

MINUTES OF PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING
EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE ROOM

January 30, 2018 – 4:30 P.M.

Committee Members Present: Councilor Marty Pepin, Chairman
 Councilor Kenneth Vincent, Vice Chair
 Councilor Edward Levasseur

Staff Present: Bob Belmore City Manager
 Police Chief David Kretschmar
 Fire Chief Keith Hoyle
 Trish Harris, City Clerk

Others present: Paul Robidas, GM, American Ambulance

Chairman Pepin called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

APPROVE PAST MEETING MINUTES

Councilor Pepin made a motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. The motion passed, 3-0.

UPDATES FROM POLICE, FIRE & EMS

Police

City Manager Belmore presented draft resolution to order one SUV style Police Cruiser. This resolution is modeled after the resolutions of previous years. Since we can't order cruisers until budget in July, this puts us "behind the 8 ball". Towns meet and decide on purchases in March; they order their cruisers and this puts the dealership and us behind schedule, and we may not be able to get what we would like. This resolution requires a full council vote to commit to placing it in the budget, to be purchased before July 1st.

Councilor Pepin asked about current equipment. Chief Kretschmar said everything looks good. This new vehicle will take the last line car out of the rotation. Maintenance has been good on the SUVs. With the larger vehicles, it is easier to get in and out for officers and prisoners.

Councilor Levasseur, seconded by Councilor Vincent, made a motion to support a resolution to order one SUV style police cruiser. The motion passed unanimously, 3-0.

Chief Kretschmar reported that they are looking to remove the Burns alarm panel in dispatch. Currently, alarms come directly to dispatch through this panel. Technology has changed, and this panel is inefficient and prone to error. Chief Kretschmar showed the roll of paper tape that the dispatcher has to read through to determine if an alarm is a test or an actual emergency. The

alarm panel is becoming obsolete and the rolled paper is not made anymore. The new system would be a reduced liability for the city. The alarm would be received by Burns and they would notify the police department via telephone.

The cost to upgrade the systems in city hall, schools and other city owned properties would be approximately \$3,000.

Police Department will continue to issue alarm permits and renewals as required, regardless of the security service provider. There was discussion about other security providers.

Councilor Levasseur, seconded by Councilor Vincent, made a motion to support the operational change in regards to the Security monitoring panel. The motion passed, 3-0.

Chief Kretschmar reported that a JAG Grant was approved in august. This grant is received based on crime stats in the area. Somersworth was approved for just over \$11,000. Finance and Public Safety Committees have approved use of the grant for DVR Recorders. Grant funds are usually received by October, but because of immigration lawsuits, grants have been put on hold.

Chief Kretschmar reported on the STEP Grant. This is a grant to assist with the enforcement of distracted driving, DWI, and operation safe commute. City Manager Belmore stated that the City is required to have an active Traffic Safety Committee to apply for this grant.

Chief Kretschmar reported that the COPS Grant was awarded in 2015 for the hire of a full time officer. The department has been at full staff for about 6 months. When not at full staff, they will need to reapply.

The Department hired a Parking Enforcement officer in November; since that time, the officer has issued 137 tickets. Councilor Levasseur asked about revenue from the tickets. Kretschmar stated that they have received approximately \$890, added to the general fund.

Chief Kretschmar reported on Community Outreach.

- Coffee with the Cop, next one being planned for mid-February at Aroma Joes on High St.
- Park and walk, Chief visits local businesses
- Presentations to the elderly, have done this 5 times, topics include How not to be a victim, Scams.
- Pizza with a cop, at schools, 2 more scheduled - Feb 13 at John Powers School, March 13 at Maplewood.
- Internet Safety, presentations at middle school, bi monthly program
- Active Shooters - Training at schools, City Hall, Hilltop Chevy, Marshbrook,

Councilor Levasseur suggested reaching out to some businesses and Chamber of Commerce.

Councilor Vincent asked about cost of these events or training. Chief Kretschmar replied that they are free to the public.

Chief Kretschmar reported on a Potential K9 program. They are currently looking into the details and at ways to fund it. This could be on next years fiscal budget. The cost of the program would be between \$8,000 and \$16,000. A lot of the cost is for the dog, which could be between

\$3,000 and \$8,000. There is a grant process in which they could receive the dog at a nominal cost or free. There is also a cost for cruiser outfitting, which includes, seats, a cooling system, water, at about 4500. Then there is a cost for the needed equipment; leashes, boarding fees, bite suits.

The benefits of a K9 program would be, positive view from public, training in the schools, another position in the police department, a retention tool, and the dog would be trained for tracking, drugs and patrol. There has always been a want and need. Somersworth has had to call for dogs from other towns, which could take up to 45 minutes or more for the dog to arrive.

Councilor Levasseur, asked about the length of training. Chief reported that the training would be about 2-3 years and a certification process.

There was discussion about possibly using the drug forfeiture funds.

Councilor Vincent, seconded by Councilor Levasseur, to support a K9 Program in the Somersworth Police Department. Motion passed unanimously. 3-0.

Chief Kretschmar stated that he wants policy and procedures in place before the move forward with the program.

There was brief discussion about drug use in Somersworth.

Fire

Chief Hoyle reported that they are at full staff.

They received a NH/ME Rural Water Association Grant to protect the drinking water supplies in Berwick and Somersworth on the Salmon Falls River. Booms will be placed around the entrance of the water plant; same for Berwick. There will be a drill on June 22, 2018. NH Department of Homeland Security will pay for overtime wage costs for the grant exercise.

The department applied for a State Fire Marshal's Office grant on smoke detectors and CO detector installation in homes of elderly residents, homes with children under 5, and low income homes. Personnel had to be trained on installation.

The Department received a FEMA FIRE Act grant to replace the 30 year Community Mutual Aid Air Van.

The department also applied for the active shooter grant to purchase equipment and vests.

Councilor Levasseur commented positively on the grant opportunities.

City Manager Belmore stated, for clarification to new Council Members, that the Fire Chief is the City's designated Emergency Management person.

American Ambulance

Paul Robidas reported that the average response time is 4min, 11 seconds. Transport calls are up for the month of January at approximately 300; 100 is the average. This could be because of the snow days, more motor vehicle accidents and flu season.

There was brief discussion about the contract with American Ambulance and the number of trucks and service. American Ambulance is located in Somersworth. Contract started July 2013.

Councilor Vincent asked about staffing. Robidas reported that they fully staffed.

MISCELLANEOUS

Chief Kretschmar reported on the intersection of Route 16B and Blackwater Road. The intersection has had several bad accidents. Route 16B is a State Road. The city applied to a Highway Safety Audit Program. Somersworth was #1 in the state and have been awarded funds to improve the intersection.

Councilor Vincent, seconded by Councilor Levassuer, made a motion to adjourn at 5:40pm. The motion passed unanimously, 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Trish Harris, City Clerk