

**TOWN OF BROOKLET  
CALLED MEETING  
JANUARY 31, 2008**

- 1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER: Mayor Grooms**  
**Members Present:** Russell Davis, Randy Newman, Attorney Hugh Hunter, Sylvia Prosser and William Hendrix. Annette Wilson was absent.
- 2. INVOCATION:** Sylvia Prosser

**THE CALLED MEETING WAS FOR MAYOR GROOMS AND COUNCIL TO REVIEW A DISCUSSION COUNCIL HAD AT THE JANUARY 24<sup>TH</sup> MEETING, CONCERNING THE POLICE OFFICER EMPLOYMENT AT SOUTHEAST BULLOCH HIGH SCHOOL.**

**MAYOR GROOMS ASKED COUNCIL FOR ANY QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS.**

Councilman Newman stated that since the January 24<sup>th</sup> meeting, there has been more information about the SRO officer down at S.E.B. and why Bulloch County Sherriff's Department will not place one of their officers at the school being that it is a Bulloch County School. Sheriff Lynn Anderson sent Councilman Newman a letter stating that he has been approached in the past by the Board of Education concerning the SRO program at S.E.B. He advised the school that Bulloch County Sheriffs' Department did not have the resources to put one of their officers at the school. Mr. Anderson is aware that one of the Brooklet officers has been working at S.E.B. has a SRO and feels that if the Town of Brooklet can do so, it is an excellent opportunity. Bulloch County Sheriffs Department will still respond to the school when called as they have always done so in the past. Councilman Newman also found out that Statesboro uses officers from the Statesboro Police Department at Statesboro High School and the police department in return pays the officers.

Mayor Grooms asked Attorney Hugh Hunter if the Town of Brooklet was still be liable for our police officer while he is working at S.E.B. Attorney Hugh Hunter stated that while the officer wears the city uniform and drives the police car works a separate and distinct shift of that, which he works at the city and he is under the schools supervision rather than the City of Brooklet supervision at the school.

Mr. Holloway stated that S.E.B. does have their own Error and Admissions Policy. The whole point is that S.E.B. needed an SRO at the school for the students well being. The school initially began paying the officer an hourly salary and sharing the cost of the mileage on the police car. It is in agreement with the school that if the officer is needed for an emergency outside the school he is to respond, even though he is on school hours. Attorney Hugh Hunter suggest that if Brooklet wants to go ahead and leave the officer at the school, then there is a way to structure the liability while it probably wouldn't be the same liability minimum and there is likely a way to shift this plan and suggest a meeting with the school board attorney.

Councilwoman Prosser stated to Mr. Holloway and other members of S.E.B. school that if she taught at S.E.B., she would strongly want the officer at the school. Our job is to look out for Brooklets best interest and the way she tries to do so is to stay in touch with the people of the town.

Mayor Grooms asked, if we let our officer work at the school without the car and uniform, would he still be certified? Interim Chief Buchan said yes. Even if the school provided the officer with a uniform besides the Brooklet PD uniform, he is still certified to carry a gun at all times. S.E.B. feels that having the officer in uniform makes a statement with the students. Also, having the patrol car down at the school is not only good for the school but it is also a plus for Brooklet just in case the officer is called to assist in an emergency in Brooklet. There were also concerns in which the officer working two jobs and the total hours worked. According to Chief Interim Buchan, the officer's schedule at the school does not interfere with the hours he works with the police department. The hours between both jobs balance out.

Charles Mallard had two questions: If the Bulloch County Sheriffs Department was approached with the same concept to provide a deputy off duty? Also, if there's a big difference between asking the Sheriff to furnish a deputy that is on his staff that comes out of his man power but if it's a deputy just moonlighting, getting a second part time job, was it going to come from the Sheriffs budget or the school budget? Councilman Newman explained that the way it would work was that the school was going to pay the sheriffs department all the cost and then the department would pay their deputy that was out there working. Mr. Mallard also stated that the officer working out at S.E.B. is a city employee of Brooklet, his job at the high school will be just like any other part time job that he chooses to go to on his off time and would the sheriffs department have the same deal or would they want an active employee? Councilman Newman did some research and stated to Mr. Mallard that Statesboro sends their officer in a Statesboro police car to Statesboro High School and it's not the same officer everyday. Lynn Anderson told Councilman Newman that one of the reasons he did not do the SRO program at S.E.B. was because he did not have enough officers to do it. Sheriff Anderson worried that if he was to do the SRO program at S.E.B., then all the other schools would want to do the same and there was no way he could do it.

Chris Ryals was concerned why this matter was a Brooklet issue not a county issue. Mr. Ryals stated that he is not against having the SRO program he was just curious to why it is Brooklets problem. Councilman Hendrix replied at which he thinks that Brooklet putting their officer out at the school would be a great investment for the town with the impact it is going to cause with the whole community. While the officer is there at the school, not only is he protecting the school, students and staff, he also is building trust and relationships with the students. This is a great way to invest and give back to the Town of Brooklet.

Coach Fred Shaver of S.E.B., feels that having the SRO program is a win situation. He supports having a Brooklet officer at the school instead of a county officer because the students are more familiar with the Brooklet officer than they would be with an officer they did not know.

There have also been a few concerns on the legal aspect of this. Attorney Hugh Hunter stated that there is a way to legally structure the SRO program contract and liability in case Brooklet was to get sued; the burden could then be placed at the school if S.E.B. is willing to accept that responsibility.

Jimmy Davis asked if this process would be open to the citizens. The decision is based on council. It will be opened to the citizens of Brooklet. Mayor Grooms stated this was the reason we had a called meeting, to get feedback from the public and how they felt.

Attorney Hugh Hunter will get with Susan Cox and come up with an agreement between the school and the Town of Brooklet.

Councilwoman Prosser would like to make a motion to table the discussion and make a final decision after the next meeting. The motion died for lack of a second.

Councilman Davis suggests we leave it as is until we get all the legal documents worked out.

Councilman Newman made a motion to let the officer continue to work at the school with the car and uniform for the time being as he has been doing. Motion was seconded by Councilman Hendrix and passed with all ayes.

Mayor Grooms then asked for adjournment to go into Executive Session.

Councilman Newman made a motion to go into Executive Session for the purpose of personnel matters. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Prosser and passed with all ayes.

Councilman Newman asked for a motion to go out of Executive Session and back into Regular Session. Motion was seconded by Councilman Davis and passed with all ayes.

Mayor Grooms asked, if there were no questions at this time he would like to have adjournment.

Councilman Newman made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Councilman Hendrix and passed with all ayes.