

SPECIAL SELECTMEN'S MEETING  
NOVEMBER 25, 2013

Attendees: Ryan Thurber, Steve Wright, Mike Charette, Jim Horrigan, Avis Bruce-Hurley, Ray Hurley, Rob Thurber, and a reporter from the Bennington Banner

The "Special Meeting" was called to order at 5 pm by Ryan Thurber.....Mike seconded the motion.....all in favor, yes.

Unpaid Bills For The Sheriff's Department: Ryan made the motion to pay the unpaid bills to the Bennington County Sheriff's Department.....Mike seconded the motion and a discussion was had.

Mike suggested that when the town makes the new contract that it has to make sure some of Jim's concerns and words are in the contract.....accountability, how many stops, what kind of offenses they may have been and things of the like and we might be able to figure out what kind of reimbursement that we might get from the state. I know that the Sheriff's Department isn't the ones who gives us the money, but they are the ones who generate it and sends it back and our present contract does not have anything that we can expect to have details back from the Sheriff's Department.

Ryan stated that before the town negotiates, that the Bennington County Sheriff's Department had contacted him and that they said that if the town wanted total coverage, then the town should contact the Vermont State Police.

Steve stated that he thought the town was paying for "patrols" and that the speeding tickets were secondary.

Mike asked, "So if the town does not pay the bills, then the Sheriff's Department is not going to honor the contract that Woodford signed?"

Jim noted that technically, Woodford did not have a current contract.....Ryan reiterated the same.

Steve stated that it said in the contract that it was for "patrols".....speeding tickets are secondary and that Woodford should not have to pay for the information.....further stating, that he had never submitted anyone a bill without knowing what their services were for.

Mike suggested that there should be a more detailed invoice when the bill came to the town.

Steve noted that Woodford should have at least the "patrol" information.....what and where did they "patrol".

Jim stated that he can not go to the state and find out what the break down is.

Jim also noted that the Sheriff's Department had written \$20,000 worth of tickets this year and that the town has gotten back about \$8,000- \$9,000.....Steve acknowledged that it was right in line and Jim disagreed.

Steve noted that Vermont State probably keeps about 75% of that money and that is in line from day one.....as long as he has served.

Steve suggested that if there were a situation such as a dog bite, or the removal of the computer, then possibly it should be recorded, but not for speeders.....only "patrol".

Ryan stated that he felt that the bills should be paid and then if the town could not get a contract signed with the Bennington County Sheriff's Department, then as it currently stands.....

Steve noted that the town was just holding the money back until the town had an understanding and not that the town was not going to pay he Sheriff's Department.

The idea was to get the information because every body wanted it. He also stated that the contract was never and adventure to make money off from the speeding tickets. It was to "patrol" the community.....stating that the town is in the "green" by the money that they had made for the town over the years.

Mike suggested that in the budget meeting that the board should discuss the contract further, but that the purpose of the "Special Meeting" was to decide whether or not to pay the two (2) bills or not.

Steve mentioned that the subject at hand needed to be discussed as to what the town wanted.....to cut back hours possibly? He noted that the "patrol used to be for ten (10) hours and it was increased to 20 hours, but he also noted that it used to be subsidized through grants.

Steve looked at the contract and noted that it was dated February 27, 2013. He asked why was it never presented to the board?.....no answer was had.

Ryan brought the meeting back to the attention of the "motion" to pay the bills.....there was already a second by Mike.....Steve accepted the motion.....all in favor, yes.

Jim asked if Ryan wanted the checks so that he may delivery them personally to the Sheriff's Department and Ryan said no and to just send the check to them.

Ryan also stated that he hoped that the door was not completely closed to the Bennington County Sheriff's Department.

Avis suggested that a lot of the problem that Jim encountered stemmed from the fact that the town budgeted for only one-half of what the town figured to be the expense, with the comment being that the board did not want to overcast the people and hopefully that the town could recover the expenses. She also noted that at the last two (2) meetings that the people wanted more accounting and that it was what Jim was running into also, as he was running tight with the budget.....and that Jim could not do proper accounting.

Ryan and Steve noted that the town had voted on an \$11,000 budget for the Sheriff's Department and that it had not yet spent the money budgeted yet this fiscal year ..... suggesting that if there are issues in the computer program, than that is where the issue needs to be addressed.....Avis agreed.

Jim noted that when he ran for the office of treasurer that he did not know everything and that he felt that he needed to know what was going on so that he could explain it to the voters.

Steve noted that Jim insisted that the town had spent the money, when in fact, the town had not yet spent the money.

Rob asked what the problem was as far as revenues coming in from the state.

Jim explained that in the financial statements that they listed that the Bennington County Sheriff's had been paid \$11,000 for "expenditures", and to date, they have been paid \$16,150, plus what was to be issued for the two (2) outstanding bills.....on the "revenue" side of that Woodford has paid in \$8,000-\$9,000.....Jim does not know how much is to come back from the state as he does not know what the formula is.

Rob noted that it is the state that is the controller of the money coming back to the town and that he was never able to resolve the issue himself when he tried.

Jim reiterated that he did not care at all about the charges and that he just wanted to understand the process.

Mike suggested that the town budget more in the future or to cut the hours back.

Ryan stated again that he hoped that the town could still continue to work with the Bennington County Sheriff's Department.

Jim mentioned that he tried to speak with the Sheriff's Department and was told that they would only speak to the selectmen.

Ryan noted that it was the selectmen that signed the contract and that they were the ones to whom the Sheriff's Department was accountable.

page 4

Avis noted that Captain Hurley sought out information for the town and that he found out that the computer program that the Sheriff's were using was a very user unfriendly program that the state used.

Jim was concerned about the "transparency" and Rob noted that the state was never going to give up their revenue and that it would be difficult to get the information.

Steve suggested that if there was accountability for the hours served then possibly this should satisfy the concerns.

Rob noted that there are negotiations made sometimes on the fines, so the money fluctuates and is difficult to account for, but the information could be found out if anyone was interested.

Ryan made a motion to adjourn.....Mike seconded the motion.....all in favor, yes.

Meeting adjourned at 5:57 pm.

Acting Secretary,  
Betty Charette