

Police Study Group (PSG) – November 15, 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, (Absent)
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, Tim Logan, Stephen Sullivan, Christopher Footit

The meeting convened at 5:36 pm

Review agenda: Changed agenda to hold Public Comment prior to Review Minutes. MV had difficulty receiving the recording of the last meeting in a timely manner and asked if it is possible to use the "record" button on the Zoom website to create a recording. BT will send future recordings right away after the meetings.

Public Comment:

Christopher Footit wanted to go on record of supporting the police department. He stated Kristin has been exceptional dealing with the community. He wants to keep the chief here and maintain things the way they are.

Rachel Schwab Rehorka thanked the committee for the work they are doing. She stated the police provide a critical essential service. She is looking forward to the discussion of the survey draft.

Minutes:

Minutes of 11/08/21 approved.

Review proposed police log spreadsheet:

MV: Hadn't seen the spreadsheet and wasn't prepared to discuss it.

CH: Spreadsheet was sent out several meetings ago.

MM: Suggests putting this topic on next meeting agenda.

CH: Will send spreadsheet to everyone again.

Review regionalization and shared chief:

(These minutes reflect comments that don't fit into either a pro or con category. Comments regarding pros and cons will be incorporated into a collated document.)

MM: Reviews definition of Regionalization from the PSG Glossary of Terms. "Town A and Town B (and Town C, so on) merge entirely into one police department to cover Town A and B. Financials are assessed based on a formula/percentage determined by a contract." This exercise began several meetings ago with the idea to list pros and cons of various models. It was an "off the top of your head" compilation.

MJ: Hopes to see this data collated into a document.

MM: Volunteers to collate the data.

MJ: Presents result of research she did regarding regionalization in Allegheny county. Regionalization was instituted to deal with a particular crime problem. Process allowed for uniform and consistent enforcement, coordination of services, record sharing, consistent response. Method didn't appear to encompass community policing, but was more of a solving a crime problem approach.

RF: Asked if we could use the spreadsheet SM created.

Both SM and MV spreadsheets regarding regionalization and shared chief are screen shared.

SM: Reference the Novak study, 'South County Police Services Study: Towns of Deerfield, Sunderland, and Whately, Massachusetts,' it appears regionalization is more apt for a larger populated area than what Shutesbury encompasses. Regional school systems bring individuals to one location to provide a service. Regional police departments don't seem to operate under consolidated population condition.

Discussion transitions to Shared Chief pros and cons.

RF: Need to realize that people move up and move on regarding employment opportunities.

RF: Most likely, towns with similar characteristics would be towns that would enter into a shared chief agreement. We seem to be listing barriers and negatives to a shared chief model. It might be difficult to achieve a shared chief agreement, but it's not impossible.

Tim Logan: Will this process include cost benefit analysis?

MM: Yes there will be cost analysis conducted.

MJ: Considering a shared chief model for Shutesbury indicates that Shutesbury doesn't need a full time chief. Need to look at Chief job description and determine if this can be accomplished with a part time chief.

SM: The potential for an administrative assistant supporting a shared chief needs to be factored in.

MV: We are attempting to determine pros and cons of these models without any specifics of what they entail. We are making random assumptions that, without a definite proposal, make listing pros and cons meaningless. We should find towns that are operating under the models we are exploring and ask them for specifics about how the model works for them. After that we can determine the pros and cons for Shutesbury.

Review survey updates, communication and feedback with the public:

Shutesbury Police Study Group Survey Draft #3. The document titled Draft #2 was one that CH developed from discussion at our last meeting for use with the subcommittee meeting on November 12, 2021. Draft 3 came out of this subcommittee meeting on November 12 negating the need to share Draft #2 with the full Police Study Group.

CH: CH, MJ and MC met on November 12 as the subcommittee. They determined the focus should be on creating a survey that doesn't ask what kind of model do residents want, but rather what residents want from their police department. Draft #3 is screen shared. The five questions are reviewed individually.

CH: A function of a survey is to educate the survey taker.

CH: This survey is trying to determine what people feel is the philosophy of policing in Shutesbury.

Rachel Schwab: Emphasizes the function of a survey is to educate. Wants to educate people regarding what the Shutesbury police department does, by changing the first questions to reflect this opposed to what a "local" police department does.

MJ: Question 1 not trying to determine what services police need to provide, but what people feel is important to them to have provided.

MV: Without additional information on other models, question 4 can be answered in only one way.

CH: Reminds everyone that a cover letter will be going out with the survey that will provide information on other models and current functions of the Shutesbury Police Department.

Meeting time ends without much discussion of question 5. It's agreed that everyone will send their comments on question to CH.

CH: Brings up issue of not having a budget to send out a survey.

BT: Will locate a source of funding for sending the survey.

SM: Desires moving our meetings off of Mondays.

MM: Tentative December meetings will be 9 and 23.

Next meeting: November 29, 2021 at 5:45PM.

Meeting adjourned at 7:39PM

Minute taker: Mike Vinsky

Documents used: Shutesbury Police Study Group Survey Draft #3

Shutesbury Police Study Group Survey Draft #3

1. Below is a list of services that may be provided by local police departments. What services do you think are important to have in Shutesbury? Please indicate level of importance on a scale of 1 - 4, where

4 - very important

3 - important

2 - somewhat important

1 - not important

___ Response to emergency calls

___ Visible police presence

___ Traffic control

___ Preventive patrol

___ Provision of referrals to or advice on social services available to Massachusetts residents

comments/suggestions: _____

2. What do you consider to be an acceptable police response time to emergency calls?

Less than 10 minutes

10-20 minutes

Greater than 20 minutes

3. Do you think it is important to have 24 hour local police coverage?

Yes

No

No opinion

Prefer not to say

4. Do you think it is important for Shutesbury to have its own police chief and department?

yes

no

no opinion

Prefer not to say

5. The Shutesbury Police Department currently follows the small town community policing model, which aims to provide services and promote a safe environment by interacting positively with residents and visitors on a day-to-day basis. How would you like the police to engage with you and your family as residents of Shutesbury?

coffee with a cop

ride-along with a cop

civilian training sessions

other _____

Comments _____
