

February 18, 2019

In response to the Face Book release of February 15 at 12:16 PM, regarding the changing Face of Law Enforcement Services In Watersmeet Township.

As you know, everyone has a right to their opinion, but no one has the right to make up their own facts. Over one and a half years ago, the LVD Tribe approached Watersmeet Township regarding police services and 2% money. Subsequently, the Township had a meeting at the Tribal Office Conference room and some of the people present included Mike Rogers, Twp Supervisor, Sandy Mansfield, Twp. Clerk, Tribal Attorney Ken Akini, Tribal Chair James Williams, Tribal Police Chief Richard Burke, and Council member Mike Hazen Jr. At that meeting, the Tribal Attorney proposed that the Township set up their own Police Department and listed the following 4 reasons for doing so.

1. Because 2/3 of the calls serviced were off Reservation, it hampers the ability of the tribe to apply for and receive grants from the BIA.
2. Because the Tribe is under Federal jurisdiction, they can only apply for Federal grants. If the Township had their own Police Dept., the town could also apply for State grants and therefore it could benefit both the Tribe and Township.
3. Because 2% revenue has been decreasing year after year, they felt that if the Township set up their own department they could save 2% money that could be used for other services.
4. It was conveyed to the Township that the Tribe was not happy being cross deputized with the Sheriff's Department and would rather be deputized under the Township. It was also conveyed that the reason they would rather be deputized under the Township is because they felt that the Sheriff's Dept. did not have a great amount of respect for the Tribal Police.

The Tribal Attorney then proposed that in the 1st year of the Township's own department the Tribe would fund the Township PD to the tune of \$70,000, provide a vehicle (one of the Tribe's older ones) and the necessary equipment to start up the Twp PD. The \$70,000 would cover one officer's wage as well as fuel for the vehicle and vehicle maintenance.

After that meeting, the Tribal Attorney drew up a cross deputation agreement. That agreement was given to the township and forwarded to the Township Attorney and after the attorney's and the Board's approval, the Tribal Attorney was notified. Watersmeet Township with the help of the township attorney, drafted all the ordinances that were required for a Municipal Police Department. The ordinances also were approved by the Township Board. Further, the Township contacted the State of Michigan and reestablished our ORI number.

The Cross Deputation Agreement was still "floating" out there and at the request of the tribe, we were asked to choose a current member of their force because they were qualified to work both on and off the reservation. The Township, through communications with Tribal Police Chief, R. Burke, chose to take one of their officers. When the Tribal Police Chief and Supervisor Rogers were talking about the individual to be chosen, the supervisor suggested one name and Chief Burke expressed reservations due to the lack of Administrative experience of that officer. At the same meeting, Chief Burke suggested two other potential officers, one being Paul Runcie. At that point in time Supervisor Rogers did not know

Paul Runcie, but because we understood that the other officer suggested had previously retired and then returned to work, the Township was looking for someone that would hopefully provide longevity to the department. After a background check, the Board decided on Paul Runcie.

Still not hearing anything from the Tribe regarding the Cross Deputation Agreement, we picked up a used car from the County; bought uniforms and started to equip the Township Police Department. At this point there was still no response to the cross deputation and really no communication at all stating they were or were not interested. The Township decided to put an additional mil on the operating millage of the Township in order to cover the cost of police protection, unless or until an agreement was formalized with the Tribe. The issue sat dormant with no response from the Tribe and the township had no choice but to implement the millage because at that point it was unclear if there would be police protection as of April 1, 2019.

The last meeting of the Township and Tribe at the Community Center regarding the Cross Deputation was attended by the Sheriff, Under Sheriff, the Tribal Attorney, Tribal Chairman Williams, Tribal Police Chief Burke, Supervisor Rogers and Paul Kemppainen Township Treasurer. At this meeting it was expressed to us by the Tribal Attorney that the deputation agreement was no longer on the table. The Sheriff stated that Cross Deputation would not be done through the County due to Watersmeet having its own PD. This should be done between the Township and the Tribe. From the Township's perspective, the cross deputation is still on the table as initially proposed by the Tribal Attorney. At this meeting there was every indication that there would be another meeting to try to resolve the Cross Deputation Agreement. There was no follow up meeting. The only thing received by the Township was a letter brought into the town offices by Tribal Chair J. Williams terminating the police agreement as of March 31, 2019.

The township is and always has been willing to work with the Tribe in cross deputation under the original proposal. Keep in mind that the whole idea of establishing a separate PD was not initiated by the Township, but by the Tribe, and as can be seen, the township did all they could do to work toward that end solution. Up until the time the Tribe approached us, we had not even considered not using the Tribal Police. It is unfortunate that the words written on Facebook have the potential to create a severe rift in the community based upon information not completely factual.