

Safety and Policing Committee Charge

In the spring of 2023, the Hartland Selectboard began a discussion of the safety needs for the Town. Although the Town has a contract for policing with the Vermont State Police (VSP) they (VSP) are unable to commit the full hours outlined in this contract. This situation has been the case for the last few years. Both the Town and the VSP see the need to seek other solutions for the safety needs of Hartland.

The Board has signed a contract with the State Police starting in July 2023 for the next year. Knowing that the State Police cannot meet the Town needs, the Board will embark on a process to define the requirements of safety / policing for the Town. Using these requirements the Board will evaluate other service providers to contract with.

To support these efforts the Board will form a committee to explore the Town needs. What follows is an outline of the charge to the Safety and Policing Committee.

Name: Safety and Policing Committee

Purpose: The purpose of the Safety and Policing Committee is to define what is meant by safety in Hartland, prioritize those needs, create recommendations on how to achieve those identified needs and draft a budget associated with these recommendations. The committee's findings shall be delivered to the Selectboard in a report.

Timeline: Deliver a report to the Selectboard in October, 2023

Committee Makeup: The safety committee will consist of seven core members that will include two Selectboard members, three citizens, one representative from the school board and one representative from the Fire and Rescue Department. Personnel resources to the group will include the Selectboard chair, the interim Town Manager as well as community experts and professionals like the State Police.

Additional comments:

Should one stop a Harland Town resident while they are shopping in the local market and ask what is needed for the safety of our community you would likely hear many different answers like speeders, drug use, domestic violence, stolen property, vandalism, noisy neighbors, mental health, suicide check, suspicious activity, vehicle crash, fighting, choking, child abuse, death investigation, dog and wildlife complaint, alarm, sexual deviants, landlord / tenant problem, etc.

The Safety and Policing Committee will meet to review, with the help of the Vermont State Police, the various incident reports for Hartland. The Committee will review the services that the State Police deliver under their current contract as well as standard services delivered to all Vermont towns.

The Committee will document the relationships between the State Police, local police authorities (Windsor Police and County Sheriff), the Hartland Fire and Rescue Squads and other area first responder services understanding how calls are triggered and dispatched (911). These relationships form the backbone of safety support in our Town. The school safety resource officer should be included as well. Once documented the Committee can begin to evaluate those services and the positive and negative impacts of those services.

An underlying factor in many of the safety issues is mental health. The Committee should become familiar with the Social Determinants of Health and develop an understanding of how these factors play into the well being of our Town and affect the safety.

Once this background is established the Committee can begin to identify what safety issues are most important to Hartland. This may include a ranking or grouping.

As the Committee gains an understanding of these many factors, the Selectboard would like to have a community wide meeting. Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Planning Commission will facilitate such a meeting. At the meeting, the Committee can present their rankings and receive feedback from Town residents.

Once the committee reviews the feedback from the town wide meeting they can work with the Town Manager to explore options to deliver the identified services. Preliminary budget estimates will also be created.

A report of the Committee's findings shall be presented to the Selectboard.