



Public Safety Commission

Town of GREENFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

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MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

28 OCTOBER 2015

The Public Safety Committee met at the Greenfield Police Department meeting room at 5:00 PM.

Attending the meeting were Chairman Butch Hawkins, and Commissioners Adam Provost, Gary Longley and Frederick Clark

A quorum was present.

Also present: Mayor William Martin, Chief Strahan, Sergeant James Rode, Danielle West, Donald Ouellette, Laurie Scarbrough, Phil Wartel, Erin Nugent, Mark Lavin

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Hawkins called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm. Proper notice had been posted.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Clark moved to approve the special meeting minutes for the 21st as submitted. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Provost. All in favor, the motion passed. Commissioner Longley moved to approve the regular meeting minutes for the 23rd as submitted. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Provost. All in the favor, the motion passed.

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

NEW BUSINESS

GUEST SPEAKER LAURIE SCARBROUGH ON ROAD SAFETY ISSUES:

-Guest speaker Laurie Scarbrough, Transportation Planning Engineer for FRCOG, spoke regarding road safety concerns particularly in the Factory Hollow area. The general message relayed was that both Factory Hollow and the rotary are eligible for Federal Funding for safety improvements and she suggested the town get in touch with MASS DOT in order to get the ball rolling on applying for that funding. She urged the commission to stress local investment in this issue in order to push the concerns forward and help to initiate change. She noted that a conversation should be had with the traffic engineer about what the town can do in terms of signage. She also revealed that recent studies had actually shown a decline in accidents between Adams Road and the Gill/Montague bridge, and that out of the 48 that had occurred between 2001 and 2015, only 9 were single vehicle, only 11 occurred near Factory Hollow, and that there was a fairly even mix of accidents occurring during the day and evening hours. Chief Strahan mentioned that the increase in accidents seems to be related to re-opening the area after the recent safety improvements, noting that the area was very well lit and had ample signage while the construction was in progress which has since been removed. Commissioner Longley suggested another town-wide traffic study be performed and inquired as to whether or not grant money could be attained for that purpose. Neither Ms. Scarbrough nor Mr. Ouellette knew for certain.

POLICE REQUEST FOR CAPITAL SUPPORT LETTER:

-The Police department requested a letter of support from the commission in its request to remove the cost of the cruiser leases from their operating budget and treat the expense as part of their capital costs. The commission agreed and a letter will be drafted and sent to the Mayor's office for review.

FIRE:

-Chief Strahan reported that Firefighters Cadran and Ragoza had graduated the Academy, noting that Firefighter Cadran had achieved the position of the top student in his class. He also mentioned that 4 of the department's men would be receiving awards from the Governor for their rescue efforts during a recent incident in Erving. The department's budget is in good condition, with balances either on target or above expectations. Other noteworthy items included a rope rescue technician class hosted by the department, a live burn training in South Deerfield, volunteer work at the GPS Community Cookout, and the receipt of a recently ordered rescue flotation device. Portable radios have been ordered, and the town-wide radio system has been updated and is mostly up and running.

POLICE:

-Officers James Rode and Jason Haskins were officially sworn in as Sergeants during the month of October. The civil service list is set to be released on November 1st and the department plans to hire up to 9 new reserves. All of the department's policies are now on the new software and step one for accreditation is complete. Some adjustments will need to be made but they are scheduled for the winter months. Scott West has returned from military leave and is currently working full time again. Officer Soto has proven to be a valuable addition to the team. Officer Megan Gilbert has been reassigned to the Detective unit beginning November 1st. Downtown Officer Cody Guilbault continues to be very involved in the community, visiting the YMCA preschool program twice this month to discuss Halloween safety. With regard to the budget, the department has been utilizing OICs to help with overtime associated with Sergeant's absences, vacations and training. Because of this and the efficiency of the 4-2 schedule, overtime is being expended at a very healthy pace. Expenses are also on target, with exceptional performance improvements being noted with regard to the new cruisers, as gas costs have gone down quite a bit. The basement has been completely cleared and discussions have taken place regarding using the space for SRT training purposes.

EMS:

- EMS reported 294 responses; 90% were on scene in 10 minutes or less. Mutual Aid was needed 5 times and provided 16 times. Other community ambulances were intercepted 30 times (in a variety of areas); 4 were for Greenfield Fire. Ms. West revealed that because surrounding towns will request a paramedic intercept, MedCare responds immediately, but they often find that it is actually a transport which ties up their ambulances. Commissioner Longley expressed concern that Greenfield residents would suffer as result of this and asked whether or not they had the right to refuse requests. Ms. West replied that they do. Chief Strahan noted that the FD now has the ability to step in for transports and that they can charge for the service, suggesting that they be utilized to help aide in the situation. Commissioner Hawkins inquired as to whether or not a discussion was had with FRCOG regarding centralization, and Ms. West said they there had been, but no progress had been made. Commissioner Clark requested actual data from MedCare in order to make a recommendation and it was agreed that those materials would be gathered. Ms. West noted their involvement in a hands-on show and tell event for the 9th grade health technology program at FCTS and their volunteered services at the request of the FD and Bomb Squad on Federal Street and the Factory Hollow HazMat situation. Medcare has filled all of its vacant dispatch positions and has only one paramedic position opening left, with many people on a wait list for when new positions become available.

DISPATCH:

-Via a report that was emailed to the Commission, Ms. Marie conveyed that the town is still not allowing any new full time hires for the department. She reports that they currently have 4 per diems, one of whom is rarely available, but that the town is allowing her to hire additional help in this area. She has received only 3 applications. She has received word that current full time employees are in the process of accepting other positions with another employer and that at least one is approaching retirement. She noted that emergency level staffing contingency plans are being actively discussed and should be in place soon. Overtime has been adversely affected by the amount of shifts needed to be filled at a per diem rate. Contracts are currently still under negotiation.

OPEN FLOOR:

-Dispatcher Mark Lavin asked clarifying questions regarding regulations set forth by the Mayor in terms of overtime. Mayor Martin responded by asking the commission to please consult with the department's Union leaders to make certain that all of the information he has given to them has been relayed to employees and offered to set up a meeting to have an open discussion with those employees to address additional questions and concerns they may have. Commissioner Clark reported on a meeting he attended for a candidate for council in order to monitor a discussion about pedestrian and cyclist safety and mentioned that only 8 people attended from precinct 2. Longley commented that in his experience motorist's disregard for stop signs and pedestrian's apathy toward using crosswalks is likely adding to the issue. Chief Strahan wished to raise awareness of the fact that there would no longer be any funds available or drills being offered from Vermont Yankee as of April 2016.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

-None

Commissioner Longley moved to adjourn the regular meeting, seconded by Commissioner Clark. All in favor the motion passed. The meeting ended at 6:15 PM.

There will be a special meeting for Fire Capital Budget review to be held on November 5th at the Greenfield Police Department.

The next scheduled meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 2nd at the Greenfield Police Department.

Respectfully Submitted,

Erin Nugent, Recording Clerk