated Calls for Service from September 2012 – almost 26% increase. Chief Buzzuro reviewed the week-by-week statistics report that shows decreases almost across the board in all crimes. Chief Buzzuro stated this report listing the Part 1 (major) crimes would reflect emerging patterns should they occur. It will greatly assist the department in strategically deploying officers. The Part 1 crimes, which are your most serious crimes, are down close to 300 as compared to year to date in 2012.
4. Chief Buzzuro reviewed the H20I statistics comparing 2010 through 2013. Arrests were significantly up this year. Traffic citations in 2010 – 256, 2011 – 288, 2012 – 478, and in 2013 – 868. Good job was done by all patrol officers. H20I is again scheduled for the weekend after Sunfest in 2014. It was suggested that Captain Colbert brief Chief Buzzuro on what was learned from our visit to Myrtle Beach a few years back and how they solved their motor vehicle problems during their Bike Week. Chief Buzzuro believes we need a holistic approach to this event and utilize all affected agencies to maximize our effectiveness. We need to involve property owners, the zoning department and other businesses in Ocean City that help to either sponsor or invite H20I members to use their facilities. This event is not a sanctioned Ocean City event, there are no special event permits given to use the inlet lot or the convention center. There are empty private parking lots in town that also seem to draw attendees. Trash along the highway became a serious problem during the recent event because of the amount of people gathering in the parking lots.
5. Hotels were full for H20I and restaurants did well. We need to work together with the sponsors, property owners and make this work for all. Councilman Dare suggested we must make this event better as the Town owes it to the residents.

Lt. Scott Harner was asked to look into other locations where H20I events are now held. Lt. Harner has been in touch with the local organizer and he is willing to use social media to get out our messages, such as our Walk Smart Campaign and the Drive Smart Campaign to attendees. He seems very engaged to work with us to make this event better for all.

Mayor Meehan mentioned that since this is a non-permitted event, they could not use public property – out of respect for all other residents and visitors to Ocean City.

6. Update on Highway Safety – Lt. Harner spoke of how well the Walk Smart and Drive Smart Campaigns have been for Ocean City. All pedestrian and bike collisions are down. State Highway funding will be made available again to Ocean City next year to continue this work. Lt. Harner informed the Council that Assistant District Engineer for the State Highway Association, Ken Cimino will be leaving the agency by the end of this year and Dallas Baker will be taking over that position. The State of Delaware visited Ocean City to learn from OCPD and how they can incorporate it into their program. Towson University wants to use our Walk Smart program. This shows that our campaign has been so successful that others want to incorporate it. Captain Kirstein mentioned that this is a true success story as it was shared at a nationwide conference held in California.
7. Lt. Harner introduced a proposal for a new seat belt ordinance. This local ordinance would cover passengers in unenclosed areas of motor vehicles, i.e., in the bed of a pick-up truck. Anne Arundel has this same ordinance. The Police Commission agrees this is being proactive to keep our citizens safe. A motion was made by Dennis Dare and Seconded by Lloyd Martin to have Lt. Harner send the proposed ordinance to City Solicitor, Guy Ayres for his legal review and comments and then return to the November Police Commission meeting with Mr. Ayres report.
8. Chief Buzzuro updated the Commission on ECD/Taser use in September. There were eight events, with one deployment. This report shows that with each incident, all suspects became immediately compliant with no injuries to subjects and/or officers. Captain Kirstein stated that officer assaults have plummeted since using ECD/Tasers. The one deployment in September was a violent confrontation but with the use of the ECD/Taser, there were no injuries. The extensive training of our officers has obviously influenced their discretion as to when to display or deploy the ECD/Taser.
9. At this time, all Police Officers and PFCs assigned to the Patrol Division are outfitted with an ECD/Taser. We still need approximately 25-30 additional to outfit all Sergeants and Corporals as well. Chief Buzzuro said that with each graduating class, all new officers would be issued an ECD/Taser. We have applied for grant money and are waiting to hear if we will receive the grant for 10 additional ECD/Tasers. We have also received monetary donations to assist with the purchase of ECD/Tasers from local individuals and organizations.

Mayor Meehan congratulated the Ocean City Police Department ECD/Taser Program for being properly run and for providing the proper training in the use of the ECD/Taser to all of its officers.

Meeting Adjourned 10:00 a.m.

The next meeting of the Police Commission will be held on Friday, November 8, 2013 at 9:00 AM at the Public Safety Building, 6501 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, MD 21842