

## Summary of Shutesbury Police Department Interviews

---

Summary of information from Interviews of four members of SPD 2/26/22 – 2/27/22

The four members we interviewed live in Ludlow, Huntington, Granby and Shutesbury. All have some previous policing experience.

### Question 1. What do you really like about the current department?

The Leadership, the chief, the team effort, shared purpose, the different mindset here compared to other work places, the feeling of being appreciated by chief and team makes it less stressful, the small community you get to know well.

Chief is a mentor, a leader, great communicator, expects us to do well, supportive of people learning the job, good listener, sets a great example of how to police, promotes community involvement, has lots of diverse experience to draw on, has brought the department together.

### 2. (a) How do you see the Police department moving forward? (b)What is your vision for the department?

a) Stay intact, add a needed sergeant to share the workload, to see the full-time chief position settled, add one or two more officers, keep the team energy growing, take a breath after this process and the uncertainty ends, the current department is appropriate to a small town

b) Find more ways to serve the community, Community Policing, know that the officers work for the people in town

### 3. What is the biggest department challenge, and how would you address it if you were in charge?

No challenges for the department as it stands, the current structure works, end the uncertainty, Chief has to get some time off – under a lot of stressors, chief being patient to introduce new ideas, feeling support from the community, are we good enough? feeling like we are under a microscope, day to day criticism at national and local level, recruiting when there are unknowns about what will happen with the structure, taking calls on your own when you are a new officer, acknowledgment of stressors of being a police officer – drain on family time, helping with people not at their best, tough situations, etc.

### 4. What motivates you to be active in the department?

Grew up in a small town and looked up to members of the police department; friendly contact with resource officer in school, can fill in part-time and flexibility, working with team that is calm and positive, the Chief is the main motivation to be in this department, being known for helping people solve tough situations and problems, make a positive impact on people's day and lives, be part of a community, interact positively with citizens and feeling appreciated for that, provide prevention

measures, explain the situation so people will gain a safer perspective, helping people on medical calls, being a help to someone on their hardest day.

5. What would you like to see continue with the department?

Outreach programs such as Coffee with a cop, initiate a bike patrol to school, continue to work on interactions at the crowded state beach in the summer, strengthen the basic team, look into a comfort dog or trained dog program, continue with our current leadership, develop support systems to help everyone become successful, continue to have a town department, no back-peddling on commitment to community policing

6. Any other additional comments/concerns?

The State police cannot provide a quick response time (35 minutes from South Hadley to Shutesbury on a recent call for example), MSP is short staffed, mutual aid is not always available, Leverett/Wendell has had some 3 – 11pm shifts that are not covered so they not available for mutual aid, contracting with another town will increase the area to cover and slow response times, prefers to work with a structure, retention of officers would be improved if there was a process to show appreciation, appreciation isn't money or a write-up in your file - it is understanding police are human beings taking care of problems, not just uniformed presences lurking, judge us by our behavior - not what is happening elsewhere, being beside the road to slow and deter speeders is not "doing nothing", working other jobs to support salary, not bored in Shutesbury, have the time to follow up on previous calls, connecting with people is very important, there is no stop/ticket quotas to be filled, the on-call model will not work – it would require more than two and that would make it more expensive, if you lose the Chief, you will lose the team, not speaking for the past but given the opportunity this could be a long term team for the SPD, we agree with the Chief's approach, when officers are contracted to multiple towns they will have to (and can) know the different town bylaws to enforce, the PSG has members working on their own agendas, there is bias against the police on the PSG, the PSG process has dragged out the decision regarding the chief and that is damaging,