



Selectmen's Informational Forum
October 19, 2011 – 6:00 PM – Academy Hall

Selectman Ken Ross-Raymond, Chair	Present
Selectwoman Karen Sheldon	Present
Selectman Pete Ballou	Present
Town Administrator Margaret Warren	Present
Administrative Assistant Kathie Downes	Present

Visitors: see sign in sheet attached with original summary on file.

Chairman Ross-Raymond called meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Meeting recorded by citizen Kathleen Doyle and BOS.

Chairman Ross-Raymond opened the informational forum explaining they are holding this forum to get insight from town residents. A survey has also been sent to town residents with request for response by November 1st. Ross-Raymond began with a brief synopsis of Board of Selectmen progress in exploring various options regarding police services for the Town of Salisbury. These options include advertising/interviewing for part time police chief (one candidate from out of state recently interviewed), possible contracting with Merrimack County Sheriff's Department for police services, and possible contracting for police services with neighboring towns (general discussion with Webster officials with tentative cost being \$60,000 for part-time coverage). For the past year Salisbury has relied on the State Police for police services. Our current police budget is approximately \$57,000.

Ross-Raymond also noted that today he received some information from State Police (SP) regarding the possibility of a program where SP provides a trooper to the town for hours requested at a specific detail rate. Board of Selectmen will look into this option in more depth.

Board opened up for discussion / comments from the floor. The following is what was brought to the floor:

- What kinds of activities are happening that requires police assistance?
Kinds of activities have not changed – since January to present – SP have responded to 159 calls
- If we had officer that was within area – some patrolling could be done with bulk of time being allotted for on call availability. Even if decision is to stay with present of depending on SP coverage – don't feel money should be eliminated from budget.
- Perhaps people are less hesitant to call SP – for non-emergency issues – where by time police can respond no longer a problem (such as drag racing over new bridge)
- Town has been recruiting for police chief for over year – what is it that isn't getting applicants – is it salary.

Town has contracted with LGC to handle the recruitment process – and Selectmen end up with final recommendations. LGC has suggested we be more flexible re salary. Small towns just cannot afford full time police dept.

- Have called SP twice – one for someone banging on door after midnight and took 25 min for SP to get there. Trooper apologized – stretched thin. Second time for obvious scam call and SP arrived before caller came but car left when saw the cruiser in driveway. Issue being can't always get to call in a timely manner because they cover such a wide area.
- In town in VT we had constables – who got paid for going to calls.
- Where I lived before the towns did not have police but were covered by county police the towns. Salisbury did have county coverage before but problem was County really wanted to get out of the business. Not sure what is the best option but most efficient is use County. With part time police – Town still has to depend on other coverage during off hours.
- As a former selectman I feel the ideal candidate is a retired police officer.
The one candidate we interviewed fits into that category.
- What is the hold up on getting a solution to police coverage.
Board is still looking at all options – getting citizens to share thoughts is part of that process. Surveys due back by 11/1.
- Would this person be moving to this community? For urgent / emergency service – SP fine but it would be nice to have someone local that could handle smaller (dog complaints) issues.
- If hired police (full time or part time) can we dictate hours we want coverage.
- Is the SP program something that will be happening in near future?
Some towns have it in place already.
- Nice to have own part time police but not practical anymore – no one stays for any length of time and then need to start all over to recruit.
In past 20 years Salisbury has had 7 part time police chiefs.
- It is nice to have local coverage for the preventative stuff – senior luncheon – self defense course, etc. that we had with previous chief.
There are plus' and minus' no matter which way we go. Neighborhood watches might be something to consider.
- Is there a tentative contracted price for SP coverage?
This is just something we are looking into at this time.
- Does BOS have a timeline of when a decision will be made?
BOS would like to make decision by end of year.
- It seems that possibly using SP program might be a longer term contract then contracting with surrounding police depts – to me SP sounds like a more secure program.
Preliminary discussion with Webster did indicate contract would have to be voted on by both towns at Town Meetings and probably be yearly.

Selectman Ballou remarked how glad he is to see so many people here tonight and the Board is trying to keep an open mind in this issue and the survey is a working tool.

Board thanked everyone for participating tonight and for their input tonight and BOS will be reviewing the surveys along with this information to come up with a decision on how to proceed and whatever is decided any option will have a better chance to work if we work together.

Also as a FYI – BOS will be speaking with Chief of Police of Temple & Greenville where they shared police services.

Session closed at 6:30 PM

Respectfully submitted:

Kathie Downes
Municipal Office Assistant

Final