

1 **SELECTBOARD MEETING approved**

2 February 7, 2024

3 Attending the meeting; Merrily Lovell, Mike Loner, Dennis Place, Paul Lamberson, Todd Odit, Joy Dubin
4 Grossman, Nick Baker, Paul Bishop, Jennifer Decker, Diane Barber, Anne Sullivan

5 Attending remotely; Maggie Gordon, Margaret McNurlan, Carl Bohlen, Aline Santiago, Justin
6 Beauchemin, Katie Charboneau, Erik Short

7 Meeting called to order at 6:00 p.m. via zoom

8 Agenda Additions or Deletions

9 none

10 Public Comment

11 none

12 Approve Minutes of 1/17 and 1/25

13 Mike moved to approve the minutes of 1/17. Seconded by Paul and approved with 5 yes votes

14 Mike moved to approve the minutes of 1/25. Seconded by Paul and approved with 5 yes votes.

15 Selectboard Forum

16 Merrily said that Richmond reached out to the Hinesburg Police Committee to set up another meeting.

17 Maggie announced the Town Common Committee has received a \$30,000 grant for tree planting and
18 pruning of trees in Creekside. Half of the trees will be planted this year and the second half next year.

19 Public Safety Strategic Plan Presentation and Public Hearing

20 The complete presentation can be found on the Town web site.

21 Paul Bishop, of CGR, said the purpose of the plan was to gather information on what the vision for Public
22 Safety should be going forward. He shared the report noting the key findings and actions going forward.
23 Paul B talked about community meetings as well as the survey for gathering information.

24 He specifically reviewed the statistics for fire and police.

25 Paul L asked if Paul B felt that covering Richmond is stressing the Police Department. Paul B said there is
26 an increase in the number of calls with adding in Richmond coverage. They looked at Hinesburg alone
27 and Hinesburg with Richmond and in both cases, there are more hours of police officers available than
28 are needed to respond to the calls.

29 Jennifer Decker asked if crime increased during the time there were fewer police officers. Paul B said
30 they did not look into that. Jennifer asked about the indication for the need for more review. Paul B said
31 there were a number of policies they looked at that appear to be appropriate. He said the suggestion is
32 to regularly review the policies. Jennifer said there is nothing in the report about police accountability.
33 Paul B replied that in the State of Vermont there is a State Board that investigates and oversees any use

of force that is reported. In addition, there is the existing structure in Hinesburg of the Selectboard and Town Manager that oversees the Police Department.

Jennifer said she did not see the list of priorities from residents in the report. She noted for her a priority is the importance of the police being aware of white supremacy, nationalism and fascism spreading across the country. She is not aware if our police are investing these types of things. She said somewhere in the report it refers to people who are dissatisfied as minorities, non-white, or BIPOP. She said these are broad terms and encourages referring to people using terms they want to be identified as. Regarding income she wonders if with 88% of survey responders making more than \$50,000 a year if it this is representative of poor and low-income people in the community.

Paul B said the survey skews a little bit older and wealthier than the population of Hinesburg, educational attainment was representative and well matched geographically.

Jennifer questions the police contract with Richmond without having public input on it. She said the police grinch, and easter bunny and Christmas celebrations are culturally exclusive which make the police look like fun. She does not consider the police to be fun and there are a significant number of people living in our community that are uncomfortable with the police. Paul L said he acknowledges there are people uncomfortable with police but he is proud of the police building comfort and being out in the community.

Jennifer said she supports more resources going to the fire department. Jennifer said she shared information with Joy and Mike to give to the DEIB regarding the racial justice alliance. She feels we need an accountability board for the actions of the police and strongly is against having extra police positions.

Anne Sullivan said she was a member of one of the focus groups, she thought it was excellent and said in going through the report she feels the things she said were taken into account. She feels it is an excellent report. She noted her area of expertise is mental health and is concerned the arrangement with the Howard Center has not worked out well. She noted she and her husband recently had to go to the police department concerning something that occurred and said they were treated well and it was a reassuring experience. Merrily noted the fact that we are having problems with the Howard Center does not mean we are giving up on a mental health component, the Board is looking for something that will work.

Margaret McNurlan addressed having some sort of forum where individuals from the community can raise issues. Currently we all use FPF and a lot of times some of the information is not always accurate. It would be nice to have somewhere to go for information such as the incident at the school with the gun, how was it handled?

Margaret asked how we compare with other municipalities our size. She knows of a bunch of communities with only 1 police officer. Was Hinesburg ranked with other similar size communities in the strategic plan. Paul B said there are many communities the size of Hinesburg that do not have a police force and rely on the Vermont State Police. If Hinesburg never had a police force the State police would patrol the community. Since we have a police force the State does not want to cover us. It would be an interesting conversation to have with the State police. Looking at size, places with police departments and less than 10,000 residents in the Northeast the average is 2.8 officers per 1000 residents. In Hinesburg that figure is 1.3 officers per 1000.

Carl Bohlen said he read the report, feels it is well written and has a lot of information. He asked what's next as he has some suggestions of things that could be included or added to the report. He asked if there is time after tonight to get feedback to Todd. Merrily said the purpose of this public hearing is to hear what people think of the report. Carl said addressing what was just commented on there are a lot of towns in Vermont with no police departments and they get coverage from the State police. What happens in those communities that are covered on a somewhat infrequent basis, not 20 hours a day or 24/7 coverage. What is making them less safe than Hinesburg with our police coverage. He feels the data we have dealing with incidents is not sufficient, all incidents are not created equal. How is time spent in terms of hours and which incidents are more dangerous and critical for a police officer to show up. The report has budget and actual expenditure numbers. He thinks it would be helpful to have staffing numbers in the same timeframe and revenue. It would be helpful to have a definition section to clarify some of the terminology. If patrol means they are actually in their car 24/7 patrol is different than 24/7 on duty. He wonders if respondents answer on this would have been the same if everyone understood the cost to go that route. Carl would like to see a committee of volunteers to put together the data on calls. He totally supports the regional approach with Richmond, two towns are good would three towns be better.

Consider Approval of Town Highway Mileage Certificate

Mike moved to approve the Town Highway Mileage Certificate. Seconded by Paul and approved with 5 yes votes.

Town Manager Report

- The energy assessment of the Town Hall will be done on 3/19
- Bids for the ww project open on 2/27
- The audit has been finalized
- Update on the sidewalk project is that Don Weston Excavating is disputing the Town resident engineer's final quantities and payment. Todd talked with the attorney and lacking substantiation by Don so we will likely deny it.
- A proposal will be coming to the Selectboard regarding the Affordable Housing Committee ARPA fund request as they now have a possible project that could use funding.
- The Town Hall roof is 95% complete

Approve Warrants and Payroll

Merrily moved to approve the warrants, including payroll, signed by herself and Maggie as submitted by the Town Treasurer. Seconded by Paul and approved with 5 yes votes.

Adjourn

Mike moved to adjourn at 7:47 p.m. Seconded by Merrily and approved with 5 yes votes.

Respectfully submitted,

111 Valerie Spadaccini, clerk of the Board

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