

Citizen Advisory Committee
May 14, 2024
6:00 p.m.

1. Organization:

- a. Review agenda.
- b. Other organizational items -
 - i. Approve [04.09.24 Minutes](#)
- Motion to accept Vincent, Seconded Roy, approved unanimously

2. Citizen's Comments (10 minutes)

Raymond Salmila is willing to let the Neighborhood Watch (NW) use his land to post signs. What will be different about NW this time? We have tried it in the past and it didn't work. Chief Williams stated, "I'm what's different" and said he believes that sometimes things don't always work out at a specific time but that they may work out with different timing and different people at the table. He is willing to try new ideas and tweak them if needed before moving on. He will make sure that the PD is involved with NW. The program has his full support.

Reviewed ways the community can connect with the Police Advisory Committee: email: cac.chester.vt@gmail.com or by calling the town hall or the PD.

3. Chester Police Department Comments and/ or Input (25 minutes)

Got 2 new computers for cruisers, \$8,000 each, funded completely with grants not taxpayer dollars.

PD spends a lot of time on paperwork to be sure to stay on top of officer training and changes in policies.

PD has been working hard to obtain grant funding for necessities and things to improve the services they provide. These grants have included:

Funding for an officer to get commercial drivers license training enforcement to focus specifically on overweight vehicles. This training compliments the scales are currently "on loan" from the DMV. Fines for being overweight can be hefty. The town keeps 50% of any fines that are included in the town's ordinances. If it isn't in the ordinance the town typically gets 20% - 30%.

The town can add ordinances but needs to have a way to enforce the ordinances which can be challenging sometimes.

Grants have also been received for 2 flashing traffic signs, 33K, bullet proof vests at \$1600 per vest. Vests are good for 5 years. A vest that gets wet needs to be replaced because it can let a bullet through!

A 25k grant was also received for 'National Night Out' a national event where the PD's put on a totally free community event to meet community members and bring them together.

\$14,000 was received for backpacks for CERT volunteers that contain safety equipment. All CERT volunteers will be trained in first aid and CPR. Currently working on a grant for a vehicle and trailer that can move the CERT teams around along with cones and signage.

The Chief pays attention to what 's happening notionally to see if it's something that can be tweaked to make it work for Chester.

The Chief reminded all that his door is always open, and the coffee is always on!

A meeting attendee noted that she appreciated the officer that used his police car to stop traffic for her. She had been waiting at a cross walk and no one was stopping to let her go.

4. Sub-Committee Updates:
a. Communication (5 minutes)

Put together flood survey, which is on the town's website, can be emailed to anyone who wants, is on the town's FB page and in the town report with a QR code

The PD has purchased a reverse 911 program called 'Catalyst' this will allow the PD to send messages to anyone who is registered regarding emergencies, road closures, etc. People who opt in will be able to decide what notices they want to receive and how they will receive those messages. NO SPAM!!

b. Personnel (3 minutes)

Still looking for a Lieutenant. Had 4 options but none were hired. Thinking about going back to a sergeant instead of a Lieutenant. However, sergeant is a union position so that needs to be worked through first.

c. Data Analysis (3 minutes)

d. Community Awareness (10 minutes)

Jan Moot – willing to volunteer in the stone village.

Lori Quinn – excited about the idea of NW. A lot of things come to her attention living on a busy road. She expressed concerns about traffic, fear of aggressive drivers and noted a rise in crime during COVID. She believes in community and feels it is important to help people out but also senses there has been a downgrade in the community and is feeling beaten down.

North Street already has a type of NW. They have potlucks and come together frequently. The problem they are seeing is that there are several 2nd homeowners who are absent and there is no one with eyes on those properties. Therefore, there is no one to keep an eye on the "regulars" or residents because all the houses around them are 2nd homeowners who aren't present and if they are they don't know what is normal and what is not. They have been gathering and supporting each other for about 5 years.

Raymond Samela, Flamstead Rd. is present and willing to help however he can.

Edward Knapp, Pleasantville Lane – was on the budget committee for several years and looked at different ways to help the police department. He feels NW needs advertising and is willing to help with that.

Sheila Garaffa, High Street. Frequently checks in in people. Was a visiting nurse. Her main concern is animal complaints, where do those go and how are they dealt with? The Chief responded that there are many laws and ordinances to protect animals but they frequently conflict with each other. The town is working on an ordinance that could help. Currently there is no place to put any animals that may be

“taken into custody” the Springfield Humane Society no longer has a person licensed (they must be licensed) to take animals away.

Kathygiufrtino@gmail.com North Street, Stone village, willing to help.

Police officer Fred is willing to help.

e. Policy Review (3 minutes)

Policy review is a very painful process, “it’s like reading War and Peace”. One policy alone is 72 pages. So, progress is slow, but it is happening. Policies that are ‘not changeable’ (set and mandated by the state) are not a priority.

5. Other Items (20 minutes)

Frank requested the meeting minutes contain more detail.

6. Next Agenda: (June 11, 2024, meeting)

7. Adjourn

Motion made by Vincent seconded by Roy, approved by all.