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Koshkonong hears sheriff's office policing ideas

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By Jennifer Eisenbart lifestyles@dailyunion.com

Profile picture, Posted on Oct 12, 2017 by Chris Spangler

KOSHKONONG — Jefferson County Chief Deputy Jeff Parker gave a detailed report to the Town of Koshkonong Board of Supervisors Wednesday night, outlining just what the sheriff's office could do for the township.

"I was asked to come here tonight to speak about the policing issue in the Town of Koshkonong," Parker told the board during its monthly meeting.

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The board had spoken with Milton officials during September's meeting about the possibility of picking up extra patrols in the Town of Koshkonong, and is exploring options to boost the number of patrols through the township.

Parker's list showed "what the sheriff's department does for the Town of Koshkonong," the chief deputy explained. On the list are normal patrols by the deputies through the territory, and having registered more than 2,800 contacts with town residents in the past year.

The Town of Koshkonong has contracted with the sheriff's office in the past for additional hours, but those come at a price. In addition, getting deputies to sign up for the additional patrols can be difficult.

"It came at a difficult time for the sheriff's department," Parker said of the past contract, adding that there were projects available at overtime pay that made it hard to find deputies to patrol Koshkonong.

Parker didn't know legalities of working with Milton, which is in Rock County, not Jefferson; however, he said he figured that everything could be worked out. However, after talking with Koshkonong Town Chairman Bill Burlingame, he came back to one question, he said.

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"What are we not doing for you now that we can do better?" Parker asked the board.

He said he dug into matters within the department, met with the patrol captain and sergeants, and also spoke with Jefferson County Sheriff Paul Milbrath, who is just returning from knee surgery and could not make the meeting.

"I hear your concerns. I've addressed those concerns," Parker said. "My key focus is to make you happy with what you're getting from us."

That could mean contracting for additional hours in some amount. Parker explained that the cost will jump from what the town last paid by \$1.35 per hour, going from \$33.48 to \$34.83. There also was some discussion by the board about offering overtime pay — or time-and-a-half — to induce officers into taking the extra patrols.

"I don't think any of us on the board had any idea there were this many calls," Burlingame said of the current numbers.

Burlingame asked that if the town did make an allocation for further hours, whether it could stipulate where the hours would be spent. Parker said yes, but he would have to find out what could be handled within the current contract first.

Town Supervisor Stacy Kutz asked how the sheriff's office would handle enforcing town ordinances. Parker explained that some townships have it written that the town chairman could issue a citation. Kutz and Burlingame confirmed that the town doesn't write tickets, and it had reached out to the sheriff's office if it needed to go beyond a warning.

Burlingame added that the town is reworking its ordinances and is trying to mirror the county ordinances.

Town Supervisor Jim Brandenburg pointed out that the numbers aren't really that high given the size of Koshkonong, one of, if not the, largest town in the state.

Parker also mentioned that having a number of major highways running through the township increased the number of traffic calls.

Two other items were briefly discussed Wednesday. A town resident received approval from the town board potentially to have two donkeys on her property, though Burlingame and others on the board told the residents to check with neighbors for approval before doing anything.

The Jefferson County Board of Supervisors also will have to approve the request.

Also, in regard to unusual traffic in a town park, Clerk Kim Cheney said she discovered the park is a stop for Pokemon Go.

There was a brief discussion about placing a sign at the entrance of the park saying such activities — which also include geocaching — can only take place during park hours.



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