

LAW ENFORCEMENT STUDY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
JOHNSON / HYDE PARK / WOLCOTT
REMOTE PARTICIPATION VIA ZOOM TELECONFERENCING
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31, 2021

Present:

Committee Members: Duncan Hastings, Roger Audet, Peter Gallo, Rick Harkins, Diana Osborn

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. Call to Order

Doug called the meeting to order at 6:33.

2. Changes to Agenda

No changes to the agenda were needed.

3. Review and Approve Minutes of March 3rd Meeting

Diana moved to accept the minutes of March 3/March 10, 2021 as presented, Rick seconded and the motion was passed.

Diana said the Law Enforcement Study Committee minutes are hard to find on the Johnson town website. She feels it is important for the public to be able to find them. Duncan said he doesn't feel that is his responsibility. We forward the minutes to municipal officials and can only hope they get posted.

4. Review and Approve Report Draft

Duncan said he has some concerns about the work Diana has done on alternatives or options. He can live with her preferences regarding what should be part of the report and what should be in an appendix, but there are some issues he feels are more of a factual nature that are more difficult for him.

Diana said she thinks the bigger issue is how the committee presents a report with contributions from various people. She values contributions from those who were present at the beginning and from those who came in later like Rick and Andy. She feels it is disrespectful to expect them to rubber stamp work that was done before they started. She would like to come to agreement on how we can create a report that is respectful of the work each person brings to the table, despite all not being in agreement. She proposes a report composed of submissions from each member. When she looked at Duncan's draft she felt there were a lot of subjective comments mixed in with factual information and she recommended moving those. Duncan felt some of what she wrote should be moved to an appendix. Rather than each person weighing in on how others should modify their reports, she suggests an alternate presentation model, with a report by each committee member.

Rick said he agrees about putting his name on something he has no background on. He has done some research on his own but it would be hard for him to rubber stamp something other people created. Is there a deadline to get this done by? He would love to do more research and have more input if he can, but he doesn't want to step on anyone's toes.

Duncan said he has no interest in providing a report that is comprised of 5 or 6 different members' opinions. If that is the path the committee wants to take, he will resign tonight. In his opinion a committee ought to develop a unified report whether or not everyone agrees with everything in it. He is not willing to be associated with something he thinks contains some factual errors. Diana is leaving on a trip so there is some urgency to get this done. He has taken it about as far as he wants to.

Rick said he thinks our job is to work together and come to a solution, not for everyone to have their own opinions. That is not what a committee does. He just would like to be involved. He agrees with pretty much everything in the draft report.

Diana said lacking the time for all to come to consensus, what she suggests is that if Duncan doesn't want his name attached to the part of the report she completed, he can leave his name off that part. And she doesn't have to have her name on his part. It will be acknowledged that we each contributed different parts to the report. People can feel free to contribute according to their strengths and knowledge.

Duncan said in his revision to the draft report he tried to move the subjective statements to the recommendations section as Diana suggested. Diana said she didn't get the revision. Duncan said he was hoping to get feedback and suggestions from people but the only person he heard from was Jim Olsen, who is no longer on the committee. Rick said he doesn't recall getting the revised report either.

Peter said he agrees with Diana. We need to go back to what the goal of this committee was – to look at what our law enforcement services are now and how we can address our communities' needs.

Duncan said he has put a lot of work and effort into this. He doesn't feel the committee is making reasonably good progress. He is resigning from the committee. He turned the hosting of the meeting over to Diana. In answer to Diana's questions he said he doesn't want the work he drafted used in conjunction with the committee's report and he does not plan to submit his work independently.

Diana said she will be leaving on Friday for a 7-month backpacking trip. There is no deadline set for the committee to finish its work. She doesn't think the committee necessarily has to submit a report, but she thinks it would be a disservice to the selectboards not to. Rick said he would be happy to do more research if there is time. Rick and Peter both said their other commitments would make it difficult for them to chair the committee.

Diana suggested that tomorrow she could submit the work committee members have done so far that has not been withdrawn with a narrative outlining what the committee has done and an explanation that the committee now has no option but to dissolve. If the selectboards want to convene another committee she could give them the names of those who would like to be considered. Roger said he thinks that sounds good. He doesn't have the capability to chair the committee. He doesn't own a computer. Roger moved that Diana notify the selectboards that the committee is dissolving. The motion was not seconded.

Peter said he would like to hold off on dissolving the committee. It seems valuable to him and he thinks it should remain open. He does think the work done so far should be submitted to the selectboards, but there is still more work to do.

Diana suggested she could submit a progress report to the selectboards, explaining what has happened so far and which committee members are still active and saying that those committee members are looking for further direction about how the selectboards would like the committee to proceed.

Peter moved that Diana submit a progress and status report to the selectboards and ask the selectboards to provide direction for the committee, Rick seconded and the motion was passed.

5. *Adjourn*

Roger moved to adjourn, Peter seconded, the motion was passed and the meeting was adjourned at 7:08.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths