

2/28/19 Excerpt of the Budget Committee Discussion
In regards to Knox County and the Thomaston Police Department

DRAFT

Patricia Hubbard said that the numbers submitted from Charlie Grover and Doug Erickson are numbers that the Select Board needs to wrestle with. The Select Board will have to share their recommendations with the voters.

Charlie Grover said one of the recommendations he would make to the Board is to have Knox County draw up a contract with the numbers and services and at the same time get the proper numbers for the Thomaston Police Department for building it out with competitive benefits with better benefits than others or at least equal. The benefits include a fixed pension deal, family benefits, and salaries. The Town is assuming that the retention problem with the Police Department is strictly benefits related. The other issue is services. With four dedicated officers from Knox County the Town will get experienced officers and a little better quality of service. The flipside is the concern for 4th of July coverage, but that can be put in a contract for coverage.

Anne Perkins said services need to be identified.

Charlie Grover said the Town would get a standard contract with a section in the contract with the additional services the Town wants.

Anne Perkins said a motion should be made to pass on recommendations to the Select Board.

Henry Carey said the Committee should look at the positions that are filled currently by the Thomaston Police Department and the potential. It looks like there are 2 applicants. There is a question of an applicant completing training at the academy.

Val Blastow said an officer gave his resignation as of March 3rd. This officer will start at his new job on March 4th. Any funds that the Town of Thomaston expended on training at the academy and overtime costs up to March 3rd will be reimbursed to the Town by the new agency that the officer is working at.

Henry Carey said the Town currently has the Police Chief, one officer, and one reserve officer.

Val Blastow said the Town has always had reserve officers, but those positions do not really fill shifts. The Town has 1 of the 4 officers that is needed. Had the candidate at the academy not resigned, and the two applicants are hired, the Thomaston Police Department would be full-staffed.

Henry Carey asked that the tasks performed by the Thomaston Police Department and the tasks that Knox County will perform be looked at. The Town needs to know that. The letter from

Police Chief Tim Hoppe did not express the tasks. Henry Carey said he wants the tasks looked at.

Henry Carey said at this point a recommendation to the Select Board would be one aspect of the budget. He does not like that and wants to represent a budget to the Select Board for their review and ask any questions the Board may have and vote on the budget.

Patricia Hubbard asked if it would be a good idea as Charlie Grover suggested to build out the Knox County numbers in the same way that the Thomaston Police Department numbers are so that both sets of numbers may be presented to the Select Board.

Henry Carey said if the Committee does not have the numbers, there is not a solid base for a recommendation to the Board.

Charlie Grover suggests the recommendation from the Budget Committee to the Select Board to ask Knox County to prepare a contract with exactly what the costs, duties, and expectations are. At the same time, have Charlie Grover and Doug Erickson work with Val Blastow to put together what the extra costs would be to make the Thomaston Police Department better.

Charlie Grover further stated that when the numbers come back another recommendation can be made of which option to go with.

Doug Erickson said he is going to talk to the Sheriff's Department and Police Chief Hoppe tomorrow to find out what the costs are to cover the 4th of July.

Anne Perkins asked what is stopping the Budget Committee from approving the Police Department budget to get this process moving. That allows time for a decision from the Select Board and come back as a Budget Committee to review the information, and revise the Budget Committee recommendation. This is a 2-3 month decision. This is not something that can be decided on right away.

Peter Lammert said there should be a town vote if the police department will be disbanded and go with Knox County instead. He does not know when that will happen or if it will be a special town meeting before the regular meeting. Personally, he does not want people pointing at the Select Board for a decision.

Doug Erickson said if there needs to be a Special Town Meeting, then lets advertise the meeting and get the votes out.

Peter Lammert said he would like to meet with the Town Attorney in regards to the union negotiations and get negotiations completed. That has been holding everyone up about settling things with the Police Department.

Val Blastow said the Budget Committee could recommend a budget for the Police Department moving forward as existing. Doug Erickson wants to build the budget out for additional benefits, etc. which could happen afterwards if the budget is amended. This would let the Budget Committee put the whole budget together and get it approved. Val Blastow said he would think there would be a special town meeting before the regular town meeting.

Josh Blackman asked if there was any way to have an informational meeting before the vote at a special town meeting. Also, having both numbers from Knox County and the Thomaston Police Department will be helpful.

Val Blastow said the Thomaston Police Department is at least \$510,000 with benefits, etc. It depends what happens with the final mediation on the union contract.

Charlie Grover said \$561,000 was used in their report which does not represent any pension or salary adjustments.

ACTION: Henry Carey requested a motion be made to accept the budget of \$397,436 as proposed with the caveat that the budget may be amended at a future date. Anne Perkins 1st. Charlie Grover 2nd. VOTE: 6-0

ACTION: Charlie Grover made a motion, seconded by Anne Perkins to get a contract from Knox County with exact costs, receive the numbers of what is required for the Thomaston Police Department to become competitive in service, wage, and benefits, and make a recommendation to the Select Board. VOTE: 6-0