

**Minutes  
Board of Selectmen Emergency Meeting  
Stow Town Building  
April 22, 2020**

**Via Zoom**

Physically present at this meeting in the Warren Room was James Salvie, Chair. Present virtually were Brian Burke, Thomas Ryan and Cortni Frecha.

Also present physically were Town Administrator William Wrigley and Executive Assistant Maureen McKeon. Town Counsel Jon Witten participated by telephone. Mr. Salvie called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Salvie explained that because this is an emergency meeting, the public posting was not posted 48 hours prior to the meeting, as is the usual practice. He added that it is a public meeting, not a public hearing, and no public comment or questions would be permitted.

The Chair read the following statement aloud and announced that the statement would be available on the Town website the following morning.

“Last weekend, our community was shocked and saddened by allegations made against our police chief, Ralph “Rusty” Marino, and his decision to remove himself from Command after being interviewed by the State Police. The nature of the allegations is deeply disturbing to many of us, most likely everyone, but in particular our police department. Our community is left with many unanswered questions. Our understanding is that a criminal complaint was filed today but the State Police are not sharing the details of their ongoing investigation at this time. Thus, town officials know no more about the facts underlying these allegations than what we have all read and seen in news media and what is indicated in the criminal charges.

Here’s what we do know right now:

1. Marino was relieved of duty on Saturday April 18 and has had no official role or duties for the Town of Stow since that time. He turned in his badge, service firearm, keys and vehicle. His computer has been secured in case it is requested as part of any investigation. Marino left Sgt. Darren Thraen in charge.
2. Marino tendered his resignation from the Stow Police Department on April 22, 2020 and the Selectmen accepted it that evening.
3. Neither the State Police nor the District Attorney’s office nor anyone else has given us any reason to believe that any other employee in the police department was aware of or aided any illegal activities. We have no reason to believe that anyone did. We have no reason to believe that the operations of the Stow Police Department were affected in any way.

4. The Town will obviously be keeping a close eye on any criminal investigation, and on any facts that come to light during that process, and will cooperate fully with the State Police and DA's office. We also respect that Marino is entitled to due process under the law.
5. The Stow Police Department is much more than any one individual. It is comprised of several dedicated men and women who have spent years keeping the Town safe and earning the trust of its residents. Again, we have no reason to believe that anyone currently in the Stow Police Department did anything wrong. Though the events of this weekend are deeply troubling to all of us, there is no reason for residents to believe that the high quality of public safety services in Stow has changed at all. The men and women of the PD will continue to support us through this time, because that's their job. We should support them through this time as well, because they've earned our support.
6. If we learn anything to the contrary to anything set out above, we pledge to inform you if allowed by the State Police, and to act on it immediately.
7. Residents should feel free to call the Town Administrator at 978-897-2927 or email him at [townadministrator@stow-ma.gov](mailto:townadministrator@stow-ma.gov), or email the chair of the Board of Selectmen at [jamesalvie@stow-ma.gov](mailto:jamesalvie@stow-ma.gov). Members of the press are requested to contact Town Counsel Jon Witten at 617-827-9056."

#### **Police Chief Administrative Leave**

Mr. Salvie stated that the Town had received a letter of resignation Chief Ralph Marino earlier that day. The letter submitted by Mr. Marino read, "*Dear Board, Effective immediately I tender my resignation from the Town of Stow Police Department.*" Mr. Salvie added that there were no conditions or agreements associated with the one sentence resignation letter submitted by Ralph Marino and it is not part of a larger settlement agreement. Town Counsel confirmed this statement.

Mr. Salvie requested that Attorney Witten explain Mr. Marino's status over the past four days. Attorney Witten explained that his opinion that because Mr. Marino was placed on administrative leave by the Town, without an indictment, voluntarily putting himself on administrative leave, that until Board accepts his resignation, according to the statute, he is on paid administrative leave. He added that if the Board accepts his resignation, that will end the period of time when the town is obligated to pay Mr. Marino.

*Mr. Ryan moved to place Ralph Marino on paid administrative leave, effective April 18, 2020 through April 22, 2020 and to accept his resignation effective immediately. Ms. Frecha seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously. Roll call vote: Ms. Frecha, aye, Mr. Burke, aye, Mr. Ryan, aye and Mr. Salvie, aye.*

#### **Appoint Acting Police Chief**

Mr. Salvie explained that Sgt. Darren Thraen stated that he preferred not to be placed in the position of Acting Police Chief for more than three weeks. He will serve in this role for three weeks to allow the Town time to determine who might be considered for the next Chief of Police and to begin that process forward.

Mr. Salvie expressed his appreciation for the work Sgt. Thraen has conducted over the past four difficult days.

*Mr. Ryan moved to appoint Sgt. Darren Thraen as Acting Chief of the Stow Police Department, effective April 18, 2020 until May 13, 2020. Ms. Frecha seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously. Roll call vote: Ms. Frecha, aye, Mr. Burke, aye, Mr. Ryan, aye and Mr. Salvie, aye.*

Mr. Salvie stated that item #3 on the agenda, *Scheduling of an Executive Session at the Board of Selectmen's April 28, 2020 meeting to discuss whether and how to engage in actions, independent of any investigation by the State Police, regarding Rusty Marino*, was unnecessary at this time.

**Adjournment**

*At 7:24 p.m. Mr. Ryan moved to adjourn. Ms. Frecha seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously. Roll call vote: Mr. Burke, aye, Ms. Frecha, aye, Mr. Ryan, aye and Mr. Salvie, aye.*

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Trunfio, Executive Assistant

YouTube link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YPS57dRYIH8>

**Documents used at this meeting. Items can be found in the Selectmen's Office filed with meeting folder:**

Written statement from Selectmen  
Resignation letter dated 4/22/20 from Ralph Marino