

TRAFFIC SAFETY BOARD MEETING

June 20, 2011 – 1:00 P.M.

PRESENT: Chairman Joseph Waldron, Mechanicville PD; E. M. Rooney, Sheriff's Office; Todd Ives, Ballston Spa PD; Patrick Campion, D.A.'s Office; Cynthia Dort, Cornell Ext. of Saratoga; Bob Murphy, DWI Coordinator; Mickey Mahoney, Probation; Tim Williams, Waterford PD; Andrew Prestigiaco, Saratoga Springs PD; Stephen Williams, Daily Gazette

Chairman Waldron called the meeting to order.

Mr. Campion reported that their DWI training, held on May 18th, was a great success. He said he appreciates the agencies that sent people, and he would like to see more attendance next year. He said they just like to do this one main class rather than travel to various agencies due to the fact this is an all-day training. It was held 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and we could have done more hours, he said. Mr. Murphy stated if people can't get out, we could assist in some overtime. If overtime is necessary, we will address it at the time and do what we have to do, because the attendance has gone down over the last few years.

Mr. Murphy stated we do not meet in July and August, but we have to be concerned about graduations coming up and the post graduation scenarios. He stated the agencies can have 6 – 12 hours for DWI patrols over the weekend, the 4th of July timeline and for the beginning of track season. Some agencies are more involved than others, he said. Chairman Waldron said we should put a strong emphasis on the parties that occur afterwards and the people who host to minors. We will be looking at that issue also and not just the drivers, he added.

Mr. Murphy requested the agencies to call him if anything is needed over the summer.

Chairman Waldron announced there will be a significant reduction in the amount of GTSC grants. The Federal government will be cutting some of the programs or severely

reducing them. Agencies may not get what they did last year because there is no money. He said the rumor is around a 30% reduction.

Chairman Waldron stated the Buckle Up New York wave went well. We put a checkpoint up by the Mechanicville High School, and it was our most ticketed area, he said.

Chairman Waldron stated there has been a lot of motorcycle crashes lately. We have to do what we can to make it safer for them. The motorcycle training that was held in Colonie was packed, and people were being turned away. With gas prices as high as they are, people are riding motorcycles more and more, he stated.

Mr. Prestigiaco said they assisted at an accident today with a person who was under the influence of valium and who had all kinds of medical conditions. He mentioned all of his guys have been through the motorcycle school, and they will be doing a detail with the NYSP in early July where they direct all of the motorcycles to pull over for an inspection.

Mr. Prestigiaco stated Joe Carey, who was their training coordinator, retired last week, and he will be sorely missed. It is a huge loss to the department, he said.

Mr. Rooney mentioned a lot of the motorcyclists are the victims because people pull in front of them. I do not have the answer, but it wouldn't be bad to raise the visibility for those poor folks, as it is not their error, he said. We need to remind the motoring public to be on the lookout for these motorcyclists, he said. He stated a lot of motorists have a tough time judging their closing rate with a cycle.

Mr. Rooney said they yielded a few DWI arrests unrelated to prom.

Mrs. Dort said they have been asked to use as much of the grant money as possible for this year. She said she will be buying 1,000 car seats. Galway Town Supervisor, George Hargrave, has given us a pod for storage. She requested those agencies that have CPS money to use it and buy car seats to have a stock of them.

Mrs. Dort said they did a CPS class and had one officer from Galway; two from Mechanicville; two from NYSP-Wilton; and one person who wants to become an officer. We are trying to set up a once a month fitting station in Galway, and we gave away 26 seats there last week. We will be doing a checkpoint there with the Galway Village PD and have seats on the side of the road for those who need them over the next two weekends. Mr. Rooney asked if they have ever had anyone who would not take a seat. Mrs. Dort said she has at Cornell. People might not want the seat we offer, but if they do not take the seat at our checkpoint if needed, they will get a ticket. The PD and I were installing a car seat at 11:00 p.m. the other night in Galway, and there was a domestic problem going on there, she said. She stated this is not as easy as you would think.

Mrs. Dort stated the Fair will be coming up and asked if the Traffic Safety Board does anything there. Chairman Waldron stated no, we are more of an executive branch. Mrs. Dort said she was hoping to have the DWI display up there, but she doesn't know where.

Mrs. Dort said the NYS Traffic Safety Board came to her two weeks ago, and she had to give them bike helmets. They said that we are not a part of the NYS Traffic Safety Board. Chairman Waldron stated that we don't pay the dues. We just handle things locally, he stated.

Mrs. Dort said there is a huge push with safety issues with pools, rollovers and leaving children in hot cars. These are big issues to remind parents about. Last year, 45 children nationwide died from being left in hot cars. She asked if there is a law against this. Chairman Waldron stated yes, they arrest for that. We do about 2 – 3 arrests for that per year, he said. He said that is a huge issue for pets also, but nothing is comparable to a child.

Mr. Mahoney said Leandra's Law will be having its first anniversary in August, and he is not seeing much of a slow down over the year. He said he has 5 – 6 cases on his desk this morning. Saratoga County is one of the highest ranking counties in the State for DWI arrests and convictions. Our numbers are big, and it keeps happening, he stated. He said some of the early concerns with the interlock ignition device is in starting in cold weather. The industry is doing gold plated soldering, and the devices are working fine. He said it's a good thing it works because some of these people are still driving around.

Mr. Champion stated initially, there was a big influx of child in vehicle offenses, but things are slowing down. Mr. Murphy said we are an extremely active county in this area by way of our Traffic Safety Board month to month. When they start comparing, I just comment by saying we are very active, he said. Mr. Champion agreed and said in order to get the interlock ignition, there has to be a conviction. Chairman Waldron said the reason the numbers are high is because we are doing our job.

**** NEXT MEETING – MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12TH AT 1:00 P.M. ****

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine M. Sodemann