

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE  
COMMITTEE MEMBERS PARTICIPATED REMOTELY VIA ZOOM VIDEO  
CONFERENCE  
CITY STAFF PARTICIPATED FROM THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
May 14, 2020 @ 3:00pm

Committee Members present:      Councilor Martin Pepin, Chairman  
   Councilor Kenneth S. Vincent  
   Councilor Crystal Paradis

Administration/Staff present:      City Manager Bob Belmore  
   Police Chief David Kretschmar  
   Finance Director Scott Smith  
   Deputy City Clerk Kelly Gagne  
   Paul Robidas, Stewarts Ambulance  
   Fire Chief George Kramlinger (entered @ 3:16pm)

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Chairman Pepin called the meeting to order at 3:00pm

Chairman Pepin announced that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

We are utilizing Zoom for this electronic meeting. All members of the Committee have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform, and although the meeting is open to the public, the public was encouraged not to attend. The public was encouraged to offer written comment by email, via USPS, or by drop-off at the City Hall Tax Collector drive-thru window. All votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote.

Attendance was taken by roll call vote; Chairman Pepin, Councilor Vincent and Councilor Paradis were present and had no one in the room with them.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

***Councilor Paradis, made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 12, 2020 meeting, seconded by Councilor Vincent. The motion passed 3-0, by roll call vote.***

POLICE DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Manager Belmore spoke of the memo from Chief Kretschmar that was included in the meeting packet. Chief Kretschmar addressed the Committee with Police updates. He stated that Officer John

Singletary was sworn in as a Police Officer on April 6, 2020. He came to us as a certified officer from the Moultonborough Police Department and is a welcome addition to our force. We have received our new service pistols which are Sig-Sauer P-320s in 9 mm caliber and associated gear. We picked up the Crime Scene Unit on May 11, 2020, we are still awaiting evidence kits that will stock the unit, in the meantime we will have it striped and have the radios and computer system installed. In closing, he stated that during this COVID 19 pandemic the department has maintained safety. These additions to the force have brought a sense of excitement.

Councilor Vincent stated that he is excited about the vehicle but it looks plain. Will there be exterior lighting and lettering done.

Chief Kretschmar stated that it will have Crime Scene Unit lettering and look similar to the police cruisers.

Manager Belmore expressed his appreciation to all Law Enforcement as it is Law Enforcement week. We raised the flag at Citizens Place with the Mayor today.

Chief Kretschmar noted that normally during Law Enforcement Memorial Week we go to the Law Enforcement Memorial located in Concord, NH to remember the fallen officers. But during this pandemic we are not able to safely do that. Two officers on their own time went to the Memorial and placed flowers and read the names all of the fallen officers.

Councilor Vincent expressed his condolences to former Somersworth Police Officer Donald Kowalski and his family. He took the time to thank Chairman Pepin because he was there as a Firefighter when that accident occurred and Officer Stanley had lost his life.

Chairman Pepin stated that he can still picture that scene to this very day and that it was a rough day. He has not been forgotten.

#### EMS – STEWARTS AMBULANCE UPDATES

Paul Robidas, of Stewart's Ambulance updated the Committee the much of the FOCUS of EMS daily has been centered around, COVID-19. It has had an impact and there are protocols in place to allow for the safety of his staff and it has helped limit the exposure to City personnel. Cleaning and disinfecting the ambulances has been a priority. They keep a flow of ambulances going and keep a clean ambulance always available. Once a call has been completed the crew cleans the ambulance from top to bottom, if a call comes in during that time they use the clean ambulance so that there is always a clean ambulance available. The time performance is at about 4:40 minutes per call within the City. The crews are doing well with limited exposure, we have had a couple exposures but those who were exposed were quarantined for 14 days and were tested. The testing times are now being delivered within 24 hours. In the beginning of this pandemic personal protective equipment was a big concern for us and we are now seeing more equipment

Councilor Paradis asked if there has been an increase in COVID 19 related calls.

Mr. Robidas stated there has been a 50% decrease in emergency calls in the state and 46-47% decrease in the City. We are starting to see an uptick now in calls.

Manager Belmore mentioned in addition to recognizing our Officers this week the Mayor is raising a flag for EMS Appreciation Week. We thank them for their service to the City.

Mr. Robidas stated that his Staff thinks of themselves as City employees and are very happy about the flag rising and it is important to his staff.

Chairman Pepin stated that he is also thankful for their service. His brother is on the ambulance/fire service in Concord, NH. He is under quarantine and he is happy and thankful for their service.

FIRE DEPARTMENT:  
CALL FIREFIGHTER PAY RESTRUCTURING

Manager Belmore stated that as of May 1, 2020, we have implemented restructuring on how Call Firefighters are paid to align more with surrounding Cities by paying them on an hourly basis. We are also looking at restructuring the Call Firefighters on how they are utilized.

There was a robust discussion on how the change in pay will be done, and also other changes regarding Call Firefighters that are still being discussed by management. The discussion also included training and certification of Call Firefighters versus Career Firefighters.

Chairman Pepin, Councilor Vincent and Councilor Paradis all expressed their concerns on the suggested changes. Manager Belmore noted that this is a work in progress and will keep in mind the Councilors concerns as any changes are being developed.

FIREFIGHTER COVERAGE - OVERTIME

Manager Belmore stated that the current policy for Firefighter coverage is maintaining at least three (3) Firefighters during the day shift and four (4) Firefighters during the night shift. As Chairman Pepin mentioned in his support to increase Firefighter OT during the budget discussion and also his desire to restructure coverage to increase to four (4) Firefighters on all shifts. Instead of going back into the budget that the Council approved, I thought perhaps the Committee might ask the Council to adopt a policy as outlined in the Draft Resolution that was in the meeting packet. Belmore explained a Section of the City Charter that allowed the City Manager to transfer funding between Department lines and if we could not work within the current Fire Department budget then he would propose a Budget Transfer Ordinance at the end of the fiscal year. Eventually, he stated that a higher Budget number for FF OT would be proposed in the 2022 Budget.

Chairman Pepin thanked Manager Belmore for doing this; he thought this is well overdue.

Councilor Paradis stated that it looks like this is very well thought out.

***Councilor Vincent, seconded by Councilor Paradis made a motion that the Public Safety Committee sponsor a Resolution to vote to adopt a policy of staffing the Fire Department with a minimum of four (4) firefighters on each shift. Motion passed 3-0, by roll call vote.***

Councilor Vincent stated that he would like a report on the number of Full Time and Call Firefighters that have come back for emergency calls over the past 2 years from Chief Kramlinger.

### NEW FIRE STATION DESIGN CHANGES

Chief Kramlinger stated that he had each shift look at the plans for the new Fire Station and to make any suggestions they thought were important. Independently he and the other shifts agreed that the living quarters were on the wrong side of the station and the kitchen was going to be at the far back corner, which is the hub of the Fire Station. Staff has worked with the architect to adjust this to put the living quarters above the administrative section of the Fire Station. The square footage wise is the same as before and the cost is the same as well.

Manager Belmore stated that the previous fire pole will be in the new building but not functional. There was discussion regarding some other subtle changes the Chief and his Staff suggested, including a training tower.

Manager Belmore stated that we are still at \$7.7 million as an estimated figure. During the adjustments made to the design, thought was given to adding a training tower to the building. If this were to be added it would increase the estimated construction cost of the building, so he asked the architect to add in the training tower as an alternate bid item. This will give us the opportunity to determine what the actual cost is, and can then make a decision based on actual bid costs received.

Councilor Vincent liked the idea that they moved the living quarters to the other side, it makes more sense.

Councilor Paradis stated that she thought the suggested changes made sense. She understands moving the living quarters closer to the admin area, but doing so moves the living quarters further from the gear room.

Chief Kramlinger explained that the equipment that Firefighters would be using during their shift would be stored on the apparatus not in the gear room. The gear room would be more of a storage area.

The Committee's consensus was to agree with the suggested changes.

### ADJOURNMENT

*Councilor Paradis, seconded by Councilor Vincent made a motion to adjourn. The motion passed, 3-0, by roll call vote. The meeting adjourned at 4:28 pm.*

Respectfully submitted,

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Kelly Gagne, Deputy City Clerk