

## **MINUTES of Moderator's Committee on Police Reporting February 14, 2017**

**Present:** Deputy Superintendent Myles Murphy, Selectman Bernard Greene, Police Officer John Canney, Brian Bergstein, Len Weiss, Tom Elwertowski, and Lynda Roseman.

Minutes of January 10 were approved.

Bernard Greene reported on his meeting with Gary Jones, petitioner of Article 30. Mr. Jones' motivation for the Warrant Article was his concern that police reports are not readily available to persons involved in police incidents. There was some discussion of whether this is actually the case. Mr. Jones feels that incident reports should quickly be made available to victims of crime and he feels that the online police blog should include all incidents from the police log. He suggested creating an index for the blog so that people could search for incidents by topic. It was suggested that perhaps Mr. Jones didn't realize the ramifications of putting all of the complete police reports online, and that he might possibly consider posting the complete log as meeting the goals of his warrant article.

Len Weiss pointed out that Mr. Jones' goal as described to Bernard Greene, is narrower than what he asked for in his Warrant Article. He also questioned how much town wide demand there is for making all police reports available online.

Tom Elwertowski discussed his reading of the nature, scope and content of information posted by surrounding towns. He noted that Brookline posts on its blog slightly fewer events than nearby towns. The committee did not discuss the qualitative or substantive value of posted information. No one posts complete incident reports. Other towns tend to post 24-48 hours after each event. They don't give a great deal of detail but report incidents in general terms, for example, "animal incident," or "domestic incident," or "medical incident." In Brookline, a person can go in person to the Police Department to look at incident reports or the police log, or they can request incident reports online.

Myles Murphy pointed out some down sides to immediately posting the log, including human error which might sometimes result in including information that should not be public but hasn't been redacted. Another issue would be a person reporting an incident who might want to remain anonymous and whose name could be made public if the log is posted.

Len Weiss suggested that a brochure be created, much like the one put out by the DPW, that would describe such things as how to get information on police incidents, how the Crime Reports link on the Police Department's webpage works, and what to do if you want more information.

The committee decided to designate the next meeting as a Public Hearing and Bernard Greene offered to inform Gary Jones that we will meet at 8:00 am on Tuesday, March 7 in the Selectmen's Conference Room on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor of Town Hall.

