

Town of Montville
Montville Law Enforcement Feasibility Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes for Tuesday, April 28, 2015
7:30 p.m. – Montville Town Hall — Room 203

1. Call to Order
Chairman Pike called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll Call
Present were Jeff Buebendorf, Bill Bucko, Robert Giffen, Victor Lenda, Tim May, and Wills Pike. Absent was Joe dePasquale. Also present were Lt. Leonard Bunnell (7:36 p.m.) and Resident State Trooper Sgt. Todd Harbeck.
4. Presentations – *none*
5. Alterations to the Agenda – *none*
6. Approval of the
 - a. Special Meeting Minutes of Tuesday, April 14, 2015
Motion made by Councilor May, seconded by Mr. Giffen. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor. Motion carried.
 - b. Remarks from the public relating to matters on the agenda with a three-minute limit
Officer Robin Salvatore, Union Executive Board President, reported that, thanks, in part, to Councilor McNally's support at this evening's meeting, the Finance Committee approved the requested additional Officers. Referencing the Committee's April 14 minutes, she disagreed with the Lieutenant's statement that he did not foresee the need for additional vehicles for the near future even with the additional staffing. Though she was unsure as to how many vehicles are currently in the fleet, she stated that the Department currently has at least four (4) vehicles with over 100,000 miles and two (2) vehicles are currently offline. While minor repairs are quickly made, those in need of major repairs tend to sit for longer periods of time. She also stated that the elimination of take-home vehicles was attempted during their last contract negotiations, but the Town opted not to do so as it would cost more money due to the compensation the Officers would receive in its stead. In addition, she requested they consider a higher step increase, as the Officers have not received any step increases over the past three years.

c. Unfinished Business

a. Review of previous independent Police Department studies and reports

1) Presentation of Findings

Chairman Pike & Vice-Chairman Bucko – Layout of the Presentation

Chairman Pike reported that he has met with Finance Director Terry Hart regarding the budget portion of their report to confirm its accuracy and to determine the benefit costs. He also met with Town Planner Marcia Vlaun, who is willing to help the Committee with their presentation, which he hopes to present to the Town Council in June. The Committee commenced to review the documents that were mailed to the members.

- a) The Mayor as an effective Chief of Police – It was felt that the item would be a con for the RST Program. It was agreed that the statement's verbiage might need to be revised. The Mayor, who is a political figure, is the CEO of the Town and does not conduct the duties of a Chief of Police. Rather, in reality, the RST and the Lieutenant are the Chiefs of Police, so to speak, in consultation with the Mayor.
- b) Adequacy of new safety complex and its ability to accommodate an independent police department – The Committee agreed that this item is a pro for an independent PD.
- c) Under the RST Program, portions of the Public Safety Building would remain unused – Such areas as the sally port, booking room, holding cells, and interview and evidence rooms remain unused due to investigation procedures and contract, liability, and accountability issues. It was felt that the verbiage may require some revision and would be a pro for an independent PD. Discussion ensued regarding the layout of the report and the need to more clearly define the pros and cons.
- d) All three of the Police Chiefs recognized the need for the Town to establish an independent PD – While the statement could be included in their report, possibly as a footnote, it should not be included as a pro or a con as it is an opinion of the Chiefs. In addition, it should also be stated that the State Police District Commander was also interviewed.
- e) Of the four previous studies, only one discouraged the formation of an independent police department – Per their previous discussions, the Committee agreed that the 2008 Chief of Police and the 2012 Almont Reports were the only reports that were valid, the other two reports being biased. It was agreed that the other reports would be used for reference. While the statement could be included in their report, possibly as a footnote, it should not be included as a pro or a con they are statements of opinion.

- f) The loss of the RST Program would require the preparation and initiation of an Administration Operations and Procedures Manual – This item would be a con for an independent PD. While the item is relevant, it was noted that a Policies and Procedures Manual currently exists for the Police Department and, in some respects, overrides that of the RST Program. Additional rules, policies, and procedures will need to be created for those tasks that are currently being handled by the State Police. It was felt that the words of the charge, “advantages and disadvantages” should be adhered to in order to clarify each of the bullet points.

Vice-Chairman Bucko requested that, due to the amount of information being presented, the members submit their thoughts to him. The organizational structure of the report, the work they have ahead of them, and their possible inability to complete their report and presentation by June was discussed. In an effort to synthesize the information provided by Chairman Pike and Vice-Chairman Bucko, Mr. Buebendorf presented a rubric or framework divided into the following categories: Leadership, Facilities, Operations, and Funds/Costs with their respective advantages and disadvantages. He added that all of the information is not included and much work will be necessary to complete the document. He recommended formulating whether each category favors the establishment of an independent police force or remaining with the RST Program. The format and presentation of the rubric was agreed upon.

The members will review the advantages and disadvantages and send any inclusions/exclusions/revisions within one week to Mr. Buebendorf, who will, then, consolidate, revise, and distribute the document to the Committee. The Committee should review the information prior to their next meeting for further discussion. Councilor May suggested an additional category entitled “Community” in the rubric.

Correcting one of the items included in one of Chairman Pike and Vice-Chairman Bucko’s documents, Mr. Lenda stated that, in accordance with the CT General Statutes, Section 29-5, while the RST contract is renewed every two years, the RST does not change. As such, some towns have had the same RST for 20 years or more.

Mr. Buebendorf & Mr. Giffen – Present day vs. Proposed Budgets

Mr. Giffen distributed the revised budget, as reviewed and revised by Finance Director Hart. The revised report includes the actual cost benefits, in accordance with the increase in staffing, and the addition of two (2) dispatchers to be added to the current dispatching department of three (3) full-time and one (1) part-time dispatcher. The CSO or Sergeant would conduct the monitoring of the holding cells; the dispatcher(s) may also be trained to monitor individuals, as necessary.

It was clarified that the current State radios are usable until they break. The new radios will cost approximately \$180,000.00, while the upgrades to the radio towers and the repeaters will cost approximately \$150,000.00. The latter upgrade will be required whether the Town opts to stay with the RST Program or form an independent PD. Because a cut-off date has not yet been provided by the State regarding when the Town(s) will be required to purchase the new radios, Lt. Bunnell will attempt to obtain a more definite timeframe.

A statement regarding who generated the report and that it was reviewed by the Finance Director will be included in the report.

Line item 59, "Maint-Police Comp.", refers to the budget allotted for the maintenance of the Public Safety Building and is used by the Public Works Department.

The Committee agreed upon the format of the document. Mr. Giffen will request the Benefit Costs for the years 2013 and 2014 from Finance Director Hart for a more accurate comparison and picture of the costs of the transition.

A question regarding the approximate amount of possible grant funding that could be received was discussed. Lt. Bunnell stated that it would be difficult to determine the grants that would be available in the future. The Department currently receives grants for vests, DUI Checkpoints, and Click-it or Ticket Program. Mr. Lenda will contact the three Police Chiefs who were interviewed for the amount of grant funding they have received over the years.

Councilor May – Non-recurring Costs & PowerPoint Presentation

It was felt that the Police Chief position and the RST Trooper costs would not be a non-recurring cost. In addition, the camera and its corresponding equipment and fencing for the impound lot will be included.

The possibility of sectioning out a portion of the parking lot at the Public Safety Building, which may be a more secure location, for the impound lot was discussed along with the maximum number of vehicles that would need to be housed at any given time. It was felt that the space, which could be allotted for an impound lot, would be inadequate.

Councilor May will meet with Lt. Bunnell to revise the list of non-recurring costs, including verifying whether there will be any additional licensing costs, and will send the list the members for review prior to their next meeting.

Chairman Pike will speak with Public Works Director Don Bourdeau for an approximate fencing cost and IT Director Bill O'Neill for an approximate cost for the surveillance cameras and any necessary accompanying equipment.

Mr. DePasquale & Mr. Lenda – Staffing & Calls for Service

It was agreed that staffing proposals for both options would be included in the report as, in either case, a staffing increase would be recommended.

Mr. Giffen distributed a proposed outline for the report. It was agreed that the report should be concise and succinct and should contain all of the salient points. The future as well as the Committee's reasons behind their recommendation(s), and the advantages and disadvantages should be prioritized and weighed resulting an objective decision by the Committee. In the interest of time, the possibility of holding workshop meetings was introduced.

In response to Mr. Giffen's request for a listing of the number of RST's who have worked with the Town of Montville, Mr. Lenda stated that, based on his personal recollection, he estimated that the Town has had approximately 12 RSTs over the past 20 years. Lt. Bunnell will review Mr. Lenda's list.

Upon reviewing all of the information, a straw vote is planned for the next meeting.

9. New Business – *none*

10. Remarks from the Public with a three-minute limit

Lt. Bunnell stated that the Public Safety Building was planned with the future in mind. Should the Town opt to remain with the RST Program, those features of the building that have yet to be utilized would be a disadvantage. Parts of the building are already showing signs of non-use and aging. In response, Mr. Giffen felt that the inclusion of those un-utilized features is not relevant to their charge and Councilor May felt that the item should be included and would be a disadvantage should they opt to remain with the RST Program.

Lt. Bunnell questioned the numbers in the proposed budget for staffing, which appear high. Mr. Giffen agreed and will review the numbers. He also reported that the Finance Committee approved the Lieutenant's request for three (3) additional officers and, should the Town Council agree, the Department will be staffed with 26 Officers.

Lt. Bunnell also stated that he agrees that the Committee should avoid using the phrase "pros and cons" in favor of "advantages and disadvantages" and added that he and others will also review the document(s) and send any corrections, additions, deletions they might have to the Committee.

Officer Salvatore agreed with Mr. Lenda regarding the safety of the impound lot at the Public Safety Building and added that the State Police does limit the number of vehicles they can house at their impound lot. She recommended the Committee speak with Fire Marshal Ray Occhialini regarding the number of necessary dispatchers as she felt that the addition of only two (2) dispatchers would be inadequate. In addition, she stated that training for all of the dispatchers to take police calls would need to be included in the budget. In response, Chairman Pike stated that they did contact Fire Marshal Occhialini, but had not yet heard back from him.

Lastly, she reiterated that, with the additional Officers, additional cars would also be necessary as the Department currently has a total of 18 (eighteen) vehicles, one of which is in need of major repair(s), six (6) of which are take-home cars (contractually, thirteen (13) Officers are able to take home their vehicles), leaving them with only eleven (11) available vehicles in the fleet. In addition, four (4) of the vehicles have over 100,000 miles and three to four vehicles have approximately 90,000 miles. The addition of five (5) Officers would require at least one or two additional cars each year. By contract, two (2) Officers may share one (1) vehicle.

Lt. Bunnell confirmed that their total fleet includes 18 (eighteen) vehicles and two (2) new replacement vehicles will be added. He added that approximately 250,000 miles per year are driven in total and agreed that with additional Officers, additional mileage will be placed on the vehicles.

11. Remarks from the Committee Members

Vice-Chairman Bucko stated that a number of revisions were made to the footprint of the building and that both the Building Committee and the Town Council were aware of the plans for the Public Safety Building.

Mr. Lenda felt that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman Bucko created a very good review of the advantages and disadvantages that may be included in Mr. Buebendorf's rubric. He also reported that he has spoken with State Police Lt. Eric Cooke, who has replaced Lt. Michael Thomas, who was transferred to the State's Major Crimes Unit. Lt. Cooke welcomed the Committee and extended his availability to respond to any questions they might have.

12. Adjournment

Motion made by Commissioner Mr. Giffen, seconded by Vice-Chairman Bucko, to adjourn the meeting at 9:49 p.m. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Agnes Miyuki, Recording Secretary for the Town of Montville