PSAC-Minutes

January 30, 2018

Brad Sevaldson, Greg Uthoff, Marie Reinhardt, Carl Ward, Colleen Gilliam, Holly Giles, Chief Lange

Agenda Reviewed

November meeting minutes approved

Department Updates:

Police Department

Chief Lange provided police department updates. Hired one person starts Feb 19th, James Fischer in the academy. Majority of hours are covered by Chief Lange and Sargent Worcester. Reserve officers working on the weekends, department has 4 good reserve officers.

New officers are concerned about not having a job on July 1st due to budget process. Struggling with the atmosphere of not having a secure job to support their families. Trying to keep morale up is an everyday fight. The department has 5 applicants for the administrative position. Position should be offered by the end of the week.

EMS- no updates

Fire-no updates

Focus of the committee, review of the mission. Committee focus is to spread the word about the public safety resources offered in Wiscasset and preservation of these resources in a tight fiscal climate.

What realistically can this committee do to help support public safety given the climate and our own limitation as volunteers? Each members contribution is important.

Discussion about how to spread the word.

Maybe more community events? Open town meeting? Bike rodeo? Chief Lange is requesting a professional assessment of how many police personnel we should have for the town. FBI recommendations are 2.5 police officers for 1000 residents. We have 4 full time to 3700 residents. Wiscasset police force is smaller than neighboring towns such as Richmond and Damariscotta and those towns have smaller census numbers. Response time will increase if it goes only to Sherriff’s department. Wiscasset responds to Westport to support the Sheriff when they are in other parts of the county. There is a false sense of security because the sheriff office is visible in Wiscasset. Presence of police important. Creates as sense of safety for the public. Pervasive nature of some crimes such as abuse, neglect and exploitation are not visible to the general public yet take up police resources. Need admin support, need to meet the needs of community people come in often for information from the police. Concealed weapons permit can get at WPD but not at Sherriff citizens would need to go to Augusta. 16,000 cars come through Wiscasset in a day in the summer months our area is a magnet for accidents.

New officer will not do any of the SRO duties. New officers will do an FTO 120 hours of training before released for duty. Once released for duty, Sergeant Worcester will resume the SRO duties. Finding that school is not reporting some things that they should report to police by law. When asked, the school board members stated that they support an SRO position this is in the meeting minutes from December meeting. A petition was presented to the select board by the school guidance counselor in November. The school board stated at their December meeting that this person was acting on her own and not as a representative of the school. Brad described police as an insurance policy for all of us to be protected if we need them at the school or another community disaster. Can we gain help from the newspaper to spread the word? Difficult to find time to devote to this project. Can the high school help? We can reach out to students to see if they would like to help create some post or slide show presentations that can be posted to face book? Committee members are open to searching for PSA announcements that we can forward to Chief Lange to be posted on social media. These same informational visuals can be shared electronically with the school via their weekly newsletters for distribution. Committee members can also post these items to Parents of Wiscasset page, and the Partners in Education page.

* Committee members please find PSA announcements to create visuals to be shared.

Colleen met with the Chamber in November and their chair. Chamber suggested that PSAC create a community survey using Survey Monkey. This will generate public feedback on public safety services and needs.

* Each PSAC member please think of one question that should be on this survey for the February meeting.

Discussion of relationship between the PSAC and the Select board. Suggestion to invite members of the select board to our next meeting. Holly Giles will send a formal invitation to the Select board via Marian Anderson. Committee members will follow up with Select board members to request that they accept the invitation to have a constructive conversation with us about public safety needs, concerns and solutions to ensure that our community is safe. We may follow up with an invitation to Sherriff Brackett to have a constructive conversation about realistic implementation of losing the PD. Wiscasset is 18% lower wages than the surrounding communities this combined with the instability of the environment causes morale issues and is a deterrent to qualified applicants.

* Holly will send invite to the board
* Committee members will follow up with phone calls to board members.

Items on agenda not discussed at tonight’s meeting:

* Capital improvement plan
* Cross training of police and EMT

Next meeting February 27, 2018, 5:30pm

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