

Exeter Police Stakeholders Committee
March 23, 2021
Minutes

Attendance: Committee Members— Katie Adams, Elliot Berkowitz, Matt Carbone, Emily Heath, Harry King, Alexis Simpson, Anne Surman, Darius Thompson. Exeter Police Department—Chief Stephan Poulin, Benjamin Clouthier, Ashley Gioia, Jessica Shupe, Theodore Sierad, John Suglia. Selectboard Members—Daryl Brown, Molly Cowan. Absent: Tanisha Johnson.

1. Chair Anne Surman called the meeting to order and read a statement: As Chair of the EPSC, I find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 this public body is authorized to meet electronically. Public notice of this meeting was posted on the town website and on the bulletin board of the town offices at 10 Front Street. As provided in that public notice, the public may access the meeting online and via phone. Please note that all votes taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote. Let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance. When each member states their presence, please also state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting and who that person is (son, daughter, spouse, etc...), which is required under the Right-to-Know law.
2. **MOTION:** Darius Thompson moved to approve the minutes of the last meeting (3/9/21) as written. Elliott Berkowitz seconded. Minutes approved unanimously.
3. Darius asked for a moment of silence for the officer killed in Colorado. The committee observed a moment of silence.
4. Chief Poulin asked for another member of the team to join him and the Chair to take a first pass at the results of the survey. **MOTION:** Matt Carbone moved that Darius join the team. **Katie Adams seconded** the motion. The motion passed with seven members voting "yay" and one abstention (Darius).
5. Officer Tad Sierad, a Field Training Officer (FTO) with the Department, gave a presentation about the training officers receive when they first join the force. The process involves a three-phased approach that lasts at least 12 weeks (plus an additional 2 weeks of observation). FTOs teach new officers the local laws that aren't covered at the Police Academy. They also teach officers that everything they do must be "ethical, legal, and moral." They teach common sense policing. The training involves teaching officers to use discretion. This skill is fine-tuned as officers have more experience. The department does trainings on an ongoing basis. Among other aspects, Officer Sierad told the committee that officers in Exeter do not have a set time on calls. This enables them to spend time deescalating difficult mental health related calls. Sometimes that means they are looking for a trusted friend or family member to sit with someone. Handling mental health calls starts with dispatch. They ask questions that give information to officers about how best to enter a difficult situation like this.

6. As part of the conversation, Chief Poulin said that his officers will not engage in what's known as "racism by proxy." In Exeter's past, officers have been dispatched after a member of our community has reported a suspicious person. When a resident calls the police reporting a suspicious person, the dispatchers now ask follow-up questions to determine if there is any reason to suspect that the police need to be called.
7. Officer Ben Clouthier spoke about his experience as a more recent hire in the department. He was an electrician before he became a police officer. He emphasized the importance of training, including crisis intervention training. There are also resources available to process difficult experiences like calls to fatal car accidents. Ongoing training and support are crucial for retaining officers. In the course of the conversation, Chief Poulin also noted that training now is different than it was 20 years ago. Remedial training is always available including training around specific scenarios.
8. On April 6, Dr. Sawyer will be speaking to the committee. Ashley Gioia will speak on April 20.
9. MOTION to adjourn by Darius. Matt seconded. The committee adjourned at 4:20.

Respectfully Submitted,
Alexis Simpson