

Upcoming town meeting

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Subject : Upcoming town meeting

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The special town meeting is scheduled for Wednesday November 12th at 7 PM at the Quaboag Regional Middle High School auditorium. Article three on the warrant is to fund the purchase of two new police vehicles. We are asking that everyone please show up and support the police department on this article. For those with young children, daycare will be provided by the students in the National Honor Society at the school.

Over the past few years I have supplied the Board of Selectmen, the Finance Committee, and the Capital planning committee with empirical data supporting the need to purchase new cars. To summarize, using this data from around the country, police vehicles last for three years or 100000 miles. The age of our fleet averages 7.6 years and 125000 miles.

There has been a lot of talk around town about the current condition of our fleet. So that everyone has a better understanding, I would like to offer the following information. We have taken the 2005 Expedition and the 2004 Taurus out of service because they will not pass State inspection due to excessive body rot and many other mechanical problems that make the cost of the repairs exceed the total value of the vehicle. As of now we are down to three vehicles. During the past few weeks our police department supplied security to both the Quaboag Middle High School and the Warren Community Elementary school. During this time we had to borrow police vehicles from other communities to provide the service, and provide for the day to day operations of the department. In addition, many officers have used their personal vehicles for police functions.

I realize that most people are not familiar with what vehicle resources are necessary to provide for police operations on a daily basis. On most shifts, we have two officers on patrol. Oftentimes other vehicles are necessary for special circumstances, directed patrols, meetings, special events, road construction, surveillance, sensitive or discreet situations and investigations, travel to court and training.

I also have heard that some people are of the opinion that we should reduce the overall size of the fleet. This specific issue has been addressed through the Board of Selectmen, the Finance Committee and the Capital Planning Committee and I have provided information to support the need for a minimum of five police vehicles and have justified the use of each vehicle. It makes little sense to reduce the size of the fleet, put more miles on fewer vehicles, increase maintenance costs and decrease the overall longevity of the cars.

We do not factor the Humvee as an operational patrol vehicle because we cannot use it for that purpose. We obtained the Humvee two years ago through a government program at no cost to the town. The town of Warren does not own the Humvee, it is the property of the United States Government. When we have no more use for it or it irreparably breaks down, we merely return it to the government. It is on loan to us for as long as we would like to use it. Much like the fire departments utility vehicle and the highway department's catch basin cleaning truck, we cannot use the Humvee on a daily basis but it has a tremendous amount of value when it is needed.

I would be happy to answer any specific questions that anyone may have. Please private message me on Facebook, email me at warrenchief1@verizon.net or call the police station at 436-9595.