

SELECT BOARD MINUTES November 24, 2009

Present: Ted Murray, Tom Ulrich and Dave DeHerdt

Approximately 30 residents were present

Meeting called to order 7:00 p.m.

Minutes

Motion was made, and seconded, to accept the minutes of November 18, 2009. Vote was unanimous.

Police Chief

John Svoboda was asked to come to the front table to review his response to the Board's outline of Probationary Protocols and Expectations.

Ted and Tom felt that John's responses did not indicate how past behavior's would change. Dave understood what they were saying, but felt it would have been a difficult task for anyone.

The Board proceeded to discuss with John the following topics outlined in the document.

1. A suggestion box would allow for a method of tracking problems before they start.
2. John would ask permission to record conversations. He also discussed with the Board the possibility of getting a grant to fund having the station automatically video and audio recorded. John said that three-quarters of the departments in the state have such a system. Employees need to be informed once that they may be recorded. A member of the public would need to give permission to be recorded.
3. John said that he would investigate violations of a policy such as misrepresenting what a witness is saying by interviewing the individual. If he felt there was a violation, then he would utilize a progressive form of discipline. This would only be for purposeful deception in logs. He understands that people make mistakes.
4. John would randomly survey the public probably by mail to get feedback on public interactions with the police.
5. John would meet regularly with the Board and the Board liaison in order to make the Board aware of any problems.
6. John did not think he would use offensive language again. He would censor himself.
7. John talked about his understanding of conflict of interest laws. It is unethical to mix town business and a side business he may have. He would also avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest and document anything that may appear to be a conflict.
8. John would also treat everyone the same regardless of where they live, their race and ethnicity.
9. John said that he would fix the problems in the department by asking what he did and what can he do to make it better. He will show that he is improving.

10. John would work on gun safety training. He said that any guns that have been sold the money goes into a donation account. The Board expressed some concern regarding the lack of a central tracking system for confiscated guns.

Motion was made, and seconded, to take one week to look at what was presented tonight and to consider the criteria that were set forth and then vote as to when and whether John Svoboda is returning to work. Vote was unanimous.

Liaison Reports

Police - none

Fire – The fire engine has been fixed.

Highway – None

Emergency Manager – Emergency Manager Doug Field discussed with the Board a proposal he received for setting up a Reverse 911 system. There is a \$750 set up fee and a \$2.50/house annual fee for a first year total of \$2500. This quote is based on 700 households. Suggestions were made from the audience to research other providers which may result in a lower cost. Geoffrey Precourt said that the 628 exchange has trouble “talking” to the 625 exchange.

Special Town Meeting

After reviewing the proposed articles for the Special Town Meeting on December 16 and announcing that Free Cash has been certified at \$121,026, motion was made, and seconded, to approve the warrant as presented. Vote was unanimous.

Public Forum

Steve Pollen questioned why the need for extra money for the police department.

Tierza-Leah Schwartz asked that the pattern of John Svoboda’s language in emails be investigated as well as where the money went for the guns that were sold. She also felt that the letter of the apology did not deal with the crux of the problem.

Geoffrey Precourt clarified the letter of apology.

Cynthia Cranston said that the police department has been given whatever they have wanted in the past at town meeting. Now we have no more money. It is time to get back to governing this town.

Donna Sarro clarified when and whether John would come back.

Barbara Maloney felt the situation was worse now than before.

Paullette Leukhardt said that the material that was discussed tonight are the kind of things that could be asked of a new police chief.

Steve Greenman made a statement regarding his thoughts on the current state of affairs.

David King talked about the letter he presented the select board where he questioned why nothing was done about John's behavior by the Select Board. He felt that if the Select Board ignored the behavior, than John would have thought it was acceptable. The Select Board is therefore equally responsible.

Motion was made, and seconded, to go into executive session per MGL Chapter 39, S. 23B to discuss charges of criminal misconduct. The Board will not reconvene in open session. Roll call vote: Ted, aye; Tom, aye; Dave, aye.

Meeting adjourned at 9:27 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Town Administrator