

TOWN OF RICHMOND
POLICE SERVICES DISCUSSION
May 29, 2018

Selectboard Members Present: Roger Brown; Christy Witters

Absent: None

Others Present: Geoffrey Urbanik, Town Manager; Police Officers Sgt. Matt Nadeau; Cpl. Brett Lindemuth; Cpl. John Hamlin; Linda Parent, Town Clerk; Andy Squires, Constable; Tim Scanlon; Stephanie Rogers; Paul Rogers; Marie Thomas; Marcy Harding; Rick Barrett; Martha Nye; Kendra Penlard; Chris Hamlin; Cathleen Gent; Terry Moultrou; Becky Burk; Bob Stafford; Mark Fausel; Jane Van Landingham; Elizabeth Emerson; Connie Carpenter; Eveline Killian; Paul Nadeau; Henry Bush; Jack Linn; Lauck Parke; and others.

The meeting convened at 7:05 pm.

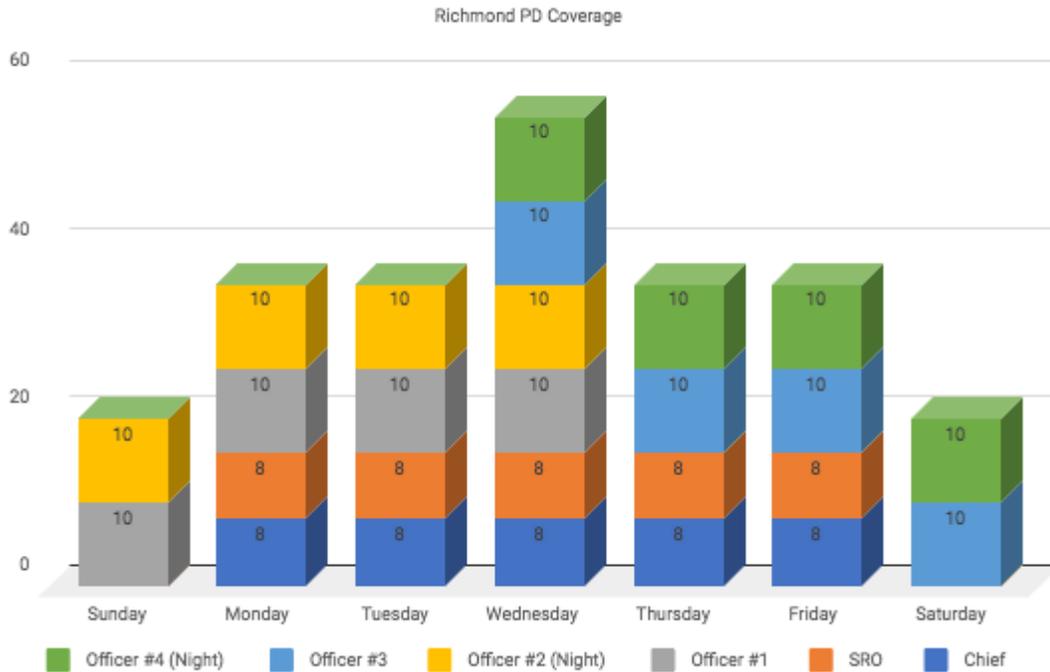
Ms. Witters opened the meeting and provided an overview of the objective. Mr. Brown also explained why this process was underway and that understanding what police services were being provided by the town and how to measure the value. He said that it was not inevitable that the department would go away.

Mr. Brown talked about the plan for an interim chief of police to temporarily replace retiring Chief Al Buck. He wanted to learn what the department did, what we want the department to do, and determine what size department is necessary.

The Manager was asked to briefly review some statistics. An intern, Tim Scanlon, had prepared some charts showing budget growth over the years. The Manager explained that there was a significant amount of data that he was still trying to compile and determine how to present it.

Mr. Brown then asked Sargent Matt Nadeau to come up and talk about what the officers did for police work in Richmond.

Sgt. Nadeau talked about the shifts, which were ten hours for four officers, the chief did eight hours Monday-Friday as did the School Resource Officer. The schedule was four days on, three days off. From 2:30 am – 7:00 am the last officer on duty was on call, away from the station. There was discussion on shifts and coverages – and that Wednesday was an overlap day with all officers on at one time or another. There was some discussion of what Williston’s shift coverages were, and Hinesburg – which ended their shifts at 11pm. With the exception of Hinesburg, all neighboring towns with police departments have 24 hour coverage. Hinesburg coverage ends at 11pm and has “on-call” service until 7am. Richmond has approximately 19 hours of coverage every day. Officers work four 10 hour shifts, with one officer starting the day “on-call” from 2:30am-7am and then on-duty from 7am-5pm. The next officer starts the night shift at 4:30pm-2:30am and stays “on-call” until the next officer’s shift. There are four officers that share the schedule of 4 days “on” and 3 days “off” so there is overlap of all officers on Wednesday. Ms. Witters later created a graph to illustrate the current shift coverage:



1 There is one officer assigned as the School Resource Officer (SRO) who works in Richmond
 2 Elementary School and Camel’s Hump Middle for 8 hour days Monday through Thursday. He works
 3 out of the Town Offices on Fridays. The Chief works normal business hours Monday through
 4 Friday, and provides back-up to officers. The Sgt. explained that there were two Tier II trained
 5 officers, which were slightly limited in their abilities. Cpl. Lindemuth detailed School Resource
 6 Officer duties and his approach to handling problems at the schools in more positive ways, so that
 7 there is less confrontation with the police. He wanted the public to understand that he wasn’t a
 8 security guard there but acted as part of a larger team to handle difficult issues at critical times in
 9 students’ lives.
 10

11 Marie Thomas said that these decisions should be data driven. It shouldn’t be just about what we
 12 wanted but what we need. She wanted to see an analysis of 911 calls that might be medical oriented
 13 or just police oriented. There was some discussion on this and an understanding that with 911,
 14 multiple agencies could be dispatched to a situation.
 15

16 There were questions from the audience about why these questions were being asked and answered,
 17 was it just the police department, why the State Police couldn’t give more patrol on I-89 and US 2.
 18

19 Someone asked if the town would have a vote to decide the provision of police services. Ms. Witters
 20 noted that was one option. Mr. Brown suggested a committee could present options first to the
 21 Selectboard, with a decision on a vote later.
 22

23 Someone noted that community events, such as races, might be affected.
 24

25 Linda Parent, Town Clerk, noted that a letter from the Beacon Light Grange supporting the local
 26 police was distributed, and she worried about rising crime if word got around that Richmond got rid
 27 of their police.
 28
 29

1 There was some discussion about offering services for a fee to Bolton and Huntington. The current
2 Bolton coverage contract was discussed, but it was minimal, and Huntington voted down an
3 expenditure for a similar contract two years ago.

4
5 Fran Thomas commented that there were more bells and whistles now, and we need to look at
6 regionalization, not “power creep.”

7
8 Marcy Harding said that she had examined some data, and that Richmond was the smallest town by
9 population in Chittenden County with its own police department. She said population wasn’t a
10 determining factor in whether to have police or not, but we need to take a careful look at what our
11 needs are.

12
13 Jack Linn said we spent too much on policing. We needed to “plug in” calls for service from outside
14 of town, to understand who we’re serving. How often do other agencies come into Richmond?
15

16 Questions and concerns that were brought up:

- 17
18 1. When is the highest call time? If at night, is it medical?
19 2. What type and frequency are calls? Criminal, property, dispute?
20 3. How many assists does our department provide and how many outside assists come to us?
21 4. We need to focus on community policing. We can achieve more community policing by
22 retaining officers. Historically, we have a very high turn-over rate. We train officers and they
23 move to larger departments. How can we retain officers?
24 5. The school staff greatly appreciate the SRO and his presence and help at the schools.
25 6. A large portion of Richmond’s population is elderly and living alone. Police coverage is
26 reassuring to this population.
27 7. Having police coverage at night is critical to response times to domestic incidents with
28 mentally ill or disabled residents.
29 8. How much do we spend on military equipment and do we need/want this equipment?
30 9. Related to the VPR story on traffic tickets, what are the traffic ticket numbers? Why was
31 VPR’s story incorrect? Where does Richmond rank?
32 10. There is an absence of patrols on our rural roads. There should be regular patrols for visibility.
33 11. The state and federal government continue to increase requirements on police departments
34 (administrative, training, etc.). What are these requirements and do we have the capacity to
35 keep up with these changes?
36 12. The discussion needs to focus on public safety and addressing Richmond’s problems. It is not
37 constructive to continue a mantra of ‘with us or against us.’
38
39

40 It was agreed that the next session would be on June 12th at 7pm, in Town Center. This was later
41 changed to June 14th at 7pm.
42

43 Adjourn

44 Mr. Brown and Ms. Witters adjourned the meeting at 9:10 pm.