

City of Whitewater Police Commission  
Quarterly Meeting Minutes  
November 17, 2010

ABSTRACT / SYNOPSIS OF THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE OFFICIAL ACTIONS OF THE  
POLICE COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WHITEWATER, WALWORTH AND JEFFERSON  
COUNTIES, WISCONSIN

- I. CALL TO ORDER, ROLE CALL: Police Commission President Jan Bilgen-Craggs called the meeting of the Whitewater Police Commission to order at 7:00 p.m.  
Members present: Jan Bilgen-Craggs, Jerry Wendt, Rosa Verduzco, Dennis Knopp, and Jim Olsen.  
Members absent: None  
Also present were Chief James Coan, Support Services Manager Kathy Boyd and Records Technician Angela Sahr
- II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Minutes from the August 4, 2010 meeting were approved unanimously on an Olsen/Verduzco motion.  
AYES: Bilgen-Craggs, Wendt, Verduzco, Knopp and Olsen  
NOES: None  
ABSENT: None
- III. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS: Bilgen-Craggs welcomed friends of Whitewater, city residents and those interested in the Police Commission. Bilgen-Craggs read the following statement "*No formal Police Commission action will be taken during this meeting although issues raised may become part of a future agenda. Participants are allotted a three to five minute speaking period. Specific items listed on the agenda may not be discussed at this time; however citizens may speak to those issues at the time the Police Commission discusses that particular item.*" Bilgen-Craggs stated that residents are invited to come down to the meetings and it is the first thing on the agenda after minute approval. Bilgen-Craggs asked if there were any comments two times. No citizen comments were made.
- IV. OLD BUSINESS:
  - A. CITIZEN COMPLAINT FORM/PROCESS: Bilgen-Craggs stated that the Police Commission wanted to check on how the new process and access on the web site was working. Chief Coan stated that Support Services Manager Kathy Boyd and IT Director Tim Nobling added the form to the City's web site and since it has gone online there have been two complaints, one anonymous and one not. Chief Coan stated that the complaints were handled accordingly and the process is online and operational. Bilgen-Craggs asked if anyone had any specific questions about the complaint process and there were none.
- V. NEW BUSINESS:
  - A. POLICE COMMISSION PRESIDENT'S REPORT:
    1. INFORMATION FROM THE CITY ATTORNEY – Bilgen-Craggs had a conversation with the City Attorney, Wally McDonell, concerning the role of the Police Commission. Bilgen-Craggs mentioned the red Commission handbook as an excellent resource. Bilgen-Craggs stated that she wanted to make sure she was prepared and following the State Statues and what the community expects. Bilgen-Craggs stated Wally provided good information and he said that he would come to a meeting if the Commission chooses. Bilgen-Craggs stated that Wally said that he would be at any meeting where

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his advice or counsel would be helpful. Bilgen-Craggs stated The Commission would need to let Wally know ahead of time. Bilgen-Craggs asked if the Commission was interested in having Wally come in to talk, if so the Commissioners should let her know now so it can go on a future agenda. Chief Coan mentioned that the state offers seminars on the role of the Police Commission and the information has been forwarded to Commission members. Chief Coan stated that if any of the members would like to attend they should let the Police Department know. Bilgen-Craggs asked Boyd to let the Commission know when the training is scheduled.

2. **POLICE COMMISSION MEETING DECORUM** – Bilgen-Craggs stated that the Commission had a discussion about a year and a half year ago, to make sure the citizens of Whitewater knew what the Commission was doing and that the Commission was compliant with all of the legal obligations the Commission holds. During Bilgen-Cragg's discussion with Wally McDonell they discuss this, since the commission is being recorded the Commissioners need to continue that commitment and because the recordings are considered a record and could be considered in any type of case that may come forward to the Commission as an appeal. Bilgen-Craggs encouraged intentional and thoughtful in the conversations and all Commissioners have understanding of obligation to the City, residents and personnel of the department. Bilgen-Craggs asked if there were any questions and there were none.
  
- B. **COMMUNITY OUTREACH**: Bilgen-Craggs wanted to see if there was any discussion on how to communicate to the community the Police Commissions role and the police department's feedback protocols. Bilgen-Craggs stated that several of the Commissioners get contacted by specific groups. Bilgen-Craggs stated it wasn't about survey work, but is there way to better communicate to citizens that they can approach the Commissioners. Knopp stated the only thing he has been confronted with is people ask him if he can do this, this or this and he says he can't. Knopp stated if they do have a problem do the complaint forms or call PD, if they're told no then there is no problem. Bilgen-Craggs stated great advice and that the department has good protocol and receptive command staff to help people. Bilgen-Craggs stated if there are concerns or don't know what is legal or illegal it is not the role of the Commission. Bilgen-Craggs stated none of the Commissioners have the training so contact the PD. Bilgen-Craggs stated there is also a way on the City's web site to contact staff and Commissioners.
  
- C. **INFORMAL RECOGNITION OF DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES BY POLICE COMMISSION**: Bilgen-Craggs said that many of the Commissioners have reached out to staff when they have had monumental changes in their lives, whether it is a marriage or child being born or exceptionally good work, which happens a lot with the staff. The Commission has not talked about it formally so Bilgen-Craggs placed it on the agenda to see if it was something that the Commission felt was part of their role. Bilgen-Craggs asked if there were any thoughts one way or the other. Wendt stated that he was appreciative of Police Day and the recognition that happens there. Wendt stated that he has been involved quite a few years, even before his time on the Commission. Wendt stated that there could be things in addition to Police Day. Wendt asked if that was what Bilgen-Craggs was looking for. Bilgen-Craggs stated she wasn't looking for the police staff to do more. Bilgen-Craggs stated that the role of the Police Commission is hiring and

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disciplinary group and she would like to see some balance. Bilgen-Craggs stated that she knows that there is a whole formal process, letters in files, commendations are written, and recognition in the newsletter and asked Chief Coan if he felt there was something missing. Bilgen-Craggs mentioned that she knew that the police staff had been operating at less than full staff. Chief Coan stated that the Police Commission's words of support are helpful. Chief Coan stated that at the previous night's budget meeting some nice compliments were shared, which is always welcomed by the officers. Chief Coan stated that unfortunately the officer's deal with situations where they don't receive the recognition they deserve. Chief Coan stated that they try to be attentive to that, Police Day Ceremony once a year and there is a formal commendation policy that rewards and commends the officers for doing good things. Chief Coan stated that the newsletter has a section that talks about letters of commendation and thanks that the department gets from citizens. Chief Coan said that these are included to as a way of conveying the good things that the officers doing. Chief Coan stated that the department sends Police Commission copies of newsletters and if there are things in the newsletter that are exemplary and they want to commend the Commission is welcome to do that. Chief Coan stated that there is commending in the department via email and letters that are put in the officers personnel files. Chief Coan stated that he could be more diligent about carbon copying the Police Commissioners so they are aware of the good things going on. Chief Coan stated the Police Commission could decide at a meeting or if one of the Commissioners, possibly Bilgen-Craggs, thought something was worthy as a commendation of the Police Commission they are welcome to do that. Chief Coan stated that he would try to keep the Police Commission as informed as possible of the good things that the department personnel are doing. Olsen stated that he would like to see that and Bilgen-Craggs stated that she would too. Bilgen-Craggs stated that there was an agreement on that and would like to see the Chief do that. Bilgen-Craggs stated that they all know that the personnel are doing good work.

- D. ANNUAL POLICE COMMISSION SCHEDULE: Bilgen-Craggs stated that the Police Commission had a challenge, because the meeting was not during their normal time due to a municipal court overload. Bilgen-Craggs stated she wanted the Police Commission to discuss that if it were to be a repetitive issue they may want to switch to the third Wednesday of the month. Bilgen-Craggs stated that Boyd did the leg work looking at the schedule so that the Police Commission meetings would be in the municipal room. Bilgen-Craggs stated that she didn't want there to be added burden to the cable TV staff. Bilgen-Craggs asked Boyd what seemed to be the best days and it was determined that Thursdays would be the best. Knopp asked if evening hours were etched in stone. Bilgen-Craggs stated that she didn't know, but thought that evening hours were for availability for citizens to attend and to be members. Bilgen-Craggs stated that it wasn't in State Statutes. Knopp stated that he wasn't saying 7:00 at night, he's saying 4:00 pm, early evening or late afternoon. Knopp stated that the meeting time has been historically 7:00 pm, but if it works for everyone else. Knopp stated he understood the citizen thing. Bilgen-Craggs asked if anyone else had an opinion about earlier than 7:00 pm. Bilgen-Craggs stated that it could be an hour earlier or two hours earlier. Olsen stated that most of the meetings are usually, Park and Rec starts at 5:00 pm and City Council starts at 6:30 pm. Olsen stated that 7:00 pm seems later than the norm and if they are going to change the time it maybe 6:00 pm or 6:30 pm might be better. Bilgen-

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Craggs asked Wendt if he had a conflict and he stated no. Verduzco stated that 6:00 pm or 6:30 pm would be better. Bilgen-Craggs asked if 6:00 pm would be better and Thursdays are better according to the schedule, would anyone have a problem with Thursdays. Bilgen-Craggs ask if Thursdays would be good for the Chief and the support staff. Chief Coan stated Thursdays are fine. Bilgen-Craggs asked if the Police Commission should do the third Thursday or first Thursday to be consistent and asked if there was any feedback. Bilgen-Craggs stated that it should be the first Thursday, quarterly and asked for a motion. An Olsen/Knopp motion to change the day and time of the next Police Commission meeting to the first Thursday of February at 6:00 pm was passed by unanimous voice vote.

AYES: Bilgen-Craggs, Wendt Verduzco, Knopp and Olsen

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

The next Police Commission meeting will be held on February 3, 2011 at 6:00 pm.

E. CHIEF'S REPORT:

1. PERSONNEL UPDATE:

- a) RECRUIT OFFICER PROGRESS: Chief Coan stated that the recruit officer has two weeks to go in recruit training and then will be out on solo patrol. Chief Coan stated that would be welcome due to the ups and downs of staffing lately. Chief Coan stated that it would be valuable to have him out on his own.

2. TESTING OF WEARABLE AUDIO/VIDEO EQUIPMENT: Chief Coan stated that the department has been testing a wearable audio/video system. Chief Coan stated that the officers wear it like a headband with the camera close to the ear. The units have a wire that connects to the radio. The department has been using for about a month and a half and has it for another month. Chief Coan stated it is a good system and it will be the way of the world and police officers all over the country in the not too distant future will be wearing these types of systems, but the downside is it is very expensive. Chief Coan stated the advantages are many; from a court standpoint the officer can go into court and show a video of what they have dealt with. Chief Coan stated from a citizen complaint standpoint the department gets complaints which might be one version and the officer might have a different version. Chief Coan stated with the video cam system the department can look at the video and make a judgment. Chief Coan stated the video can also be helpful from a remedial, training or tactical standpoint that can be shared with other officers or recruit officers. Chief Coan stated there are a lot of advantages to the system and it will be seen in the future. Chief Coan stated with technological advances the system will be less cumbersome, although it is not very cumbersome now. Chief Coan stated it is something that the department will evolve into, cost permitting. Olsen asked what the cost is. Chief Coan stated that the initial cost is about \$30,000, but there is an ongoing cost for the video to be downloaded to their system and made accessible from an evidence/retrieval standpoint. Chief Coan stated the company has a market on the system and doesn't allow separating. Chief Coan stated there would be an additional fee of \$10,000 per year. Chief Coan stated other companies might have an alternate system that the department could explore, but it is not out there yet. Chief Coan stated it is a prohibitive for our department, but there is hope that the cost will come down in the future. Knopp asked what the chances of the department getting

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the system now. Chief Coan said that the budget was passed last night and due to budgetary constraints that the city has faced it was not added to the budget. Chief Coan stated the department has discussed donations, maybe going to civic groups. Chief Coan stated the downside is the ongoing cost and could it rise in the future. Chief Coan stated the department wants to be careful about entering into something like this. Chief Coan stated maybe in 6 months or a year it could be less expensive or there might be something else out there. Chief Coan stated the department is going to proceed cautiously. Chief Coan said he feels that it is the way of the future. Knopp asked if the department has it in use right now. Chief Coan stated yes. Knopp asked when it had to be given back. Chief Coan stated at the end of the year. Chief Coan stated the department met with the vendor last week and went over an evaluation. Chief Coan stated that there are only two or three LE agencies that have bought the systems. Chief Coan stated that Bilgen-Craggs was here for the orientation for the system. Chief Coan stated he thought the system would take off with more agencies buying into it. Chief Coan stated the vendor extended the use until the end of the year. Chief Coan stated the department made an overture to the company asking them if it would be nice to have a Midwestern college town as one of their sites that they could point to, boost the stock and trade, but they didn't buy it. Chief Coan stated the system is very nice and one day the department hopes to afford one. Bilgen-Craggs stated that she was impressed with the quality of the video and she is interested in hearing what the officers say about wearing it for their whole shift because it is like having a Maglite strapped to your head. Bilgen-Craggs stated the possibilities for the training aspect, helping people remember what they said and the backup and security download and how the data is protected. Bilgen-Craggs stated the video can't be tampered with and evidentiary trail, chain is very well protected. Bilgen-Craggs asked what the officers are saying about the system. Chief Coan stated that overall the officers are receptive to the system and they see the value particularly from a court standpoint, to be able to show a situation or incident. Chief Coan stated that one of the officers commented that the headband slacked after a period of time, minor things. Chief Coan stated that it a part of it is getting use to it, it is cumbersome wearing it. Chief Coan stated he felt in the future it would become lighter, easier, more wearable. Chief Coan stated that we have all seen videos in squad cars, but the problem is that it is limited to a stationary camera in a squad car that only shows what the camera is pointed to. Chief Coan stated that this system is head mounted and where the officer goes so does the camera. Knopp asked if the recording was selective, if the shift starts at seven in the morning and it goes on and is done at three. Chief Coan stated that it can be activated by the officer. Chief Coan stated if the officer is having a private conversation and they can turn it on when they are out in the field. Chief Coan stated that the department hasn't established any policy because this is experimental. Chief Coan stated if the department were able to get a system like this a policy would be drafted that would dictated when it would be used. Chief Coan stated right now it is discretionary on the part of the officer when they turn it on. Bilgen-Craggs asked if there were any conversations with Chief Kiederlen and campus police. Bilgen-Craggs stated that she knew there were a couple different systems, headsets, some on the chest. Chief Coan stated there was a less expensive system that the department tried, but there were drawbacks, technical difficulties. Campus Police Department is interested in the

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system. They've not experimented with the system that our department used. One day it would be valuable for all to be linked to the same system. Bilgen-Craggs asked if there were any other questions for the Chief and there were none. Bilgen-Craggs asked if there was anything else in the Chief's report and he said no.

Bilgen-Craggs mentioned that she and Boyd work on the agenda about a week in advance and the Commissioners are encouraged to contact the Chief with any questions in between times. Bilgen-Craggs stated because the Commission meets quarterly there may be things that are more timely. The Chief makes himself available to the Commission. Bilgen-Craggs stated feel free to email Boyd or Bilgen-Craggs and she'll include whatever should be on the agenda. Bilgen-Craggs stated because there is nothing else on the agenda she offered her apologies to add requests to the agenda next time. Bilgen-Craggs said that she would sit after the meeting was adjourned and take any agenda items for next time because it can't be done on record in public.

VI. ADJOURNMENT: Bilgen-Craggs entertained a motion to adjourn and an Olsen/Verduzco motion to adjourn was passed by unanimous voice vote.

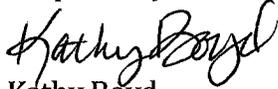
AYES: Bilgen-Craggs, Wendt, Verduzco, Knopp and Olsen

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

The meeting adjourned at 7:31 pm

Respectfully submitted



Kathy Boyd

Support Services Manager