

**MEETING TO HELP DEFINE THE HINESBURG COMMUNITY'S GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
FOR LOCAL POLICE SERVICES**

Wednesday, January 3, 2007

Summary of Comments

Comments from Small Group Discussion

Participants' responses to questions posed by the Selectboard:

1. *Are the existing services of the police department meeting the community's needs?*

- It's difficult to know what's the "right" level of policing.
- Not enough police visibility
- Stress on officers
- Current level of coverage seems appropriate
- Want more night coverage
- Concern re cost of expanding services
- Don't want to go back to relying on the State Police
- Miss seeing local police on private roads
- We should work to minimize officer turnover by creating good working conditions: we get back what we put in
- Comfort in seeing police; nice presence
- I feel safe; don't need to be personally aware of police presence
- Not enough services to prevent burglaries and drug crimes
- Stagger shifts to cover more night hours. Don't make info re hours not covered available to the public. It's common knowledge that the police are off duty after 11:00 PM
- Don't spread existing staff too thin.
- Coordination between police, fire and highway crew is great. Keep this!
- Need info as to whether we're better off because we have local service. How do we compare to Charlotte?
- I appreciate the police and what they do

2. *Are there additional services that are important for our community?*

- Increase police presence and visibility
- Faster response for health emergencies (majority of officers are EMT certified)
- More traffic control, especially for rush hour and on 4th of July; use the radar machine
- Additional staff and hours
- Some night coverage
- Increased officer training
- Listen to what officers need: cooperation between officers and comp time
- Provide police w/ the hours they need to provide services
- Drug services
- Remedial officer at CVU
- Need positive attitude about youth
- Increase presence in schools
- Emergency Preparedness Plan
- More night time policing
- Explore ways to increase office efficiency—e.g. computer speed
- Preventive and proactive presence in more rural areas—more officers to conduct random drive-thrus

- Neighborhood Watch
- With more sidewalks, more patrols will be needed
- 45 minute response time for State Police isn't adequate
- We need more self-policing
- Provide info re what the department does that doesn't show up on the incident reports (lock out assistance, house checks, school programs, EMS calls, info calls)
- Want to know more about what businesses think about going after bad checks. Is this a priority?

3. Are there services that can be eliminated?

- Speeding tickets
- Canine training
- Let the department set its priorities
- Are lock out services needed?
- Keep NOT doing animal control
- Consider not checking vacant homes, or charging a fee for this service, or getting neighbors to check
- Consider using volunteers or others for EMS calls and other "non-police" services
- Still good for officers to have EMS training
- Police are ready and able to respond to EMS calls
- Ask Chris to develop a list of non-police services the department provides
- Eliminate assistance to other towns
- Would be helpful to have info re a typical officer's day.
- Emulate Shelburne and Williston and publish police logs in the paper.

4. Is the "community policing" philosophy important for our community?

- Works! It's terrific!
- Community connection important: e-mail system, caring attitude
- Small town atmosphere important for children; children are more comfortable with community officers
- Community officers are "in touch" and accessible to the people
- Community involvement to help officers
- Work with other police forces
- Like that we are helping other communities
- I don't want the police to be buddies, I want them there with a badge and a gun; I don't know about the "Teddy Bear" part.
- Police treating people with respect and courtesy is super important
- Not good that I didn't respect the police growing up.
- Authority of police is important, and is diminished by community policing
- Police for traditional police services.
- I like the e-mails to look out for certain cars

5. The Police Department is proposing an increase in staffing of 1.7 officers. This increase would represent an increase in the budget of approximately \$105,000 (approximately \$45 increase in the tax bill for a \$200,000 property). Do you support this level of increase?

Yes: 23

No: 7

Please note that not all groups voted. The numbers above are a tally of those participants

who clearly indicated that they supported or opposed this proposal.

Comments:

- Where does it end?
- More info needed re how the department would use the money, and what services aren't currently offered, and the consequences
- Maximize value for \$ invested
- Support the department and its normal rate of increase; we don't have professional expertise; we elect and hire people to make these decisions.
- Key indicator: we're losing officers
- Support salary increases –longevity is critical to community policing; we don't want to be a training ground for officers.
- 1 – 2% increase is a no-brainer. Let's do it.
- Young and old people may find this a hardship
- The Chief was making a leap w/ the cigarettes!
- Take an ax to the other part of the pie
- Don't increase the police budget at the expense of education
- Would support an increase after this meeting, but NOT this coming one. Support reasonable increase this time w/ good explanation. Grow by small increments.
- Should have a police commission or board to review police department
- Intermediary growth between status quo and 1.7 officers?
- Seek monetary contribution from Chittenden South School District?
- Additional officers and salary increases are important
- I've changed my mind because of this discussion
- They're being worked to death
- I'd rather pay officers more than hire more people; value of high performance and skilled officers
- Clarify what we would get for \$105,000.
- Concerned re prospect of new police building in the future
- Doing #5 and 6 in one year is too much

6. ***The police department currently provides 16-hours of coverage, with the Vermont State Police providing essential police services for the remaining 8 hours. To provide 24-hour coverage by our local police department would represent an increase in the budget of approximately \$385,000 (approximately \$166 increase in the tax bill for a \$200,000 property). Do you support this level of increase?***

Yes: 0

No: 9

Please note that not all groups voted. The numbers above are a tally of those participants who clearly indicated that they supported or opposed this proposal.

Comments:

- Not sure we can afford it
- Don't support unless something else is cut
- A VERY significant increase; like the current mix of local and State Police coverage
- Need more coverage than we have now
- What are the most important hours to cover?
- Discuss other options
- 12:00 to 3:00 AM coverage not needed
- Need overlapping shifts for officer support and communication
- Keep coverage unpredictable, so criminals don't know schedule
- Make 24 coverage a long-term goal, but don't go to it now
- Don't want to lose State Police coverage at night
- Want info from State Police re number of calls they receive from Hinesburg 11:00 PM to 7:00 AM
- 24 hour coverage is worthwhile, if it can be accomplished w/o a tax increase
- Salary increases and comp time pay are more important than 24 hour coverage
- Explore on call options

Comments by Speakers Who Addressed the Full Group

- Is a regional approach in which several towns share resources a possibility?
- Doug did a great job, but we need more info
- Not much time between now and Town Meeting to figure this out
- One can get complacent living in a rural area; when you need a police officer, you don't want to have to wait. 25 minutes is too long to wait for a response from out of town
- 1 – 2% budget increase is worth it to have a fully-staffed department.
- Is there any way to compensate Chris when he's called out at night?
- What other options are there other than having an officer on duty 24/7?