

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
September 28, 2022 – 3:30 p.m.

Committee Members Present: Councilor Martin Pepin, Chair  
Councilor Denis Messier  
Councilor Nancie Cameron  
Councilor Richard Michaud (Mayoral Temporary Appointment)

Committee Members Absent: Councilor Kenneth S. Vincent, Vice-Chair

Administration/Staff present: City Manager Bob Belmore  
Finance Director Scott Smith  
Police Chief Timothy McLin  
Fire Chief George Kramlinger  
Stewarts Ambulance Paul Robidas  
Welfare Officer Kristen LaPanne

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Chairman Pepin called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. and noted the Mayor appointed Councilor Michaud as a temporary member for this meeting to replace absent member Councilor Vincent.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

***Councilor Messier made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 18, 2022 meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilor Cameron and passed 3-0-1. Councilor Michaud abstained.***

STEWART'S AMBULANCE SERVICE AGREEMENT

Manger Belmore reviewed the draft amendment to Section 4 of the Agreement between the City of Somersworth and Stewart's Ambulance Service, Inc., waiving the City's accreditation requirement of CAAS (Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services). Stewart's Ambulance request to waive the CAAS accreditation is due to staffing shortages and the expense that comes along with maintaining the accreditation. The amended language provides assurances from Stewart's Board of Directors that the EMS services will continue to operate at the same high levels of the CAAS standards and use the funds, which would have gone to CAAS accreditation, to retaining employees critical to EMS response to Somersworth.

Paul Robidas provided history to Stewart's Ambulance and the CAAS accreditation noting that it helped to develop policies and daily operating procedures. The CAAS accreditation is expensive to maintain and requires a full-time staff member dedicated to handling the accreditation process. Mr. Robidas added that CAAS is not required by the State. EMS continues to struggle with staffing recruitment and retention. Mr. Robidas reiterated that the waiver doesn't change the current policies, procedures and operations adopted by Stewart's Ambulance and that the funds will be used to make an effort to retain current employees.

Manager Belmore noted that Stewart's Ambulance has and continues to meet and exceed CAAS accreditation standards and they will continue to do so. Councilor Messier requested that the amended contract language in Section 4 state that the CAAS accreditation funds savings be specified to be used for retention and recruitment of employees of Stewart's Ambulance. The Committee agreed.

***Councilor Cameron made a motion to sponsor a Resolution to modify Section 4 of the Stewart's Ambulance Services, Inc. contract with the City of Somersworth to indefinitely waive the CAAS accreditation requirement. The motion was seconded by Councilor Messier and passed 4-0.***

#### FIRE, EMS, & POLICE UPDATES

Paul Robidas reported that EMS has experienced a significant increase in volume of calls. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, total calls and requests for service came in at around 12,000 while this year they are on target to hit about 19,000 calls. Mr. Robidas noted that mutual aid has increased with need for Stewart's Ambulance requesting assistance as well as the need for them to respond to mutual aid calls.

Fire Chief Kramlinger reported that the Fire Department fleet is healthy and that Fire Engine 4 (E-4) has been returned today after being worked on by the DPW mechanic for several weeks saving the City thousands of dollars. The new Fire Station construction project is moving along within Phase 2 with a goal of having the structure enclosed before coming into the severe winter weather to avoid incurring weather related construction costs and excess heating costs.

Chief Kramlinger attended a ceremony in which Somersworth Fire Department Personnel were recognized by the NH Fire & Emergency Medical Services Committee of Merit for meritorious service for the response to a fire at 10 Bell St, Berwick, ME on the first day of March of 2019. The personnel recognized were Lt. James Drakopoulos, Firefighter Spenser Barnes and former Firefighter Michael Roach.

Chief Kramlinger reported on the emergency generator which is up and running and will be helpful with Phase 2 of the Fire Department construction and the decontamination equipment which has had a noticeable difference in cleaning of breathing apparatus. Chief Kramlinger is in the process of completing the process for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) to purchase a battery powered vehicle extraction tool as well as the bid specifications for the Rural Development grant awarded to purchase a thermal imaging camera.

Councilor Messier inquired about a firefighter leaving the department which was confirmed. Chief Kramlinger noted that the City Manager has an interview scheduled with their top candidate later this week.

Police Chief McLin provided a staffing update noting that 1 officer has graduated from the Police Academy with another to graduate in November. Another 4 officers are scheduled to attend the Police Academy in January. Chief McLin is happy to report that the Police Department has 2 officers being sworn in on Monday, both of which are bilingual and expected to be beneficial to the City of Somersworth.

At this time, Chief McLin notes that there are currently 3 openings to fill within the Police Department and he is continuing efforts to recruit officers and get them signed up to attend the Police Academy. Current staff have attended FBI/LEEDA training as well as interrogation training. The School Resource Officer will be attending the School Safety Conference. Chief McLin mentioned a new project initiative, Mirror Project, where Police Officers and students practice role reversal scenarios providing beneficial

conversations and bettering the relationship between the two. Chief McLin is attending the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) in October in Dallas, Texas.

Chief McLin mentioned that National Coffee with a Cop Day is October 5<sup>th</sup> and members of the Police Department will be at Aroma Joes from 8:00 AM to 10:00 AM located at 10 Andrews Road in Somersworth.

Manager Belmore provided the Committee with a Bullet Proof Vest Grant Update and NH Highway Safety Enforcement Grant memorandums from Chief McLin. The Police Department was awarded \$8,525.00 which covered 50 percent of the total \$17,050.00 to purchase 20 bullet proof vests. Manager Belmore noted that the grant acceptance does not require a signature signifying specific governing body approval and the Committee agreed that there was no need for a formal Resolution. The NH Highway Safety Enforcement Grant awarded the City \$8,200.00 requiring a maximum soft City in-kind match of \$2,050.00 towards enforcement patrols/overtime. The City did not apply for, but was awarded a Community Outreach and Betterment (COB) Grant of \$20,000.00 requiring a maximum soft City in-kind match of \$5,000.00. The COB Grant requires a minimum of 5 presentations of highway safety messages via in-person to traditionally underserved NH drivers, outreach to Refugee/New American Groups, Low-Income Neighborhoods, Older Drivers, Low-Vision and Hearing-Impaired Drivers, Youth Drivers, Limited English-Speaking Proficiency Groups, and Elementary/High School and Driver's Education Groups.

*Councilor Cameron made a motion to sponsor a Resolution to accept the NH Highway Safety Grant of \$8,200.00 with a maximum soft City in-kind of \$2,050.00. The motion was seconded by Councilor Messier and passed 4-0.*

*Councilor Cameron made a motion to sponsor a resolution to accept the Community Outreach and Betterment (COB) Grant of \$20,000.00 with a maximum soft City in-kind of \$5,000.00. The motion was seconded by Councilor Messier and passed 4-0.*

#### MISCELLANEOUS

Nothing to report

#### ADJOURNMENT

*Councilor Cameron made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilor Messier and passed 4-0. The meeting adjourned at 4:04 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,

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Kristen LaPanne, Welfare Officer