

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE  
COMMITTEE MEMBERS PARTICIPATED REMOTELY VIA ZOOM VIDEO  
CONFERENCE  
CITY STAFF PARTICIPATED FROM THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
August 5, 2020 @ 5:00pm

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

Councilor, Nancie Cameron

Administration/Staff present:      City Manager, Bob Belmore  
   Police Chief, David Kretschmar  
   City Clerk, Jonathan Slaven  
   Paul Robidas, Stewarts Ambulance  
   Fire Chief, George Kramlinger

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Chairman Pepin called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

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, Councilor Cameron, 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 May 14, 2020 meeting, seconded by Councilor Vincent. The motion passed 3-0, by roll call vote. Councilor Cameron abstained.*

POLICE DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Chief Kretschmar informed the committee he is in the process of looking for a Parking Enforcement Officer which is a 20 hour/week position. He also indicated he has one opening for a full-time officer and a 2<sup>nd</sup> opening for a full-time officer from the 2020 budget. He has one candidate almost through the background process should have him on in a few weeks. Chief stated the Somersworth Police Department had 139 calls from June 1<sup>st</sup> through July 28<sup>th</sup>.

### FIRE

Chief Kramlinger informed the Committee the Forestry truck is in final stage of outfitting, but is taking longer due to supply chain issues. The Humvee is currently out of commission and up for auction on Govdeals.com. Chief informed the Committee of a proposal to donate used gear including boots, helmets, jackets, and pants to Sanford CTC to help upcoming firefighters get through their training. Councilor Paradis asked if other organizations in the area were in need of gear. Chief replied that he researched and looked where the greatest need was. Councilor Cameron asked about liability of donating gear. Chief said they understand they are taking it as is and take risk of used gear and that donating such gear is a typical occurrence. He explained further that the gear was not for fire training, just drills.

Chief Kramlinger is happy to report that Father Andrew of the Ignatius Parish, has agreed to be fire department chaplain. Councilor Vincent stated we couldn't have found a better person. Councilor Paradis asked if the chaplain position is new. Manager Belmore said we have had many police and fire chaplains over the years. Councilor Pepin said the chaplains do a lot of support for the firefighters on a number of issues. Councilor Cameron echoed the sentiment that Father Andrew is an excellent choice.

### EMS – STEWARTS AMBULANCE UPDATES

Mr. Robidas noted the call volume has started to incline. We had dropped to 50% volume reduction and that has pretty much come back. The current average response time is 4 minutes and 47 seconds. ICASS accreditation has been resubmitted. The application for that was just under 1400 pages. We received report that they were happy with the application and had a some follow up questions. They typically spend 3-4 days in checking out the operation, but with COVID they are looking into way to do this remotely.

I don't often speak about staffing, but we are seeing a dip. We are currently down about four full-time paramedics. Schools have halted education and agencies are not allowing ride time. We are not at a critical point, but are down more than they would like to be. If things get tight on EMS/Paramedic coverage, we can use other agencies for assistance. Councilor Cameron inquired if new recruits cannot be educated, how will things progress? Chief indicated there will be a need to create some kind of didactics. Once we start to see a vaccine, we will hopefully start to see programs opening back up. Some EMS are getting provisional licensing.

### COPS GRANT AWARD

Manager Belmore stated the Finance Committee did meet and voted to recommend moving forward with the Grant acceptance. Chief Kretschmar stated it was back in Feb or March he came with proposal to go through this program for two hires. He was informed one position was awarded. The only additional requirement is we retain the officer for an additional year after the 3 years of the

Grant has expired. The grant position is for a patrol position that also would have a community policing component, which would oversee community policing events and oversee a new program for adverse child hood response teams. Chief stated the goal is to reduce childhood trauma through agencies in the state.

Councilor Paradis state she has been looking more closely recently. The \$165,000 City cost assumed over the first 3 years with the \$125,000 grant would be a total cost of 260 for the 4-yr period. She stated she is certainly in support of the community policing events etc., but wanted to know if someone is currently doing this now? She asked Why do we need an additional officer for this? A lot of what the police and fire respond to involves drug abuse or mental health related client involvement. There must be something we can do on a more systemic level. Don't have the answer of where or what at the City's \$165,000 should go to, but wants to look at this and other funding in broader terms.

Councilor Vincent said the Police department has been working so hard and has been so understaffed for what we have in responding to incidents in the City. He agreed a lot of their response is opioid and drug related, but its more than that. He said he thinks 2 or 3 additional officers could be helpful. Chief Kretschmar stated he is still at 3 officers per shift, but sometimes there are 4. One reason we looked at a 3-4 shift is it gives overlap and officers are not overloaded with paperwork. There is an understaffing of mental help in the state, but to reduce police staff is not the appropriate way to go. Councilor Vincent stated those 3 officers are responding to 9-12 calls a day per officer. Councilor Pepin stated he was down at the Police Department and noticed the logs were significant and asked for a motion. Councilor Paradis wanted to clarify that alleviating the backlog was a goal.

***Councilor Vincent moved to add their recommendation and names as sponsors. The motion was seconded by Councilor Cameron and passed 3-0 with Councilor Paradis abstaining.***

#### ORDINANCE NO. 3-21 AMEND CH21A- FIREWORKS DISPLAY

Councilor Vincent stated most people know he owns firework business in town and asked when it becomes inappropriate to be involved in this. Manager Belmore said it is an individual thing. He further clarified saying a Councilor shall not be involved in conversations or votes pertaining to any fiduciary benefit to themselves or family. Councilor Vincent recused himself from discussions, however does have a comment. The fee is almost helping to track where the fireworks are being utilized and being done safely. Councilor Pepin said if we make the fee too high, people will not get permits and we will have a hard time tracking where they are being used. Councilors discussed the prosed 3 major change areas. All three concurred on increasing penalties for violators. Councilor Cameron likes the fees, but agrees the \$50 fee was a little high. \$10-15 may be a good compromise. Councilor Paradis agreed it makes sense for the fines. She also didn't feel the permit fee should be raised and even \$20 still seems too high. She stated the only reason the fee exists is to track and doesn't want to put financial burden on those purchasing. She indicated she would be in favor of keeping it at \$5. Manager Belmore clarified that individuals don't need a permit to purchase, just a permit to actually light them within City limits. Councilor Pepin stated, in addition, he doesn't see big deal with the time change. Councilor Cameron said not everybody has the holidays off and some have to work the next day and thinks 12 is reasonable time. Councilor Paradis stated she believes 12 already seems pretty late. On Jan 1<sup>st</sup>, she does recall a lot of midnight fireworks. The Committee reached a consensus on recommending the display application fee be kept at \$5. And the times be left at 12:30am.

*Councilor Cameron made a motion to support an amendment to Ordinance 3-21 to keep permit fee at \$5, and change times back to 12:30 and to support the violation penalty fee increases. The motion was seconded by Councilor Pepin and passed 3-0, with Councilor Vincent abstaining.*

#### POLICE BODY CAMS

Chief Kretschmar stated the Police department have cruiser cameras on cars and audio mics to go with the officer with that car. If you talk to any officer, when cameras are mentioned, they are in favor of these. If there is a conflict the cameras support the people in the Police Department. Body cams are the same way. There is accountability and transparency, although cost and storage can bring issues. With Right to Know requests, redacting also becomes an issue. Some of the things we are looking at is cost, depending on what company, can range from \$50k-250k. depending on media and storage. Chief would like to deep dive into who to purchase from and specific policies regarding the body cams. Manager Belmore stated chief had already been in conversations with other chiefs. Councilor Cameron asked if there is any grant funding. Chief said he was not aware of any funding available. Councilor Paradis expressed concern about the data, cloud hacking, and redaction. Chief Kretschmar explained he get requests daily. Part of any Right to Know requests includes redaction to include juveniles' information, names, images, witnesses' images. He stated some software can already take care of this, but the security, even if cloud, has to follow strict guidelines. Every system he knows about is already certified by CJIS. The Manager stated the Chief would continue to explore implementation.

#### MISC

Manager Belmore stated the Finance Committee did support the Resolution to move forward with purchases of new PD vehicle and undercover car. He asked if this committee cared to be sponsors as it is on agenda for Monday. Manager Belmore stated the purchase was for an SUV patrol cruiser and start a program to replace unmarked detective cars which has been discussed with various Councils. He explained this was in the budget, just wanted to bring to your attention. Councilor Vincent said he would like to sponsor this. Councilor Pepin stated he is also in favor. Councilor Paradis asked for more information on the present vehicles being replaced.

*Councilor Vincent moved to support a Resolution for the purchase of budgeted frontline SUV cruiser and new unmarked police vehicle. Councilor Cameron seconded the motion which passed 4-0 by roll call vote.*

#### FIREFIGHTER CALLBACKS

Councilor Pepin expressed a concern about coverage in Somersworth. He stated times have changed and people are not as dedicated as before. He doesn't want to shortchange the Fire Department as the building is concerned. Councilor Vincent thinks we do have use for a call department, but it doesn't have to be traditional. Asked if we can think outside the box. Train then hire? He expressed his faith in the fire chief to figure this issue out. Councilor Pepin stated if you have a natural disaster, we are fortunate to have other departments to send trucks, but there have been times when calling for mutual aid then it might not be received. Chief Kramlinger expressed to the Committee he sees that the mutual aid system works. Councilor Pepin said he would like to see new hires have a contract to include a requirement they live somewhere within a 15-mile radius.

There was a general discussion in regards to the new fire station and fire apparatus.

ADJOURNMENT

*Councilor Cameron, seconded by Councilor Paradis made a motion to adjourn. The motion passed, 4-0, by roll call vote. The meeting adjourned at 6:31 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,

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Jonathan Slaven, City Clerk