

Police Study Group (PSG) – November 8, 2021 5:30 pm Virtual / Hybrid meeting

Attending members: Select Board members: Melissa Makepeace-O'Neil, Chair; Rita Farrell
Town Administrator, ex-officio member: Becky Torres,
Acting Chief, Shutesbury Police Dept, (SPD): Kristin Burgess,
Personnel Board member: Melody Chartier,
Finance Committee member: Susie Mosher,
Community at large members: Cheryl Hayden, Mike Vinskey, Mary Jo Johnson
General Public: Rachel Schwab-Rehorka, Susan Rice, Kate McConnell, Ria Windcaller, Steve Dise, Guy Devito, Walter Tibbetts

The meeting convened at 5:35 pm

Review agenda: Noted Public Comments item missing from agenda, Melody Chartier needs to leave meeting at 7PM, Melissa Make-Peace O'Neil needs to leave at 7:30PM

Public Comment:

Ria Windcaller had difficulty accessing the last meeting while on the road. Could not identify herself so due to Zoom bombing problems she was removed from the meeting. In the future Becky can receive messages from the Town Administrator email townadmin@shutesbury.org or call her at 413 259 1214 to be let back into the meeting.

Rachel Schwab Rehorka would like to know when publicity issues will be placed on the agenda to be addressed. She says many citizens are unaware of the PSG work.

MJ: PSG videos are on the Shutesbury.org website.

BT: The PSG videos are at <https://shutesbury.org/police>

Minutes:

Minutes of 9/29/21 approved, minutes of 10/28/21 approved as amended

Susie Mosher asked for the task of writing up the minutes to be shared among PSG members that are willing. Mike Vinskey will take a turn.

Review proposed public survey:

The document 'Shutesbury Police Study Group Survey Draft' was screen shared.

CH gave an overview of the first draft of the survey questions. CH, MJ and MC were the subcommittee working on the survey. Surveys reviewed in developing the questions included one from Montague, MA; one from the US Dept of Justice; one from the Fairfax County Police Department; and one from Franklin, TN. This draft had seven questions. The subcommittee felt the last two questions required more discussion from the PSG. The subcommittee attempted to keep the wording neutral, and tried to keep responses all inclusive.

Each question was reviewed, generally, one by one. Specific concerns and suggestions were left to the subcommittee to record and consider.

General concerns expressed included perceived bias in the questions as well as toward the process the PSG is trying to pursue.

Not having an understanding and common definition of various policing options and especially community policing. This causes the PSG to be unsure of their direction which causes the survey to be disjointed.

Questions raised as to what the survey is attempting to find out. Is it what do the police do? What do people want the police to do? How best to provide the people with the policing they want?

Concern that the PSG needs to formulate its exploration of options and research to remain within the constraints of what the Select board has determined is acceptable policing for Shutesbury.

An idea to have a listening session prior to distributing a survey was discussed.

The subcommittee will incorporate comments, suggestions, and concerns into the next draft. PSG determined it is acceptable for members to email directly to CH additional comments and suggestions. No date was established for the next subcommittee meeting or a timeline for further discussion on the next draft of the survey.

Review last two structures, regionalization and shared chief: not accomplished at this meeting. Will need to be rescheduled to later meeting date.

Next meeting: November 15, 2021 at 5:30PM.

Meeting adjourned at 7:27PM

Minute taker: Mike Vinskey

Documents used: Shutesbury Police Study Group Survey Draft (Seven Questions)