

Minutes of the Select Board Meeting, April 28, 2022

Hilary Weeks and Patrick Williamson were present; Rebecca Coletta was not in attendance. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. The minutes of April 12, 2022 were accepted with a one sentence revision to the 5th paragraph.

Police Chief Report

The March Police Log was read by Chief Litchfield. The log is OK for publication in the Plainfield Post, but is not easily condensed for space consideration. A 28-page report will be scanned and uploaded to the Police Department web page. Neither children's names nor the term "domestic violence" can be published; Street names can be used, but not numerical addresses. Officers are working with Chief Perkins, Cummington, to become proficient with the new computer system.

Police Survey

The Plainfield Police Working Group compiled and submitted an updated report with 8 recommendations gleaned from the information from the survey: 1. Safety-speeding, 2. Weekend coverage, 3. Departmental funding, 4. Police logs, 5. Off-Duty Detail, 6. Departmental technology, 7. Plan for POST compliance, 8. Shared services, (Complete report attached). Patrick expressed his appreciation with the recommendations adding the need for a reasonable way to manage departments that is helpful, but not clumsy or destructive.

FY23 Budget

The FY23 Budget approved by the Finance Committee was submitted to the Board. Chair Bob Silberberg stated the Finance Committee's recommendation to lower the Police Salary budget was based on its consideration of residents and the impact on the tax rate. Member Roberta Wooldridge spoke to the split vote on the matter referring to discussion in previous years when there was no plan and officers were needed. She added Plainfield, by its geographical location, is often "left out" and too far removed from services, events, etc. Cummington is closer to the Northampton barracks making state police response time quicker, the same being true with Ashfield being closer to the Shelburne barracks. Roberta opined on regionalization and shared services. She stated the need to move forward, speaking

to the same responsibilities required of police departments, large or small. She believes if Plainfield was faced with hiring a new chief that no one would do the job for minimum pay. The chief should be fairly compensated while issues/concerns are being addressed. Patrick spoke about what makes good sense and what the Town can afford. While he takes Roberta's comments seriously he is uncomfortable re-arguing the matter at this point.

Off-Duty Detail for police officers was discussed. Kimberly Longey expressed her concerns on the hidden costs to the Town.

In regards to the police budget Chief Litchfield brought up the \$15.00 and \$16.00 hourly wage for officers in 2018 and 2019. He stated he has built up the departmental budget slowly and referenced the 6 months he spent discussing shared services with both Savoy and Hawley. In terms of scheduling and weekend coverage, he reiterated Monday through Friday coverage from 6:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. is data driven leaving five hours for Saturdays; The Chief answers calls on Sunday if he is in town. He believes police salaries should be equal to highway salaries.

Hilary moved to accept the FY23 budget as recommended by the Finance Committee. The motion, seconded by Patrick, was approved.

Other Business

Hilary moved to accept VFIS renewal quote #209347 in the amount of 17,656 for firefighters/police officers injured on duty coverage for FY23. The motion, seconded by Patrick, was approved. The policy increases medical coverage from \$100,000 to \$150,000.

Hilary moved to pay KP Law invoice #135185 in the amount of \$117.00. The motion was seconded by Patrick and was approved.

The Board has not yet received word from KP Law on the proposed bylaw changes.

FRCOG bids for #2 heating oil, gasoline, and diesel fuel will be opened on June 6, 2022. The Board will review the bids and determine whether or not to go with a fixed price at their June 7th meeting.

Jerry Little attended the April 9th 2nd Annual Selectmen's Association meeting suggesting future attendance by a member of the Board.

Elaine Sidney asked about speed humps on town roads.

Correspondence

Notice of Municipal Hearing Officer training was received.

The Board received a quote of \$14,759.00 for the town's VOI (Voice Over Internet) telephone system conversion. The quote was not received in time for the May 7th Annual Town Meeting which will require a Special Town Meeting.

Other mail was reviewed.

Warrants were signed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula J. King
Administrative Secretary