

**Ticonderoga Special Town Board Public Safety Workshop and any other Lawful  
Business held on June 30, 2017 commencing at 6:00 p.m.**

**Present:** Joseph Giordano, Supervisor  
Fred Hunsdon, Councilman  
Wayne Taylor, Councilman  
Dorcey Crammond, Councilwoman  
Dave Woods, Councilman  
Tonya M. Thompson, Town Clerk

**Others:** Michael Lavallie, Margaret Lauman, Jodi Belden, Kortney Bessett, Erika Kuhl, Charles Bolstridge, Police Officers - Heather Genier, Mark Belden, Melanie LaPerle, Michael Mawn, Sergeants - Dale Quesnel, Adam Hurlburt

Supervisor Giordano opened the meeting with the Reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance at 6:00 p.m. and read the following statement:

The Ticonderoga Town Board recently placed Chief Mark Johns on administrative leave for a personnel matter that the Town is still working through. Rather than focus on this decision or any questions as to the details which will not be disclosed, I would rather redirect your attention at this time to the question of “where do we go from here?”

The Ticonderoga Police Department was formed to protect and to serve those in our community. It is your duty as police officers, as it is our commitment as elected and appointed officials, to work in concert with our citizens to achieve this goal. Over the past 18-months in office, there is much I have learned about the policing operations in our Town and still more I do not know. I have been elated by the successes that have resulted from good teamwork and equally disheartened by the actions and words which have deteriorated the integrity of that teamwork and likewise its sole objective to serve and protect.

However, at this juncture, I am committed to improving this department and its operations, as are the other members of the Town Board and Police Commissioners. Over the past week, my mind has entertained many questions, as I’m sure yours has too. While there are those that still remain unanswered, I have been pleasantly surprised by the manner in which some have been responded to.

Having said this, today marks a turning point for all of us. While the Town is in no way eliminating this department, we are now in a position of rebuilding. How this rebuilding will take shape depends as much on you as it does on us. Your positions will be secured solely by upholding the professional conduct of being a police officer, both on and off duty, as well as your rededication to the commitment of working together and taking ownership of our community. That is to say, “you must each have each officer’s back.” The Town, reciprocates its commitment by standing behind you, our officers and your families, and providing the department with the necessary training, equipment and levels of staffing to carry out your public safety mission. Furthermore, we are diligently working to relocate the department to a more suitable building indicative to the professional nature of your work.

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As you know, our community is presently overwhelmed on numerous fronts: aged infrastructure, an increasing number of abandoned properties, latent economic growth, limited financial resources and a growing drug problem. Yet, through each of these challenges, a unique opportunity presents itself to a department or to a separate coalition to rise up to challenge, address the issue and resolve to overcome it.

Before we open up the floor to questions. I want to speak to one of the pleasant surprise responses I had this past week. On Monday, I had a conversation with Mike LaVallie. We discussed the department, the issues facing the town and his confidence in the resolve of the officers to serve the public. A couple days elapsed and then I learned of his interest to serve as the Interim Police Chief until the Town Board can conduct a proper search for a full-time Police Chief. I have heard from many people over the past months of how respected Mike is in this community and on the force when he served in the department. I believe given the transition we find ourselves in, Mike will provide the right direction and commitment to lead us to achieving our mission.

With these thoughts in mind, I offer the following mission statement for the department.

The mission of the Ticonderoga Police Department is to serve and to protect through the development of partnerships and community problem-solving techniques, to reduce crime and enhance the safety and well-being of those in our community.

Michael Lavallie thanked the board along with the Officers and their families. He explained that when he was approached regarding this it really put him at a loss for words and wondered if he would turn and walk away, but he knows most of you all if not all of you and your families and he has a love for this department and this town. He has and always will no matter if he is with this agency or another agency. He was born and raised and has roots here and when he was offered this opportunity to serve as the Part-Time Interim Police Chief, he really was speechless. He really had to dig deep in his sole, but again, his father instilled the right thing to do is to assist you all with your mission with the job that needs to go forward as we all know needs to go forward. He knows it will because he knows the dedication of the guys and ladies sitting here. Thank you all.

Sgt. Hurlburt addressed his major concern right now being where we stand as far as manpower. He would like to now address everyone at the same time and express that we are a skeleton staff at this point going into our busy part of the year. A lot of our guys are getting beat up now, they are not getting their days off because they are working their days off. We are working 18's and it is really starting to take a toll on everyone, especially since this busy time. We have had a vacancy since February and we are now almost in July. He would like to tell the board that the days of lateral transfers are pretty much done. We would be lucky to get one, so we have to start looking into training our own guys at the academy. He believes that we will get a better outcome that way, if we recruit them right, they probably won't go anywhere. We need to spend some money up front so we can have these guys for 20 years. They are going to start here and a lot will end here. Right now we have to hopefully look at getting us some extra help.

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Supervisor Giordano noted that we have reached out to the academy and we do understand that there are some slots open. We will be back in touch with them next week. We have also had some conversations with our Human Resources consultant and have set up some times and dates to set up some interviews with potential candidates that were on the list from Civil Service. This is the busiest weekend of the year, so he has reached out to the Sheriffs Office and they will send down two officers for Tuesday, July 4th and may be willing to send down some more.

Councilman Taylor asked if we had any pending part time applicants, that potentially could work.

Supervisor Giordano stated that there are some on the civil service list, but he is not sure if there is any others that would be interested. We can look into it.

Officer Belden asked the board if they are looking at sending someone to the academy?

Mr. Lavallie stated yes, the academy is starting in August and we have set up dates the week of the 10th for the interview process regarding those applicants at the top of the civil service list.

Councilman Taylor stated that he is greatly relieved that this has transpired and Mr. Lavallie has agreed to help us.

Mr. Lavallie expressed that he is not giving up his full-time job at Warren County. Fortunately, his boss did authorize him to serve here on a part-time basis. His schedule is a 12 hour schedule. One week he has five days and another he has two. His shift now is 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., so his availability will be after 8 p.m.; however, he will have his cell phone on if needed for calls and questions. He will probably will be in the office on those days off for person to person meetings and such.

Councilman Taylor asked if Mr. Lavallie felt that Ti needs a full-time Administrative Police Chief?

Mr. Lavallie explained that there is something via civil service that if there are a certain number of officers you need to have a full time....

Councilman Taylor interrupted to state that yes, it used to be five full time officers. He then asked if contractually Mr. Lavallie can do police work like stop cars? He has seen for example Jeff Cook stop cars.

Mr. Lavallie explained that the reason why he approached the Supervisor wanting to do this, and Jeff Cook would be great, but his service certification has lapsed even like Dennis Johnson or someone like that, they have been out of it so long that they their certification has expired. That is why he wanted to come and help on an interim basis because he is already trained. He will just need to qualify and he can assist on the policing and also on an administrating side. Fortunately, he is very familiar with the

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administrative side being past sergeant, he is aware that there are things that have changed since he has been gone, but he has the utmost confidence in the officers and the Sergeants that you currently have to work with him with that.

Councilman Taylor stated that he couldn't be happier.

**Resolution #207-2017** brought by Fred Hunsdon, seconded by Dave Woods to hire Michael LaVallie as the interim Chief of Police effective June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at the bi-weekly rate of \$2,692.31. **All in Favor** Joseph Giordano - Aye, Fred Hunsdon - Aye, Wayne Taylor - Aye, Dorcey Crammond - Aye, Dave Woods - Aye. **Opposed** - none. **Carried.**

**Resolution #208-2017** brought by Joseph Giordano, seconded by Wayne Taylor to appoint Supervisor Giordano as the sole police commissioner. **All in Favor** Joseph Giordano - Aye, Fred Hunsdon - Aye, Wayne Taylor - Aye, Dorcey Crammond - Aye, Dave Woods - Aye. **Opposed** - none. **Carried.**

Meeting adjourned at 6:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Tonya M. Thompson, Town Clerk