



POLICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Type: **Regular Meeting**
Date: **Tuesday, May 17, 2022**
Time: **5:30 p.m.**
Physical Address: **47 Bombardier Road, Milton, VT 05468**
Location: **Fire Department Meeting Room, Milton Fire Station**
Contact: **(802) 893-6655**
Website: www.miltonvt.gov

Meeting Minutes

Police Advisory Committee Members Present: Harjit Dhaliwal, Chair; Richard Edwards, Member; Dylan Martel, Member

Police Advisory Committee Members Not Present: Kevin Kimball, Clerk

Staff Members Present: Stephen Laroche, Police Chief; Michaela Foody, Public Safety Director

I. Call to Order

Meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

II. Flag Salute

Those present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Public Forum

None

IV. Agenda Review

No changes made to agenda as presented. Motion made by Richard Edwards to approve the agenda with a second by Dylan Martell. **Approved 4-0.**

V. Approval of Minutes

Motion made by Richard Edwards to approve the minutes as presented for the February 15, 2022 Police Advisory Committee meeting with a second by Dylan Martell. **Approved 4-0.**

VI. Committee Vacancy Process

Update and overview provided by Michaela Foody on the current vacancy of one Police Advisory Committee position, including the advertising and warning/posting actions taken and the timeline for applications and the appointment. Also overviewed the process for reappointment and/or the filling of the vacancies that will be created at the end of the two-year term for all current Committee members in the fall.

VII. Public Safety Director's Position Relative to the Police Department

Discussion led by Michaela Foody regarding her position as Public Safety Director for the Town of Milton and her responsibilities relative to the Police Department. Explanation of responsibilities include: serving as the Interim Chief of the Rescue Department (until April 2022); assisting the Fire, Rescue, and Police Departments with administrative duties; serving as the Town's Emergency Management Director; facilitating grants; maintaining Town plans pertaining to public safety; acting as a conduit between the public safety departments and the Town Manager and the Milton Selectboard.

Discussed the role of the Public Safety Director in emergencies, which depends on the scale of the incident. As the Emergency Manager, the Director acts in the background, working from the Emergency Operation Center to assist the operations on scene by coordinating financial and additional resources, the flow of information, and public communication. The Local Emergency Operations Plan is regularly reviewed and updated to plan for resources and actions needed in the event of emergency. Currently working on the All Hazard Mitigation Plan, which identifies potential high hazard issues and critical infrastructure within the town.

The Committee asked if the Director has any access to current Police investigations. The Director is not privy to information regarding investigations unless there is a hazard to public safety or unless additional town public safety departments become involved.

The Committee asked about the Director's role in applying for grants related to the Police Department. The Director assists as needed, however most grants are applied for within the Police Department themselves.

The Committee asked if there is a policy about interacting with diverse populations for each public safety department. There is no blanket Public Safety Department policy, however, there is training required for the maintenance of police officer and EMS certifications, and this is one of the continuing education criteria. Committee members suggested that members of diverse groups be included in this education by attending and leading trainings on awareness of their culture.

The Committee asked how members of public safety departments handle responding to calls where they interact with people who speak foreign languages or are unable to verbally communicate. Units can contact St. Albans Central Dispatch or the Emergency Department for language interpreters to assist in communications with citizens. First responders will use other resources, like whiteboards, to communicate if a translation service is not applicable or the situation is time sensitive.

VIII. Police Department Website Review

Chief Laroche projected the Town's website for the Committee to view and recommend changes and updates to the website. The Committee made the following suggestions for user accessibility and utility:

- Contact Information
 - o Adding TTY number
 - o Reword descriptions of phone numbers
 - o Move directory up and rename "Staff Directory"
 - o Label "211" tab as a State resource
- Media
 - o Move social media links to the top of the page
 - o Add sections for videos, which gives a face to the department
 - o Tie in a social media marquee linked to Instagram and Facebook.
- Additions:
 - o Officer introduction/"blurb" with officer portraits to contact information
 - o Howard Center contact information and their stats
 - o Links to Police Department statistics

There was discussion about officer and family safety when discussing the inclusion of officer portraits to the website. The Town is redesigning their website and the new site should be up around July 1st. These suggested changes would not be made until this site goes live.

IX. Police Chief's Update

Chief Laroche provided the Committee with a Department update:

- 1 new officer graduating the Police Academy soon
- Lieutenant's promotions process will start in June 7 written test being written by Roger Williams University
- New School Resource Officer will be Cpl. Porter. Officer Carlson (Raymond) will return to the road at the end of the school year
- The Detective position will be rotating soon. Like the SRO position, it is rotated on a 5 year basis to provide opportunities to all officers
- Call volume is returning to pre-pandemic numbers
 - o Mental health numbers are plateauing

Committee member asked about morale and mental health of officers. Chief Laroche spoke about the Wellness Program the Department uses and how trained professionals can come in and speak with officers and/or their families. There are also officers on the Department that are trained in Peer Support.

