

Approved 3/31/05

TOWN OF HAMPDEN, MASSACHUSETTS
BOARD OF SELECTMEN/BOARD OF HEALTH
MINUTES

March 1, 2005
7:00 pm

625 Main Street
Town House

Present at 7:00 pm – James Smith and Duane Mosier
Guest: Doug Farmer, Wilbraham-Hampden Times

7:00 pm Walk-Ins

7:15 pm Chief Mellis: The Chief was in to discuss the department budget performance to date. Salary numbers are in line within budget. Medical and health testing, newspaper ad and money toward clothing has hit the budget. Cruiser maintenance should improve considerably with the acquisition of a new cruiser. Training is scheduled for two more officers that need in-service refresher class; Officer Trombly and Sgt. Farnsworth.

Budget review for FY06: The budget is level funded except for the Chief's salary. Cruiser maintenance is high still high and the Tahoe may become a problem in the near future. Crown Vic is ten years old and may soon have maintenance issues as well. This line item is variable dependent upon the department getting new vehicles for FY06. General expenses went up slightly as telephone was not properly budgeted for last year. James Smith expressed the desire to have vehicles carried as an Operating Expense on the budget rather than as a warrant article. James would like to work towards having set criteria to determine when a vehicle needs to be replaced for the department.

There will be new 911 training with equipment provided by the State which will require some space reconfiguration at the department's dispatch area.

The department has two applicants applying for the position left open by Michael Hawk's resignation. Both are academy trained.

There was discussion about officer refresher courses that are offered to full time employees only and are not available for reserve officers.

Mark Barba arrived at 8:15 pm.

The Chief discussed the need for additional officers based on the fact that there is a financial risk for reserve officers, (not trained on changes to laws as full time officers are).

The Chief explained that new restrictions apply to recruits attending the academy. It is his understanding that a Town must hire a candidate for them to be allowed into the academy. There will no longer be any self-sponsoring of training by an individual. This would seriously impact the hiring process and timeframe. Chief feels that 2 additional officers would be a good place to start in augmenting the ranks of full time. Chief to get further information on new process for academy training.

Warrant articles – see draft warrant.

Resignation Letter from Chief Mellis: He will stay until March 28th. What day to day duties are required for an interim person to handle when the Chief is gone? Sgt. Farnsworth is knowledgeable and has held the reins when the Chief has been out of town previously. He is budget knowledgeable, grant savvy, understands the staffing issue, has been around during daytime shifts.

Sgt. Henry is also very knowledgeable, but does not have the day shift experience. Pistol permits are handled by Radcliff Kenison, Dispatcher.

The Board wants to see if there is an interest on the part of the in-place Sgts. to be considered as an interim Chief while we search for a new Chief. They should understand that there would be no advantage for them should they wish to be an applicant for the permanent position as well.

The Board will contact Sgt. Farnsworth and Sgt. Henry if they wish to come before the Board at our next meeting (March 15th).

Ask personnel committee to conduct an exit interview with the Chief for feedback on the position.

Hearing Date for Charter Communications: Notify Cable Committee members and have them in for next meeting. We need one or two more members added to the committee. Set May 9th at 7:00 pm hearing date to allow residents access to the information.

Warrant Review: Done.

Regional Selectmen's Meeting: March 24, Senior Center. Discuss cable contract extension to dovetail with other communities, utilities, regionalization of trash pick-up.

Review of Minutes of February 15, 2005: Motion to accept as corrected by James Smith, second by Duane Mosier. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Police Chief Search Discussion:

Interim situation can be discussed at our next meeting. Not as critical a situation in that Chief will be here until 3/28. For next meeting invite two Sergeants in separately for their thoughts on the department, then invite them in together to discuss issues jointly. How to run the department in the interim?

Discussion of using a Search Committee: Perhaps 2 or 3 members of the Personnel committee might join in search committee, use the previous process, need to advertise. Schedule meeting next week to start the process. Possibility of creating a new search committee.

Motion to go into Executive Session at 10:30 pm by Mark Barba for purpose of discussing the use of security personnel or devices without return to Open Session. Second by Duane Mosier. VOTE: James Smith yes, Duane Mosier yes, Mark Barba yes.

Respectfully submitted:

Pamela B. Courtney
Administrative Assistant

/pbc