

JANUARY 14, 2020

The Special Meeting of the Lake Benton City Council was held on Tuesday, January 14, 2020 at 4:00 PM in the Heritage Center/City Office. Mayor Bob Worth, Trustees Rosie DeZeeuw, Mark Dunn, Dave Enke, and Daryl Schlapkohl were present. City Attorney Mike Cable, City Administrator/Clerk Eileen Christensen, Police Chief Jeff Bumgarner, Lincoln County Sheriff Chad Meester, County Commissioner Corey Sik, Maintenance Supervisor Todd Draper, Roger Rudebusch, Don and Diane Evers, and Shelly Finzen from the Lake Benton Valley Journal were also present.

Mayor Bob Worth called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all present.

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss with Lincoln County regarding law enforcement services. Mayor Bob Worth thanked everyone in attendance for coming to the meeting. Mayor Bob Worth then handed the floor over to Sheriff Chad Meester. Sheriff Meester stated that Police Chief Jeff Bumgarner is a great resource to have participating in this discussion, and how he is impressed with Jeff's knowledge with the struggles of small communities and law enforcement. Sheriff Meester then stated there may have been a misconception on his previous presentation to the Council last year, but contracting does work. The County can provide the services needed and can easily track the hours contracted by the City. Sheriff Meester used Hendricks as an example for the discussion. Hendricks contracts for ten hours a week and they average the ten hours throughout the year.

The Council then asked if the City of Lake Benton agrees to contract, do the contracted hours mean boots on the ground or does it include paperwork, etc. The contracted hours will consist of boots on the ground, being visible in the City, and include a percentage of hours dedicated to paperwork.

Another question was asked if the County's philosophy is proactive or reactive. Sheriff Meester stated the County's philosophy is proactive. Sheriff Meester gives his deputies direction and encourages them to stop and meet people, eat at places in the City, go to the school, demonstrate public relations (PR), and make an effort to meet the community.

It was then asked if the County has the personnel to contract with another City. Sheriff Meester stated he is excited, hopeful and believes we can make this work. If the current staff isn't enough, he will request additional staff.

It was stated there are several benefits for the City to contract law enforcement services with the County due to the fact it is harder for smaller cities to maintain a police department. Discussion then took place on the length of the contract, escape clause, and hours provided.

If the City contracts with the County, what insurance or support will the County have should the make-up of the Commissioners or Sheriff change? It was definitively stated that no contracts have stopped due to the change of a board or Sheriff. The County board and Sheriff are ultimately looking at serving the citizens and should continue to emphasize that practice.

Discussion was then concentrated on hours and dollars. Sheriff Meester stated the calls for service in Lake Benton are about the same as those in Hendricks. The call volume for medical services has increased and the deputies are taking more medical calls to assist short-handed EMS personnel. It was asked if the City could request a ten minute response time. Sheriff Meester is looking at setting up patrol zones to assist in that, but will need to research if the City can request a deputy live within the ten minute response time.

The County currently has five deputies on duty and is in the process of filling one vacancy which brings the total to six deputies. How many hours does the City deem necessary? Responses included 10 to 12 hours/week, 16 hours/week, and 20 to 24 hours/week. Some Council members felt 10 to 12 hours seems to work for Hendricks, it should work for Lake Benton; 20 to 24 hours was more comfortable due to the fact there are two major highways going in and out of Lake Benton to better control speeding, and if the City gets the reputation for low law enforcement and high crime, how are we going to attract new families, students for the school and teachers; ten hours is not enough time for PR and 20 hours should be good; split the difference between the 10 and 24 hours and try 16 hours a week.

It was then commented the City of Lake Benton's police office could be used as a satellite office for the County. The County agreed and felt they would be inclined to utilize the space to park in Lake Benton, write their reports, and have a secure space for interviews.

The City of Hendricks pays \$52.454 per person residing in the City (713), ten hours a week for a total of \$37,400.00 per year. As a scenario, if the City of Lake Benton proposes ten hours a week at \$52.454 per person (683) the total would be \$35,826.08 per year (multiplier of 1.0); or 24 hours a week at \$52.454 per person the total would be \$71,652.16 (multiplier of 2.0).

The Council inquired what the County would do with the City's new squad. The County would purchase the squad outright with the equipment included.

It was recommended the City prepare two proposals – one for 10 hours a week, and one for 20 to 24 hours a week – and present the proposals to the County after the Council has approved.

There being no further business to come before the Council at this time, a **MOTION** was made by Mark Dunn, seconded by Dave Enke and carried, the meeting adjourned.

MAYOR

ADMINISTRATOR/CLERK