

Town of Groton  
Select Board Work Session Minutes  
April 16, 2019

**In attendance: John Rescigno, Tony Albert and Sara Smith (Administrative Assistant - AA)**

**Absent: Ron Madan**

**John called the meeting to order at 4:00pm.**

***Meeting with June Garneau- All Hazard Mitigation Plan Update (John, Tony, Sara, Gina, Dave, Lynn, Ruth, Mike Lemieux, Bill Oakley, Patti Oakley and Executive Councilor)***

Things to follow up on from last meeting:

- Sara sent June the pay information for herself and Bubba
- Sara created a page on website for emergency information
- Sara looked into NFIP brochures and she has ordered some copies and put the links on the website for two helpful brochures
- Sara found the Maxam response plan and sent the information to June
- We have a new EMD and Deputy EMD which are Bill and Patti Oakley

Today's topics:

- Review from the last few meetings to bring everyone up to speed
- Reviewed Table 7.1 that we completed last meeting to make sure all looked okay.
- Begin working on Table 8.1, Potential Mitigation Strategies & the STAPLEE
- Begin working on Table 9.1, Mitigation Action Items

Homework:

- Look into NIMS, ICS and Web EOC Training for new officials and emergency operations team. Tony is going to work with John Fisher to conduct a training for us.
- Review Materials sent by MAPS
- Digital photos- contributions welcome
- Storm Water Maintenance Plan should be developed at some point
- Work on culvert spreadsheet- just need to start on this- the first tab needs to be done before the plan is completed which is the culverts in needs of action
- June also reminded everyone to make sure that they track all projects, time reading materials, etc. on the blue sheet.

Upcoming meetings are:

- May 7, 2019 at 4:00pm
- July 2, 2019 at 4:00pm (last meeting)

***Meeting with Future of the Police Department Committee (John, Tony, Frank Harris, Jim Joyce, Jeremy Elder, Nick Blodgett, Norm Willey, Miles Sinclair)***

John mentioned that they have met today to discuss the future of the Police Department. John mentioned that the Select Board are not against a Police Department but it is a large cost which is something that needs to be looked at if the money is being used in the best way or if there are better options. They are looking at what would be best for the Town and what are some things that would entice someone to work in the Town which is why it is nice to have members of law enforcement provide feedback.

Frank Harris said the market for Police Chief is high. A full-time chief is expensive and can run anywhere between \$60-80,000 a year and he feels it isn't needed. He said money will entice them but we don't have the money in Groton. Miles said when he first moved in to town the PD budget was \$27,000 and people were complaining then. That was at the 1998 town meeting. He pointed out that the entire budget didn't even cover the wages for a patrolman in Derry never mind benefits or anything else. It was agreed there are areas that could be shaved out of the budget but we will still need to be willing to pay to get good people.

Frank said we have more time to look at this and we need to look at what the town needs whether that be a part time chief and a few part time guys. He said EJ was making around \$50,000.00 which wasn't a lot of money but it is what the Town could do but not everyone will work for that. The Police Budget is \$107,000 but we could look at a few guys for that amount and they could be retired guys that all of us know and have a decent reputation who is invested in the Town and someone who is respected by law enforcement because if you get a chief that people don't like you won't get anyone to work with them but if you get one that people do like who is a good person it could bring in other good people. State Police can augment what you can't cover. Frank said that for the retired guys they will have a certification but it does lapse. Miles said it is 30 days now, it used to be three years. Nick mentioned you can get a waiver from the academy for up to a year or something along those lines. One thing to keep in mind is that we will have to pay them more money but if it is a part time working and administrative Chief. You want someone who is decent, not the first person that shows up, so you are more apt to get someone who will stay.

The prosecution cost is a lot of money but there is some concern because there are not a lot of people that are prosecutors or who want to go to prosecutor school or are qualified to be a prosecutor. Then on top of it, it could wipe out the hours for the week or year prosecuting a motor vehicle ticket. The amount Groton pays for the prosecution is for every agency that they have. Miles said part of what happens is when others drop out of the prosecution it increases the financial burden for everyone who remains. It may be worth looking into talking with Marcie Hornick who is the County attorney to see if there are any options there.

Tony asked if we need to have a Chief to have the mutual aid agreement. It was explained you just need an officer in charge. Miles stated that if there are people in the department there will always be someone in charge whether you choose to call them a Chief or not but he will be the head of the department.

John asked in everyone's opinion how close should the person live. It would be ideal to have someone with no more than 30-minute commute but it was agreed that this may not happen considering where we live. Some Police Departments have no limit but this is not what we want. Nick mentioned that if you look at the surrounding Towns, they have officers that live in Plymouth but also some that live in Laconia, which is 45 minutes. However, it was agreed that it may be best to post it is preferred to be within a reasonable distance to the Town but not set a limit so that if we find a quality person but they live outside of the 30-minutes we are not held back.

John said that the Sheriff mentioned that we are looking for a needle in a haystack and we can be in the same situation in a few years. It would be ideal to get a retired officer. Nick said one thing to keep in mind is that that the retired officers they are still under the PT requirement. They can only have the waiver for so long and if they cannot pass the PT, they will not get their certificate, unless they are grandfathered. Miles understanding is that if you leave law enforcement there is a 30-day window for you to maintain your certification. He said he understands that the day you leave you lose your grandfathered status for the PT test so if you are looking to come back you need to meet the requirements.

John asked what they mean by maintain your certification. It was explained that every police officer that works in New Hampshire has to be certified by Police Standards and Training which is going through the academy and

passing. Prior to 2000 the PFT (physical fitness test) which is run, jump, sit ups, push-ups, etc. These are referred to as cooper standards. If you are on before 2000 wouldn't have to do the PFT every three years as long as you don't break service but after you do. If you leave and it's been two years, you may get a waiver but you still have to pass the PFT. Miles mentioned that it is the run that people have trouble with. Nick said the sit-ups are a problem too. They aren't difficult if people stay in shape.

Frank said he feels the town needs a part time Chief who should make between \$25-\$30/hr. and if you post that amount then you will get someone decent. It will add up fast so they would have to stay within a certain number of hours like 20 hours a week. The Town can give a list of responsibilities and expectations. We should start with writing out language of what we want. We should include that they must be certified (full or part time) along with the pay rate once that is decided and the hours of an average of 20 hours and see who applies.

John asked if they will still get their retirement if they are working part time. Norm said that you can't work more than 25 hours a week for retirees. Miles said there is a bill in front of the legislature now that addresses this.

John asked if a part time chief would have vested interest in the Town. Frank said it depends on the person. If you get someone who is a decent person then they would be. Miles said there are a lot of people that can't let the job go, they love what they do and they may be interested.

John asked what we should pay a part time patrolman. They said around \$20 maybe but they recommended to check with other towns. Norm said he thinks Rumney pays \$22/hr., Hebron pays \$25/hr. and they are part time but have full time certifications. John mentioned that we started around \$17/hr. before and we were not getting anyone so we did increase it last time.

In the past we have been burned by paying for training and then they leave. Everyone agreed that we need to hire someone who is already certified so we do not pay for the training. It was agreed to start with a Police Chief that is part time and then have them feel out the Town and decide where we should go from there as far as what we need for other officers. It is more about the presence of the cruiser in the town, having someone to get permits from or to call for complaints, etc. Miles agreed that we should start with a part time chief but down the road we should look at a part time office so there is someone to fill in if anything happens to the Chief.

John asked how long it takes to process paperwork for a ticket. It depends on what it is but may take an additional 15-20 minutes.

John asked where it is best to advertise. A few recommendations were NH Police Chiefs Association, Police One, Police Academy, Sheriffs Association and NHMA. Sara will be reach out to Primex and see what their recommendations are.

Nick asked if we reached out to State Police for patrols like we did the Sheriff's Department. It was explained that we did but there were issues with the contract so it didn't work out and now the Town voted that they didn't want to do contracted services. Nick wanted to drive home that State Police will always respond just as they would when we have a Chief that is not on duty. Frank said there would be but there wouldn't be follow up; etc.

Frank, Jim, Miles, and Norm would be interested if there is an oral board during the hiring process. The Select Board stated there would be since they are not police officers and don't know what exactly to look for. These meeting and the oral board are very helpful.

For a recap: Sara will reach out to Primex to consult with them about the position and we will look at other towns close by to see what they are paying. We will then post the position as a certified part time chief that will handle administrative, patrol, and all duties. It was agreed we may want to be flexible with the distance and the Select Board should be flexible with the schedule.

Norm asked if anyone has come in to inventory the items and look at the cruiser and equipment. It was explained this was done right when EJ left but no one has done it since then but when we hire someone we will. Norm believes the Sheriff's Department said they would be willing to assist the Town with this.

The Select Board thanked everyone for coming and appreciated their time and feedback.

**Having no other business to conduct, John motioned to adjourn at 7:04pm, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Smith  
Administrative Assistant