

FILED

EAST LYME BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
PUBLIC HEARING OF OCTOBER 19, 2016  
MINUTES

Oct 20 2016 AT 10:45 AM/PM  
Kenneth M. Orr  
EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

PRESENT: Mark Nickerson, Kevin Seery, Holly Cheeseman, Marc Salerno, Rose Ann Hardy, Dan Cunningham.

Mr. Nickerson called the Public Hearing regarding the adoption of an Ordinance Establishing a Police Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the Pledge.

Mr. Nickerson noted that Town had been reviewing the possibility of an independent police force for over 10 years. He said becoming independent will bring a better managed department through a full time Chief and in the beginning it will be close to a net neutral cost. He added that presently the cost for the Resident Trooper is \$212,000 plus fringe benefits and car. He stressed that presently, we are not deciding to build a building. He agreed that the police need a better, more appropriate place to work from, but a new building will come somewhere down the line. He suggested two changes to the draft ordinance; increasing the size of the Commission from 5 to 7 members and the First Selectman should be a voting member but not the Chair of the Commission.

John Rigney of 5 Windfall Lane asked what the cost factor is to hiring 7 officers.

Mr. Nickerson noted that presently we have 22 officers and we are requesting a Chief of Police in lieu of a Resident Trooper. He said there would be a cost for the use of the jail in Waterford and an additional part time administrative secretary. He added that the seven- member Commission would be volunteers.

John Drabik of 18 Drabik Road said that appears that the First Selectman has already made up his mind to go independent and no figures have been offered to the public. He said he wanted the commission members to be elected, not appointed to keep politics out of it. He suggested cutting part of the First Selectman's salary since he would no longer be Chief of Police.

Joe Mingo of 397 Boston Post Road said he is not against a private police department, but it should be mirrored after the Water and Sewer Commission; members should be elected.

Sgt. Bruce Babcock of 44 Roxbury Road noted he had been an East Lyme police officer for 33 years. He added that independence had been studied three times since 1984. He reviewed the capabilities of the personnel in the department and said that the time to change operations is now.

Pat Larkin of 14 Oak Hill Drive agreed with getting a Chief and he added that he would like to see the Chief required to be a resident of town. He said that the Commission members should be elected.

Mark Powers of 4 Round Rock Road noted he served on the advisory board that recommended independence for the Police Department. He said that it is time to move into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and he urged the Selectmen to move forward to independence. He stressed that politics needed to be kept away from the Police Commission. He agreed with the suggestion of changing the membership count from 5 to 7 for the Commission. He suggested that the members be appointed with recommendations

coming from both Town parties and then consider other members who could present resumes to the Selectmen stating why they would like to be on the Commission.

Lisa Picarazzi of 14 Oak Hill Drive thanked the police for their service. She said that she was speaking as a private citizen and she believed it would be more effective if the Commission members were elected. She added she was concerned about them wanting a new building since the Board of Finance was doing their best to keep taxes down in town.

William Cornelius of 29 Forest Road stated that in the last 9 years, he has contacted the police department 3 times and he had to go to the Police Chief to get final resolution of the issue. He added that he believed that the First Selectman should be at the top of the Commission and knowledge of the law would be important for elected and appointed members of the Commission.

Jerry Bourgault of 24 Attawan said he was not sure if we had approved an independent police department.

Mr. Nickerson noted that the public hearing was to review the establishment of a Police Commission whose duty it would be to finalize an agreement with Waterford, hiring a police chief, and all the others tasks needed to operate independently. He said that the Town must give the State a 30 day notice and we do not lose anything, but we gain accountability, vision and continuity. He said with independence, we can provide better value at the same cost.

Terry Donovan of 25 Woodridge Road said that we need a full time police force, but we need to show the public the overall costs. He said the Commission members should be elected.

Mr. Nickerson reviewed Attachment A detailing operational, capital costs and onetime costs to become independent.

Joe Aires of 44 Chesterfield Road agreed with going independent, but added that the force might need captains, lieutenants and patrol officers to backfill those vacated positions.

Mr. Nickerson said there is no plan to change the supervisory layers presently.

Kevin Seery noted he had been a Resident Trooper for 22 years in Salem. He noted that East Lyme had grown too large to continue with the Resident Trooper program. He said we need more and better supervision which would in turn give a better product to the town.

David Tretter of Brainard Road said he was a Resident Trooper and was whole heartedly in support of the decision to go independent. He said this move would not be cost neutral and to stop saying it would be cost neutral.

Pat Larkin said once selected, the Chief should live in town.

MOTION (1)

Mr. Seery moved to close the Public Hearing at 8:12 p.m.

Seconded by Ms. Cheeseman. Motion passed 6-0.

Attendant A

East Lyme Independent Police

OPERATIONAL BUDGET COSTS:

Insurance: no increase in liability or P&C costs	\$0
Waterford Costs: \$30-\$40k for use of jail, large evidence locker and care of prisoners Estimate on high side but expectation is for this to be lowered	\$40,000
Police Chief: \$90-\$105k	\$100,000
Police Chief Benefit Package \$18k-\$25k	\$25,000
Admin Secretary: from PT to FT	\$15,000
Benefits for FT Admin	\$20,000
Recording Secretary for Commission meetings/Commission supplies	\$6,000
Total:	\$206,000
Current cost \$212,000 (and expected to rise dramatically)	

ONE TIME COSTS:

Dispatcher Training: to be paid this fiscal year from contingency budget	\$5,000
State Trooper salary paid in arrears: (this will be a line item in next year's budget) if we switch on: March 1 <sup>st</sup>	\$115,000 or
May 1 <sup>st</sup>	\$146,000 or
July 1 <sup>st</sup>	\$175,000

CAPITAL COST NEEDS:

Chief Car used car not equipped with full police car package	\$30,000
Upgrades to station: \$10,000 needed immediately (regardless of switch) for security enhancements. The \$20,000 would be to develop processing area, storage and evidence lock-up, and computers.	\$30,000
Vehicle computer upgrade... to the system we have already invested in	\$8,000
State Police radio required investment	(\$150,000)