

A special meeting of the Town Council held on Thursday, September 25, 2008 for the Town at Town Council Chambers and was called to order at 7:05 PM. Council President Budway presiding.

After pledging allegiance to the flag of our country, Town Clerk Long called the roll:

Councilman Collins-present	Councilman Salisbury - present
Councilwoman Knowlton-present	Councilman D'Agostino - present
Councilman Winfield - present	Council Vice-President Farrar - present
Council President Budway – present	

Motion made by Councilman D'Agostino, seconded by Councilman Collins and voted to adjourn to closed session at 7:06 PM pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5(A)3 – Discussion regarding security, including but not limited to, the deployment of security personnel or devices and to allow Town Clerk Long, Town Solicitor D'Agostino, Richard Tucker, Eddy Rogers, Fire Chiefs Campbell, Otto, Gaffney, Ellis, Chief of Police Randall, Al Ouellette from the Scituate Ambulance Corp, David Provonsil, Matthew Bellisle and Craig Pereira from Pare Corporation.

Councilman Collins-aye	Councilman Salisbury - aye
Councilwoman Knowlton-aye	Councilman D'Agostino –aye
Councilman Winfield –aye	Council Vice-President Farrar –aye
Council President Budway – aye	

Motion carries.

Open session reconvened at 8:07 PM.

First item is audience participation; Council President Budway asked if there is anyone in the audience that would like to speak on any agenda item and then any other item.

Richard Finnegan, Ridge Road said that he was in Foster police station last evening and they had 153 arrests to date. He said that when he checked to see how many arrests the Scituate Police had to date and they had 139 arrests. He said that there is a big difference in staffing, with the Scituate Police Department having more patrol officers and administrative staff but less arrests to date. He asked if the Chief of Police is looking for an increase or decrease in staffing. He said that Foster is having a lot arrests for DUI's from out of Town. He wanted to know how these drivers are getting through Scituate without being stopped but then getting stopped in Foster. He suggested that the Police Department might want to be a little more productive.

Council President Budway said that the next item on the agenda is the REAP contract. REAP is a group of municipalities that band together and purchase their electricity through the

League of Cities and Towns. He said that this contract will allow the League to negotiate and sign an energy contract on behalf of the Town Council.

Town Solicitor D'Agostino said that he reviewed the contract and found it in order.

Councilman Winfield asked if the Libraries and Fire Companies are allowed to purchase the discount electricity under the Town's contract. He said that most of them are Town buildings or get substantial monies from the Town. He asked if the Town Treasurer could investigate it.

Councilman Salisbury asked if anyone has ever checked to see if this is the best deal available. He asked if we find a contract that is less expensive, could we get out of this contract.

Town Solicitor D'Agostino said that the Town can negotiate with other energy providers.

Town Council President said that this contract does represent 36 out of the 39 communities in Rhode Island.

Councilwoman Knowlton asked if we could just cross off the provision for the League to sign a contract for us. She said let them do the leg work and then we can decide.

Councilman Winfield asked if there is a State contract.

Councilman Salisbury said that he would like to check out other sources and prices.

Council President Budway suggested that they find out what the provisions are if the town withdraws from the contract.

Councilman Winfield said that he thinks a study should be conducted to see which carrier has the best price.

Motion made by Councilman Salisbury, seconded by Councilwoman Knowlton and voted to table the REAP contract until further studies can be done.

Councilman Collins-aye

Councilman Salisbury - aye

Councilwoman Knowlton-aye

Councilman D'Agostino -aye

Councilman Winfield -aye

Council Vice-President Farrar -aye

Council President Budway - aye

Motion carries.

Chief Randall made a presentation that was written by Officer King in regards to using the Chopmist Hill Center as a work station for the North end car. He said that this would not be a substation so therefore you would not need all of the equipment and personnel. He said that the officer that would be used is the one vacated by Richard Tucker, Emergency Management Director. He said that they will use it for routine investigative work, returning phone calls and writing reports. This will save time, money and allow the Police Officer to be on the road for longer periods of time. Chief Randall said that all major investigations and interviewing

witnesses would be done at the Police Station. He said some of the key points to this proposal are; improving response times, improve case investigation and preparation, better working conditions, reduce fuel cost/vehicle maintenance, increase police presence, improve senior citizen relations and increase Officer's morale.

Councilman D'Agostino said that he thought it was a good idea.

Councilman Winfield said that he is against the proposal but he is against getting paper work last minute and then be expected to vote on it. He said that if this comes to a vote he will have to abstain.

Councilman Salisbury said that in looking at the list of equipment that will be needed he is wondering why a phone and phone line will be needed since there should be one there.

Councilman Winfield asked Town Treasurer Przybyla asked if the phone service is under a State contract.

Richard Finnegan, 47 Ridge Road said that he understands what the chief is saying but he is wondering why they wouldn't use the Town Council Chambers because this is in the middle of the Town.

Council President Budway said that Council Chambers are used a lot at night for meetings.

Next on the agenda is the discussion of the staffing needs at the Police Station. Chief Randall said that currently he has 16 officers with two of them being in the academy and not ready for full duty until February 2009. He said that with the two in the academy he is still down two Officers. He said that he is having a hard time filling the shifts when someone is out sick or on vacation. He also said that this is causing a lot of overtime. He also said that way the demographics are in the Police Department there are no members with between 11-17 years on the force. He said this is not good because if everyone with more than 20 years retired then the administrative staff would be drawn from members without that many years of service.

Chief Randall said that the next academy starts in December 2008, with 15 weeks in the academy and 9 weeks in field training, that person will not be able to ride alone until June 2009. He said that if he puts one in December and then one in March he will be fully staffed in the fall of 2009 barring any retirements or resignations.

Chief Randall said that in the months of July and August there was a lot of overtime and people were ordered back. This is because Chief Mack and Richard Krajewski had a lot of time they had to discharge before their retirements.

Chief Randall said what really hurts morale is when an officer is ordered back to duty. He said this happens when you cannot voluntarily get someone to fill a vacant shift. He said it doesn't matter what the officer is doing they have to come back to work. He said that he is spending a lot time and energy trying to keep everything under control and to keep the morale up.

Chief Randall said that his proposal is to put one recruit in the December 2008 academy and one recruit in the March 2009 academy.

Councilman D'Agostino said that he thinks it is a good idea and better than spending a lot of money on overtime and having disgruntled employees.

Chief Randall said he has not overspent his overtime budget yet but he is still looking at the two busiest months for overtime,(i.e. October and December) he said the he also has to abide by the union contract which has a stipulation for minimum staffing levels.

He said the per the FBI statistics for a Town with your population in a New England State we should have 1.8 officers per 1000 residents which equals 18 officers, actually what he is asking for.

Councilman Winfield asked what the statistics are for a Town with less than 10,000 people.

Chief Randall said that he does not have that information but will get it for him. He said that what he is asking for is not unrealistic. He said that this could become a serious situation because if someone goes out on injured status he doesn't know what he would do.

Councilman Collins said that when he was Deputy Chief two years ago if the staffing became that low he would take a shift and if he couldn't the Chief would. Have you ever considered that?

Chief Randall said that they could and would absorb the load for short periods of time but the Town is not paying a Chief, Deputy Chief or Lt. to do patrol work.

Councilman Collins said that he would work the eight hour shift to save the Town money.

Chief Randall said that there are a lot of reasons not to put administration on the road, it causes a breakdown in the chain of command and it is counterproductive.

Council Vice President Farrar said that he served 20 years in the military and knew how bad for morale it is being ordered back to work. He asked if there is anywhere in the contract that might give the Town some relief from all of these restrictions.

Councilman Winfield said that the Town is looking at a very bad year financially and things are only going to get harder. He said that the School continues to take more and more of the money and he doesn't see any end in sight. He said that the Town might have to ask the State Police to do a shift or two.

Chief Randall said that he is under the same financial pressures as the rest of the Town is. He also said that the State Police are facing the same hardships.

Councilman Winfield asked Chief Randall if he has thought about putting the School Resource Officer back on the streets.

Chief Randall said that a lot of the calls and arrests are from the schools. He feels that he is more effective there.

Councilwoman Knowlton asked if the School Resource Officer is on the road in the summer.

Chief Randall said no, he is doing his paper work and taking his vacations.

Councilman Salisbury said that he feels that the Council should compromise and approve one recruit for the December 2008 academy and then look at the budget and see about the recruit for the March 2009 academy. He said that the Council should have a better grasp on next year's budget and he feels that the new Council should make the decision.

Richard Finnegan, Ridge Road asked if the Council has ever thought of regionalizing the police services. For example, Foster, Gloucester and Scituate could form a tri-town Police Department.

Councilman Winfield said that we are trying it with the Dog Pound and that is not going very well.

Council President Budway said that once we get into the budget season we can consider all options within are legal limitations and have a look at all collective bargaining agreements. He said that Council will have to look long and hard and not rule anything out.

Richard Finnegan said that this is a nice safe Town maybe we don't need so many Police Officers.

Council Vice-President Farrar said that we cannot change the collective bargaining agreement without sitting down with both sides.

Motion made by Councilman Salisbury, seconded by Councilman Collins and voted to approve the placement of one recruit in the December 2008 Police Academy.

Councilman Collins-aye

Councilman Salisbury - aye

Councilwoman Knowlton-aye

Councilman D'Agostino -aye

Councilman Winfield –aye

Council Vice-President Farrar –aye

Council President Budway – aye

Motion carries.

Motion made by Councilman Salisbury, seconded by Councilman Collins and voted to adjourn at 9:12 PM and to keep the minutes of the meetings previously closed to the public; closed pursuant to RIGL 42-46-4 and 42-46-5 and to allow the Town Clerk 14 days to prepare the minutes of the meeting.

Councilman Collins-aye

Councilman Salisbury - aye

Councilwoman Knowlton-aye

Councilman D'Agostino –aye

Councilman Winfield –aye

Council Vice-President Farrar –aye

Council President Budway – aye

Motion carries.

For complete discussion, refer to audiotape.

Attest:

Margaret M. Long, Town Clerk