

Greensboro Selectboard

June 10, 2021 Special Meeting

MINUTES

[Meeting was held via Zoom video conference]

SELECTBOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Peter Romans, David Kelley, Gary Circosta, Tracy Collier

SELECTBOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Matt McAllister

OTHERS PRESENT: Kim Greaves, Sgt. Richard Wells, Sheriff Jennifer Harlow, Josh Karp, Hal Gray, Christine Armstrong, Dep. Doug Morrill, Dep. Andrew Gonyaw, Nancy Hill, Ellen Celnik, Clive Gray, BJ Gray, Rusty Newhouse, Karin Newhouse, Anne Stevens, Rob Hurst, Bethany Warner

CALLED TO ORDER: 6:35 PM

MEET & GREET WITH ORLEANS COUNTY SHERIFF

Peter welcomed those present, explaining that the Selectboard spent much time last fall and winter researching policing options for the town, and settled on the Orleans County Sheriff's Department (OCSD). He said the Board is excited about this change and is looking forward to building this new relationship. The OCSD will take over policing services in Greensboro on July 1, 2021.

Both Tracy and Peter said that almost every public comment they've received regarding the shift to the OCSD has been positive.

Sheriff Harlow said that prior to being appointed Sheriff, she worked at the Newport Police Dept. for 16 years. During that time she worked on many child and sexual abuse cases.

Sgt. Wells is in charge of the patrol division, and introduced the two Deputies who will be doing most of the patrols in Greensboro. Dep. Morrill has been with OCSD for three years, used to live in Hardwick and has some familiarity with the area. Dep. Gonyaw has been with OCSD just over a year. He worked with Newport police for a few years, and said that he looks forward to getting to know Greensboro.

Sheriff Harlow said that she's strived throughout her career to do Community Policing, and she's excited to bring this approach to Greensboro. She added that Greensboro is a unique town in some ways, and that the OCSD is looking forward to getting to know the community, to be a presence here and act as a deterrent to crime.

Sheriff Harlow said they'll be covering Greensboro from 12PM to 12AM seven days a week, plus on-call hours. She asked if there are any particular issues in Greensboro that the OCSD should be aware of.

Hal said there have been drug related thefts in town and noted that the HPD kept an eye on the Bend. He asked Sheriff Harlow to comment on drug issues in Orleans County. Sheriff Harlow said that they're going to rely on the community to keep them apprised of issues, and that's where community policing comes into effect – local residents know their town best. Sgt. Wells said that one of his top priorities is getting drug houses out of communities. He added that in addition to utilizing the Community Policing approach, they will work closely with the HPD to get information as needed.

Hal asked Sheriff Harlow what she sees as her major priority in Greensboro. Sheriff Harlow replied that domestic violence and drug and alcohol abuse are big issues in most communities, issues which the OCSD has lots of experience with.

Sheriff Harlow asked whether any roads are opened to ATVs. Kim said that only one road is open to ATVs – Old Schoolhouse Rd. in Greensboro Bend – and is commonly used as a way for ATVs and snowmobiles to get from trail networks to Smith’s Store. Tracy commented that while she’s seen ATVs on the roads in certain parts of town, there haven’t really been issues with them. Sgt. Wells asked what kind of ATV enforcement the town would like from the OCSD. Peter said that it probably makes sense to start off with a more educational approach, and move to stricter enforcement actions for repeat offenders.

Hal asked whether there was a policy on winter patrols. Peter said that as long as he’s been on the Board, they’ve never gotten a report from the HPD about patrols of camps on unplowed roads. Sheriff Harlow said that if they received a call about an issue at a snow-bound camp, they’d find a way to get up there – but won’t be patrolling such camps routinely.

Hal spoke about his experience with vandalized mailboxes and how the Restorative Justice program was used; he asked Sheriff Harlow if the OCSD works with Restorative Justice programs. Sheriff Harlow said that they do work with Restorative Justice, often for minor crimes.

Ellen welcomed the OCSD to Greensboro. She said that she’s been a social worker in NYC, and learned that strong community connections are needed to effectively solve problems.

Karin Newhouse asked about response time for an emergency or alarm call. Sgt. Wells said that when they’re not patrolling in Greensboro, they will often be close by in adjacent towns. In some instances, such as for a 2 AM alarm call, they may be responding from their Derby location, which could be 20-25 minutes.

Peter said that many times the Board has heard the response time comparison between HPD and OCSD, but he feels that Greensboro’s proximity to the HPD vs. OCSD isn’t necessarily an accurate way to determine response time. For example, the HPD, while close by, could be busy or understaffed at times, leading to an officer arriving later than expected. He said the OCSD will have more of a presence in town, and that the Board looked extensively at this issue and is very optimistic about the quality of service the town will get from the OCSD.

Ellen asked about coordination with Hardwick Rescue. Sheriff Harlow said that they’ve met with both Hardwick Rescue and the Greensboro Fire Dept., and while there will be a learning curve, especially with the radio systems, she’s confident they’ll all work very well together.

Sheriff Harlow added that there may be times when they’ll ask the HPD for backup, or may back them up when asked - we’re all in law enforcement and we’ll work together to support each other as needed.

Rob Hurst said that he had a regular relationship with the HPD’s detective regarding bad checks, and asked what he can expect from the OCSD in this area. Sheriff Harlow said she can provide Rob with guidance on bad checks from the state’s attorney, but that the OCSD doesn’t have a dedicated detective.

Sheriff Harlow thanked everyone who attended the meet and greet. The OCSD will be in town all day on the Funky Fourth (July 3).

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:28 PM.

Respectfully Submitted: Josh Karp, Selectboard Clerk