

**TOWN OF WOLFEBORO
BUDGET COMMITTEE
APPROVED MINUTES
January 17, 2023**

I. Call To Order

Chairman MacDonald opened the meeting at 6:05 pm at the Wolfeboro Public Library.

Members Present: John MacDonald, Chairman, Bob Tougher, Vice-Chairman, John Burt, Bob Loughman, Brian Black, Tom Bell, Bob Moholland, Matt Plache, Steve Johnson, Members, Brian Deshaies, BOS Representative, Linda Murray, BOS Alternate Representative.

Staff Present: Jim Pineo, Town Manager, Kathy Carpentier, Finance Director, Lee Ann Hendrickson, Administrative Assistant.

The Committee participated in the pledge of allegiance.

II. SRO Warrant Article

John MacDonald stated the Committee has been asked to reconsider their position on the school resource officer; noting Dean Rondeau requested the Committee reconvene to review information that was not provided at the public hearing.

It was moved by John MacDonald and seconded by Tom Bell to reconsider the Committee's vote on the School Resource Officer warrant article. Roll call vote: Bob Tougher – yes, John Burt – yes, John MacDonald – yes, Tom Bell – yes, Bob Moholland – yes, Brian Black – yes, Matt Plache – yes, Steve Johnson – yes, Bob Loughman – yes. The motion passed (9-0-0).

Dean Rondeau asked for a round of applause to the Town's firefighters for last night's work (Hunter's Shop and Save fire). He reviewed data from the middle school and contacted the SAU; noting the SAU is the entity that inputs the administrative data.

Steve Wood stated the Police Commissioner reviewed the authority of the Police Commission. He stated the Commission receives a monthly report from the SRO and noted an uptick in 2021 of increased violence on school grounds (90 cases). He stated the number increased this year and the Commission decided in a nonpublic session in October 2022 to move forward with this initiative and request for an additional SRO. He stated the information provided is from the Assistant Superintendent and noted they have a duty to report – what they are reporting to the State based on their requirement. He reviewed the data reported to the State.

Dean Rondeau stated there are 169 total incidents.

Steve Wood stated there were 80 incidents of violence in 2022 at the middle school; noting the number is high compared to other schools in the State. He stated the in-school suspension rates have increased; noting 4.59% increase and the middle school was 13.785% and out of school suspensions for the middle school in 2022 was 20.22%.

Dean Rondeau stated the trend can be followed back to 2016 and noted the data is administrative data. He reviewed data from the list and number of offenses provided to the Committee from the SRO.

John MacDonald stated the Committee received the statistics the night of the public hearing and noted the Committee did not have any data to support the request. He stated that if the Department had provided the data to support the request, this meeting may not have had to occur.

Matt Plache confirmed the data shows that 20.22% of students at the middle school have received an out of school suspension in 2022.

Steve Wood stated he doesn't know the parameters for suspensions and noted that it could be "frequent flyers."

Brian Deshaies asked if the district information is broken down by school.

Steve Wood replied no.

Linda Murray asked if the data reflects the complex.

Dean Rondeau stated the data being reviewed is for the middle school.

Brian Deshaies confirmed that Crescent Lake School is not included as part of the complex and confirmed that there is an existing part-time SRO at both Crescent Lake School and Carpenter School. He questioned the definition of part-time.

Steve Wood replied 24 hours/week.

Brian Deshaies confirmed 6 hours/day between the two schools.

John Burt asked how much the SAU pays for the SRO.

Steve Wood replied the SAU reimburses the Town \$306/day/per SRO (\$55,080).

John Burt questioned the number of full-time employees at the Police Department.

Mark Livie replied 14.

John Burt questioned the distance between the middle school and high school.

Steve Wood stated the schools are attached, connected by a hallway.

John Burt confirmed the SRO is addressing issues with the students and not for safety if someone comes in with an AR15.

Steve Wood stated the SRO serves multiple roles however, primarily they are a deterrent to those coming in from the outside trying to do harm. He stated the SRO is a means of relief from acts of violence.

Bob Loughman asked of the 198 offenses provided in the 2022 data, how many are acts of violence.

Mark Livie stated he doesn't know without going through the data.

Dean Rondeau stated the Committee could go through the numbers and determine such.

John MacDonald stated the Committee shouldn't have to do that and the information should be provided to the Committee.

Bob Loughman stated the Committee has three sets of numbers that are being presented and the reports are causing confusion.

Dean Rondeau stated one report is administrative in nature (KRMS Dashboard); noting such may not rise to a criminal offense, however, meets the SAU's reporting criteria.

Bob Loughman confirmed the 198 incidents are cases the SRO is investigating.

Shawn Coope reviewed the type of offenses that are considered violations and violent crimes.

Steve Johnson asked why the dashboard reflects 0 expulsions and stated he believes the SRO is a band aid to the underlying issues in the School. He stated he would like to have a discussion with the School Board as to what they are doing to have a standard of proper behavior and etiquette.

Dean Rondeau stated he is aware that the district does expel students.

Steve Wood noted that every student receives a code of conduct handbook; noting such is the standard to which the student is being held.

Steve Johnson questioned the execution of such and questioned whether such is being applied.

Brian Black stated what convinced him to vote in favor was the report submitted by the SRO and the 198 cases. He questioned the number of times an officer has been called off the road to assist the SRO; noting the school district does not fund that officer. He stated he would like to see the SRO benefit from a part-time position and address those times when help is needed.

Steve Wood stated the original thought was to have two SROs, one for the middle school and the other for the elementary schools. He stated that he was told by the SAU that if they were to fund elementary school SRO in Wolfeboro that the other elementary schools within the district would ask for an SRO and that would not be supported.

Brian Black agrees there is a benefit of having an officer at elementary schools and feels that if a large crisis happens at the high school or middle school that the SRO would receive help from a police officer. Therefore, he questioned the value of assigning a part-time SRO at the elementary schools.

Brian Deshaies stated according to the State's statistics over the last ten years, violent crimes have decreased in the State of NH. He stated the only thing up in the State for crime statistics is larceny. He stated the CDC states that mental health counselors do the most productive work in stopping violence in school situations. He stated SROs are important in addressing general concerns of students that attend school. He stated he asked Shawn Coope if there was ever an incident that the SRO was not available and was told no. He stated SRO Devine was trained by the National Association for School Resource Officers and asked how long Officer Devine has been at the school.

Steve Wood replied 2020.

Referencing the 198 cases, Matt Plache asked if the cases are juvenile delinquent cases.

Dean Rondeau replied yes.

Matt Plache confirmed that only juvenile delinquent cases generate a report and asked what an SRO does and the benefits of an SRO outside of a school shooting.

Mark Livie stated that other than the actual cases, connecting with the students is a huge benefit.

Steve Wood stated SRO Devine tries to get to the middle school to talk to the students but can't because she's buried in cases and work.

Linda Murray stated Officer Devine did an outstanding job explaining her role at the school board meeting.

Steve Wood stated she would be at the deliberative session.

Dean Rondeau stated deterrence and prevention are pieces of the SRO's job and connecting with the students is important. He stated the security piece is also important.

Bob Tougher reviewed the following data from the Department of Education reported to the State from the school district for the middle school only; number of restraint reports generated – 0, number of active ongoing investigations – 0, investigated and closed – 0, number of restraints as a result of these reports – 0, serious injury or death – 0, number of seclusions generated – 0, number of active ongoing investigations – 0, investigated and closed – 0. Number of harassment incident reports gender related – 2, sexual orientation – 4, race, color, or national origin – 4, disability – 1, physical characteristics other than race – 0. Number of students reported to be harassed for gender – 2, sexual orientation – 3, race, color, or national origin – 1, disability – 1, physical characteristics other than race – 0. Number of students disciplined for engaging in harassment gender related – 0, sexual orientation – 2, race, color, or national origin – 1, disability – 1, physical characteristics other than race – 1. Bullying: incidents reported of bullying of any kind – 5, cyber bullying – 2, investigated and actual cases found for both bullying of any kind and cyber bullying – 0, incidents based on gender – 0, sexual orientation – 0, race, color or national origin – 0, disability – 0, physical characteristics – 0, any other basis – 0, were a pattern of deliberative harmful events – 0, including physical harm – 0, including property damage – 0, use social/emotional alienation – 0, interfered with educational opportunities – 0, disrupted school operations – 0. Incidents that resulted in expulsion or suspension for at least one full day: violent incidents with physical injury requiring professional medical attention – 0, violent incidents including bullying and harassment without injury – 0, weapons possession – 2, illicit drugs – 12, alcohol – 0, other incidents related to drug or alcohol use, weapons possession, or violence – 55, disruption – 47, defiance – 36, inappropriate language – 22, all other incidents – 8. Count of students who received in-school suspension – 71, students who received out-of-school suspensions – 111, students who were expelled – 0. Handgun, rifle, shotgun, and firearm incidents – 0, homicide, aggravated felonies, assault, felonious sexual assaults, robberies, firearms possession, or sales – 0. Number of students habitually truant – 82.

Tom Bell asked where data comes from.

Bob Tougher replied NH State Department of Education as reported by the Governor Wentworth Regional School District. Referencing the secret service report, he stated a study was conducted on 41 schools over the past 20 years and reviewed such. He read the following on the introductory page, "Despite prompt law enforcement responses most attacks were stopped by other means than law enforcement actions." He stated most of the schools in the study implemented some type of physical security measure and 2/3 of them had at least a part-time SRO at the time of the attack. He reviewed the data on reporting tools for those schools. He stated he is concerned about a false sense of security by placing a SRO in the school. He stated he doesn't agree with the financial situation; noting that the SRO will be assigned to the school buildings ten months of the year and the Town gets to use that officer for two months out of the year. He stated the Town's taxpayers pay 50% of the cost of the officer out of the Town's property taxes and then have to pay a prorated amount of 35% of the school district's taxes to get use of the officer. He stated the Board of Education voted 6-4-0 and doesn't see the vote as an enthusiastic response. He stated Brewster has the same number of students as the middle school and they have security, a retired State Trooper.

Mark Livie stated Brewster just hired overnight security.

Brian Deshaies stated Brewster also has a more advanced mental health department.

Suzanne Ryan stated the school has an agreement with the Police Department and it lays out a scope and assignment of the SRO relative to truancy, violence issues, bullying, theft, drugs, driver passenger safety issues, etc. She stated that when she asked what a SRO does in our district, she was told that this year the

superintendent called a meeting of all the towns, police departments, fire departments, administrators to discuss how to protect the compound. She stated three grants were received and alarms and security will be implemented. She asked whether the schools have a metal detector and the response was no. She read the school district's warrant article; noting the article only plans for one year. She stated the taxpayers are responsible for \$72,000 and the school district does not have the money to start the process.

Brodie Deshaies stated the school district's budget starts on July 1 however, the SRO won't start until September.

Brian Deshaies confirmed the doors are open when students go from one building to another in between classes.

Mark Livie stated it is an open campus.

John MacDonald asked if the warrant article read by Suzanne Ryan is accurate.

Brodie Deshaies replied yes.

John MacDonald stated the Town's warrant article is different from the school district's warrant article and recommended asking the district to amend the language to reflect the language of the Town's warrant article.

Linda Murray agreed with John MacDonald.

Brodie stated the agreement that Suzanne Ryan referred to is important because a lot of questions asked are included in the agreement and encouraged the Committee to review such.

Brian Black asked Brodie Deshaies how he sees the school district dealing with the language of their warrant article language only addressing the funding for one year.

Brodie Deshaies stated that in the past the school district will assess whether to include such in the operating budget which is assessed during the budget year and will happen next fall. He stated there would have to be another warrant article or include the position in the operating budget.

Linda Murray stated the Town could amend the language at the deliberative session to reflect a period of one year.

Suzanne Ryan reviewed the discrepancies between the school district and Town's warrant article and noted the Town cannot direct the school board to pay for anything. She stated the Town has no jurisdiction over the school district's article nor does the school district have jurisdiction over the Town's warrant article.

Luke Freudenberg stated the Police Commission held a public forum this past summer and people expressed concern for school safety. He stated the issue is being debated when it should go to the voters. He stated that if one shooting or one student getting injured can be prevented then that is all that matters.

Bob O'Brien stated the issue is bigger than Wolfeboro and is an issue across the State. He stated the Commission is planning for the future.

Matt Plache asked if the \$55,000 commitment would be covered in the agreement.

Dean Rondeau replied yes.

Brodie Deshaies stated the agreement is very clear that it is for one officer and the agreement is reaffirmed every year.

Matt Plache asked if the agreement covers the second officer at this point.

Steve Wood replied no, the agreement hasn't been voted on.

Brian Deshaies stated the agreement is called a Resource Officer Agreement between the Wolfeboro Police Department and the Governor Wentworth Regional School District.

Tom Bell asked if there needs to be congruence between the SAU warrant article and the Town's warrant article.

Steve Wood stated he would speak to the school district regarding the warrant article.

John MacDonald asked whether the Police Commission and Police Department agrees that the SRO has to be certified by the National Association of School Resource Officers prior to contact with a youth and prior to an assignment.

Dean Rondeau replied yes.

John MacDonald asked whether the Police Commission and Police Department agree that the Commission and Department works with stakeholders and oversee the development of a model SRO memorandum of understanding between the Department and the school district that clearly defines the roles, prohibitions, and expectations of the SRO's role in the school's setting specifically with regard to the SRO's role with student discipline for noncriminal matters.

Dean Rondeau replied yes.

John MacDonald stated these statements are executive orders from the Governor.

Dean Rondeau stated the Department is moving in the direction of accreditation.

Jim Pineo asked the Police Commission if there is an intention for another SRO in the next five years or additional staffing in the next five years.

Steve Wood replied no to additional SRO personnel. With regard to additional personnel in the Police Department, he stated it is desirous and sees the need to staff the midnight shift and increase from one officer to two officers. He stated they are exploring a three-year proposal, one officer each year for 3 years.

Brian Deshaies asked if the additional staffing at the Police Department would require additional cruisers.

Steve Wood replied no and that there is no intent to increase the fleet.

John MacDonald asked if the new SRO would count as one of the three officers.

Steve Wood replied no.

Bob Tougher stated the secret service report stated that in school attacks 51% of the incidents were ended by the person making the attack either through surrender, by suicide, or by escape. He stated 12% of the attacks were ended by the SRO, 1 was ended by a custodian and the remainder were ended by school staff.

Jim Pineo stated part of the SRO's responsibility in emergency management is to recognize things before it gets to that point and view potential threats prior to an incident to minimize the incident. He stated it will never be known the number of incidents prevented.

Steve Johnson stated the warrant article presented by the BOS is not meshing with the School District's warrant article and asked why the Committee would vote on the warrant article prior to that issue being resolved.

Linda Murray stated the Deliberative Session is the only time the warrant article can be amended.

It was moved by Matt Plache and seconded by Bob Loughman to recommend the School Resource Officer Warrant Article. Roll call vote: Bob Tougher – no, John Burt – no, John MacDonald – yes, Tom Bell – yes, Bob Moholland – no, Brian Black – yes, Matt Plache – yes, Steve Johnson – no, Bob Loughman – yes. The motion passed (5-4-0).

III. Other Business

None.

IV. Public Comment

None.

V. Adjournment

It was moved by Steve Johnson and seconded by Matt Plache to adjourn the January 17, 2023 Wolfeboro Budget Committee meeting. All members voted in favor. The motion passed.

There being no further business before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 7:38 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Ann Hendrickson

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