

Town of Montville
Montville Law Enforcement Feasibility Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes for Tuesday, May 12, 2015
6:30 p.m. – Montville Town Hall — Room 203

1. Call to Order
Chairman Pike called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll Call
Present were Jeff Buebendorf, Bill Bucko, Joe dePasquale, Robert Giffen, Victor Lenda Councilor May (6:38 p.m.), and Wills Pike. Also present were Lt. Leonard Bunnell.
4. Presentations – *none*
5. Alterations to the Agenda – *none*
6. Approval of the
 - a. Special Meeting Minutes of Tuesday, April 28, 2015
Motion made by Mr. Buebendorf, seconded by Mr. Lenda. Discussion: It was clarified that, on page 5, under Mr. dePasquale and Mr. Lenda’s Staffing & Calls for Service, the staffing proposals for both options will include the proposals for the Resident State Trooper (RST) Program and the Independent Police Force (IPF). Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor. Motion carried.
7. Remarks from the public relating to matters on the agenda with a three-minute limit – *none*
8. 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
Mr. Buebendorf & Mr. Giffen – Present day vs. Proposed Budgets
Councilor May – Non-Recurring Costs & PowerPoint Presentation
Based upon the installation of the cameras at the Quaker Hill and Chapel Hill Towers, the surveillance cameras for the impound lot is estimated to cost \$5,000.00. The cost includes wireless capabilities, weatherproofing, corresponding fees, etc. The fencing is estimated to cost \$15,000.00. It was also noted that the cost of lighting and the installation of an oil filtration system would need to be considered. Lt. Bunnell has not yet received a definite cut-off date for the State Police radios.

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

The *Analysis of the Disadvantages/Advantages* was reviewed by the Committee. Mr. Buebendorf incorporated the comments he received from the Committee Members and, when provided with opposing comments, included both representations for further discussion. The Community section, which is currently unpopulated, has been added. Also included is an area where the Committee may note whether the section Strongly or Slightly Favors the RST Program or an IPF or is a Draw.

Leadership: Discussion ensued regarding the role of the Mayor as the Chief of Police. Though, in accordance to their Charter, the Mayor is the Chief of Police, he/she plays an administrative, rather than operational, role. Based on his experience, Mr. Lenda stated the town's RST makes the operational decisions and reports to the Mayor or First Selectman, adding that he/she never overruled him as the RST (in some cases, under the direction of the State Police Lieutenant or Sergeant), regarding police operations. The Mayor, First Selectman, and/or Police Commission handled such tasks as the hiring and firing of Officers and the requesting of investigations of Officers from the State Police. Though a policy for performance reviews is in place, due to the lack of time, the Department has not been able to handle their long-term tasks, including conducting periodic evaluations. In an IPF, the Deputy Chief or Captain, rather than the Chief, would most likely, conduct a Performance Observation Review (POR). Similarly, under the RST Program, the RST, Lieutenant, or Sergeant will conduct the POR.

Facilities: Discussion ensued regarding whether it is the travel time that is an issue or the time it takes to conduct their necessary business at the State Police Barracks, e.g., detention, due to the number of towns the facility serves resulting in a lack of efficiency. For clarification, the following changes were agreed upon:

RST – Disadvantages:

- Officers complain of routinely being required to **wait for processing at the State Police ~~travel to Montville~~ barracks**

IPF – Advantages:

- **~~No need for officers to travel to barracks~~**
- **Ease of public access to the Police facility**

The question arose as to whether the underutilization of substantial portions of the Public Safety Building can be substantiated was raised. It was agreed that the additional costs of maintaining, heating, cooling, etc. the building and the fact that it is a resource that is not being utilized and

that its utilization would allow for a more efficient use of their resources justifies the inclusion of this statement.

Operations: According to the Commander of the State Barracks, the number of times the local Police Officers have been required to travel to other towns to handle situations at the request of the State Police leaving their town without adequate coverage is very few. Lt. Bunnell felt that it was not an issue. Due to mutual aid, such events will occur from time to time.

The following changes were proposed:

RST – Disadvantages:

- ~~Officers required to complete both State and local forms (redundant).? if this requirement is imposed by RST program or Town.? if necessary)~~
See related explanation under IPF – Advantages below.
- ~~Ability to use area patrol dog(s)~~ Prohibition of use of non-State patrol dogs (canine); Town does not have the latitude to use local resources for canine units that are not State-approved

IPF – Advantages:

- ~~Eliminates redundancy requirement of filling out State Police forms~~
It was explained that the Police Department currently records information in both the State and Local systems. Entering information into their local system provides the Officers with quicker and easier access to necessary information, including pistol permits, the number of times the police have been called to a location, number of accidents, etc. In addition, their system also records more specific information, e.g., a larceny in the State Police system is entered as a patrol check, but is entered as a larceny in the local system. The resulting statistics provided by the State Police system results in the underreporting and/or a disparity in the numbers and statistics of various incidents. The Police Department is required by the State to enter the information into their system and is also required to enter the information into their local system per an internal policy. They have been entering information into their current CAD system since 2007 and, previous to that, have entered information into a different CAD system, which they continue to access.
- Increased accuracy of ~~crime statistics/data collection~~ of the Federal crime reporting system that would help identify problem areas and resource management and facilitate in the obtaining of grants
- ~~Ability to use area patrol dog(s)~~ Lack of restrictions for canine usage.

- In-house chain of command/supervisors, providing one structure and leadership that would have knowledge of and be more responsive to the Town and its needs

Discussion ensued regarding the mutual aid agreement and whether the Town would be in a better position in receiving mutual aid as an IPF. While a mutual aid agreement has been signed with the State Police for spot checks and events, the agreement for responding to emergencies is currently under review by the Town Attorney.

IPF – Disadvantages:

- ~~Loss of State Police data reporting/management functions~~

It was agreed to remove the item as the information would continue to be available to the Department.

- A new budget will incur cost increases

Funds/Costs: IPF – Disadvantages:

- ~~Increased officer training costs~~

Because the cost for training new/additional Officers would exist in either of the proposed plans, it was agreed to delete the item.

- Costs for two (2) additional dispatchers

Currently, there are three (3) full-time and eight (8) part-time dispatchers handling fire and EMS calls for the Town. While Fire Marshal Ray Occhialini estimated that five (5) additional dispatchers would be necessary to handle the additional calls, it was agreed that two (2) additional full-time dispatchers would be adequate and that the need for additional dispatchers would be a disadvantage of an IPF as the Town would be required to incur those costs. In addition, it was felt that the dispatching unit should be under helm of the Police Chief.

It was clarified that the cost difference for the transition from an the RST Program to an IPF is approximately \$600,000.00.

Community: RST –Disadvantages:

- The Resident State Trooper is neither responsive to the town government nor obligated or able to conduct the same duties of a Chief of Police

Discussion ensued regarding the longevity of a Police Chief vs. that of a Resident State Trooper. It is estimated that the Town has experienced an average of one RST per 3-4 years over the past 20+ years.

IPF – Advantages:

- The Police Chief would come to know and have a vested interest in the community, thereby gaining the community's support

- The Community would benefit from the continuity and the stability of a Police Chief by providing the residents with comfort and security
- The Police Chief would come to know the expectations of the Town government
- The availability of additional grants would directly impact the community in the tax savings they would receive
- Over time, the security and stability of a Police Chief will increase the morale of the Officers.

A straw vote was taken by the members of the Committee:

Mr. Bucko voted in favor of an IPF. Though he and his wife are senior citizens living on a fixed income and he, as other residents, would not be in favor of a tax increase, based upon what the Committee has gathered and what he has learned, he is in favor of an IPF.

Councilor May voted in favor of an IPF due to the fact that Montville is a growing community that will need to view the Police Department as one of its resources, the intangibles, and the idea that a Police Chief would aid in promoting safety, good business, and community support.

Mr. Lenda voted in favor of an IPF. While the RST Program is a good program, he felt that it was outdated for a growing community such as Montville. The RST, who holds his allegiance to the State Police, the Town, as well as the Government, has a difficult job. He is troubled by the State's efforts to balance the budget by raising the costs of the RST Program. In addition, the possibility of applying for and obtaining additional grants, the recent approval of the three (3) additional officers by the Town Council, and the underutilization of the Public Safety Building has swayed his decision.

Mr. dePasquale voted in favor of an IPF. Similarly, due to the proposed rise in the costs of the RST Program, the need to adequately accommodate the needs of the growing town, The approval of the additional officers by the Town Council, and the premise under which the Public Safety Building was constructed, he is in favor of an IPF.

Mr. Giffen voted in favor of an IPF. While he felt that the RST Program has served the Town well, Mr. Giffen echoed the previous statements, adding that the impact an IPF would have on the community and its officers far outweigh the costs that would be incurred.

Mr. Buebendorf voted in favor of an IPF. He provided a review of his thoughts in each of the categories in the matrix:

Leadership - favors an IPF

Facilities - favors the RST Program, which brings many services to the Town that may be difficult for the Town to initially address

Operations - favors both the RST Program and an IPF

Funding and Costs - favors the RST Program due to the cost increase

Community Impact - most strongly favors an IPF and, with the primary duty of the police force being to serve the community, is the strongest point

In addition to the Community Impact, he added that, while the RST Program has been very valuable and the program, itself, is very valuable, he felt that, due to the current trends of the State forcing more and more of the costs down to the municipal level, there may come a time when the Town is forced to form an IPF and, should such an event occur, it would be more beneficial to the Town to have made that choice themselves.

Chairman Pike, having learnt a great deal about the RST Program, the State of CT, listening to their guests, and their discussions, he felt that, though the RST program has been very effective in the Town and provides the safety necessary to the community, felt that Montville is a growing community that can be better served by an IPF.

Chairman Pike stated that Mr. Bucko and himself will begin working on the final report, which will be based upon the *Analysis of the Advantages and Disadvantages*. He will also begin working with Town Planner Marcia Vlaun to create the PowerPoint presentation.

Mr. Lenda proposed eliminating the CSO (Community Service Officers) from the IPF proposal to allow the Chief to decide the actual needs of the Police Department. It was clarified the staffing for the final proposal will include 29 (twenty-nine) sworn Officers, including the Chief of Police.

9. New Business – *none*

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

Lt. Bunnell reported that he had the honor of being requested to visit Killingly, which is currently investigating the possibility of establishing a constabulary. The town has a population of approximately 17,000 and a budget of approximately \$1 million to fund four (4) Resident State Troopers. He noted that towns are looking into the possibility of establishing a regional police department is being investigated by other towns, while others, such as Salem and Bozrah, are conducting studies. With this in mind, should Montville decide to establish an IPF, these and other neighboring towns might look to Montville to help provide police services.

11. Remarks from the Committee Members – *none*

12. Adjournment

Motion made by Commissioner Mr. Giffen, seconded by Vice-Chairman Bucko, to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 p.m. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Agnes Miyuki, Recording Secretary for the Town of Montville