

**Approved 12/8/10**  
**TOWN OF WEST TISBURY**  
**SELECTMENS MEETING**  
**Saturday, November 13, 2010, 9:30 a.m. – 1:03 p.m.**

**Present:** Selectmen Richard Knabel, Cindy Mitchell, Skipper Manter, Pam Thors-Adm. Asst.

**Guests:** Members of the Press

Richard explained that the only thing on the agenda was the three interviews of the candidates for Police Chief. He stated that each candidate would be interviewed for one hour and that no questions would be taken until the end of the meeting. He also explained that the questions would be asked alternately by Cindy and him.

First Interview – Donald Hull 9:30 a.m.

C.M. – Asked what his definition of Community Policing is and 1 or 2 examples of how it works.  
D.H. – Stated that Community Policing is involvement on all levels including being very visible to the public. He noted that he encourages all of his officers to interact with the public as much as possible while policing local events. He and his officers are required to go to schools and are urged to stop by local businesses in the course of their days on duty. He said that he also often contributes to information on the town's website.

C.M. – Asked how the tone is set in terms of the department and Community Policing.

D.H. – Answered that officers are sent to seminars dealing with community relations and that mostly the tone is set by officers engaging the elderly, students and the public at large as often as possible.

R.K. – Asked, if he were chosen as the West Tisbury Police Chief, how he would deal with the fact that the acting chief has been endorsed by so many members of the law enforcement community on the island.

D.H. – Explained that he was on the other end of this scenario when his town hired a new chief. He said that he would just take the acceptance factor into account and let things fall into place. He stated that Mr. Rossi is a wealth of information and that he would make the opportunity to talk to him to assure a smooth transition and encourage a good relationship.

R.K. – Asked why he thought he wasn't chosen as the new chief in Canton.

D.H. – Stated that it had a lot to do with his predecessor who was not well liked. He thought that politics may have had a lot to do with the outcome.

C.M. – Asked what he had learned about the town in the process of applying for the position.

D.H. – He explained that first he started reading the newspapers online and also spoke to the officers at the station, asking many questions about the department. He also stopped by the general store, basically trying to get the lay of the land. He found everyone to be very friendly and helpful.

C.M. – Asked what he had learned about the Police Department.

D.H. – He said that the department is similar to his own in Canton with 15 members including the chief. The town has a population of 10,000 and is 26 square miles. He has found that communities back one another during emergencies and that West Tisbury seemed to be no exception.

R.K. – Asked what his view was of the relationship between the Board of Selectmen and the Chief of Police.

D.H. – He stated that communication is key and that between the Town Hall staff and public officials, the dialogue needs to be ongoing.

R.K. – Asked how he felt about attending meetings of the Board of Selectmen.

D.H. – He said that if it were something that the Selectmen would like then yes, it would be.

C.M. – Asked how managing is different than just being an officer.

D.H. – He explained that as a manager he would encourage officers to be motivated and involved. He feels that listening to them and encouraging their input is motivational. Planning for special events, he often has officers put a strategy, complete with emergency measures, together, allowing them into the process.

R.K. – Stated that we have an unusual, but legal in Massachusetts, situation in town in that one of the police officers is also a Selectman. Asked how he views this situation and how he would handle it.

D.H. – Mr. Hull stated that the officer has a responsibility as an officer and also as a town official. There is an officer in his town who is also a State Senator.

R.K. – Asked what he would do to define that dividing line.

D.H. – Explained that in each situation the officer/town official in question would need to abide by the rules and regulations of each job, adhering to the laws pertaining to conflict of interest.

C.M. – Asked how he felt about developing a budget for the department.

D.H. – Stated that his town basically has a bare bones policy these days. He sighted knowing what is really needed and what can be done without as being very important. He stated that maintaining a certain level of technology is considered a priority.

R.K. – Asked if Canton has a town meeting style of government.

D.H. – Stated that it does have this type of government.

C.M. – Asked if he has experience presenting information at town meeting.

D.H. – Said that he does have that experience.

C.M. – Asked what Canton's budget is.

D.H. – Stated that the budget there is just under 2 million.

R.K. – Asked what amount of time it would take to be the Chief of Police in West Tisbury.

D.H. – Stated that he thinks the job is a 24/7 commitment.

C.M. – Stated that the police department may begin planning for a new building. Asked him how he feels about that.

D.H. – Stated that he was very much involved with a new facility in Canton in 2002. He was involved with looking at everything from computer hookups to future space needs. The new building cost about 2 million dollars.

R.K. – Asked how he feels about Massachusetts having decriminalized the possession of small amounts of marijuana.

D.H. – Stated that you needed to look at both sides of the situation and basically accept the change in the law, hoping that the youthful population does not go on to more dangerous drugs.

C.M. – Stated that the vineyard has fire, police, and EMT personnel. Asked how he feels about regionalization of the police force and the pooling of resources.

D.H. – Stated that looking at the actual cost savings is important. He is unsure of whether it does save money and if the savings are worth it. He does think that pooling resources and training works well.

C.M. – Asked if he thinks there is a benefit to sharing administrative services.

D.H. – He said that he does see a benefit to it but wondered if it is really cost effective and if the town loses its individual character by doing so.

R.K. – Stated that West Tisbury has a broad spectrum of citizens including families, retirees from affluent communities, the super rich and many celebrities especially during the summer months. Some demand a certain amount of deference. How would you deal with that?”

D.H. – Explained that in Canton, there were some very well off residents too and that each time someone deals with an officer, he wants each person to feel satisfied with the experience. He feels that respect and proper communication are key.

C.M. – Stated that we have a paid police department and a volunteer fire department. Asked him to talk about this.

D.H. – Stated that we are often first responders working very closely with them and they all get along well. They share equipment, meetings and planning. Problems are brought forward and dealt with openly.

R.K. – Said that he has listed situations and would like to hear how he would handle them. The first one is underage drinking.

D.H. – Suggested that the most important thing is communicating with the parents. He said that a verbal warning goes a long way and that following up with the parents and referring them to agencies that might be helpful is beneficial. He suggested that immediate court involvement is not always best.

R.K. – Stated that we have narrow roads and speeding problems. Asked what his attitude is towards traffic violations.

D.H. – Stated that verbal warnings and high visibility slow people down as well as speed trailers.

R.K. – Stated that one problem we have here is elderly drivers. Asked him what he sees as his role.

D.H. – He said that talking with the family is very important and that sometimes taking the license so that the person must be retested is necessary to protect the safety of all involved, He agreed that it is a very delicate situation.

R.K. – Asked what his experience is in handling domestic violence.

D.H. – Explained that Connecticut has a, “no discretion”, law when it comes to domestic violence. He cited that education and support are really most important.

R.K. – Stated that we have some problems in the summer with vacationers staying next to residents. Asked him how he would deal with this problem.

D.H. – Stated that you have to determine what is reasonable and whether any law is being broken or ordinances being violated.

R.K. –Posed the following scenario; a young woman pedestrian is hit at an intersection at dusk and dies. The District Attorney does not want the name of the driver to be released claiming that it may interfere with the investigation. The D.A. also happens to be a friend of the driver’s family. Asked him how he would respond.

D.H. – States that the department has to do what is best for the families at the appropriate time, while respecting the District Attorneys position.

R.K. –Posed this scenario; you receive complaints about an officer being especially harsh, maybe age profiling, the officer denies the allegations. Asked him what he would do.

D.H. – Stated that getting the facts, comparing the data and eventually communicating with the officer and possibly working with him/her all may be necessary.

Mutual thanks were expressed

Second Interview – Christian Pedoty 10:40 a.m.

C.M. – Asked what his definition of Community Policing is and 1 or 2 examples of how it works.

C.P. – Answered that Community Policing is interacting with the community and letting them know that you are approachable and that the department is there to serve them. He noted that in a crime ridden community, sometimes getting involved in the area and talking to people and encouraging them to come forth with information can drastically improve a situation.

R.K. – Asked how he would feel taking over in a department where the acting chief is so heavily endorsed.

C.P. - Answered that of course it would be challenging but that he would come in with an open hand and hope for mutual respect. He said that he would not want to minimize the efforts of the department. He went on to say that it is a matter of respecting what goes on in the department now and would only want to enhance that. He said that you need to create a team approach.

C.M. – Asked what he had learned about the town and the island.

C.P. – Said that the internet has been helpful and noted that island communities have many similarities. He noted that he used to live in Hawaii and that nurturing the special qualities of the island would be important.

C.M. – Asked what he had learned about the Police Department

C.P. - He stated that he had learned about the basic size of the department and that networking is very important here. Discussed marijuana usage as it relates to addiction and to other drugs and crime.

R.K. - Asked him how he felt about the decriminalization of possession of small amounts of marijuana.

C.P. – He stated that he is not happy about it and discussed the law. He said that he does not think that it is a positive step but agreed that the law must be adhered to.

C.M.-Asked how managing and leading a department is different than strictly being a member.

C.P.-Answered that the baseline has to remain the same but as leader, there are many more demands and issues. He stated that as chief, your concern has to involve all the political aspects of the department as well as personnel issues.

R.K.-Asked if he has 24 years of service.

C.P.-Answered that yes he does have 24 years of service and that he does qualify for a pension.

R.K.-Asked him about his educational pursuits and how he would integrate those requirements with those of being the Chief of Police.

C.P.-Answered that a lot can be done on line but that education is very important to him but that he would gage the job to decide how much schooling is possible.

R.K.-Asked what he would do with the degrees.

C.P. - Answered that most of the education is involved with law enforcement but that education leadership education is something he is very interested in.

C.M.-Asked what his approach would be to department budgets.

C.P.-Stated that line item budgeting seems most effective. He feels that it allows comparison from 1 year to the next. He feels that any overages need to be justified and that transparency is important.

R.K.-Asked if he had ever presented a budget.

C.P.-Answered that he had not but had been involved with procurement.

R.K.-Asked him how he sees the job in relationship to the Board of Selectmen.

C.P.-Answered that he sees the relationship as a necessary one. He noted that as chief, you have to maintain open communication.

C.M.-Asked if he any experience that would assist him in if the station were renovated.

C.P.-Answered that they just had a new station built and learned a lot from that experience. He noted that officer input is very important and that collaboration of all staff is important.

C.M.-Asked him how he feels about regionalization and the pooling of resources.

C.P.-Answered that it is very easy to look at the money as the most important issue but that with this process changes are imminent and that you may end up losing more than you gain in the process.

R.K.-Asked how he feels about underage drinking, traffic, busy small roads, renters etc.

C.P.-Answered that he feels that there is a lot of discretion that may be used in small towns. He noted that there will be times that writing up a summons is the thing to do but other times where a verbal warning will suffice. He noted that dealing with domestic violence is not discretionary.

C.M.-Asked how he feels about having a volunteer fire department and a paid police department.

C.P.-Answered that he respects their dedication and noted that they do a great job supporting the police department when issues involving both departments arise.

R.K.-Stated that there is a very diverse group of people that live here and that in the summer there is an assemblage of extremely wealthy people. Asked him how he would deal with this sense of entitlement that may be present in a situation.

C.P.-It is a matter of giving everyone the same excellent level of service. Notes that these situations may be challenging but the chief may be able to mitigate a lot of these issues.

R.K. -Posed the following scenario; a young woman pedestrian is hit at an intersection at dusk and dies. The District Attorney does not want the name of the driver to be released claiming that

it may interfere with the investigation. The D.A. also happens to be a friend of the driver's family. Asked him how he would respond.

C.P.-Answered that he wouldn't go around the direction of the D.A. and that the relationship is an important one and that if there is a concern, it needs to be dealt with in the proper manner.

R.K. -Posed this scenario; you receive complaints about an officer being especially harsh, maybe age profiling, the officer denies the allegations. Asked him what he would do.

C.P.-Answered that he would first need to check the facts and if the officer did seem to be profiling, he/she would require retraining and possibly more supervision.

R.K.-Described a hostage situation and asked him how he would deal with it.

C.P.-Replied that he would call in resources that have specific training in negotiations. He noted that careful communication would be critical.

Mutual thanks were expressed.

Third Interview-Daniel Rossi

C.M. - Asked what his definition of Community Policing is and 1 or 2 examples of how it works.

D.R.-Answered that to him the term means forming a partnership between citizens and police to prevent crime. He noted that West Tisbury has been practicing this the days of Chief George Manter. He said that he has been approachable and involved with families and the community at large for many years and feels that people know him as Dan Rossi and not as a West Tisbury Police Officer.

R.K.-Asked what he thinks is the proper relationship between the Selectmen and the Chief of Police.

D.R.-Answered that communication between the chief and all town departments is important.

C.M.-Asked him what he has had to do differently in the role of acting chief.

D.R.-Stated that when he was appointed Sergeant, he took on a more administrative role but that in other areas there hasn't been a lot that has been different. He said that the relationships have remained wonderful and much hasn't changed except for times when decisions have to be made. He said that he is very comfortable making them and standing by them.

R.K.-Asked how he feels about Skipper being a Selectman and an Officer.

D.R.-Answered that he feels comfortable with it because Skipper does a great job keeping the two jobs separate.

C.M.-Asked him what changes he has seen on the island.

D.R.-Answered that the population has grown and there are more domestic issues in the community. He noted that he is very proud of all the up-island departments and the relationships they have with the community.

R.K.-Asked him how much time the job of Chief of Police takes.

D.R.-Stated that it is really a 24/7 commitment. He said that even as a sergeant it is 24/7.

R.K.-Asked if the all the West Tisbury officers live in West Tisbury.

D.R.-He said that all of them do.

C.M.-Asked him how he would approach developing the yearly budget.

D.R.-Answered that he would zero based budgeting and that there would perhaps be no COLA but there would be step increases. He also noted that line items would be reduced according to last year's figures and that the budgeting process would be challenging.

R.K. - Asked him how he felt about the decriminalization of possession of small amounts of marijuana.

D.R.-Answered that we don't make the laws, we just enforce them.

C.M.-Asked how he would deal with the new police station.

D.R.-He said that he is very comfortable with the planning and has taken part in the process so far. He mentioned that visiting other departments and reviewing guidelines set up for planning new police stations has been interesting.

R.K.-Stated that he knew that Dan had worked a lot at the school and with the youth on the island and asked him how he deals with drinking and substance abuse.

D.R.-Answered that if they are called to a party where underage drinking is involved, the alcohol is confiscated, the kids are brought home and the parents are notified. He said that it is their job to keep people safe and that it is far better to deal with the situation proactively.

C.M.-Asked him how he feels about regionalization and the pooling of resources.

D.R.-Answered that he is not sure that it saves money but that pooling resources is great. He noted that having an all island detective team would be fantastic. He mentioned that he didn't think that it definitely saves money and that the cost cutting is accomplished through attrition.

R.K.-Asked about the issue of elderly drivers, domestic violence and the summer population.

D.R.-Stated that he thinks that the harshest thing is an immediate threat to pull a license and that a discussion is better with family members and the department involved. He noted that the department has been very successful with discussions with seniors asking them not to drive. He stated that domestic violence is one of the most difficult crimes to deal with because you often know the people involved. He noted that Massachusetts guidelines dictate that an arrest should take place under all circumstances. He noted that state guidelines advise that you never go in alone because you really never know what you will find. He stated that with vacationers and dealing with the summer population, quality of life issues come up and that noise complaints are usually handled with the real threat of close down or pay the fine.

C.M.-Asked how he feels about having a volunteer fire department and a paid police department.

D.R.-He answered that the department works well with them and the EMTs. He noted that to have the support is very important and believes that this collaboration exists in West Tisbury.

R.K.-Asked him how he feels about the summer population, especially the wealthy visitors who sometimes require deferential treatment.

D.R.-Responded that he really hadn't come across this much in all his years of service. He explained that they get the same level of service as everyone else.

R.K. -Posed the following scenario; a young woman pedestrian is hit at an intersection at dusk and dies. The District Attorney does not want the name of the driver to be released claiming that it may interfere with the investigation. The D.A. also happens to be a friend of the driver's family. Asked him how he would respond.

D.R.-Answered that the D.A. is the highest level of law enforcement and that the position taken should be respected but that the appropriate forms would be completed using names but that they would not be released to the press.

R.K. -Posed this scenario; you receive complaints about an officer being especially harsh, maybe age profiling, the officer denies the allegations. Asked him what he would do.

D.R.-Answered that the facts would have to be checked and all angles would need to be looked into. He noted that if the officer was being too harsh he/she may need to be asked to calm down.

R.K.-Posed this scenario; marijuana is being cultivated. Asked him what he would do about it.

D.R.-Answered that he would pull it and get it out of there.

R.K.-Posed this scenario and asked Dan what he would do about it; it is prom night and you pull over a limo. There are 3 couples all dressed up and an unopened bottle of vodka on the floor.

D.R.-Answered that the driver should be summoned to court and the alcohol confiscated. He said that the parents would be notified and the kids advised of the danger of the situation. He said that he would then tell the kids to go and enjoy the prom.

R.K.-Presented this scenario and asked Dan what he would do about it. A taxpayer wants to adopt a bylaw relating to the monitoring of sex offenders.

D.R.-Answered that there are laws in place that take care of this and that the Selectmen would have to be on board to change any by-laws.

Mutual thanks were expressed.

The press and the Board of Selectmen discussed the success of the process. Richard expressed thanks to the selection committee for providing them with 3 such viable candidates. All agreed the process was very transparent.

Members of the press asked about the next step in the process and when the final decision would be made. Richard and Cindy concurred that they had seen and heard all that they needed to and that the decision would be made A.S.A.P.

Richard moved to adjourn

Cindy seconded the motion

Meeting adjourned at 1:03 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pam Thors

Administrative Assistant