

Policing in Hartland Meeting Monday, August 14, 2023, 5:30 PM

Recorded by: Christine Knippenberg

Committee Attendees:

Trace Tancreti, Mandi Potter, Christine Knippenberg, Robyn Mosher (Teams), Lyndsie Perkins (Teams). Absent: Tom Kennedy & Alan Beebe

Public Attendees:

Ryan Palmer, Windsor County Sheriff's Department

Robert North, Sherry Clarke, Curt Peterson (Teams), James Dow (Teams)

Meeting was delayed due to Zoom equipment not working as it should. With assistance from town employee, Stacey Bradley, we were able to record the meeting via Teams, so that available members could attend online as well as in person.

1. Public comments:

- Question regarding sheriff department response to medical care, the availability, access to AED's?
- Questions about the process and timeline, overall charge of the policing committee.

2. Windsor County Sheriff's Department Sheriff's department:

Sheriff Palmer provided an overview of the current department, the types of services provided, issues encountered, current and future training, overall philosophy.

- Currently 25 employees 22 officers about ½ Level 2, ½ Level 3. Headquarters in Woodstock, officers respond to calls from a variety of locations, vs. coming from a central point. Hope to add a social worker, currently using VSP.

Training focus: a variety of training activities to address the varying needs of community (e.g., sign language/ de-escalation) Plans to send FT officers to police academy. Creating a positive work environment leads to positive interaction with the public.

- Community outreach important for public to have positive image of department, feel comfortable interacting and alerting to potential concerns. Important to be a part of community, trying to avoid a more "heavy-handed" image or approach.
- Serve 7 towns under contract, regional planning, approx. 60-80 hours a month, calls for service roughly 7am until 10:00 pm. Hoping to become a 24 hour agency.
- Limitations/ challenges: funding for staffing, equipment, training. Using additional funding resources: Federal grants for traffic enforcement (Click IT and Ticket). Medical emergencies: Currently building capacity to respond to medical calls, emergency first responder course, working to have purchase medical equipment (e.g. AED)
- For traffic enforcement, sees: a balance needed to address the issues and control traffic vs. simply writing tickets. Traffic carts, in Vermont simply flashing speed, not photographing license plate cameras. Impression is that the carts are not all that effective.

- When considering Response Time, Hartland is spread out and getting to many locations takes time. Hard to quantify current response time likelihood.
- Typical issues in small town that department addresses: neighbor disputes, speeding, theft, drug-related crime. Calls for service have increased when there is known consistent coverage. Side note: Hartland population more than Windsor, with twice the area to cover.
- Current policing concerns: rise of violent crime in the state. Trends are concerning specifically about drug use. Stressed importance of being proactive –keeping youth out of trouble, presenting a positive role model; a regular police presence as a preventative measure. Some discussion of known drug activity/dealing in Hartland as the limited policing is well known, vs. Windsor or Hartford.
- Discussion of Funding streams for VSP and Sheriff’s Department. VSP currently billing time and a half (contract represents an overtime detail), vs. straight time. Sheriff’s Dept. cost less. Current service provision model: providing a “floor” of service: dedicated patrol time, any complex issues billed separately to a cap. State police do continue to serve as a backup.
- 911 will connect to the correct service provider through dispatch. This involves a very specific set of questions before the call can be referred to the correct agency, which may create a delay. Different dispatchers and different departments take and refer calls.
- Were the Sheriff’s Department to provide services, would have a core group of officers serving the town, to be more familiar with the townspeople and issues.
- Questions/ Other issues discussed
 - How do the different agencies interplay in a coordinated manner, going forward?.
 - Need for community education about who to call in the event of an emergency. Town may need more information about who are the appropriate agencies (e.g. flooding to fire department). Appropriate use of 911.

3. Discussion regarding Areas of Importance

Reviewed the list from last meeting. Identified priority issues:

1. **Response time** as critical in safety and life and death situations, with **Safety** (esp. thinking of school-related issues)
2. **A well-trained police force**
3. **Community Policing as a proactive approach**
4. **Number of Police hours needed and wanted. How to determine what we need.**

Next meeting: August 28, 5:30 PM

Agenda: Identify policing needs

1. Compile Data from dispatching
2. Community input plan
 - Further Define top 3 areas
 - a. What is a good response time?

- b. What would we want for trained officers?
- c. What are the aspects of community policing that are essential?