

Policing in Hartland Meeting Minutes Wednesday October 11 5:30 PM

Recorded by Christine Knippenberg

Committee Attendees:

Mandi Potter, Tom Kennedy, Trace Tancreti, Christine Knippenberg, Lyndsay Perkins (zoom)

Absent: Robyn Mosher, Alan Beebe

Community Members:

Sherry Clarke, Curt Peterson (zoom)

Public Input:

1. Sherry Clarke summarized that the town does not have a mission statement about “public safety” on the website. Asked what is the role of the town constable and how does that work with any law enforcement efforts?” Would like to have a Public Safety Committee on a continuing basis.
2. Curt Peterson: discussed Barnard and Killington police department “oversight”. Barnard: State Police give annual presentation reporting on previous year to Selectboard. Killington: police chief attends all meetings and oversight done there.

Committee Discussion

Constable: Is an elected position. any town can have a constable, the amount of payment is discretionary. Reiterated currently town constable is working full-time for the Sheriff’s department. Constable budget could be rolled into overall available monies toward an expanded contracted police service going forward.

“Takeaway” impressions from community meeting:

1. Consensus was the community was looking to significantly increase budget and services.
2. Level 3 training seemed to be a preferred level of training.
3. Response time is very important when contracting a service.
4. Traffic control a very important issue to community.
5. Responsiveness to complaints needs to improve.
6. Concern about integration of services—using other community services in addition to policing, how to make it work seamlessly from the “user” end.
7. 24 hour access
8. Clarification that the public meeting was not to present the different options or services, rather to get input from the community regarding safety, level of policing, priority issues.

Summary information to make a recommendation:

1. Possibly offer “detail” hours to Windsor PD and Sheriff’s office. Discussion about how to implement a trial period and whether that would yield useful information about the different services.
2. Reviewed West Windsor contract with Windsor Police Department. 15-20 hours at \$104,000 for 2022-2024. Includes intermittent patrolling and access to 24 hour response.

3. Training levels in adjoining police/ Sheriff's department summarized: Windsor all level 3 except 1 who always rides with a Level 3 officer. Woodstock most level 3. Hartford all level 3. Sheriff's 12 have Level 3/10 have level 2
4. Level of Policing: mixed opinions on the best way to start a more intensified police service—either very strict to begin then relax as compliance increases, or the “warn once, then ticket” approach (e.g. more often used in Windsor). Concerns that without strong enforcement to start, town policing might be seen as “weak” while alternatively too heavy-handed an approach can be seen as over-reach where there has been little enforcement to date. Concluded that town cannot and should not direct how to do the policing, that is the job of whomever is contracted. Those services looking to get the contract should be specific about their level of policing and the town can then decide if that is a good fit.
5. Other non-personnel items: signage not on all streets by informal review. Speed carts affordable to extend traffic speed awareness and safety, grants available for purchase but applicants are specific official agencies (e.g. police departments) vs. town.

Summary of Recommendations:

1. Increase hours 40 hours proposed as a working number to build a budget for review. Rough estimate \$240,000 (current \$\$ allocated to constable propose shifting to this contract).
2. Service to include a mix of day and nighttime coverage, intermittent patrols, 24-hour emergency service. Use the budget of the constable.
3. 90% of officers are level 3 trained.
4. Policing services should be asked about the way they would be carrying out their policing.
5. Planning for future next steps should be included:
 - a. Suggest Selectboard appoint a group to research how to optimize community connections, to identify community resources. This was considered premature until there was a viable police service that could work with those resources.
6. Continue the safety and policing committee on an intermittent basis (bimonthly? Quarterly), to assess status and progress toward stated safety goals.

Meeting adjourned 6:50 pm