

**NORTHERN BERKS REGIONAL POLICE
COMMISSION MEETING
SEPTEMBER 11, 2023**

ATTENDING: Dave Franke – Maidencreek Commissioner, Ron Strause – Leesport Commissioner, Gary Hadden – Ontelaunee Commissioner, Josh Steingraber – Ontelaunee Alternate, Josh Meck – Maidencreek Alternate, Andy Rongaus – Solicitor, Chief Jim Keiser

GUESTS: Joe Farley, Dave Brown, Donna Culp, Eric Bauman, Kris Schittler, Mike Schittler, Robert Wood, Jr., Steve Hoptley, Mike Cardona, Daisy Cardona, Angel Toro

Commissioner Franke called the September 11, 2023 Commission Meeting to order at 6:03 PM, followed by the pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence. He mentioned that there would be an executive session at the end of the meeting, which would require an addition to the agenda to include possible disciplinary action. **Commissioner Hadden** made a motion, seconded by **Commissioner Strause** to approve this amended agenda. All commissioners voted, “Aye”. Motion carried.

FOR THE RECORD: There was an executive session held after the adjournment of the August 14, 2023 police commission meeting. There was an executive session held on August 29, 2023. Both sessions were in regards to issues of employment.

COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES: **Commissioner Hadden** made a motion, seconded by **Commissioner Strause** to approve the August 14, 2023 Commission Meeting minutes. All commissioners voted, “Aye”. Motion carried.

TREASURER’S REPORT: The August 2023 Treasurer’s report was given by Chief Jim Keiser as follows-

Money Market	\$707,806.29	Tompkins Vist	\$159,933.53
General Checking	\$82,727.08	NNO	\$10,388.62
<u>Payroll</u>	<u>\$3,416.43</u>		
Total Budget Bal.	\$793,949.80		

Commissioner Strause made a motion, seconded by **Commissioner Hadden** to approve the August 2023 Treasurer’s report as presented. All commissioners voted, “Aye”. Motion carried.

DEPARTMENT REPORT: Chief Keiser read the activity report for August 2023.

TOWNSHIP	CALLS	CITATIONS	WARNINGS	CONTACTS	ARRESTS	HOURS OF SERVICE
Maidencreek	314	76	71	125	7	28.3 per day
Ontelaunee	232	77	55	98	5	25.9 per day
Leesport	74	48	16	40	1	8 per day
Administrative	20					

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TOTAL	640	201	142	263	13
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FUEL: 1147 gallons MILEAGE: 9,991

CRASHES: **Maidencreek - 29 (9 Reportable/17 Non Reportable/3 Hit & Run)**
Ontelaunee - 19 (4 Reportable/13 Non Reportable/2 Hit & Run)
Leesport - 1 (1 Reportable/0 Non Reportable/0 Hit & Run)

BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR:

David Brown, Maidencreek Township, asked for increased police presence during the overnight hours and weekends on the north side of Lake Ontelaunee. He reports vandalism, Tannerite explosions and the theft of copper from telephone poles. He believes this is due to increased activity on the closed bridge. He suggested putting cameras up in various trees with the images sent to the police department. He also suggested that the bridge be closed after dark for safety reasons. Detective Sergeant Wood explained that Met Ed will not allow any cameras to be installed on any of their equipment or poles. He said that the land is property of the Reading Area Water Authority and the bridge belongs to PennDOT. He also said that he does not recall any reports of Tannerite explosions and stressed the importance of calling in these incidents when they occur. Chief Keiser said that he would like to see the bridge completely fenced off, but that would be up to PennDOT. If cameras were put in the trees, that would have to be done by the property owner, which is RAWA. NBRPD cannot place cameras that would have recording capabilities due to surveillance/wiretap implications. Commissioner Franke suggested that Mr. Brown attend the Maidencreek Township meeting on Thursday night to present his concerns. Maidencreek Township could then assist in drafting a letter to PennDOT. This would at least put them "on notice" that there is a safety issue. Det. Sgt. Wood again stressed the importance of reporting any illegal behavior as it is occurring. The only recent reports for this area were for the copper thefts and an abandoned vehicle. Mr. Brown asked that signs be posted that clearly state that no one is allowed on the bridge after dark. Commissioner Franke again responded that such a sign would need to be initiated by PennDOT. Alternate Josh Meck said that he will bring up this issue at the next Maidencreek Township meeting. The first step will be sending a letter to PennDOT, alerting them to the issues.

Alternate Josh Meck talked about issues on Venice Drive, such as loud music and asked if the department had gotten any calls over the past week. Det. Sgt. Wood said that he did see that people had posted complaints on Facebook, but nothing had been called in to the department.

OLD BUSINESS:

Update on Hiring Process - Chief Keiser said that there were 9 applicants interviewed for police officer positions with NBRPD. After the interviews were conducted, the top 4 rated applicants were moved to the background

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investigation portion of the hiring process. 1 applicant has completed this portion. Once the other 3 have completed the background investigation, 2 will be presented to the commission for moving ahead with a conditional offer of employment.

Update on Promotions Process - 4 officers will be testing for the position of Corporal. This test will take place on Saturday, October 21, 2023.

NEW BUSINESS:

Consider motion to purchase a new vehicle in 2024 - Commissioner Franke explained that it has been difficult to obtain new vehicles and it is important to start this process early. Chief Keiser would like to place an order for a new police Explorer when the Ford ordering window opens, usually in October. Commissioner Franke asked what the price would be. Chief Keiser said that he does not have an exact price, but we need to remember to factor in the price of the vehicle, the upfitting costs and the costs associated with the decals. Commissioner Hadden explained to the audience that we have money available in the budget, largely due to grants that have funded equipment needs, rather than the commission having to fund that from our accounts. A new vehicle should not require an increase in rates in 2024. There is enough saved to fund this. Alternate Josh Steingraber suggested that cars be continuously cycled out and replaced on a yearly basis. **Commissioner Hadden** made a motion, seconded by **Commissioner Strause** to purchase a new Ford Explorer, not to exceed \$60,000. All commissioners voted, "Aye". Motion carried. Alternate Josh Meck asked for an update on the 2 vehicles we had already ordered. Chief Keiser said that the dealership is still waiting on the parts necessary to complete the upfittings.

Discuss/present police commission letterhead - Commissioner Franke said that there should be a separate letterhead used for issues and correspondence regarding the police commission. Chief Keiser created a letterhead that was presented to the commissioners. Commissioner Franke asked that a phone number be added to the letterhead. Det. Sgt. Wood suggested that we list the police department phone line that goes to the office voice mail after hours. This would avoid any calls being transferred to dispatch. Any calls received on this line would either be answered immediately during business hours by Administrative Assistant Alysia Fredericks or be forwarded to voicemail, which would then be checked during the next working day. He also would like a commission email address to be listed. Det. Sgt. Wood will contact Omega about creating a commission email address. This commission address will then be linked to the 3 commissioners, so that any electronic communication coming to that address will be automatically forwarded to each of them.

On-Scene Collision Investigation Training - Chief Keiser said that Officer Shivery will be attending a 2 week training for crash investigations. As this

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training is out of the area, Officer Shivery will be at a hotel for each week. Chief Keiser suggested that a meal allowance be discussed. This allowance would then be applied during the occurrence of any training that required travel/out of area stays. **Commissioner Hadden** made a motion, seconded by **Commissioner Strause** to approve a meal allowance during out of area trainings up to \$60/day upon submittal of receipts. This would not include any alcohol purchases. All commissioners voted, "Aye". Motion carried.

Retirement Badge Presentment - Commissioner Franke said that going forward, retired officers will be presented with a retirement badge from the commission as a thank you for their years of service. Tonight, we have 2 retired NBRPD officers in attendance who have been invited to receive their retirement badges. Chief Keiser presented Retired Officer Mike Cardona and Retired Officer Steven Hoptley with a certificate of appreciation and a retirement badge.

FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER: Commissioner Franke presented a letter that he typed up in regards to our recent National Night Out 2023 event that he will be forwarding to a publication that is distributed to the municipalities in Pennsylvania.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: The commission will now hold an executive session. The meeting will not be adjourned until after the session, as there may be action taken.

NEW BUSINESS:

Consider two motions to impose disciplinary action - **Commissioner Strause** made a motion, seconded by **Commissioner Hadden** to impose disciplinary action in the form of training on Officer Anthony Vaillant and Officer Carnathan in regards to a prior incident. This action would also include a written warning in their files and an 18 month reckoning period from the date of occurrence. All commissioners voted, "Aye". Motion carried.

ADJOURN: **Commissioner Hadden** made a motion, seconded by **Commissioner Strause** to adjourn the meeting. All commissioners voted, "Aye". Motion carried and meeting was adjourned at 8:27 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Alysia Fredericks
NBRPD Administrative Assistant

CC: NBRPD Commission & Alternates
Hunter Ahrens, Maiden creek Township Manager
Kim Berger, Ontelaunee Township Secretary
Sandra Weiser, Leesport Borough Secretary
Christopher Gerber, Solicitor