

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

January 13, 2022 @ 3:30 p.m.

Committee Members present: Councilor Martin Pepin, Chairman
Councilor Kenneth S. Vincent, Vice Chairman
Councilor Denis Messier

Committee Members Excused: Councilor Nancie Cameron

Administration/Staff present: City Manager Bob Belmore
Finance Director Scott Smith
Police Chief David Kretschmar
Fire Chief George Kramlinger
City Clerk Jonathan Slaven

Chairman Pepin called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Councilor Vincent made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 21, 2021 meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilor Pepin and passed 2-0-1 by roll call vote. Councilor Messier abstained.

POLICE DEPARTMENT BODY-WORN CAMERA GRANT

City Manager Belmore informed the Committee that the Finance Committee has reviewed and voted to sponsor a supplemental appropriation for funding for the body-worn cameras grant. The grant is a 50/50 match with the City's contribution at around \$27,000. The Finance Committee supported having \$10,000 come from the drug forfeiture fund and the remaining \$17,000 coming from the cable fund.

Chief Kretschmar stated research on which company to purchase the cameras began last year and they decided to go with Watchguard. The department will have an easier time integrating them because the department uses Watchguard for their dash cameras. Chief Kretschmar also said his IT personnel has vetted the body-worn cameras and concurred they are a good fit for the department. He added the PD has already requested upgraded server storage to accommodate the large amount of storage necessary for the body cameras. Chief Kretschmar stated the grant must be accepted before the 31st and said policies and procedures must be updated prior to receiving the cameras, which is currently being worked on.

Councilor Pepin asked Chief Kretschmar how his department feels about getting the cameras. Chief replied that there were mixed feelings, but he has always told his staff to always act as if they are being recorded and if you are doing your job, you shouldn't have anything to worry about.

Councilor Messier asked about potential annual upgrade costs. Chief said there are not any upgrade costs, rather he is requesting funds in his FY 22/23 budget for annual maintenance costs.

Councilor Vincent made a motion to support a Resolution to accept the grant for body-worn cameras. The motion was seconded by Councilor Messier and passed 3-0.

UPDATES: POLICE, FIRE, AND EMS

Chief Kretschmar stated he has applied for a grant for \$75,000 to alleviate high costs of Covid related overtime for his department. He hopes to hear back either tomorrow or next week and added that the funds, if received, can be backdated to July 2021. Councilor Messier inquired if the funds for the grant would be filtered first through the general fund. Director Smith stated that the money would be received via general fund, but recommends the City consider a supplemental appropriation for the funds if they are awarded the grant. Belmore mentioned that if funds are received after the end of the fiscal year, it would go into general fund revenue.

Chief Kretschmar stated he received one of his new cruisers yesterday with the second due to arrive February 2nd or 3rd. Chief also said regarding staffing, he is currently down 5 officers and 1 parking enforcement officer. He is interviewing two candidates Tuesday for officer positions and a new parking enforcement officer's background check is done. He also recently hired a new dispatcher.

Chief Kramlinger stated total calls are up approximately 6% from last year, however more serious calls are up about 20%. He said his department has been training hard and has made leaps and bounds with the capability of his department. He said they are able to manage a lot of situations many neighboring departments cannot. Chief Kramlinger stated there is a pre-construction meeting scheduled in April for a new pumper with construction to take place in October. Councilor Vincent asked if his department was fully staffed. Chief replied it is; however, he has one firefighter out with shoulder surgery.

Chief Kramlinger also informed the Committee that the department has filed for an Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) for a battery powered extrication tool, and a Rural Development grant to support purchasing a thermal imaging camera.

MISCELLANEOUS

Councilor Pepin asked both Chiefs for an update on the number of calls being made to the warming center on Willand Drive. Chief Kretschmar said there has been a serious uptick in the number of calls requiring service to the warming center. He added that the ancillary issues from surrounding areas and businesses have also risen exponentially and is impacting the City in a very negative way, especially during extremely cold weather days. City Manager Belmore also noted that there has the Highway Department has had to retrieve carts from the side of the road nearby Willand Drive from the homeless residents of the warming center who will ditch them prior to arriving for the evening.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Vincent made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilor Messier and passed 3-0 by roll call vote. The meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Slaven, City Clerk