

## Policing in Hartland Meeting Minutes Monday, August 28, 2023, 5:30 PM

Recorded by Christine Knippenberg

Committee Attendees:

Mandi Potter, Tom Kennedy, Trace Tancreti, Alan Beebe, Robyn Mosher, Christine Knippenberg

Absent: Lyndsie Perkins

Public Attendees:

Robert North, David Singer

### Public Comments:

There were no specific public comments. David Singer in an advisory capacity provided information on specific questions from the committee.

### Overview of the types of calls/services to the town

1. 18 months of calls from VSP were grouped into rough categories. Discussion over how the groupings were made, some limitations due to limited data, noting this does not completely represent the full extent of policing/safety needs in Hartland (e.g. that people may not call for help knowing current personnel shortages may mean little or delayed response time). How do these numbers reflect our needs. Some specifics of discussion included:
  - a. Of Motor Vehicle calls, 50% represent traffic stops. Discussion of who gets Ticketing revenue-- depends on the location of the incident and which statute the ticket is written to. If written under municipal ordinance, roughly 80% to the town, a percentage to personnel training. Currently no ordinances are written by the town.
  - b. Mental health issues are a significant concern, with the possibility of violent crime emerging from a mental health issue or crisis. Some discussion of whether drug issues should be included as mental health issues.
  - c. Does this data give us a full picture of policing needs? What might be missing? The challenge is that we may not be able to identify this until we actually have increased policing to see what happens to the number and types of calls.
  - d. Identifying the need for random patrolling as an effective means of providing a strong police presence as a deterrent, whether for traffic or drug or other crime issues.

### Defining priority areas: what might we in Hartland want for Response time, officer training, and community policing

- **Response Time/ Safety:** National average for response time 19 minutes, once the call is moved through dispatch (est. 5 minutes).
  - Discussion of how different agencies might address response time:
    1. Sheriff's Department has a plan keep 3 deputies on at a time spread out across their coverage area during service hours, then on call and VSP.
    2. Windsor has officers staffed 24 hours (staffing level not known).
    3. VSP likely similar response times to Windsor County Sheriffs.

4. Discussion about possibilities of a full-time police “department” in town. Suggested a comparable model might be Weathersfield with 1.5 FT officers. Norwich and Thetford offer a FT police department at much larger budget points. Negatives included location for department (needs holding cell), costs for cars/ outfitting officers/ equipment.
- **Training levels:** consensus that expectation should be officers have Level 3, and ideally be CIT certified or have crisis/de-escalation training.
  - **Community Policing:** having visibility in the community, creating a sense of being part of the community, being engaged with townspeople outside specific policing calls for service.

Timeline/ Content for what needs to be done to meet the October deadline for our recommendation to Selectboard

- Want to have a community meeting with enough time to consider public input as we make our recommendations.
- Next meeting: Wednesday sept 13 develop the presentation for public meeting.
  - Mandi will work on a slide presentation of our information gathering thus far
  - We will work on the presentation agenda/questions for public at this meeting.
- Public meeting suggested for September 27
- Hope to put together the final report by October 11.

Other:

1. Discussion of the budget/ outlay for constable services—could the Selectboard apply the \$\$ currently not used to add to our overall policing budget? Do we need a constable under any new proposed policing plan. Vermont League of Cities and Towns is a resource.
2. What level of enforcement to Hartlanders want?
3. How will the process move forward after the committee report? Consensus was that optimally the town identifies Hartland’s wants and needs (optimal response time, level of training desired, access to community policing) and then see what each of the possible policing services might be able to provide now/into the future. The importance of designing something for our town was emphasized.