

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
June 8, 2022 @ 3:30 PM

Committee Members present: Councilor Martin Pepin, Chairman
 Councilor Kenneth S. Vincent, Vice Chairman (arrived @ 3:36)
 Councilor Denis Messier
 Councilor Nancie Cameron

Administration/Staff present: City Manager Bob Belmore
 Finance Director Scott Smith
 Police Chief Timothy McLin
 Fire Chief George Kramlinger
 Police Sargent McKnight (excused @ 3:59 PM)
 Paul Robidas –Stewarts Ambulance
 Gerard T. Christian – Stewarts Ambulance
 Planning Secretary Dana Crossley

Chairman Pepin called the meeting to order at 3:31 PM.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Motion made by Councilor Messier, seconded by Councilor Cameron, to approve the minutes of the March 23, 2022 meeting. Motion was approved 3-0.

UPDATES

EMS – STEWARTS AMBULANCE: EMS IN THE WARM ZONE PROGRAM

Robidas reviewed their monthly report, response time remains about 4 minutes within the City. There were 167 calls for service in the last month and they continue to be busy. Noted that Frisbee Hospital has been on a divert for nights, holidays and weekends which impacts their service due to increased time in offloading and other areas since everything is being diverted to Wentworth Douglas. They are handling the volume but remain busy.

Councilor Vincent arrived at this time.

Christian addressed the status of training and provided a copy of his remarks for the Committee. In the past 18 months they have been working with Police, Fire and SAU 56 to unify the response efforts for active threats within the community. Noted as part of the efforts senior EMS leadership and members from the Police Department have taken Active Shooter Incident Management (ASIM) training. They have been utilizing those concepts throughout their department.

Christian stated they applied for and received a \$6,000 grant from the New Hampshire Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) Warm Zone Grant Program. The warm zone is the area beyond the shooting or active threat, the pocket area where people are located that need help and rather than waiting for the scene

to go cold the equipment (vests and helmets) they purchased through the grant will allow them to enter the warm zone and provide care.

Christian explained they were able to purchase six (6) sets of protective gear of vests and helmets to be able to provide care in the warm zone area. The two primary ambulances will each have 2 sets of equipment on board and the remaining will be on hold and able to distribute to a scene as needed. They are participating in ongoing training through the State that will take place in two phases. Phase 1 is online training and Phase 2 is additional online training then live training for operations practical.

Councilor Messier inquired if their ambulance staff in surrounding communities will have the same training. Christian explained that the surrounding communities get the NH training as well and some staff work at more than one of the stations.

Councilor Messier inquired if the practical training is just for Somersworth.

Christian stated first priority is for Somersworth, but if they are unable to fill the training slots, they could reach out to other agencies to have them come to the training.

Councilor Messier inquired how many employees Stewarts has.

Robidas stated 74 active, there are 4-5 units staffed in a day and they have gear enough for three units.

City Manager Belmore inquired if key SAU staff would be able to partake in training as well.

Christian stated the training is online where they could go log in to take and explained thoughts of training expansion.

Chief McLin noted that a large amount of the school population is trained.

Christian stated the training is more specific to the EMS field, Fire often takes some of the same training since they share some of the same rolls.

Councilor Pepin clarified if the warm zone was specific to schools.

Christian stated no it would be for any location such as a movie theatre, shopping plaza or any large event, however the school is a good place they have for training.

The Committee reviewed the personal protective equipment purchased and held a brief discussion on the details of how the equipment functions.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

- WELLNESS UNIFORM

Chief McLin stated the wellness uniform proposal is part of the Officer Wellness Program. He stated over the last few years there has been a movement towards utilizing a uniform design that takes the gear off the hips and redistributes the weight. Explained with the gear being located on a vest they are completing modified training to accommodate the different design. Stated the vest can more easily be taken off when Officer's are in the office doing administrative work and allows for less wear and tear on the body. Noted this vest design stays conformed to the body therefore Officers can sit more comfortably and not have gear riding up on their chin.

Councilor Messier inquired where the body cam cameras would be located.

Chief McLin stated on the vest.

Councilor Vincent noted that technology is always changing and updating and feels this will allow the Officer's to do their job better since their uniform would not be impacting movement or hindering function of doing their job.

Sargent McKnight stated these uniforms allow for better agility, flexibility and mobility. They have been a very positive impact in allowing him to complete his duties allows him to easily apprehend or move quickly where the traditional uniform is more restricting in movement. He has worn this new uniform design now for a few weeks and after 14 years of the traditional uniform this design is a relief to wear.

Councilor Messier inquired the location of the taser and handcuffs, if they would remain on the belt or go onto the vest.

Chief McLin stated it allows for either.

Sargent McKnight stated the adaptor was not available when he first got the uniform but both of those items could be worn on the vest.

Councilor Pepin asked if the gun would remain on the belt.

Chief McLin stated the gun stays on the hip and the taser will remain on a cross draw and yellow.

City Manager Belmore noted the Chief provided a memo that shows the comparisons for the cost of the uniforms. He stated they are monitoring the budget but the intention is to approach this in a phase purchase plan. To purchase some of the uniforms this year and next with the Committee's support.

Brief discussion on the phased purchase plan.

Councilor Vincent moved to support the proposal to purchase Wellness Uniforms. The motion is seconded by Councilor Cameron. The motion carries 4-0.

- **GRANTS**

City Manager Belmore introduced the Police grant items that will be further addressed by Chief

- **PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD**

Chief McLin stated extension of a grant they have been participating in through the Department of Justice declaring hotspot neighborhoods and to create community contacts and reduce crime.

Chief McLin stated due to COVID there were remaining funds and they were contacted by the State to perform Project Safe Neighborhood Patrols to use some of the remaining funds. He stated they would do one 4-hour patrols a week and this would continue until June 2023. He noted that due to issues at the Ward 5 playground they reached out to expand the neighborhood area to include that playground to allow for patrol time there to be covered.

Councilor Pepin asked when it would take affect

Chief McLin stated they are waiting for Governor and Council approval but hoping for end of July or early August.

There was a brief discussion on timeline for the City action needed.

City Manager Belmore noted that there was a previously approved Resolution and this would be a modification to that.

Councilor Vincent motioned to sponsor a Resolution to modify the grant program for Project Safe Neighborhoods. The motion is seconded by Councilor Messier. The motion carries 4-0.

○ COSSAP – PET PROGRAM

Chief McLin reported that the Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Abuse Site-based Program (COSSAP) grant is being expanded into Strafford County. Through Congressman Chris Pappas' office, Somersworth was offered the full amount available in Strafford County. Noted that due to staffing issues they would be moving forward with an overtime approach for the grant with no match requirement. He explained the grant allows for a focus on forming relationships with Mental Health, Substance Abuse, Medical and other community organizations to help provide resources. He noted this would allow for them to continue the ACERT and continue to strengthen partnerships to help those in need.

City Manager Belmore explained the grant breakdown and action they were looking for from this Committee.

Councilor Vincent inquired how the monies are budgeted and received.

Chief McLin stated it is a re-imburement, they create a budget for each year for three years. Noted part of the program includes special training.

There was a brief discussion of the benefits and duties that go along with the program.

Councilor Messier clarified if the grant covered all costs associated with overtime for the Officer, such as NH retirement etc.

City Manager Belmore noted they are waiting on some remaining paperwork however the State retirement would be included in the grant.

Chief McLin noted as well that items such as FICA and retirement are part of the budget for the grant.

Councilor Vincent motioned to sponsor a Resolution to accept the COSSAP grant program. The motion is seconded by Councilor Messier. The Motion carries 4-0.

○ BULLETPROOF VESTS

City Manager Belmore noted the City has been utilizing this grant almost annually. He noted the life expectancy of a vest and that they look to replace at least 6 vests a year.

Councilor Messier clarified if this was part of the discussion from the last Council meeting.

City Manager Belmore noted that was for body cameras.

Councilor Messier motioned to sponsor a Resolution to accept the grant for bulletproof vests. The motion is seconded by Councilor Cameron. The motion carries 4-0.

- NEW POLICE OFFICER COMMUNITY BADGE

Councilor Messier inquired who the badges were going to.

City Manager Belmore stated the entire Police force.

Chief McLin stated they have developed a badge that includes the City slogan and silhouette of the Police Department. There is a gold and silver full badge and then a smaller version that will be the hat badge.

Councilor Pepin inquired if the hat badge was for their Class A's.

Chief McLin stated yes, baseball hats can be embroidered.

Councilor Vincent noted it had been a long time since they changed the badges and is in support of this change.

The Committee was in consensus to support the new badges.

Councilor Pepin inquired on the status of staffing for the Police Department.

Chief McLin noted they had two new officers but one changed their mind and will not be continuing, the other is still on track. Looking to hire six officers.

City Manager Belmore noted that everyone is having trouble finding Police staffing.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

- NEW FIRE APPARATUS DELIVERY: Chief Kramlinger stated he traveled to the Pierce Manufacturing in Appleton WI accompanied by Firefighter Dan Toof for the new fire pumper pre-construction conference. He stated they were more than impressed by the facility and team and product that the City will get. Looking forward to getting that on board and in service.
- Other
 - Chief Kramlinger reported they have submitted grant applications through the Governor's Office for Emergency Relief and Recovery (GOFERR) under the Locality Equipment Purchase Grant Program. If awarded the monies would help offset the cost of respiratory equipment. Noted how the grant would help offset overall cost of the Fire Station.
 - Chief Kramlinger reported that they have been involved in active shooter response for quite a while. The previous Fire Chief was able to secure protective equipment like what Stewarts acquired. Reviewed some of the training the staff has benefited from.
 - Councilor Messier inquired about the old washing machine to be sold proposal.
City Manager Belmore explained that there is a piece of equipment from the Fire Department that the would be looking for their support to schedule on Council agenda to be able to place the item on Gov. Deals with a minimum bid of \$3,500 and would notify the interested

company that they can bid on the website. It would be timed so that the equipment would be removed once the new equipment came in.

Councilor Messier clarified that any funds received in the sale of that equipment would go into the General Fund.

There was a brief discussion regarding Fire Station construction soft costs and the general fund.

Additional discussion of the HVAC units at the Fire Station.

MISCELLANEOUS

No other items discussed.

ADJOURNMENT

***Motion to adjourn made by Councilor Messier, seconded by Councilor Cameron, motion passed 4-0.
Meeting adjourned at 4:32 PM***

Respectfully submitted,

Dana Crossley, Planning Secretary