



South Worcester County Communications Center

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Serving the Towns of Webster and Dudley, Massachusetts



Gregory Lynskey, Communications Center Director

SWCCC Operations Board Meeting Minutes for February 18, 2020 – Regular Session

Attendees: Chairman Dean Kochanowski, Michael Shaw, Steven Wojnar, Brian Hickey, Gary Milliard Gregory Lynskey, Toby Wheeler

- Meeting called to order by Chairman Kochanowski at 10:00am
- Chief Kochanowski led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance
- Chief Shaw made a motion to approve the November 5, 2019 regular session meeting minutes. Second by Chief Milliard. Unanimous vote.
- Director Lynskey stated he had no significant update regarding any additional towns other than that Board of Director Randy Becker had been attempting to schedule a meeting with an Oxford Board of Selectmen member without much success and that both Town Administrators had not be able to get a meeting scheduled with the Oxford Town Manager. He also added that State 911 has changed the FY21 Development Grant to provide additional incentives to support regionalization. The guidelines were just released and applications are due April 1. There would need to be a community signed on in order to take advantage of the new incentives which would be almost impossible to do before the deadline. Chief Shaw noted that Charlton has a new Town Administrator so it may be worth considering reaching out to them again.
- Chief Wojnar stated the funding for the backup equipment has been confirmed to have been received. It is expected that Senator Fattman will be out in the next 2 weeks to do a formal presentation.
- Director Lynskey informed the Board that a presentation would be done at the March 9 Dudley Selectmen's meeting to recognize a 7 year old boy who had to call 911 when his mom was having a medical emergency last month. The boy did an incredible job for his young age.
- Chief Shaw stated he and Deputy Chief Wheeler were prepared to provide an update on the cell block complaint investigation. The report is up to approximately 150 pages of written material plus addendums. Going forward if a similar type situation ever was to rise again it would be necessary to have this type of review conducted by an outside agency as the amount of work necessary was significant. Chief Shaw stated he wished to thank Deputy Chief Wheeler for his time and effort.
- He indicated there were 8 basic complaints made as best they could discern from the written emails that had been provided by dispatchers. A summary of the complaints and the findings follow.
 - Offensive odor – odors are subjective, the level of offensiveness, especially after a long weekend varies by person. Whether or not the odor was offensive was deemed to be unfounded however it was sustained that there was an existence of an unpleasant odor.

Board of Directors:

Doug Willardson - Chairman
Jonathan Ruda – Vice-Chairman
Randy Becker - Member
John Marsi - Member

Operations Board:

Dean Kochanowski - Chairman
Michael Shaw - Vice Chairman
Steven Wojnar - Member
Brian Hickey – Member
Gary Milliard - Member

- Feces – The subject was actively defecating on his own free will. There was no finding made as it appeared to be a complaint simply that the feces existed in his cell. There was no way to control those actions. It was noted that during the first occurrence of defecation which occurred while the subject was in the restraint chair that there was a significant gap in time between cell checks.
- Contamination in the cell hall – This resulted from an attempt to clean debris out of the cell. This was sustained.
- Subject was naked from the waist down – No finding as it was unclear the basis of this complaint. The subject was suicidal and was therefore stripped down per department policy.
- Communication/Attitude of certain WPD officers and supervisors – No names were given as to who the concerns pertained to and therefore there was no finding.
- Suicide attempt that went undocumented – 3 attempts occurred and possibly a 4th. As such this complaint was sustained.
- Neglect of duty by WPD Command staff – detailed further below.
- The findings and conclusions total approximately 40 pages.
- Deputy Chief Wheeler noted that although 8 complaints are listed, they were difficult to discern due to the nature in which they were received. 4 emails from dispatchers were documented, one was mostly a rant, one had some good detail, and two others were more general observations of the weekend. Some of the complaints did overlap.
- It was noted that in regards to the odor, one dispatcher who clearly appeared agitated entered the cell block to complete a prisoner check. While doing so, took 2 photos of unoccupied but contaminated cell. Upon the next prisoner check conducted, said dispatcher had a surgical type mask on which was the first appearance of the use of a mask.
- Chief Shaw noted that there were several long gaps of prisoner checks through the weekend. 12 to be exact. Chief Wojnar asked if it was sorted out the responsibility of documenting missed checks if checks are not being done for a particular reason? Director Lynskey stated that was one of the items that has already been identified as needing to be addressed via policy as it is not current in any policy. Deputy Chief Wheeler added that in his time as a patrol supervisor if that decision was ever made he stated he thought it was common sense to log that checks were not being done and why. Director Lynskey agreed.
- Chief Hickey asked what the criteria was for sending someone out for an evaluation if they are suicidal? Chief Shaw read a section from the findings that covered this and noted the subject had a stay at the hospital while in custody and was cleared and returned to the WPD cell.
- On the complaint of neglect of duty, Chief Shaw stated the basis of that complaint was that the WPD Command Staff knew of the situation and conditions while it was ongoing and did nothing. There is significant

documentation in the report indicating that the command staff was not aware of the extent but also had checked in on things multiple times and were not advised. It was also noted that there was an incorrect log entry made regarding the options for PES treatment. The WPD Supervisor who had the conversation with Deputy Chief Wheeler regarding the PES options stated that he did not advise dispatch to log that. It is currently unknown how the dispatcher had knowledge of that call, however the log entry did not correlate to the recording of what was said in the call. Deputy Chief Wheeler noted that through the course of the investigation it came to his attention that the dispatcher could have potentially accessed the call through the recorder system, something he had not realized. He noted that Director Lynskey had informed him there is no way to segregate out portions of calls made on the generic recorded business lines. Director Lynskey noted that is correct. Chief Hickey stated he has concerns that a dispatcher may have listened to a call between WPD supervisors. Chief Shaw stated it was hard for the command staff, who had conducted the investigation, to clear themselves on this category of complaint. He suggested that it might be more appropriate for the Board to review the findings on that section of the investigation and have the board come to a consensus, and that he would be recusing himself from that board discussion.

- After discussion, it was suggested that Chief Milliard and Director Lynskey would sit with Deputy Chief Wheeler to review the material, including video if needed, and report back to the Board. This review would also include determining the scope of necessary action to be taken regarding any of the dispatchers related to the findings. Chief Wojnar made that a motion, seconded by Chief Hickey. Vote 3-0-2 with Chief Milliard and Shaw abstaining. Deputy Chief Wheeler stated it was his opinion that every dispatcher who worked during the weekend would need to be involved in some form of conversation regarding the situation.
- Chief Kochanowski stated that he was comfortable accepting a motion to clear the WPD command staff on the complaint of neglect of duty. Chief Shaw strongly suggested holding off on that until Chief Milliard and Director Lynskey were able to report back to the board.
- Deputy Chief Wheeler added that it was important to note that the inability to compel the dispatchers to speak with him on the matter hinder the ability to make formal findings on several of the complaints. He also noted that since he was not able to interview the dispatchers he also did not interview WPD Officers so as to not introduce any inconsistent process into the review.
- Chief Milliard stated it was his opinion that as a board, the Operations Board has mitigated the matter as best it can such that he believes a situation like this can't happen again.
- Chief Wojnar stated he believed it was important to stay focused on concluding the matter and remain as narrowly pigeon holed as possible.

- Chief Milliard stated he wanted to commend Deputy Chief Wheeler for a great job done. He stated it sets the tone that all allegations will be looked into thoroughly.
- Chief Wojnar made a motion to adjourn at 11:05am, second by Chief Hickey. Unanimous vote.