

The Selectmen have been informed of Chief Barry Moores' impending retirement. A change in leadership in any organization provides the opportunity to evaluate the structure and operations of that organization. In the case of Madison Police Department, the recent devaluation of the paper mill has caused the Board of Selectmen to examine every facet of municipal government to make sure that Madison is getting the services required by its citizens at the best possible cost.

Early in the year, the Madison Board of Selectmen asked Sheriff Dale Lancaster to work with Chief Moores to examine the operations of Madison Police Department and the policing needs of the Town of Madison to see if there are any areas of opportunity that we might work together. Chief Moores worked side by side with Sheriff Lancaster to develop a plan that was presented to the Madison Board of Selectmen in executive session on Monday night. It was presented in executive session because part of the plan is personnel, wages and benefits and the Selectmen felt that unless the plan was viable, it wasn't appropriate to make it public until the Board was convinced that it was the right thing to do.

In the present budget year, Madison residents will pay approximately \$610,000 for law enforcement services. The mill devaluation requires that we try to bring that number down. The citizens require that we maintain a certain level of service. The plan presented does both.

The plan proposes to turn over the administration of Madison Police Department to Somerset County Sheriff effective July 1, 2015. Somerset County Sheriff's Department will create the Madison Division of that entity. The titles to the two newest cruisers will be turned over to Somerset County as of that date. Madison police officers, after screening by the Sheriff's department, will become employees of the county with the pay and benefit structure currently offered the County employees by contract.

Operationally, citizens should see little change in their police department. Sheriff Lancaster has assured the Select Board that Madison will have 24/7 coverage. The office located on Weston Ave will continue to be available to serve the public during normal business hours. Madison will gain many resources from this affiliation with the Somerset County Sheriff. The SO has some of the most well trained, respected professional investigators in areas of drugs, sexual abuse and other societal ills that are present in our area. All those folks will be available to the Madison division as needed.

The cost of this service to the Madison taxpayers for 2015-16 will be \$480,728. This is a savings of over \$130,000 if you include annual cruiser purchasing.

The Board of Selectmen has asked Chief Moores to remain in place until December 2015 to assist with this transition and he has agreed to do so.