

Old Saybrook Police Commission

Special Meeting

March 2, 2026

MINUTES

A special hybrid meeting of the Old Saybrook Police Commission was held on Monday, March 2, 2026. The meeting was recorded and can be viewed in its entirety at <https://youtu.be/fj3j7sb0Ag0>

Present: Chairman Shippee, Vice Chairman Wilcox, Secretary Notar-Francesco and Commissioners Von Dassel, Ciliano, Bonneau and Prast. Chief Onofrio was present from the Department of Police Services.

I. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance / Roll Call (0:23)

Chairman Shippee called the meeting to order at 6:37 PM and led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance. All members were present from the Police Commission.

II. Comments from the Public (1:07)

There were no comments from the public.

III. Correspondence (1:13)

Chairman Shippee stated that she sent the updated bylaws regarding correspondence to all Commissioners, so all members were now aware of the bylaw surrounding correspondence.

IV. Discussion and Possible Action on Meeting Minutes for: (1:49)

a. Regular Meeting – December 15, 2025 (1:53)

Secretary Notar-Francesco made a motion to accept the December 15, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Ciliano seconded the motion. The motion passed with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

b. Special Meeting – January 6, 2026 (2:08)

Secretary Notar-Francesco made a motion to accept the January 6, 2026 Special Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Bonneau seconded the motion. The motion passed with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

c. Special Meeting – January 8, 2026 (2:24)

Secretary Notar-Francesco made a motion to accept the January 8, 2026 Special Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Prast seconded the motion. The motion passed with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

V. Executive Reports from Chief Onofrio

a. FY 25-26 Operating Budget (2:46)

Chief Onofrio stated that he met with Jennifer D'Amato last week to go through the current operating budget and to audit where the Department is to date. He stated that the budget is on track for most accounts. He stated that the accounts that are going into the negative are the ones he anticipated, but there will be a surplus in other accounts.

b. FY 26-27 Budget Process Update (6:38)

Chief Onofrio stated that nothing has changed in the FY 26-27 Budget Process. The Department requested a 3.5% increase. He stated that he appreciates the support from the Police Commission, the Board of Finance, Board of Selectmen and the Finance Director.

c. Off Budget Accounts (7:33)

Chief Onofrio stated that there was a discrepancy with the DARE account. He sent an email to the Commission letting them know that there was a deduction that was missing. The payment was deducted, and the account was fixed.

Chief Onofrio stated that he handed out a several invoices to the Commission. One was a Stalker Radar quote. He is looking to use funds from the Driver's Safety Account to purchase these units for the new vehicles. The second quote is for police bikes. He would like to purchase five mountain bikes, and the equipment needed to revamp the bike patrol. Hamden will be hosting a class in the spring that he would like to send five officers to. The K-9 vehicle will be getting replaced and Chief Onofrio would like to use some off budget K-9 funds to offset some of those expenses. The final invoice is regarding an autism awareness training. He stated that he has taken this training previously and that it is well put together and well thought out. It dives into understanding autism and how to properly handle situations. He stated that the training is about \$3,000 just for the class. He would like to invite more than just police officers. He would also open it to other town government members, Board of Education members, the Fire Department, etc.

The Commission spoke about these requests and asked that they be put on the regular meeting agenda later this month so they can vote on it.

d. Personnel Matters (29:39)

Chief Onofrio updated the Commission stating that two officers are currently out on light duty due to pregnancies. He stated that they will be incurring some overtime expenses to fill patrol openings.

Chief Onofrio requested that the Commission appoint Father Greg from St. John Church as the Official Police Chaplin for the Department. He stated that he has spoken with Father Greg and he is willing to take on this role. It is a great support for himself and the officers.

Chairman Shippee stated that since this has no budget implications, she feels that the Chief can appoint whomever he wants.

Secretary Notar-Francesco agreed stating that this would fall under the operations, and she believes that no approval from the Commission was needed.

e. Professional Development Update (32:05)

Chief Onofrio stated that at the last meeting he gave recommendations for a promotional process. He was looking for any feedback or opposition from the Commission. Vice Chairman Wilcox stated that he felt the recommendation was well thought out. Commissioner Ciliano stated that he liked it a lot. The Chief stated that he presented it to the Union, but wanted to get feedback from the Commission. He stated that he will proceed with this promotional process. He is looking to fill the Captain and entry level positions before anything else.

Chief Onofrio advised the Commission that in March he, Sergeant Ciccone and Lieutenant Milardo will be attending the FBI Regional Command College. He stated that it is a beneficial program.

Chief Onofrio advised the Commission that Sergeant Ciccone has started the FBI Leeda trio classes. He has already finished one and the second one will be in April. Chief Onofrio stated that Sergeant Ciccone will also be assisting him as the Assistant Local Traffic Authority. The Chief states that he will be signing him up for a class soon.

f. Activity Report (34:45)

Chief Onofrio stated that he wanted to expand on the press release that he sent out in January. It was a great case that got national coverage. The case was a multiple state auto theft ring. Detective Sergeant Williams put an incredible amount of work into this case and worked with many other agencies in different states to get the arrest.

Chief Onofrio stated that there recently was a short pursuit in evening the hours. Glastonbury tracked a car and notified the Department when the car was in Old Saybrook. The Chief stated that he was in the area and saw the officers in action. He said that Sergeant Mora led the shift in a very responsible way. It was a non-climatic story, but he was proud of how the officers handled the situation.

g. Golf Cart License Plate Design Contest (40:48)

Chief Onofrio stated that Jennifer D'Amato advised him and said that the former Chief designed the golf cart plates and that it was his responsibility. She suggested, however, that the Police Department could allow Goodwin students the opportunity of designing the plate. Chief Onofrio stated that he loved the idea and that it has received a great response from the Commission and Principal Walton. The kids will submit their drawings around April 1st and the Commission will pick a design.

h. Fleet Update (43:00)

The Chief stated that two administrative cars and one K-9 pickup truck have been ordered. Chief Onofrio stated that he is waiting to discuss financing for the other six. The new cars will replace the aging explorers.

i. Diaper Drive report (46:10)

Chief Onofrio stated that the Diaper Drive was a great success and thanked everyone who participated for their support.

VI. Discussion on Ordinances from E-Bike, ATVs and Golf Cart (48:51)

Chief Onofrio stated that this was put on the agenda at the request of Commissioner Ciliano. He stated that golf carts are allowed by town ordinance and permitted on certain roadways, but must have specific safety equipment. He stated that this will be his first summer here as Chief, so he will be observing how residents use golf carts.

Chief Onofrio stated that he doesn't see a huge issue in town right now with E-bikes. He stated that he also doesn't feel the need for a town ordinance as state legislation caught up and has very specific rules regarding E-Bikes. He stated that, should E-Bikes become an issue as the weather warms, up there will be enforcement.

VII. Discussion regarding the executive goals of the Chief of Police (52:03)

The Chief presented the Commission with his Executive Goals. He stated that he believes that they are attainable and measurable.

- Goal 1-Professional Development and Employee Retention.
- Goal 2-Operational Excellence and Organizational Review
- Goal 3-Fiscal Responsibility and Strategic Budget Management
- Goal 4-Community Engagement & Relationship Building

Commissioner Prast stated that she has witnessed how the Chief has been fully present for events, and the amount of them, in the short period of time that he has been here. Chief Onofrio stated that he enjoys coming here and working in Old Saybrook.

Secretary Notar-Francesco stated that she loved how the Chief outlined his goals. She said that these items are reported to the Commission in conversation every month and that would serve as an update. She stated that this was great work.

VIII. Discussion concerning the Means to Evaluate the Chief of Police (1:05:13)

Chairman Shippee stated that she knows the Commission has a tool for evaluating, but after seeing how the Chief laid out his goals, she asked the Commission if they need a formal tool. Secretary Notar-Francesco stated that she does not. She stated that she feels that the Commission can reflect on these goals and decide if he has met or exceeded these goals as a means to an evaluation when the time comes. Chief Onofrio stated that he was happy with that.

IX. Discussion and Possible action on the Police Commission joining the Police Commission Association of Connecticut (1:06:47)

Chairman Shippee stated that she added this to the agenda as Secretary Notar-Francesco mentioned that she was possibly interested in joining an organization for training Police Commissioners. Chairman Shippee asked the Chief if there are other training opportunities.

Chief Onofrio stated that POSCT does not have training for Commissioners. He did state that a Citizen's Police Academy is a good start. It is not just for Police Commission members, but would be open to the

public and can be posted online. It would include training on use of force, internal affairs, community engagement, investigations, etc. He stated that if this were something that the Commission would like he can move forward with it.

Commissioner Von Dassel is a member of the Police Commission Association of Connecticut, and he explained to the Commission what they do. He said they put together an awards dinner every year and this year he nominated Detective Sergeant Williams for his work on the auto theft case. He stated that they raise money for scholarships and are a very pro police organization. He stated that there is no training, but it is a great group of people who do a lot of good work.

Commissioner Prast stated that she likes that Commissioner Von Dassel is a member and would love for him to come back and report to the Commission. The Commission agreed.

X. Comments from the Public (1:16:25)

There were no comments from the public.

XI. Comments from the Chief (1:16:46)

Chief Onofrio commented.

XII. Comments from Commissioners (1:17:02)

Commissioner Von Dassel commented.

Commissioner Prast commented.

Commissioner Bonneau commented.

Chairman Shippee commented.

Vice Chairman Wilcox commented.

Commissioner Ciliano commented.

XIII. Adjournment (1:27:26)

Vice Chairman Wilcox made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Ciliano seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn passed with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:

Jennifer D'Amato
Records Clerk for the Old Saybrook Police Commission