

TOWN OF CHAPLIN – JUNE 10, 2024 - MINUTES OF SPECIAL TOWN MEETING – TROOPER PROGRAM

Approximately 25 electors assembled at the Special Town Meeting on June 10, 2024, at 7:00 P.M. at the Chaplin Senior Center, 132 Chaplin Street, Chaplin, Connecticut. Also present were Selectman Juan Roman, III, Selectman Joe Pinto. The following business was transacted:

The Town Clerk called the meeting to order at 7:04, read the call of the meeting and opened the floor for nominations to elect a Moderator. Selectman Roman/Selectman Pinto moved/seconded to nominate Irene Schein. Hearing no further nomination, Irene Schein was declared Moderator and read the following item on the call:

2* "Shall the Town of Chaplin discontinue the Resident State Trooper Program? Yes/No".

*At its meeting held on May 31, 2024 the Board of Selectmen voted, pursuant to CGS § 7-7, that Item #2 of the Call of the Special Town Meeting be submitted to a referendum vote at an Adjourned Special Town Meeting to be held June 20, 2024 at the Chaplin Firehouse, 106 Phoenixville Road (Rte. 198) in said Chaplin from 12:00 Noon to 8:00 P.M. The question on the ballot label at said referendum shall read as follows:

"Shall the Town of Chaplin discontinue the Resident State Trooper Program? Yes/No"

Absentee ballots shall be available as provided by law to persons applying in person at the office of the Town Clerk during its regular business hours.

Dated at Chaplin, Connecticut, this 1st day of June 2024.

/s/**CHAPLIN BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

Resident Patricia Pogmore asked what the alternative is to having a resident state trooper program. Moderator Shein said that we would use Troop D as we have in the past.

Resident Kylee Varga asked if we discontinue the trooper program, who will take over the community-based programs such as DARE and if a trooper would have a presence at the town schools similar to what the resident trooper has had in the past. Selectman Roman answered that at the last town meeting Linda Caron who is a teacher at the school and is involved with the DARE program indicated that she could find another trooper to teach the DARE program. As far as community policing, Troop D covers our area, and we could request Troop D to send somebody once in a while or whenever we have an event or security awareness need. The school itself has established a security system that is monitored by the State Police. Resident Varga also asked how Troop D services are paid for. Selectman Roman answered that it is covered through our state taxes.

Selectman Roman commented that we discussed, at the last town meeting, whether we should vote to discontinue the trooper program. The Moderator called for a vote at the last town meeting with 42 in favor of ending the program and 2 in favor of keeping the program. The consensus was to discontinue the program, but we then also voted to send the question to a special town meeting to discuss only the trooper program question and adjourn to a separate referendum to vote, thus, making sure that all of Chaplin's electors have the opportunity to be involved in this important decision. It was voted to go to special meeting and referendum.

Resident Juan Sanchez inquired about the actual cost for the trooper program? Selectman Roman responded that the cost for the current year is \$156,262.93.

Resident Leslie Ricklin asked how our taxes will be affected if the program is cut from the budget. Selectman Roman indicated that is a question for the Board of Finance.

Moderator Schein asked how long it will take, after the town votes to discontinue the program, for the program to terminate. Selectman Roman spoke with the attorneys for the State Police and they said it would terminate immediately. The program is currently slated to expire in 2025. If it is voted to end the program early, there will be time to adjust the town budget figures before the 2nd town budget referendum.

Resident Ann Chuk asked how long we have had the trooper program and why did we started it to begin with. Moderator Schein answered that the program started after the murder on Singleton Road which was about 30 years ago. Also, that we did have a state trooper program previous to this current program and that program was also ended.

Resident Robert DeMayo said he is interested to know, from a resident's point of view, what the major incidents are in town that require the police to be called. Selectman Roman responds that "reportable incidents" are anything that require an incident number. Crime in Chaplin is not very high. Traffic stops are most of the reportable incidents in town, and they are mostly on Route 6 which is covered by Troop D. Most of the calls happen in the evening and are responded to by Troop D. Demayo also states that the original intention of the trooper program was to have a resident trooper who worked late shifts and not a 9 – 5 shift. That is not what is happening now and feels the program is a good deal for the troopers but not a good deal for the town.

Resident Leslie Ricklin expressed concern regarding the phrasing of the question on the ballot and that it is stated in the negative and should be stated in the positive. The question says "Shall the Town of Chaplin discontinue the Resident State Trooper Program? Yes/No". She feels it should be stated "Shall the Town of Chaplin continue the Resident State Trooper Program? Yes/No".

Town Clerk Shari Smith remembers a statute that requires referendum questions to be in a yes/no format, but does not recall a statute that requires the question to be stated in the positive.

The question as stated, has already been discussed and voted on at the first town meeting. It has been published in two legal warnings that appeared in the Chronicle newspaper, on our website and on the town clerk's board outside of the town hall. Sample ballots with the exact question have been published inside of the town hall and also on the website.

Moderator Schein stated that the contract currently goes to 2025, so if we say "continue" it, does that mean after it ends in 2025? It may seem that we are asking if it should continue after 2025. What we are actually asking is if the trooper program should terminate now.

Resident Donald Neborsky stated that anytime he needed to call the police, Troop D and not the resident trooper responded. He called the police when a friend's house was broken into, and it took 4 ½ hours for Troop D to respond and the resident trooper was not on duty. He does not feel that the expense is worth it.

The Moderator called for a motion to adjourn. Robert DeMayo/Selectman Roman moved/seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 7:26 P.M.

Respectfully submitted, Shari Smith, Chaplin Town Clerk