

**SPECIAL JOINT BOARD OF SELECTPERSON'S MEETING WITH TOWN OF MEXICO**  
**January 21, 2015, 6:30 p.m.**  
**Rumford Falls Auditorium**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: RUMFORD**

Vice-Chairperson Jeffrey Sterling, Selectperson Bradford Adley, Selectperson Frank DiConzo, Selectperson Mark Belanger, Town Manager John Madigan, Jr. Absent: Chairperson Gregory Buccina

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: MEXICO**

Chairperson Richie Philbrick, Reggie Arsenault, Albert Aniel, Andy Dupuis, Byron Ouellette

**ATTENDEES:** Philip Blampied, Len Greaney, Matt Daigle, Stacy Carter, Roy Hodsdon, Bob Chase, John Blais, Robert Drouin, Lawrence Winson, Donald Miller, Douglas Maifeld, Dan Carrier, Tracey Higley, Brad Gallant, James Bernard, Scott Belskis

The Boards have heard the Chief's proposals and the Sheriff's proposal. The Police Union is willing to listen if they can help.

Reggie Arsenault said that Mexico cannot pay Rumford wages and that Rumford must be willing to drop some wages a little bit. There has to be some give. He also wanted to see the Explorers and Seniors Watch continued.

Mark Belanger asked if the Union has been asked to open the contract. Specific items should include wages, overtime benefits, health insurance, etc. The Unions should be asked to open the contracts.

Dan Carrier believes that the Mexico Union is willing to talk.

Albert Aniel made a motion to present three options to the voters: 1. To keep things the way they are with both town's having a police department, 2. Dissolve both police departments and go with a budget of 1.2 million for 15 officers (that would basically put all police staff at the Mexico wages and save both towns some money), or 3. The Sheriff's proposal.

The Town Manager explained the salaries for both town police departments.

Mark Belanger was concerned with the amount of overtime for the Rumford officers.

Chief Carter explained that the overtime is based on the 2014 payroll. The first six months we had ten officers. In January we lost an officer to Mexico. In February we lost another officer who resigned. We had to fill two vacancies with overtime to fill those positions, yet at the same time there are no regular wages or benefits being paid for the vacant positions. There were 42 weeks of vacancies to fill. At the end of the fiscal year in June the bottom line of the police department was under the budget. He felt that people should not be criticized for working the overtime, but that they should be commended for working it and having to be away from their families.

Sgt. Tracey Higley believes the Boards should look at the contracts and find what is reasonable for both sides.

Police Officers Lawrence Winson, Doug Maifeld, Dan Carrier, and James Bernard voiced their concerns about the dissolution of the police departments and the affect that will have on them. Fire Chief Robert Chase also spoke to this issue.

The motion was amended by Albert Aniel and restated by Chairperson Jeffrey Sterling as follows: To present the following choices to the voters: 1. 1.3 million combined police budget and dissolving the Rumford Union, 2. The Sheriff's proposal, 3. Keep the police departments as they are now.

Dr. Aniel's motion failed.

Mr. Sterling made a motion to pass on to the voters a one year proposal for \$1,454,856.13 presented by both Chiefs of Police, that would save Rumford \$66,045.30 and Mexico \$44,237.15 for a total saved of \$110,282.45, where upon approval by voters after a public hearing, a sub-committee of 2 members of each Select Board would get together to form a new bargaining unit with Rumford and Mexico Police force and negotiate a cost containment contract for the years 2, 3, and 4. Seconded by Brad Adley.

Byron Ouellette believes we need to sit down and put together a proposal to go to the union with first.

Sgt. Tracey Higley suggested that this motion be voted down and that another meeting be set up with the unions asking them to come back with some concessions in non-binding discussions and for the Boards to come back with educated ideas on where to find places to save money. As a group we may be able to work together for the benefit of all involved, he said.

Mr. Sterling's motion failed.

Byron Ouellette made a motion to have both Boards meet to put together a proposal for one year of combined police force and then meet with both unions to give them the new proposal in executive session. Seconded by Mark Belanger.

Mr. DiConzo would like to add to the motion that both Board's will have two members to meet with the Police Union along with the Town Manager.

Mr. Ouellette and Mr. Belanger were in agreement with the amendment.

Mr. Ouellette's amended motion passed: 9-0

The next meeting will be held in Executive Session on Monday, February 2, 2015 in the Conference Room in Rumford Town Hall at 6:00 p.m. Copies of the Mexico and Rumford union contracts to be distributed to all Board members prior to meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

JEMJr/tp

John E. Madigan, Jr.  
Town Manager