

**JOINT MEETING  
TOWN OF CHESTER  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
and  
TOWN OF BLANDFORD  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
October 25, 2018**

**OPEN SESSION 1:00 p.m.**

**E. McVey**, Clerk; **W. Levakis**, Member; **J. Garcia**, Interim Town Administrator; **Julia Novak** (by phone); **Jim Mazik**; **John Baldasaro**; **Daniel Ilnicky**; **Bill Connor** in attendance.

**Meeting called to order at 1:00 pm**

Jim Mazik of Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, started the meeting and introduced Bill Connor and Julie Novak of the Novak Consulting Group.

It was shared that the purpose of the meeting is to determine expectations and goals (short versus long-term) for the exploratory process of sharing police services between Chester and Blandford. Also, identifying any concerns that folks would like to see addressed as well.

John Baldasaro, Chairman of the Chester Board of Selectmen, shared his interest in identifying potential cost savings and also learning what a shared police service arrangement would look like.

Eric McVey, Clerk of the Blandford Board of Selectmen, expressed his concern around leadership and transparency at the Blandford Police Department throughout the years. Department needs were never backed up with adequate data to confirm these needs and there was not a plan in place to address them. Mr. McVey was curious to learn through the exploratory process where the individual capacity of the police department stands and what are the gaps that need to be worked on questioning how the two towns can maximize these services and costs to meet these gaps. Upon identifying these options, Mr. McVey expressed to the consultants the importance of including, within their scope, one of two public meeting sessions to discuss with the communities involved.

Bill Levakis, Member of the Blandford Board of Selectmen, shared his interest in learning how the governance structure of a shared police department would look like. Bill Connor talked about the difference of service sharing and consolidation and referenced a Massachusetts law that outlines structure for governance.

Police Chief Daniel Ilnicky noted how officer safety is a priority and expressed his concern of having two different control centers for the two towns which sometimes creates a lapse that places an officer and/or the community at risk. A decision of how communication is going to work should be included in the process.

Bill Levakis asked about the Novak Consulting Group's success rate for implementation of a shared service arrangement. Bill Connor and Joshua Garcia, Interim Town Administrator for the Town of Blandford, explained that this phase is only a feasibility stage to identify options for what is possible. The end product will be a tangible document that the two towns can use as a tool to assist with decision making. The success of implementation is only within the town's willingness to pursue any of these options.

Eric McVey brought up to the consultants the potential for the future turnpike exit and to keep that in mind when doing its analysis. Eric also expressed his interest in seeing how a partnership arrangement can make professional positions more desirable to attract qualified and skilled candidates for the police department. Mr. McVey was also curious about whether or not there are community bylaws that need to be presented.

Bill Levakis shared interest in learning about any potential grants that may exist to support a shared police department.

Mr. Garcia revisited a discussion to confirm the desire for a public meeting to solicit input from the public. Ms. Novak shared that the scope is limited for community outreach but will revisit the scope with Jim Mazik to ensure a public meeting for a final presentation.

Bill Connor will be spending time at each of the towns doing interviews and assessing police infrastructure. Mr. Connor had asked the Boards whether or not he should interview past police officers. Joshua shared that he could for Blandford but he probably will not get much help. Bill Levakis express a strong interest in not interviewing former police officers of Blandford.

Mr. Connor provided to the towns a list of items he is seeking information on. Chief Ilnicky took the lead and said he would work on getting this information to Mr. Connor.

Meeting adjourned 2:02 pm

Submitted by: Joshua Garcia  
Interim Town Administrator

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Eric McVey, Clerk

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William Levakis, Member