

Grand Island needs a school resource officer, but full time or part time?

By [Nancy A. Fischer](#) | Published October 31, 2017

A school resource officer needs to be added to Grand Island schools, but should the position be full time or part time? That is the questions the Grand Island town and school boards.

The Grand Island schools have been without a school resource officer since 2013, when an officer provided by State Police was discontinued. Trooper Chris Pyc, whose wife Lisa is the school board president, was the last resource officer for the district and served in the position for many years.

School Superintendent Brian Graham told the members of both board boards in a joint meeting Monday that the school received \$45,000 in state money through the efforts of Sen. Chris Jacobs and Assemblyman Angelo Morinello to be used to bring a resource officer back to the school. The school will pay for the position, but the officer would be a town employee.

Graham would like to see the position be full time and drafted a job description that calls for the position to be filled by a retired officer, which would avoid the need to pay for benefits. "Any retired officer could apply and then it would come down to experience," said Graham.

But Councilman Michael Madigan said discussions originally centered on using two part-time town police officers. Currently all 25 Grand Island officers are part time. "The job was structured with a specific person in mind," Madigan said after the meeting, adding, "the husband of the school board president." Lisa Pyc said allegations that she was involved in creating the position were false. Graham said he and his staff created the position. Madigan said the Grand Island town police officers are also "up in arms."

Tom Dewey, who works part time for the town police department 19 hours a week, said after the meeting that he was in favor of an resource officer at the school, but was "absolutely not in favor of hiring a special patrolman to do the job of town police."

Graham said a full-time position in the school would give the district someone they could call in a crisis, a person who could interact with district child protective social workers, and an adult students would begin to interact with as early as kindergarten. He noted that there are 3,000 students on the Grand Island campus, which is 14 percent of the town's population. "We need a full-time officer on campus," Graham said. "It's an additional layer of safety for the district."

He said the district would pay the \$25 an hour salary and payroll taxes, as well as the costs for a uniform and weapon, while the town would provide a vehicle. School board member Susan Marsten said that limiting the search to a retired officer would limit the pool of potential candidates.

Supervisor Nathan McMurray, who favors a full-time officer, said the issue has been discussed for months and said both boards need to make the resource officer a priority and negotiate a path to a plan by the end of November.