

1 **Town of Richmond**
2 **Special Selectboard Meeting**
3 **Minutes of March 26, 2025**
4

5 **Members Present:** Bard Hill, Jay Furr, David Sander, Caitlin Filkins, Adam Wood
6

7 **Absent:** None
8

9 **Staff Present:** Town Manager Josh Arneson; Assistant to the Town Manager Duncan
10 Wardwell, Police Officer Matt Cohen (and Duke), Town Clerk Linda Parent.
11

12 **Others Present:** MMCTV Erin Wagg, Hinesburg Selectboard members Michael Loner,
13 Dennis Place, Paul Lamberson, Merily Lovell, Assistant Town Manager to Hinesburg Joy
14 Dubin Grossman; Interim Police Chief in Hinesburg Frank Bryan; Jamie Valyou, Erin
15 Farr, Frank Koss, Sarah Toscano, Natacha Liuzzi, Tony St. Hilaire, John Kingston, Tyler
16 Sparks, Ruchel St. Hilaire, Jeanne Adams, Kathy Giroux, Matthew Cohen, Will
17 MacKinnon, Joanne, Richard Bigue, Brittany Spence, Sarah and David, Kelsey Pasteris,
18 Pam, Amy Cambridge, Joel and Laura, Adriana, mbrow, Catherine Moller, Noa, Paige
19 Kaleita, Donna, Catherine Goldsmith, Donne, Connie Van Eeghen, Pete O'Neil, Brendan
20 Filkins, Darren Kennedy, Mary's iPad, Judy McVickar, Kathleen Newton.
21
22

23 **MMCTV Video:** Recorded by MMCTV by Erin Wagg
24 <https://youtu.be/aZxE7L7R67I?si=8nHfKuVX7TGYDRAN>
25
26

27 **Call to Order:** 7:00 p.m.
28

29 **Welcome by:**
30

31 Lovell welcomed everyone and stated that a change to the agenda would be an action
32 item to appoint 2 members from each Selectboard to a task force in the search for a new
33 shared Chief of Police.
34

35 **Public Comment:**
36

37 Toscano stated that her husband works in Law Enforcement and that former Chief
38 Cambridge was well liked and that he was the victim of a smear campaign and should be
39 reinstated. Liuzzi mentioned that former Chief Cambridge would like to meet with both
40 Town's respective Selectboards and neither has responded to his request for such a
41 meeting. Lovell responded that all communication with former Chief Cambridge has to
42 go through his lawyer presently, which is causing a delay. Furr responded that the case
43 regarding hiring Cambridge as Chief of Police is closed and not open for further
44 discussion, and the Richmond Selectboard is only interested in discussing what lays
45 ahead. Valyou emphasized that he thinks finding a Chief of Police is paramount to
46 effective emergency services. Furr ended with adding the aforementioned action item to
47 the agenda.
48
49

50 **Items for Presentation or Discussion with those present**

51

52 **Discussion of current agreements for shared police and police chief services**

53 Timestamp: 0:07

54

55 People who participated in discussion: Furr, Wood, Hill, Arneson, Lovell, Place,
56 Lamberson, Farr, Bryan, Cohen, Sander, Valyou

57

58 Arneson explained that joint Police services between the two Towns started in 2023,
59 when Richmond was losing police officers and needed help with coverage, as well as a
60 Chief. Lovell stated that at the last Hinesburg Selectboard meeting it was unanimously
61 voted to keep joint police services between the two Towns. Furr concurred that
62 financially it is wise to continue with joint services. He asked that others chime in with
63 their thoughts. Hill added that he feels shared policing will lower costs and add quality
64 and access to police services for both Towns. Lamberson dittoed by saying he is grateful
65 that the two Towns are willing to work together like this. Furr stated that the previous
66 arrangement made a lot of sense because Hinesburg has a sally port and larger
67 headquarters, which Lovell agreed with, saying that's why it makes sense to have the
68 headquarters in Hinesburg. Place queried how long this arrangement is intended to last,
69 since Richmond continues to look for its own police officers. Arneson added the idea
70 always was for Richmond to continue to hire get to a fully staffed department. But we are
71 at a new starting point now with some experience so it is a good topic to discuss as we
72 look to the future; ideally both Towns would collectively have 8-9 officers to cover both.
73 Hill added that Richmond is in a bit of a pickle due to the collective bargaining
74 agreement. Wood said he hopes both Towns find a comfortable number of officers
75 budget-wise, so that there is a balance of the number of officers hired in each Town
76 versus the way it is now. Farr asked what the ideal number of officers for each Town
77 would be? Hill stated it's more important to keep in mind how many officers each Town
78 budgeted for in the next year. Furr added that a one-year contract is insufficient. Bryan
79 doesn't think the Towns have reached an ideal working relationship yet, in terms of
80 shared police governance. Cohen agreed that optimal conditions and maximum benefits
81 have not been achieved because there is only one police officer (and his dog) in
82 Richmond. Both officers feel an ideal should be decided on and worked toward.
83 Lamberson noted that it was still not possible to fully staff both Towns despite the
84 previous collaboration agreement. Sander added that it is hard to hire young officers and
85 attract them to small Towns such as Richmond and Hinesburg because the options for
86 upward movement in the department is lacking, compared to other larger Towns. Hill
87 said that quality of life for a Police officer in Hinesburg and Richmond is better than
88 other places. Valyou feels the items being discussed is something a qualified Chief of
89 Police should take care of, not individual Selectboard members.

90

91

92 **Discussion of options for structure of shared police and police chief services going
93 forward**

94 Timestamp: 0:29

95

96 People who participated in discussion: Furr, Koss, Cohen, Arneson, Filkins, Lamberson,
97 St. Hilaire, Wood, Hill, Valyou

98

99 Koss feels that a plan for moving forward is lacking, even if a Chief is hired there is no
100 clear path. Cohen gave a comprehensive presentation summarizing what he has seen
101 while being a corporal in the Richmond Police Department, as well as suggestions and
102 ideas for moving forward. He showed that the Towns are closely matched in terms of
103 sizes and budgets. He pointed out that contracts, trainings, pay and paid days off are not
104 aligned between the two Towns, which he feels could lead to jealousy or indifference in
105 governance. Filkins asked if such jealousy has occurred under the previous shared
106 policing arrangement, which Cohen replied he has not seen this, but he wanted to present
107 it as a possible pitfall. Arneson added that Richmond police are unionized and the pay is
108 a bit higher, where Hinesburg is not unionized. Cohen thinks one larger department might
109 be more logical. Hill and Wood think that would create a separate governance body,
110 dissolving one Town's police force. Lamberson said he does not want the two Town's
111 Police departments to develop into the currently dysfunctional Burlington Police. St.
112 Hilaire, who has experience in negotiating contracts for Police officers, concurred with
113 previous statements regarding young Police officers going to larger districts to advance
114 their careers, adding that they go where the money and better benefits are. Cohen
115 continued stating that for full-time coverage in both Towns a total of 15 officers would be
116 needed. Farr asked what the predicted growth of Hinesburg might be in terms of
117 residents, in comparison to Richmond's growth which is considerably slower. Cohen
118 responded that he thinks both Towns are growing toward an eventual need for 24/7
119 policing. Wood thinks the disparity between the Towns may widen, with Hinesburg
120 seeing more rapid growth. Cohen pointed out that in terms of population Hinesburg has
121 53% and Richmond 47%. Lovell mentioned that under the previous contract a goal had
122 been to create a Grand Unified Municipal District, akin to what the Chittenden County
123 Waste District is doing, something she no longer is keen to pursue. Wood wonders if the
124 end goal needs to be decided first, then figure out how to reach that goal. Hill said
125 figuring out what both Towns want looking ahead, say in 2027 may be wise, keeping in
126 mind that the legislature may change before that time. Furr and Wood gave kudos to
127 Cohen for creating such a presentation and thinking forward. Cohen feels the Towns need
128 to determine how do the two Town's want to be policed and then work toward that.
129 Filkins concurred. Valyou strongly feels that many of the things discussed and decided on
130 by the Selectboard should fall to the future Chief of Police who will be a professional
131 adept at answering many of these questions; similarly, a committee should be created
132 encompassing people who are knowledgeable regarding hiring practices for Police
133 departments. Lovell pushed back and stated that the Selectboards' collectively are
134 governing bodies and can make such decisions, and she likes the idea of creating a vision
135 of what sort of policing both Town's want. Koss strongly feels that both Towns need to
136 make some decisions and move forward with purpose.

137

138

139 **Discussion of hiring a police chief to serve for both Richmond and Hinesburg**

140 Timestamp: 1:32

141

142 People who participated in discussion: Furr, Lamberson, Cohen, Lovell, Bryan, Kingston,
143 Farr, Arneson, Sparks, Loner, Hill

144

145 Lamberson feels the current arrangement with an interim Chief and five officers for both
146 Towns is working. Wood added that finding a "perfect" Chief is more important than
147 expediency. Lovell hopes the members of the new hiring committee will create a process
148 with which to hire an appropriate chief. Cohen added that stability is key right now after

149 the recent upheaval. Bryan said it's hard to hire officers if they don't know what job they
150 are going to do and if it will be there for them after a year. He desperately needs more
151 officers in uniform heading into the busy spring and summer seasons. Kingston feels the
152 basic structure of the shared Policing agreement is an important determination to make.
153 Farr said she hears expedience as an overarching theme for both Towns. Arneson pointed
154 out that the previous job description included the idea of moving toward shared Police
155 services with Hinesburg, now two years later the vision of shared Policing is clearer and
156 that would drive the job description. Valyou suggested in the short term to have an acting
157 Chief in each Town's police department who work together. Sparks suggested having just
158 one department and having officers on-call for the Town that doesn't have a Police
159 department. Loner emphasized the importance of hiring a chief that understands he will
160 be working with both Town's and to make that clear from the start. Hill emphasized the
161 importance of keeping in mind short-term versus long-term needs and goals.

162

163 David Sander and Bard Hill were previously voted to be on the special hiring committee.

164

165 *Lovell moved to appoint Mike Loner and Dennis Place to be part of the special hiring*
166 *committee to explore collaboration in policing. Lamberson seconded.*

167 *Roll Call Vote: Lovell, Loner, Place, Lamberson, Dubin Grossman in favor. Motion*
168 *approved.*

169

170 St. Hilaire (Ruchel) feels the Town's culture in Hinesburg should be looked at.

171

172 Arneson described that the committee would encompass two Selectboard members from
173 each Town, the Town Managers from each Town, also Former Chief of Police in
174 Hinesburg Frank Koss.

175

176 *Sander moved to add Corporal Matt Cohen to the hiring committee. Filkins seconded.*

177 *Roll Call Vote: Furr, Hill, Filkins, Sander, Wood in favor. Motion approved.*

178

179 *Lovell moved to add Matt Bryan acting Chief in Hinesburg to the committee. Lamberson*
180 *seconded.*

181 *Roll Call Vote: Lovell, Loner, Place, Lamberson, Dubin Grossman in favor. Motion*
182 *approved.*

183

184 The Town Managers will set up a time to meet for the new committee members.

185 Lamberson wanted to give kudos to the officers who are working for the two Towns
186 presently. Filkins, Furr and Lovell seconded those kudos.

187

188

189 **Adjourn**

190

191 *Sander moved to adjourn. Hill seconded.*

192 *Roll Call Vote: Furr abstain. Hill, Miller, Sander, Furr, Wood in favor. Motion*
193 *approved.*

194

195 *Lovell moved to adjourn. Lamberson seconded.*

196 *Roll Call Vote: Lovell, Loner, Place, Lamberson, Dubin Grossman in favor. Motion*
197 *approved.*

198

199 **Meeting adjourned at: 8:53 p.m.**

200

201

202 **Chat file from Zoom:**

203

204 Catherine Goldsmith

205 01:14:36

206 Hinesburg is looking towards 400 dwelling units not houses. This includes units within
207 group senior housing.

208

209 Catherine Goldsmith

210 01:33:02

211 Fyi- the Deborah Rawson Library serves Jericho and Underhill and is also a municipal
212 taxing unit.

213