**Public Safety Advisory Council**

**Meeting April 26, 2017**

**MINUTES**

**ATTENDANCE:** Jeff Lange, TJ Merry, Toby Martin, Jody Elwell, Colleen Gilliam, Holly Giles, Marie Reinhardt, John Reinhardt and Brad Sevaldson. Zach Reed, Mauve, juniors of Wiscasset High School arrived about 6pm.

**OPENING:** Chief Lange thanked the panel for the volunteerism in becoming part of the Council and assisting the Chiefs moving forward and explained their roll on the Council.

**INTRODUCTION:** All council members introduced themselves and where they from. Chief Martin described the vision of the Council, the reasons for establishing it which included how can we better serve the community, are we meeting the needs of what the community deserves and want?

**AMBULANCE SERVICE:**

* The WAS was analyzed by Tide View. The report recommended that to improve the department they needed to start at the top with administration and then move their way down and I was hired in March 2016. There were only four members doing 800 calls a year. Currently we have two on duty all the time 24/7. We want to maintain that paramedic licensure, if we don’t maintain it, we call for mutual aid and we are charged $250 to $300 a call.
* Our future, we’ve outgrown this building. We don’t have capital improvement plans in any of our emergency departments. WAS can’t function year to year, there must be capital improvement.
* We are currently trying to get all departments within the town in compliance with National Incident Management System (NIMS) which is a federal regulation. Includes town office, selectman, manager, and our emergency departments. To apply for any grants, we need to in compliance with NIMS.
* To be self-sustaining, we must do 2000 calls a year and we are currently at 1000. Do we spend the extra money for our Department to increase the revenue or do we say we are at our max and we want no increase and leaving everything alone?
* I had an opportunity to bid on a contract with Midcoast Hospital who is currently using Northeast for their over 3400 transports a year with revenue of 2.1 million. After presenting to the manager/Select Chair, they opted not to put in for the contract because they thought we were moving too fast. Now we need to determine what type of EMS the Town wants, serve only it’s residence or branch out to offset the tax hikes over the couple years.
* We are hopeful that with this public safety committee we will receive feedback from you and the community as to its needs and wants so that the public safety departments can better serve the community.
* We generate revenue only if we transport individuals. Nationally, EMS is changing its focus from transporting to helping with the immediate needs of the individuals. Example, we can’t take some with a fractured ankle to a walk-in clinic because we don’t get paid. The only way we can get paid is to take them to a hospital, it’s the only facility that gives up reimbursement.
* Transport charges:

BLS 600

ALS1 750

ALS2 750

Specialty 1000

* What is your actual cost? $87.26 per hour per ambulance.
* Wiscasset EMS covers Edgecomb, Westport and Wiscasset. The subsidies we charge now are very low, flat rate of $3000. I proposed an increase to the board and they elected not to increase the rate because they didn’t want to lose the revenue, Westport revenue is about $28,000 a year, Edgecomb is about $75,000.
* Discussions also were of billing out EMS services, and how that has changed and is bringing in more revenue.

**FIRE DEPARTMENT**

* Membership is 21, by-laws indicate up to 45. Chief Merry says the 21 are some of the hardest people I work with. Chief is hoping that this committee will be able to help with education in the school and towns to increase membership.
* Capital improvement in desperate need of replacing or getting rid of our ladder truck. Ames supply wants FD to have a ladder truck. FD doesn’t have the funds to repair its current fleet. The capital improvement came in at 1.5 million, however the Selectman just isn’t ready to prepare our tax payers/citizens for it.
* We’ve got to get the word out to our older community and get their support because “someday you are going to be asking for help, let’s make sure it is there”.
* Chief Merry says “Townspeople don’t see the struggles because myself, Chief Lange, Chief Martin all have great people that we work with that give countless hours to this community and nothing ever seems to fall apart, however there is struggles in each department however we manage to make thing done. This community is very fortunate to have three great departments in this town that are short staff but the job is always getting done and that is what the town sees.”
* With mandates, equipment, training, etc. the cost for one volunteer fire fighter that must be 18 or older is on average $4-$5,000 for mandates, training and another $2,500 for equipment that must be fit to the individual. There are federal mandates that are not being met due to funding.
* The average age of residence is 58. People that age do a lot of volunteering but they can’t do some things like what you chiefs need.
* Discussions we had about getting the word out through social media, newspapers, town meetings, etc.
* Another issue, by laws, which state you must live in the community to be a member of the fire department.
* Talk about cross training within departments, allowing abutting community members to join the force and its complications and the opposition by the community to change this by law and perhaps review the by-laws to allow for community input.
* Proposed analysis of the FD to determine what is needed to keep the departments infrastructure and purchase/replace/replace its equipment.
* FD budget is currently $130,000, with $50,000 on equipment maintenance and PPE that $2500 a set that must be replaced every ten years. The budgets are zero lined, doesn’t matter what the department needs or wants, it is not getting it.

**POLICE DEPARTMENT**

* The Department has coverage 24/7 with three full time officers, one full time school resource officer. Staffing with three officers is not possible so the Department relies on reserves. It is nothing to get a reserve officer, short training, 80 class, the problem is, although we don’t have to pay them benefits etc. we must outfit them. The vest alone is $700 and only good for five years. Sgt. Simmons had a vest for 20 years. If he was ever shot, the liability to the Town would be astronomical, allowing him to work with an expired vest is just unacceptable.
* Currently, there are times during the week that we have officers on call that live in town and rotate the on call so we are not out there patrolling, but if they call at 3am we go out.
* Reserves perform the same functions as our full timers, however, their limitations are fatal accidents, big scale criminal crimes, these require a fulltime officer presence. It’s not paying them to be on our department, it’s the insurances that it costs to be a full-time employee. Average about $20,000 per person for benefits for employee within the town. Money that they don’t have or budgeted and they don’t want to spend.
* Equipment: Computers outdated. Purchasing refurbished computers for the Department. Can’t access the Town’s server due to confidentiality/evidence issues and accessibility. Currently using IMC database through the Sheriff’s office and we pay them $6000 for this service but the Sheriff has control of it.
* Zach Reed, Mauve, junior of Wiscasset high school and part of our committee just arrived. Briefed them on meeting progress.
* SRO will be hosting an introduction in law enforcement class and would like to expand to ems and fire.

**PUBLIC SAFETY GENERAL INFORMATION:**

* Community service within the departments, is that an option.
* Age requirement issues and the recruitment problems facing the departments because by the time kids turn 18 they are seniors and already looking towards moving out town, going to college, etc.
* Educate students on building community service, teaching the class, educate them on the services weather in Wiscasset or other community.
* State law now requires all high school student be CPR certified before graduation. If we don’t reach out to the younger generation, and tell them college isn’t for everyone we aren’t going to get to those people.
* Perhaps an incentive program can be developed for recruiting. A possibility is if you are a property owner and an employee of the town, why don’t you get a cut on your taxes.
* The Town is still playing catch up and not planning for the future. Departments need to have a three-year plan and not simply planning for the here and now.
* The sign when entering Town says, “prettiest ***little*** village”. There are many residence that want to keep it that way, but at some point, the Town will have to start thinking about pharmacy, big box, etc. to increase the tax base. Without growth, we won’t solve anything.
* Lots of conversation between members and the different generation and the difference of opinions in generational gaps.

**TO DO:**

* Review mission statement. Provide feedback at next meeting.

**NEXT MEETING:**

* May 31, 2017, 530pm at the Town Office.

Meeting adjourned at 6:37pm

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey E. Lange

Chief of Police