

Police Advisory Meeting 9/22/14

Present: Nancy McVetty, John St. Martin, Chris St. Cyr, Jessie Wentworth, Tom McVetty, Don Mooney, John Tholl, Jay McCusker, Fran Gleason, Ron Sheltry, Anna Gilbody, Sharon Tupper

Meeting called at 6:40.

John St. Martin and Chris St. Cyr presented their report of Assessment and Recommendation. We as a town, have a staffing priority at the Patrolman level. As a town, department, and advisory committee, we have taken appropriate actions to insure that there has been no gap in police services to the citizens of Dalton. This has included the strong support of the NH State Police and the expressed support of neighboring town Police Departments.

Jay McCusker wanted it noted in the minutes that this board did not do away with the PD, they all quit except for 2 of the three sitting at the table. (John St. Martin and Chris St. Cyr).

Questions raised were, where are we going and what hours of coverage are required?

The presentation by the PD included 8 points used in their methodology.

- Meet with selectboard to begin a formal planning process
- Establish and meet with temporary police advisory committee
- Interview town personnel
- Interview PD employees
- Interview the chief
- Review policies and procedures
- Review department files
- Review evidence room, documentation and security

These 8 points have all been addressed.

One recommendation by the PD was the need for some sort of community involvement, as in a neighborhood watch program. This could be a very big part of the future of the Dalton PD. Due to our limited budget and ability to recruit trained police officers, this could help to expand resources. As the Dalton PD now stands, we consist of 3 officers, State Police and neighboring towns assistance as available. This is working well and has been garnering positive comments from State Police and neighboring towns. Our reputation has improved with this system.

There has been no increase in crime since May. In fact the statistics show a slight decrease, perhaps due to the more visible presence of the State Police.

Discussion then centered on how to staff for the future. A suggestion was made to reach out to neighboring communities to see if some of their trained officers would be interested in part time work. It has been proven over and over through the years that training our own people pulled from the community does not work. We spend thousands of dollars and then as soon as they are certified they leave Dalton to work in a bigger department which offers full time hours. The consensus was that Dalton is not looking for a full time PD, but looking for some part time coverage which will fall within the budget that we are able to provide. Offering to train and then asking officers to sign a contract to not leave, does not work and is not legally enforceable. This has been tried in other departments and has ended in costly lawsuits which the towns end up losing.

Discussion moved on to how to get the word out to people about what has been accomplished and the need for more concerned citizens to become involved in a solution. A suggestion was made to create a flyer to distribute to educate the public on what has been done so far.

A suggestion was then brought forward by the PD to hire an administrator for 2-3 hours weekly to be the "face" of the PD. Someone who would have regular hours (such as every Monday night) to file, do paperwork, hand out permits, handle phone calls/complaints, etc. This person would need to have all of the necessary background checks and the bar would need to be set very high as this would be the person who the public would interact with on a weekly basis. This is going to be brought as a suggestion to the selectboard on Monday the 29th.

Chris St. Cyr is working on historical information as far as where the department has been over the years with command and officer numbers.

John St. Martin would like it noted in the minutes that the cruiser has been refurbished and returned to a full state of readiness. It was also stated that the 3 Dalton PD officers will be qualifying this next week and that they have begun implementing the recommendations of this committee.

The next meeting is scheduled for October 20, 2014 at 6:30. The committee and the Dalton PD would like to encourage any and all citizens to become involved in this very important work, and to educate themselves as to where the PD stands at this time and help to decide the direction it will take in the future.