



TOWN OF GROVELAND

2013 MAR 14 PM 4:32

MEETING NOTICE TOWN CLERK
(MGL Chapter 30A, Sections 18-25) RECEIVED/POSTED

**COMMITTEE OR
CONVENING BODY:**

Board of Selectmen

MEETING PLACE:

Selectmen's Conference Room
Town Hall – 183 Main Street, Groveland, MA

**DATE & TIME OF
MEETING:**

Monday, March 18, 2013 @ 5:45 P.M.

Open Meeting

Meet with Police Department personnel

Signed:

Nancy Lewandowski

Date: March 14, 2013

*All meeting notices must be time stamped and filed in the Town Clerk's Office and posted
48 hours prior to the meeting (excluding Saturdays, Sundays and all Holidays).*

MINUTES

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

MARCH 18, 2013

Meeting called to order at 5:46 P.M.

Present Selectman Donald N. Greaney, Chairman William H. Darke, the Board's Administrative Assistant, Groveland Police Department full-time and part-time Patrolmen, Dispatchers, Sergeant and Deputy Chief. Also present were MACOPS legal representative Jun X. Lim from Sanduli Grace PC, and MACOPS union representative Robert Hickey.

Chairman Darke opened the meeting and told the police employees they were ordered in to talk with the Board about the operations of the police department, whether there is anything that can be done better; that if so, whether the Board of Selectmen can help in any way; that Selectman Greaney and he want to hear what the employees have to say, whether it's good, bad or indifferent.

Selectman Greaney explained that he and Chairman Darke had put together a few questions they'd like to ask and get input from the employees on. He also stated they'd like to hear anything the employees might want to tell them about department operations.

Greaney mentioned he had read over the Department's Rules and Regulations and asked Dispatchers who their direct Supervisor is. Dispatcher Edwin Fournier responded that Sgt. McDonald is their supervisor and that they are a paramilitary organization and follow chain of command, i.e., Sergeant, Deputy, Chief.

Greaney told the employees that he hadn't seen any complaints coming before the Board; that they haven't seen much of anything happening. He asked if there were any morale problems. Dispatcher/Reserve Officer Fournier told the Board that he has a morale issue with the town, not with the department. Fournier explained how Reserve Officers from Boxford or other towns receive double his pay when working a private detail for the town; that Groveland Reserves won't take town jobs because of that; that it doesn't seem fair to work next to an Officer from another town who is making full detail rate while the town's officer is making time and one-half. He said the Reserves find that a morale issue; that they work for the town yet the town pays more to those who don't.

Deputy Gillen responded that both he and the Chief are in favor of their Reserves getting paid the detail rate instead of time and one-half. Chairman Darke stated he has always felt the rate should be fair and based on a standard rate for all. Fournier

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responded that he turns down town jobs to take a job in Haverhill where he will receive their detail rate. Deputy Gillen told the Selectmen that the Reserves are the town's "best bang for its buck".

Selectman Greaney asked if the employees are allowed to use cell phones while on duty. Sgt. McDonald responded that there is no prohibition against it. Greaney then asked what is the allowance for using department/town computers and McDonald responded that the department encourages personal use, just not excessive use, and they follow the town's policy. Selectman Greaney asked if there have been any issues and McDonald responded there haven't been. Greaney asked again if there was anything going on, and Robert Hickey, representative of MACOPS responded that he has not been contacted by any of the members of the Patrolmen's Union in months; that no one has talked to him about any disputes. Greaney asked are there any issues any of the employees feel the Selectmen should be involved in on a more consistent basis; that he understands the Chief is supposed to be dealing with department business on a daily basis but does anyone have issues they feel the Board could help them with. The response from the group was "no".

Chairman Darke asked if anyone had comments, good, bad or indifferent. Deputy Chief Jeff Gillen said he would like to start by saying where they came from four years ago with new management changes, one of their first tasks was to make the department more transparent. They accomplished this by:

- Changing the style and color scheme of the cruisers they purchase;
- Adding department computers;
- Providing the best and newest firearms;
- Providing Tasers;
- New radios;
- Security cameras for the hallways to ensure employees safety; and
- Future bullet proof vests will be coming soon

A number of the employees in the audience were nodding in agreement while Deputy Gillen was speaking. Deputy Gillen told the Selectmen that they still have a full-time position to fill but understand that money has been scarce; that the men and women of the department take on extra duties and responsibilities because of that. Gillen told the Board that everyone has been great and he doesn't think things could be much better now. He feels the town is in great shape and he thanked the Board for listening to them this evening.

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Dispatcher/Reserve Officer Fournier told the Board that he has worked for the town for nine years and worked under the former Chief and current Chief. Fournier said the former Chief was an invisible, missing Chief and that it was tough working for such; that the current Chief is approachable and Fournier said he feels things are a lot better.

Detective James Morton spoke up and said he is doing the job he loves to do; that when he can go out to do his job, he is doing what he loves to do; that he could not be happier and feels he accomplishes a lot; that he does a lot of stuff with kids in the neighborhoods and feels he is a very lucky guy. Morton stated that you will never make everyone happy every day.

Dispatcher Victoria Ladd stood and said she wasn't going to speak but changed her mind. She told the Board that she has worked as a dispatcher for Groveland for 33 years and this is the first time they have ever been asked to speak to the Board. Ladd said she feels those that work at the Police Department are a family and if there are problems they discuss them as a family; that people will have disagreements with each other but the employees there are not being made to feel they need to divide and conquer. Ladd said she feels they have a good cohesive team now; that it's like a brother and sister situation and a good working environment. Ladd told the Board "brass has done a good job!" Ladd said they do all depend on each other and she feels they are a team; that it's the best working environment she has ever had there.

Reserve Officer David Shanahan told the Board he has been a Reserve Officer for the town for 23 years and that he loves his job.

Reserve Officer Danny Rodriguez told the Board that he is very grateful to be on the Groveland Police Department; that he is very happy to have the job; that Chief Weeks hired him but he enjoys working with Chief Kirmelewicz. Rodriguez said he thinks they should all be very happy to work for this town.

Selectman Greaney told the employees that when he walks around town he hears from residents how much they respect the Officers and appreciate the way they are treated by them when they call them for help; that the elderly in the housing out back (River Pines Senior Housing Complex) respect them and appreciate the dinners the department has organized for them in the past. Deputy Gillen responded they are planning something this Spring for the senior citizens. Greaney said the police helping with the kids at Pentucket with the cost for new bats was appreciated. Selectman Greaney also noted that when Deputy Gillen was away last year at F.B.I. training everyone in the department stepped up and helped during his absence. Dispatcher Fournier responded that "we are not a perfect department, but we are a good department."

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Deputy Gillen told the Board that the department has the best working relationship there has ever been with the Fire Department, and included also the Highway, Electric and Water Departments. He said he gets direct complements about their officers, how they look, what they do and how they conduct themselves. Gillen said they are a para military organization and the superior officers have an open door policy for all employees; that they can talk to any of them (Chief, Deputy, Sergeant) at any time, and that they've had no grievances. He also complemented their Dispatchers and part-time Reserve Officers.

Chairman Darke reported to the group that Selectman Gorski decided not to come down to the meeting because of issues with her having her son on the department.

Sgt. McDonald told the Board that limited funding prevents the training they would like to offer the men; that they would need \$2,000-\$3,000 for each training and that it's always been his belief that if they could get together three or four times a year it would really benefit the men and the department; that they do have on-line training but would really like to see them get some extra funding for regular training. Selectman Greaney suggested they try working with the Finance Board to possibly obtain some extra funding. Deputy Gillen reported that they are working on that and have taken advantage of training programs offered through MIIA, the town's insurance.

Chairman Darke suggested they put together a program and plan out what they want to do, bring it forward; that he would be in favor of transferring some money for that; that it's good for the men to have training.

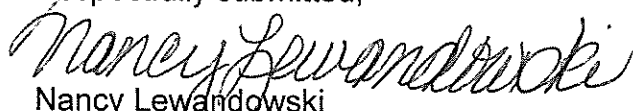
Patrolman Steve Petrone asked the Selectmen if they are planning to hire a full-time officer and Chairman Darke responded that they had not discussed that as a Board.

The Selectmen told the employees they appreciate everything they do and told them if they feel they need to talk to the Board they are available to listen, talk and be facilitators.

There being no further business to come before the Board, moved Greaney, seconded Darke, and it was

VOTED: To adjourn.
Adjourned at 6:19 P.M. 2-0

Respectfully submitted,


Nancy Lewandowski
Administrative Assistant

Note: Accepted by vote of Greaney/Darke on Mar. 25, 2013

3/18/13 - Reserve Officer Paul Pierce stopped by my office today to apologize for not being able to respond to the Board's order to attend this evening's meeting. Officer Pierce stated he works nights at his regular job but if the Board wants him to come back to see them any time during afternoon hours he would be happy to do so.

He asked me if I had any questions for him and I told him I did not, but that if he would like to comment at all on the purpose stated in the letter he received I would pass on his comments to the Board. He responded he would very much like to do so.

Officer Pierce told me that although his full-time job is as a power plant operator for Pfiezer, as a young boy he always wanted to work in law enforcement; that he had applied a number of years ago to another area town but wasn't selected. He has worked for Groveland for 5 years and loves his job. He does not see a problem with the morale at the station. He feels being a small group of guys they all get along really well @ and don't have the issues sometimes found in larger departments.

Officer Pierce stated he has no problems with any of his superior officers; that they have all been great to him and if there were issues he would feel very comfortable going to any of them about it. He believes them all to be fair and good men.

Officer Pierce stated he has no concerns about the management or men and women he works with at Groveland PD and if the Board would like him to return to speak with them personally, please let him know.

Nancy Lewandowski

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From: Lynn Crosby [lynnrosby16@hotmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, March 19, 2013 2:23 AM
To: Selectmen; chief@grovelandpolice.com; Jeff Gillen; Dwight McDonald
Subject: Groveland Police Discussion

My name is Lynn Crosby, I have been a Reserve Dispatcher for roughly 17 years. I was initially hired by Chief Sargent, then began working for Chief Weeks and most recently Chief Kirmelewicz.

After attending the meeting with the Groveland Board of Selectmen on Monday night, March 18, 2013 I had the opportunity to speak with Mr. Greaney and Dr. Darke regarding my impressions of the Groveland Police Department. During these conversations I explained how awkward it felt speaking while people who are not associated with the Department were in attendance. I also informed the two Selectmen of how well I believe the Department is being run and how much I enjoy working with each member of the Department. Basically, if I weren't searching for a job in Florida I would continue as an employee indefinitely.

I would like to submit the following detailed statements for the record. It is my sincere belief that the current leadership - Chief Kirmelewicz, Deputy Gillen and Sgt McDonald - have done a fantastic job of turning around the morale of the Department while doing everything in their power to clean the tarnished reputation of the Department in the wake of less than stellar leadership. Over the past few years I have seen procedures enacted where it is understood what is expected of each employee and true appreciation has been shown to every member of the Department for carrying out the daily tasks. Many positive changes have taken place and I'm sure many more changes will continue. The Chief, Deputy Chief and Sgt have always been available - with an open mind - if the opportunity to speak about any situation ever arose. I have never felt that either was unapproachable or that I could not bring concerns to their attention. Early in my career, the Department was plagued by micro-management and being under the leadership of an iron fist. There were also times when minimal leadership was provided and past lower ranking members of the Department felt they ran the show. These situations are a thing of the past and I believe most - if not all - members of the Department feel very fortunate to work at the Groveland Police Department. Unfortunately, there will be times when drama is unnecessarily brought to light; when this occurs I feel the Department as a whole sees it for what it is, moves past it and continues providing a safe community for the citizens of Groveland. It is very disappointing to me that drama is played out in this environment thereby distracting the attention of extremely professional and compassionate people employed by the Groveland Police Department.

Once again, I am extremely proud to be a member of the Groveland Police Department and enjoy all aspects of my job!

Thank you for the chance to be heard.

Respectfully,

Lynn Crosby
Reserve Dispatcher