

**Board of Selectmen
Minutes of November 17, 2015
Selectmen's Chamber, Town Hall**

Present: Tony Archinski, Chairman, Alison Hughes, Vice-Chairwoman, Tami M. Dristiliaris, Clerk, Joseph DiRocco, Jr., Cathy Richardson, Jim Duggan, Town Manager, Attorney James Hall, Attorney Stanley Weinberg and Recording Secretary Shannon Rowe Beaulieu

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

AGENDA ITEMS:

* Municipal Resources, Inc. (MRI) – Presentation of the Police Department Risk Assessment Study – Mr. Archinski read a statement explaining why he was recusing himself from tonight's meeting. Mr. Archinski passed the gravel to Mrs. Hughes, Vice-Chairwoman.

Mrs. Dristiliaris asked Mr. Duggan if the leadership of the Dracut Police Department were invited to tonight's meeting? Mr. Duggan stated no, he has not spoken to the Police Chief since a week ago Monday.

Motion made by Mrs. Dristiliaris to Table tonight's presentation until the leadership of the Dracut Police Department can attend a meeting and to reconvene in 90 days at a regular scheduled meeting where the Police Department leadership can answer any questions the Board may have. Motion seconded by Ms. Richardson. Under Discussion:

Ms. Richardson stated that she does feel that this meeting was called quickly but does understand that MRI is here to give their presentation to the Board. Ms. Richardson stated that she does not want MRI to discuss any personnel issues tonight.

Mr. DiRocco stated that MRI is here tonight to give their presentation and would only like to hear from MRI a recap of how they arrived at the presented document. Mr. DiRocco discussed allowing MRI to explain the document and make their recommendations.

Attorney Hall stated that it is proper to hear the report from MRI but it is up to the Board as there would be no legal issue with hearing the report.

Attorney Weinberg stated that tonight's meeting is not a hearing or a trial, MRI is just here to present their study and the Board could have personnel come in at a later time.

Mrs. Dristiliaris stated that it is premature to have tonight's meeting.

Mrs. Hughes stated that she has questions on how the timeframe of the study happened and would like to hear MRI's action plan with recommendations.

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Mr. DiRocco discussed the Lowell Sun having MRI's document and reporting on it for over a week now.

Ms. Richardson discussed there being a lot of press on the document which is unfair and she would just like to hear the specifics of the document and not discuss any personnel issues.

Mrs. Dristiliaris stated that MRI's PowerPoint presentation was not included with the Board's agenda.

Mrs. Hughes stated that the Board would have to discuss at a later time, on how and when documents should be submitted to the Board before a meeting.

Mr. DiRocco stated that he has received calls on who from the Police Department leadership would be fired and discussed the how the chain of command works.

Mrs. Hughes discussed the intent of tonight's meeting is to be transparent.

Mr. Duggan discussed the request for information from the Lowell Sun on November 2, 2015 and having 10 days to respond to the request. Mr. Duggan stated that the Lowell Sun received a redacted version of the document on Thursday.

Attorney Hall stated that the Lowell Sun threatened to go to the Secretary of State if their request for information was not received within the legal time frame.

Motion failed 1 to 3. Mrs. Dristiliaris voted Yes. Ms. Richardson, Mr. DiRocco and Mrs. Hughes voted No.

Mr. Duggan read a statement explaining the history of having a Police Department Risk Assessment Study, the hiring of an independent consultant to complete the study and how the consultant creates the study.

Mr. Duggan discussed there being a number of areas needing improvement and there being a number of recommendations.

Mr. Duggan discussed the study being completed in a collaborative manner with the Dracut Police Department and MRI and he maintains improving the safety to the residents and business' in Dracut.

Mr. DiRocco stated that it is his opinion that the Police Chief deserves the right to review all of the information in the document with the Town Manager.

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The Board agreed that the Police Chief should review the document with the Town Manager before any action plan is created.

Mr. Duggan discussed having the consultants help with moving the Police Department forward. The Board asked if that was included in the \$25,000 fee for the completion of the study? Mr. Duggan stated yes, he has discussed that with MRI.

Mr. Alan Gould, Municipal Resources, Inc., appeared before the Board to present the Dracut Police Department Risk Assessment Study. Mr. Gould stated that he has 25 years of experience in completing these studies and gave a brief history of MRI.

Mr. Gould introduced John Bryfonski. Mr. Bryfonski stated that he is currently the Chief of Police in Bedford, NH.

Mr. Gould introduced Neil Ouellette. Mr. Ouellette stated that he is a Retired Chief of Police from Danvers, MA, and stated that he knows Police Chief Richardson.

Mr. Gould introduced David Kurz. Mr. Kurz stated that he is currently the Chief of Police in Durham, NH.

Mr. Gould began his PowerPoint presentation dated November 16, 2015 and stated that they encourage any questions the Board may have. Mr. Gould reviewed the project scope, process and stated that all employees had an opportunity to provide input through and internal survey and one-on-one interviews. Mr. Gould stated that 43 employees responded; 33 full time employees, 5 civilian employees and 3 part time employees.

Mr. Gould discussed some recommendations being financial matters, reallocation of funds and stated that some of these could be implemented at no cost.

Mr. Gould explained that safety concerns were redacted from the report.

Mrs. Dristiliaris asked how many employees were interviewed? Mr. Gould stated that 15-20 employees were interviewed one-on-one. Mr. Gould stated that they made every effort to contact all of the employees.

Mrs. Dristiliaris stated that two Officers contacted MRI with no return telephone call.

Mr. Gould stated that if that was the case, he is very surprised by that.

Mr. DiRocco stated that the Board is only hearing explanations of how MRI derived at their findings.

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Mr. Gould discussed their key recommendations such as; reorganization, making hiring and retention top priorities, invest in personnel through training in order to enhance, develop a plan to make compensation more competitive, get the Department up to full staffing levels, remove the Police Chief's position from the Civil Service system and invest in technology to enhance and improve efficiency & effectiveness.

Mr. Bryfonski discussed technology such as; mobile data terminals, which would allow Officers to work from their cruisers, phone system & servers and mobile radios and equipment.

Mr. Ouellette discussed State 911 grants and stated that the more technology available less staffing is needed. Mr. Ouellette stated that the Board should rethink technology funding.

Mr. Gould stated that MRI can support the Town later on with grant information.

Mr. Gould discussed improving data collection.

Mr. Bryfonski discussed a further analysis of software for data collection

Mr. Gould discussed develop and adopting a new set of rules, regulations, policies & procedures that represent contemporary "Best Practices"

Mr. Kurz discussed creating a policies and procedures guide including patrol, evidence, etc. Mr. Kurz discussed shifting personnel to help with creating the guide which would take about six months to one year. Mr. Kurz discussed the Departments goal should be accreditation.

Mr. Gould stated that the most important thing is to implement "Best Practices".

Mr. Gould discussed establishing meaningful communications up, down and across the ranks and division of the Department and adopting a true Department wide "Community Policing" philosophy aimed at energizing, educating, communicating and informing the public.

Mr. Bryfonski discussed the importance and need for Community Policing.

Mr. Gould discussed in order to manage the risks identified in this report and increase the ability of the Department to meet service demands, this report should be viewed as a roadmap or work plan.

Mr. Gould discussed the Department, in cooperation with Town leadership and support from the Community, should prioritize the recommendations in this report and establish a realistic plan to achieve them.

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Mr. DiRocco asked the consultants if they were Contract Chief's or Strong Chief's?

Mr. Bryfonski, Mr. Ouellette and Mr. Kurz stated no. Mr. Gould stated that he has worked with both.

Mr. Gould stated that they interviewed the majority of the Department but they can't make people talk to them. Mr. Gould stated that they spoke with most of the employees regarding how the Department works.

Mr. Gould stated that the surveys were anonymous and they had one-on-one interviews with employees of every rank.

Mr. Gould stated that they spent three to five hours with the Police Chief and Deputy Police Chief and had many calls and internet correspondence with both of them.

ADJOURNMENT:

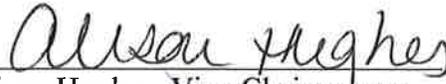
Motion made by Mrs. Dristiliaris to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Ms. Richardson. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

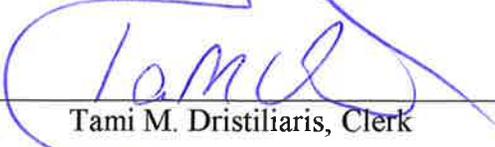
BOARD OF SELECTMEN



Tony Archinski, Chairman



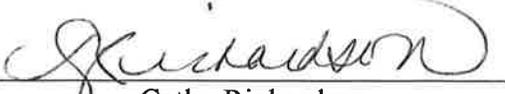
Alison Hughes, Vice-Chairwoman



Tami M. Dristiliaris, Clerk



Joseph DiRocco, Jr.



Cathy Richardson