

On Monday, the Village of Deer Park terminated its contract for police protection with the Village of Kildeer and approved a draft agreement with the Lake County Sheriff, subject to approval by the Lake County Board.

There is no greater responsibility for any elected official at any level than “to provide for the common defense” of all constituents. Police service has consistently been the dominant Village expense, roughly equating to sales tax revenues and crowding out infrastructure repair and other desired investments.

The current Village administration ran on a platform of transparency, which was notably lacking on a change of this magnitude that impacts each and every resident and business owner or manager. At the Oct. 17 VODP Board meeting, nearly every public commenter requested more open communication, preferably including public hearings. Elected officials seemed to maintain a wall of silence, other than, in my opinion, remarks scripted by the Village Attorney or extracted from press releases.

Since the Board is currently unable to communicate, I have accepted an invitation from Deer Park Neighbors (DPN) to share what I believe to be an accurate update of this issue. I would strongly encourage those who can correct any errors in my letter to do so. DPN has requested that comments or corrections be sent to [info@deerparkneighbors.com](mailto:info@deerparkneighbors.com) or by fax to 847-984-1277, including permission to publish. In that way all of us can have a full understanding of why a change was made and what we can expect under the pending contract with Lake County.

### History and Economics

Deer Park entered into an agreement for police service with Kildeer around the time that the Kildeer Village Hall was built. The contract called for Deer Park to pay half of the department cost and receive one dedicated sworn officer to patrol Deer Park plus one shared officer focused on the Rand Road retail corridor, including the Deer Park malls and the Kildeer malls. Although there were annual audit provisions there is no evidence that Deer Park ever exercised its rights, so it is unclear as to how much of the Kildeer Village Hall was effectively paid by Deer Park. Convention junkets by the previous police chief would have been included expenses, as were a variety of other indirect line items. There is also capital equipment included in the Kildeer line item expenses which presumably will be retained by Kildeer, even though it was identified for use in Deer Park service.

Deer Park accepted the 50/50 split even though there are twice as many residents in Kildeer. Moreover, a second agreement was executed in 2008 which continued the service with a 5% automatic price increase, decoupled from the cost of providing the service. Line item details in the Kildeer FY 2011 and FY2012 budgets show that the (unaudited) expenses for Deer Park police service has been significantly less than what Deer Park was paying:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Cost to Kildeer</u>	<u>Paid by Deer Park</u>	<u>Kildeer Profit</u>
FY08	\$1.125MM	\$1.260MM	\$135K
FY09	\$1.095MM	\$1.325MM	\$230K
FY10	\$1.032MM	\$1.390MM	\$385K
FY11	\$1.313MM	\$1.460MM	\$147K

Since May, Deer Park has been paying at a \$1.53MM rate even though the Kildeer budget for FY12 was \$1.4MM. Assuming costs have been tracking as budgeted, this means that for the past four and a half years, Kildeer has profited from Deer Park by about one million dollars. In effect, each of us has been subsidizing Kildeer due to the ignorance or laziness of former Trustees.

Given these outrageous discrepancies, at some point it appears that Deer Park finally began investigating its rights. Analysis of service coverage revealed a material breach, which allowed Deer Park to terminate the agreement. Deer Park discovered that Kildeer was not providing contractual coverage. The language in the termination letter is somewhat confusing, but to my understanding, it indicates as much as a 10% shortfall in coverage in the residential areas and only 10 to 16% actual coverage in the commercial area. The aggregate shortfall would equate to over 4600 hours/year less coverage than contracted, or more than two full-time employees. The termination letter indicates that attempts were made to renegotiate a fair fee for current services; however, no agreement could be reached. Understandably, it would be challenging to renegotiate with a party that had consistently been shortchanging service levels. The termination letter and the draft contract with Lake County are in the October agenda packet on the Village website <http://villageofdeerpark.com/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=999>

None of this is a reflection on the individual officers, and we understand that the officers, through their union, made significant concessions, including work rules affecting shift hours, that would have lowered the cost of operations. However, in Kildeer the Police Chief reports directly to the Village Administrator, Michael Talbett (appointed to a \$100,000/yr position by his sister-in-law, the Mayor of Kildeer, over objection of several board members). Negotiations with Mr. Talbett did not proceed to an amicable resolution. Now Kildeer has sent layoff notices to eight of their fourteen officers.

Deer Park sought proposals from Palatine, Lake Zurich, and Barrington; however, nothing developed with any of the surrounding communities. Instead, after vetting satisfaction levels with other communities such as North Barrington and Long Grove, an agreement with the Lake County Sheriff's department was negotiated.

Service Coverage and Questions

Nine sworn officers currently are assigned to patrol Deer Park. The squad cars are based at the Kildeer Village Hall on Quentin Rd. According to the officers, current 911 response time is about two minutes, although residents have shared longer experiences (closer to five minutes). Dispatch has been provided by Lake Zurich which handles the LZFRD fire response as well. Multiple cars could respond depending upon the nature of the emergency. Absent emergencies, there is a mix of routine required duties. Based on repeated directives from Deer Park over the years, significant time is devoted to STEP traffic enforcement. In September, there were 225 STEP patrols resulting in 15 citations. This occupies several hours per day and Deer Park's share of the citation fees works out to far less than minimum wage. A few subdivisions are patrolled each shift, such that most subdivisions are checked briefly about once a day. Other duties include residence checks upon request if someone is out-of-town and business checks.

Under the draft agreement with Lake County, Deer Park would purchase five squad cars for \$232,000. The annual fee will be \$1.2MM, less than our current fee but more than the average recent cost to provide the currently contracted service. As there is no local police station, the cars would typically be garaged at the officers' homes. The contract calls for one dedicated officer 24/7 and another one 17 hours/day, more than the current allocation. If we were paying for 36 hours/day and receiving 25 or 26, then 41 hours/ day represents about a significant increase in actual coverage. How those hours will be utilized is an open question, but comparisons to a era in which Deer Park was patrolled 4 or 8 hours/day is simply inappropriate.

The Lake County contractual response time is less than four minutes, roughly consistent with current experience. Dispatch would transition away from Lake Zurich, presumably to Waukegan, although it is unclear how the relay would affect either police or fire response times in the future. The contract does not address the allocation of non-emergency priorities, nor are there any other metrics. There is no discussion in the contract regarding the division of labor for the Rand Road corridor nor authority if greater response is needed than on duty (e.g. a multi-car collision or criminal chase on Rand Road.)

In the event of an arrest, a Lake County officer would need to drive to Waukegan to process the case, unless there is a closer sub-station with a lock-up. What coverage would remain in Deer Park during the officer's travel, especially if the incident occurred during the seven hours/day of single-car coverage?

Will there be dedicated personnel for Deer Park who can learn the nuances of every subdivision to recognize suspicious activity vs. a homeowner's car parked on the street? Community policing is a core principle of public safety, whether a beat cop in the city or in a more suburban setting.

Many of you have additional questions of your own. I would encourage everyone to use this forum to express their questions and concerns with the transition, and strongly encourage our elected officials to answer everyone's questions. There ought to be a Town Hall/Public Forum as well as a written FAQ mailing with how to's and non-emergency contact numbers. Some of this information (e.g. house watch requests, etc.) is on the Lake County website <http://www.lakecountyil.gov/sheriff/Pages/default.aspx> .

Although Deer Park has approved this change, the change will not take place until November 15<sup>th</sup> at the earliest. Lake County must vote on the matter on November 8<sup>th</sup>. You can reach the Lake County Sheriff at 847-377-4000 or [mcurran@lakecountyil.gov](mailto:mcurran@lakecountyil.gov) . You can reach our Village President, Bob Kellermann, at 847-526-7266 or [rkellermann@villageofdeerpark.com](mailto:rkellermann@villageofdeerpark.com) .

On whole, as much as I respect the current officer pool and their Chief, there is reason to believe that the Village of Deer Park will be better served after the transition. It appears that the Board had the interests of the residents at heart and faced with coverage lapses had no alternative. Lake County would not be my personal preference, but there does not appear to have been any competitive proposals from neighboring communities. A do-it-yourself option, which Inverness chose, is enticing, but probably unrealistic given the support staff requirements and the activity levels Deer Park experiences with its retail mix and Rand Road proximity.

There are two keys to success. First, we need dedicated personnel who each reach out and into the Deer Park community for a true community policing environment. The Board needs to provide clear direction so that our 41 hours are used optimally—more time in the neighborhoods and less time on minor traffic enforcement. To the extent that we as residents reach out as well, inviting crime prevention seminars at HOA meetings and other Community Watch activities, we can meet our new guardians part way. A diligent community is the best first line of protection.

Second, the Board needs to collect and address each and every public safety concern of the residents. DPN can be an initial vehicle until the Board officially conducts a town forum. The responses need to be codified and widely distributed, preferably over-communicated. For example, everyone with a home security system will need to notify their provider of the change in police coverage so that contacts are updated at the time of the changeover. Moreover, significant resident concerns need to be incorporated into a binding amendment to the draft contract with Lake County. Lest we ignore the lessons of history, performance metrics that address reasonably foreseeable issues would go a long way to avoiding a reoccurrence of the unfortunate circumstances that required this change in the first place.

Respectfully,

Roger Hankin