
TO: Selectboard
FROM: Rod Francis, Acting Town Manager
RE: Town Manager Report
DATE: June 3, 2022

Staffing

The Norwich Police Department has operated with one full-time officer, one Community Safety Officer and one administrative assistant with the support of the Hartford Dispatch and the Vermont State Police. I appreciate the commitment and professionalism of the Norwich Police Department under these demanding circumstances.

I have requested data on the number and type of calls the department has responded to since the departure of Chief Frank. This type of information will be valuable in support of a meeting with Officer Ingraham, Lieutenant O'Donnell of the VSP and Hartford Dispatch to work through any issues arising from the current arrangements. This meeting is scheduled for June 27, 2022. The documentation of an agreement between Norwich and VSP concerning VSP response protocols is included here.

I have placed an advertisement for the Chief position on the Vermont Police Academy website after consulting with Officer Ingraham and reviewing the many similar position advertisements. I am exploring other online venues for the job posting. Elsewhere in this packet I have provided suggested discussion questions to help clarify what experience and background the community is seeking in a new chief of police.

I have collated some data to offer a preliminary comparison on police department pay scales from towns in the region. I have also been reviewing the salary ranges offered in police chief hiring ads. I hope to have more analysis in time for the meeting. There are many factors to take into account.

Sara LeBlanc has resigned her position as assistant to the Listers. We are yet to have a response to the open equipment operator positions in DPW or the open position in the Finance office.

Auditor RFP

Despite advertising widely, we have received no responses. We will be extending the response date and re-advertising to obtain viable responses.

Moore Lane Bridge Release of Materials

We are awaiting laboratory test results to confirm that the substance is creosote and then can activate an approved plan to remove the ineffective tarp, clean the bridge supports and install an approved response to the material release.

From: [Miranda Bergmeier](#)
To: [Rod Francis](#)
Subject: FW: Norwich Response Agreement
Date: Friday, June 10, 2022 11:07:15 AM

From: Miranda Bergmeier
Sent: Friday, June 10, 2022 10:24 AM
To: Whitcomb, James <James.Whitcomb@vermont.gov>
Subject: RE: Norwich Response Agreement

Good morning, Major Whitcomb,

This is to acknowledge receipt of your email. I have cc'd Rod Francis, our Town Manager, on this so that he is in the loop, as well.

Best regards,
Miranda

Miranda H. Bergmeier
Assistant to the Town Manager
Town of Norwich
P.O. Box 376
Norwich, VT 05055
802-649-1419 x101

Please note that any response or reply to this electronic message may be subject to disclosure as a public record under the Vermont Public Records Act.

From: Whitcomb, James <James.Whitcomb@vermont.gov>
Sent: Friday, June 10, 2022 10:14 AM
To: Miranda Bergmeier <MBergmeier@norwich.vt.us>
Cc: Farmer, Roger <Roger.Farmer@vermont.gov>; O'Donnell, Hugh <Hugh.ODonnell@vermont.gov>; Burnham, Lance <Lance.Burnham@vermont.gov>

Subject: Norwich Response Agreement

Town Manager Francis,

I am writing you as a way to formalize information I received from Captain Roger Farmer and Lieutenant Hugh O'Donnell after their meeting with you this past Monday . I know you are doing your best to not only alleviate the hours your staff is currently working during this temporary staffing crisis, but also to minimize any hours requiring our assistance. I would like to take the opportunity to summarize our understanding of how VSP will assist Norwich. It is my understanding that the Town of Norwich is requesting that the Vermont State Police respond to reported, active in progress crimes and other serious emergencies occurring during times that Norwich does not have an officer on duty or another agency participating in assistance is not available. Your request for our assistance started on June 6th, 2022.

Examples of in progress and active crimes of violence or serious incidents that we would respond to include:

- Burglaries in progress
- Domestic in progress
- Sexual assaults
- Robberies in progress
- Simple and aggravated assaults
- Kidnapping and unlawful restraint
- Crash with injury or death resulting

Other emergencies requiring our response could include:

- 911 hang up calls
- Active mental health/welfare check cases that you determine require a response due to life safety concerns after the call is screened by your staff. Our staff will further screen these calls to determine what our response will look like based on our best practice and training related to these cases.
- Suspicious circumstance that you determine require a response due to possible life safety concerns after the call is screened by your staff

You also confirmed that you or your staff are prepared to screen calls during some of the time that you are requesting assistance from the Vermont State Police and forward calls for our response as needed. Hartford's on duty dispatcher will contact the designated screening officer from Norwich and share the specifics of the call with them to ensure the call meets the requirement of in progress crimes, active crimes of violence or an emergency. If it does, the Norwich officer assigned to screen calls will direct the Hartford dispatcher to call the Westminster Department of Public Safety Dispatcher to request a response. The Vermont State Police would then automatically respond. I understand that the times of active Norwich Police on-duty and on-call screening availability will vary and a schedule of availability will be provided to us as appropriate so we can plan our schedules appropriately.

We will conduct a weekly review of requests for our response to evaluate operations and we will

periodically hold meetings to evaluate how Norwich is progressing toward filling vacancies so that the department can assume full operations as soon as possible. Lieutenant O'Donnell will continue to communicate with the designated officer in charge regarding operations.

As this is a summary of the conversation, please feel free to clarify any of this information or call me with any concerns.

Major Whitcomb

Major James Whitcomb
Commander - Field Force Division
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