

Waterbury Village Trustees
Public Hearing on Proposed Charter Change
November 1, 2012
Thatcher Brook Primary School Cafeteria
Minutes

Present: P. H. Flanders, Village President; N. Howell-Sherman and L. Sayah, Trustees; Captain Glen Hall, Vermont State Police; W. Shepeuk, Municipal Manager; A. Imhoff, ORCA Media; K. Fountain, Waterbury Record; D. Taube, Times Argus; and C. Lawrence, Village Clerk.

Police: J. Feccia, Chief; B. Lindemuth, M. Lavalley, R. J. Caldwell, A. Mazilli, T. Bernier.

Public: See attached list.

The Public Hearing was called to order at 7:03pm.

N. Howell-Sherman gave the background on the proposed charter change. She stated that the Trustees wanted to hear from voters at an election with heavy voter turnout, and determine whether it make sense to voters to locally fund the department or eliminate it. She explained the process if the vote passes.

Information on Village Police statistics was distributed. P. H. Flanders provided an explanation of Table 1 – police statistics from 2007 – 2012. Table 2 showed a comparison what several other Towns are spending on police services. Table 3 illustrated the 2013 budget projections under various scenarios.

J. Feccia spoke and stated that having a PD in the Village is a good idea, that having well trained officers to respond to the school and businesses is important. A small town police department provides services that the community would not get otherwise.

L. Sayah reviewed a letter that he had placed in the Waterbury Record a couple of weeks ago. He stated the benefits to having the police department in the Village.

Captain Hall spoke about State Police coverage in Waterbury if there was no local PD. He stated that 13 troopers cover 18 towns, running 2 shifts. They also cover interstate events. If the Village depends on the State Police, they will not get the attention that a local force gives. They have to prioritize their calls and respond to the most serious first.

E. Coffey: East Montpelier contracts with the State Police for a specific rate. This option would be available to Waterbury. Captain Hall stated that contract hours are worked by troopers off shift on an overtime basis.

B. Lindemuth: What might residents expect to pay for services that would meet the needs of Waterbury? Captain Hall responded that the contract rate is approximately \$55 per hour and the Village would have to decide the number of hours they would require.

J. Martin: How stretched is the VSP compared to other states? Captain Hall responded that the VSP covers a lot of area. State police in NH do a lot less rural policing. Policing has changed – there are lot more specialty areas such as computer crime, drug task force, and several other specialty teams. They welcome communities to come together with their own policing forces which they can support.

T. Bernier: How many towns has the VSP had to absorb through loss of local police departments? Captain Hall does not recall any. Several departments have expanded their presence throughout the town.

What is the number of incidents with drugs in towns that do not have a PD versus those that do have a local department? G. Hall was not able to answer the question in terms of numbers, but police presence is definitely important as a deterrent. VSP has a drug task force, but a local presence can do more.

Does the Sheriff's department offer similar services under contract work? They both try to give communities the services that they want but would have to talk with the Sheriff in Washington County. R J. Caldwell stated that when he worked for the Sheriff's department, they provided mostly motor vehicle enforcement, not much criminal enforcement.

W. Shepeluk: Stated that at \$55 per hour, a \$357,000 budget would provide 6,505 hours of coverage. The Village police department is on duty 18 to 20 hours per day and therefore provide between 6,570 and 7,300 hours of coverage. He reviewed some of the statistics in Table 1. The major activity conducted by Waterbury PD is traffic control. If there was no PD, the Village would have to contract with an agency to provide that level of traffic control (traffic stops, traffic tickets, speeding tickets).

D. Pitstick: Asked where would the money come from to contract police services. If the Village decided to do that, taxes would be raised to cover the costs. W. Shepeluk stated that the Select Board could be approached about putting money in Town budget to cover services and spread costs. The bone of contention with Merger is paying for police services.

R. Darby: Is a resident of the Town but owns property and has a business in the Village. He read a letter that he sent to the Waterbury Record expressing concerns about the upcoming vote.

MK Monley: President RW – spoke on behalf of Board supporting a PD in the downtown. She stated it is vital to keep the Village on an upward track.

J. Martin: He is worried about budgets and services. He stated that a PD is intimately involved in the local community. People won't see the benefit of money being saved if the department is abolished.

A. Tuscany: In the winter when the highway department is trying to clear snow in the business district, they cannot deal with cars breaking the parking ban and rely heavily on the PD for parking ban enforcement. There is a very limited timeframe during storms. IN emergencies the police department helps with traffic control. The snow removal occurs in the Village and the highway department is a town department. He suggested that maybe those hours should be billed to the town.

D. Luce: Seconded R. Darby's letter. He also lives in the Town and owns a business in the Village. He feels self-assured knowing there is a department on duty in the Village, especially during the night. He is disappointed that the Trustees are not taking a position and feels they owe it to the Village residents who pay for the services. P. H. Flanders said they would abide by the vote of the Village residents.

B. Lindner: Lived here is whole life, is an EMT as well. Often need a police officer on a call, and the Village PD shows up. Can't see cutting off the head of 1/3rd of the first responders in the community.

J. Kamien: Spoke to the issue of community policing. Community policing works, and is effective – makes people feel safe, crimes are lower. What will happen if Waterbury disbands PD, especially give its location at the Intersection of I89, Route 100 and Route 2.

K. Hackett: Runs an in home child care but is concerned about businesses. There are a lot of vacant buildings, and people will not want to start a business if there are no police services. Felt safe during the flood knowing police officers were around when her house was vacant.

T. Christie: Manages a business in Waterbury, they are open late in the evening. She fears for her employees leaving building late in the evening. There is a need for a PD due to some things happening within the Village.

G. Dillon: Supports having a police department. He feels the Board brought the question forward due to concerns over the police department. What is the Board going to do to satisfy those concerns if the vote fails? P. H. Flanders stated there would be a discussion with the Chief and Manager to address concerns and work on issues.

R. Lloyd spoke about personal and societal responsibilities - neighbors caring about others and pitching in for the greater good.

J. Katz: Moved here from Burlington. She described an incident whereby her car was broken into and there was no police to respond.

E. Coffey: Strongly agrees with D. Luce, and added to what Brian said about officers getting on scene during an ambulance call. Feels it is unfortunate that the Board is not taking a stand. He stated issues with department and personnel, and suggested that there may need to be a thorough overhauling of the Department versus abolishing the department. He challenged the Board to address the issue of what they are getting versus what they are paying.

D. Luce: Stated he was disappointed about airing dirty linen during a public meeting. Personnel issues should have been dealt with. This has been a long festering issue and the Board should take a position and resolve the problems. He was called out of order by P. H. Flanders.

D. Pitstick: The Board needs to do their job. He expressed frustration that they are asking Village residents to sacrifice the police department.

J. Martin – wording of the ballot is confusing.

B. Shepeluk: Town has said no to merger over the years with every police department. At Town Meeting, Town residents requested to be asked first if they wanted a police department before it was put in the budget.

Another resident is disappointed in the Trustees for not taking a stand. Would rather have the Trustees advise as to what is best for the Village.

C. Nordle: If the charter is changed, what is the Trustees proposal for police services in the Village. P. H. Flanders stated that the VSP would automatically cover the area.

K. Hackett: A lot of people in the room are supportive of the police. Is there anyone who is not supportive? No one spoke.

N. Howell-Sherman: Few people come to Village meeting to speak to the budget - it is very constraining. People seem to want to squeeze the budget but then are not happy with police services. The vote is intended to open it up to see if village residents want to support a police budget.

M.K. Monley - past 14 months have been very difficult. People have been working together and she had hoped for merger.

W. Shepeluk: R. Lloyd stated maybe police department should be bigger. The budget has dropped over the last 3 years. 13.9 cents multiplied by Town Grand List would result in a budget of \$973,000. This is way more than the Town would need to fund a PD. Towns people feel like are being adequately served and don't have to pay anything.

G. Dillon: If there is a perception of a problem then it cannot be fixed without good communication.

D. Luce: What if legislature does not agree to change charter? A discussion was held with regard to the wording in the charter.

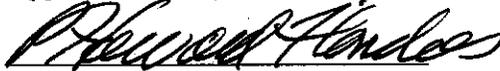
R. Darby: The problem is that a significant portion of the people who own property in the Village cannot vote. He is also concerned about the future plans of the State complex. Someone needs to represent the folks who are not residents.

The Public Hearing was closed at 8:40pm.

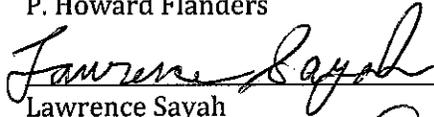
Respectfully submitted,

Carla Lawrence, Village Clerk

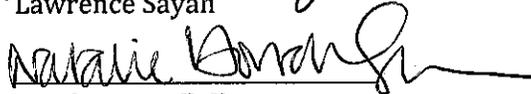
Approved on: 11/01/12



P. Howard Flanders



Lawrence Sayah



Natalie Howell-Sherman

November 1, 2012

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>
Brian Lindner	Acorn Dr
DAVID LUCE	Withy Ctr.
Darrick Pitstick	Union St.
Eva Lomis	Waterbury Center
Jeff Matt W	Waterbury S Main St
David Tanbe	The Times Argus
Everett Coffey	Waterbury Village
DAVID KAMION	Waterbury
Roy Woods	191 Ashford Lane, Waterbury, VT 05676
JUDITH KAMION	191 Ashford Lane, Waterbury, VT 05676
Jessica Kartz	16 Winoski St #2 Waterbury 05676
Tony Carpenter	16 Winoski St #2
Raine Gray	4 Winoski St
Michelle Abajian	19 Union St
Kelley Hackett	11 Elm St
Richard + Dianne Bilodeau	66 N Main St.
JON CONTI	20 LINCOLN ST
DAVID ROGERS	61 So. Main St.
JOBY PECCIA	1070
MK Monley	8 Metayer Ct.
Teri Ann Christie	33 N. Main Street
Jane Grace Tuscany	86 So Main St
Linda Eldredge	12 Railroad St
Alec Tuscany	86 So Main St
TIM BURROWS	101 Middle Rd.
JOBY BERNIER	WPD
WPD	WPD
Michelle Lavallee	WPD
RJ Caldered	WPD
Brian Waseyouth	WPD
Glen Hall	VSP
GARY DILLON	9 ELMWOOD AVE.
K. Fountain	Wat Newark.
Chris Noodle	19 Union St.