



immediately given the number of new officers in house. Newest employees work on the 3<sup>rd</sup> shift and need the supervision.

The Board discussed our immediate needs. An obvious choice would be to appoint a sergeant as the interim chief. The issue of appointing a sergeant with no guarantee for the full time position was discussed. The acting chief may be hopeful but they need to know that acting as interim chief comes with no guarantee. Sgt. Henry thinks the department would be supportive of an acting chief. It would also provide upward mobility for the rest of the department. He notes that the department is running smoothly now, and is not in need of a fix necessarily. There are no conflicts, no philosophical differences within the department. Sgt. Henry feels that it would be a logical decision to make Sgt. Farnsworth the acting chief, as he sees the day-to-day activities of the department and he is the senior officer.

8:00 pm Sgt. Farnsworth came in to discuss his thoughts on the interim time period when Chief Mellis leaves. He thinks the department is in good shape with no major internal issues, other than staffing needs. There is a need to maintain stability and the direction in which the department is currently moving. The current organization is a strong one due to the new perspective brought in by Chief Mellis. There are changes that Sgt. Farnsworth thinks are necessary; more training, more experience, and putting the training into practical use. The morale is good and it is a stable working environment.

Mark Barba asked about the interim position and appointing from within versus interviewing other candidates, and how the department would handle the situation. Sgt. Farnsworth feels as though it would be handled with professionalism by the department. Sgt. Farnsworth was asked directly if he is interested in the interim position. He is aware that there is no guarantee should he be appointed as acting chief. He feels as though he is capable of doing the job, as he is familiar with budget issues, day-to-day issues. He has no personal concerns and can always contact Chief Mellis for a quick answer should he need one.

Feedback from the department has been positive and it is open to change.

The Sgts. need to bring information back to the department, so everyone is in the loop. Shift positions are determined by seniority and rank. There is a management clause in the IBPO contract currently that allows management to make the ultimate shift designation.

Jeff Farnsworth stated that he would like the position of Acting Chief, knows what needs to be done administratively, financially, and is able to deal with personnel. He would continue the training process that is currently in place, giving more opportunities to staff. Sr. Resource officer is needed now that Reserve Officer, Gary Courtney has resigned. He would look for a business liaison to work with Lions Club, Rotary, etc.

Sgt. Joe Henry has been working on grant writing.

He will find the strengths in the current personnel, and nurture those.

His number one goal would be to maintain stability and stay the course that has been instituted.

The issue of open patrolman positions was discussed. He has had 4 applicants, one withdrew for personal reasons. There were three interviewed, and 1 candidate stood out from the rest. Need to get someone on board now, since there is firearm training on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Would like the Board to meet so they are able to get someone ready now. He has 2 good candidates, and if 2 positions were available, he would bring them forward. The candidate has current certifications and would be ready to go other than a physical and psychological review. Add contingency clause to appointment language. Police will bring that language forward.

After meeting with the two sergeants, the Board discussed how best to proceed with the Chief search.

James Smith questioned whether they should look internally or do an external search. He does not see a big advantage in searching externally for a chief at this time. We have no major issues with Sgt. Farnsworth and could appoint him as a probationary chief.

Mark Barba noted that the Town's needs were very different during the last search for a Police Chief.

Duane Mosier noted that we have the skills and talent in house to do the job now, but feels that we have an obligation to go through a process to search for a chief. He thinks it should be a formal process and we need to look at more than one candidate. He feels as though an interim appointment is fine, but that a final decision cannot be made without the formal process of a search. Pursue the issue with the Personnel Committee.

#### **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:**

1. Review of Town Report
2. BAN Payment: The Board received a letter from Steve Nembirkow, Director of Business Services for the Hampden/Wilbraham Regional School District regarding outstanding BAN payments due to the District. A letter will be drafted responding to his letter dated February 10, 2005 stating that we are researching the same. It will ask that he copy us on further correspondence but he should direct letters to the Treasurer. There are payments due to the School District in the amount of \$25,000 or so. Some payments are due from when Green Meadows project began. Duane and the Treasurer, Tracy Sicbaldi, have had conversations regarding these payments, and are looking for payment history. Research needs to be done prior to further payout to the School.
3. Police Budget: There was discussion about line item 57.5, for a new cruiser and whether it should remain as part of the budget.
4. Chief's Remaining Time: We need to get a final accounting from Kathy Zanetti to understand potential impact to the budget.
5. Conservation Commission Appointment: Charlie Schmitt brought forward the name of Cindy Connors to be appointed as a full time member to the Commission and appoint Judy Mikala as the clerk.

Motion was made by James Smith to appoint Cindy Connors as a full member of the Conservation Commission to fill the remaining vacant term. Second by Duane Mosier. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Judy Mikala must complete an application for our files.

Motion to adjourn at 10:00 pm by James Smith, second by Duane Mosier. VOTE: James Smith yes, Duane Mosier yes, Mark Barba yes.

Respectfully submitted:

Pamela B. Courtney  
Administrative Assistant

/pbc