



BOARD OF SELECTMEN

CHARLES E. SHEPARD MUNICIPAL BUILDING

48 High St. • P.O. Box 609 • Warren, MA 01083-0609 • Tel. 413-436-5701 • Fax 413-436-9754

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES OF OCTOBER 7, 2020

PRESENT: Mr. John A. Nason; Chairman, Mr. Marc Richard; Vice-Chairman and Mr. David Dufresne, Clerk

ATTENDEES: See attached list

Opened the Meeting at 7:15 PM

Mr. Nason opened the meeting and dispensed with the Pledge of Allegiance. He advised all that this meeting is being video, and audio taped.

The Board met this evening with Chief Millette and Chief Lavoie to discuss the communication infrastructure project. Due to recent weather events, the radio communication system has gone down, thus leaving police and fire personnel unable to communicate when on portables. An initial price of such an undertaking was estimated to be in the \$320K price range, which was for a 2-site system. Mr. Craig Gagne from Modular Communications was in attendance this evening to discuss the latest proposal which the price is based on a worst-case scenario. The new estimated cost is approximately \$546K, allowing for a 3-site system, which is far greater coverage overall.

Mr. Nason questioned as to why in two months we went from no issues and not needing anything to needing this kind of funding. Chief Lavoie stated that technology has changed dramatically over the last several years and said that the Police Department should not be on phone lines as they are the most vulnerable.

The recent failures signal end of life for the equipment and the systems we have in place are designed for a 10-15-year life span. Ours are well beyond that making getting replacement parts next to impossible. Mr. Nason again questioned why this hasn't been discussed prior. Chief Lavoie cited a lack of Finance Committee or Capital Planning over projects such as this. The Board of Selectmen serve as both in any vacancy so that is why the Chiefs are here tonight. Mr. Gagne stated that there isn't much anyone can do to get it back up and running. Mr. Nason would like to see what we could do to limp along until more information and discussions on funding is had.

Mr. Richard stated that the Selectmen are just in sticker shock. Chief Lavoie stated that it is understandable as the report just came into the office approximately 1 hour prior to the meeting. All parties are just getting to digest the numbers. Again, this figure is based on a worst-case scenario and more than likely, we would see a reduction in costs. Mr. Gagne further explained that the Police lines are Verizon lines and they could opt to end the lines entirely, which he has seen happen before. The current lines are upwards of 60 years old. Chief Lavoie did go on to say that there are options to alleviate the burden to the taxpayers such as grants through RRECC and loans, however grants are a rare commodity currently. Chief Lavoie stated that the 2-site system would work, however in no way ideal. Mr. Gagne stated that a well-engineered site would return a life span of approximately 15 years.

Mr. Dufresne also discussed the matter of RRECC dropping calls. Both Chief's stated that this last weather event was going on in all towns that they service, and the call volume would have resulted in the same outcome even if we were dispatching locally. Mr. Dufresne went on to question why we're paying for a service to RRECC which they don't seem to

provide during emergency situations. Chief Lavoie stated that the Director of RRECC, Michael Moriarity is not in attendance this evening as he himself is working the phones and feels that any discussion regarding that subject should be tabled until he is present to answer questions.

Mr. Nason feels the Highway Department should be involved and at this point the Board needs additional information in order to determine which manner to move forward. Mr. Gagne strongly recommended that the town consider hiring a communications consultant as it is money well spent.

Additional discussion will take place at an upcoming meeting which is to be determined.

Motion to Adjourn made by Mr. Richard; second: Mr. Dufresne – unanimous at 8:55 PM

Respectfully submitted,



Rebecca Acerra
Administrative Secretary



David P. Dufresne, Sr., Clerk

Approved 10-27-20