

Town of Richmond

Police Chief

Background Statement

1/23/23

The Richmond Police department is currently budgeted for a chief, four full-time officers, a part-time administrative assistant, and up to three per diem officers who would work two to four shifts per month. The FY23 budget is \$767,996. The minimum starting salary for the Police Chief is currently \$75,506. Richmond has had a small police department since about 1992, and the size has grown only slightly since then. In June of 2022 the Police Chief resigned. The Acting Sergeant was promoted to serve as the Interim Chief. The Department is currently short-staffed. The Interim Chief has two full-time officers and a part-time administrative assistant. In addition, there are no per diem officers employed with the Town.

After the resignation of the Chief, the Town began to explore options of shared services with the neighboring municipality of Hinesburg. Hinesburg is a similarly-sized town with a similarly-sized police department. The discussions quickly turned to the potential of forming a Union Municipal District which would dissolve both Town police departments and form a separate municipality which would provide police services to both towns with shared governance by leaders from each town. The Union Municipal District would employ a chief and officers to provide coverage to the new district consisting of the two towns.

The discussion of the pursuing the process of establishing a joint survey committee to investigate the option of a Union Municipal District stalled when Hinesburg hired a consultant to examine public safety services in Hinesburg. The study is expected to be completed in the summer of 2023. It is expected that Richmond and Hinesburg will meet at that point to discuss if Hinesburg is still interested in exploring this avenue.

If both Towns agree to explore a Union Municipal District, the process will likely take two to three years to complete. If a Union Municipal District is formed, there would be a search for a chief of the new police department. At this point, the Richmond Police Department would be replaced by the Police Department formed under the Union Municipal District. The Richmond Police Chief could apply for the position of Police Chief at the newly formed police department.

The Town of Richmond undertook a public engagement process in 2018 following the retirement of the Police Chief. The main questions in that process were 1) Do the residents want to continue to have a Richmond Police Department? and 2) What is the feasibility of combining with another department to provide shared services? It was determined that the residents were in favor of continuing with a Richmond Police Department. The process explored combining services with

the neighboring town of Williston, and it was determined that option was not feasible at that time.

The next Richmond Police Chief will be asked to engage with the Selectboard and community members on further examination of police services in Richmond. This will include examining the staffing, capital equipment, policing style, scheduling, public engagement and more. This will also involve examining the potential of shared services with neighboring departments, which may include assistance in forming a Union Municipal District. This process may also include working with an outside consultant to develop a long-term strategic plan for the department.

The Department is currently working with the Richmond Racial Equity group on providing more data and transparency regarding police activities in Richmond. This work is expected to be ongoing for years to come. The Town is also currently exploring options for a renovation of the Town Center, which is the building that currently houses the Richmond Police Department. Part of this process is examining the current space for the department (which is small) and determining the proper amount of space for the Department.