



Public Safety Commission

Town of GREENFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

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MINUTES REGULAR MEETING 25 MARCH 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 Gary Longley, Adam Provost and Frederick Clark.

A quorum was present.

Also present: Chief Haigh, Chief Strahan, Dispatch Manager Danielle Marie, Danielle West

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Hawkins called the meeting to order at 5:02 pm. Proper notice had been posted.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Longley moved to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Clark. All in favor, the motion passed.

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Chairman Hawkins acknowledged both Chiefs and Dispatch Manager Danielle Marie on all of the changes they have implemented and the improvements they have made. He remarked that the Board appreciates the difficulty of that task and appreciates all their efforts.

OLD BUSINESS

SAFETY COMPLEX WORKING GROUP:

-Chairman Hawkins reported that the first meeting for this group was to be held on Wednesday, April 15th pending a response from the Architect. He noted that the Mayor had decided not to become an official group member as he would be responsible for reviewing recommendations and felt it would be a conflict of interest. Additionally, Mark Leonard was asked to be a member and accepted the invitation.

NEW BUSINESS

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED:

None

EMS:

- Ms. West reports that they responded to 229 calls in March, 90% of which were attended to in 10 minutes or less. The need for mutual aid occurred 20 times. MedCare has also started using a new style of chair vans that more closely resemble those that would be used as a personal vehicle by a person with a physical disability, providing more comfort, easier use and a more inviting atmosphere to patients utilizing them. Commissioner Longley remarked that he intended to visit the MedCare facility during the second half of the month of April and invited any other interested commission member to join him.

FIRE:

-Chief Strahan reported that there were not enough names on the Civil Service list to be able to interview for new hires. The Lieutenant list will be certified on April 10th. The Commission agreed to hold a meeting to interview for the position of Captain on Wednesday, April 8th at 5:00 PM at the Police Department. Strahan also mentioned that he had been continuing to communicate with the Montague and Turners Falls Fire Departments regarding pooling resources due to lack of manpower. Discussion has been centered around the possibility of regionalization to include all town surrounding/near Montague. There have been issues with staffing across the board and often Mutual Aid is not even available to respond when requested. He announced a public meeting to be held at the Transit Center on Olive Street in Greenfield on Tuesday, April 14th at 6:00 PM. Strahan presented the Commission with a packet outlining new procedures related to assigning engines to particular calls. He explained the process as it is now and how the new packet would help streamline the process and increase the effectiveness and timeliness of responding to those calls. He noted that both Dispatchers and Firefighters would benefit from the packet as it would act as a guideline and playbook to be referenced on any occasion. Commissioner Longley wondered whether there would be a reference document available on the computer also and while Strahan responded that they would eventually digitize the handbook, he expects that over time it will become second nature and won't even be necessary. He did note however that because so much activity takes place on the computer screen already during the process, that a paper copy might actually be easier to reference while they are still getting to know the new procedures. Commissioner Clark inquired about whether or not there was a section regarding Mutual Aid and Strahan replied that there was. Strahan announced that his request to hire 3 new Firefighters had been rejected and he was asked to reduce his budget by an additional 2-3%.

POLICE:

-Chief Haigh reported that the Assessment Center was now in place for the last week of June or the first week of July. Additionally, the Promotional Policy was officially accepted and is now in place. Officer Richard Logan is officially retiring from the Department as of July 1st and would be completing his final evaluation on April 15th. New hire Jeff Bengtson is doing very well in the Court Administrator position, the two officers currently attending the Academy are performing nicely, and the Department is currently taking in applications for 5 Specials. Sergeant Dodge has been put in charge of setting up the Oral Boards. In addition, the Department may hire an additional Reserve officer. Things are progressing with the downtown office, and a review of the space's floor plan is set to take place tomorrow, March 26th at 9:30 AM. Commissioner Longley remarked that Mark Leonard had offered the services of supervised inmates to help with any construction and moving needs the department may have. He also asked if there would be an additional designated cruiser spot needed once the office is in place. Haigh responded that while the officer assigned to the office space is primarily a bike officer, the department will likely just move the existing designated space to be closer to the new office. Chief Haigh noted that he also was asked to further reduce his budget, cutting a total of \$120,000 primarily from overtime accounts. Commissioner Longley inquired as to whether or not the department planned to re-structure its vacations in response to the new 4-2 schedule, to which Chief Haigh replied that he did intend to propose a change that would coordinate bidding vacation time with bidding shifts.

DISPATCH:

-Ms. Marie informed the Commission of the departure of one full time dispatcher, leaving 9 full time dispatchers. She revealed that the Mayor has placed a hiring freeze for 10th position and that as of right now the vacation relief dispatch position is no longer in effect. Commissioner Longley inquired as to why that was. Ms. Marie responded that the freeze was not related to budget reduction, just organizational changes. She was however approved to hire 3 per diem positions, the interviews for which occurred this week. She has decided to offer employment to each of them, as they all interviewed well and have prior dispatch experience. She noted concern for her overtime account because- vacations will be starting in May and with no vacation relief, all those shifts will be filled by overtime or per diems. Per contract, the shifts must be offered to full timers first so the potential for a rise in overtime is likely. She reported that all but two dispatchers have completed their mandatory 16 hours of continuing education and that one has a Communications Training Officer class in April, and other has classes coming up in both May and June. She continues with the preparation and submission of the paperwork needed for reimbursements provided by a grant for wages and training costs. She was pleased to announce that Dispatch had been successfully moved back to its original room, complete with many new upgrades. Ms. Marie also brought to light an on-going HVAC issue that both Dispatch and Police have had with the current building in which they are operating. Both departments have made multiple calls to Central Maintenance about the issue and have paid for repairs to no avail. She suggested the issue be reviewed by the Mayor as there seemed to be no permanent fix in sight. Moving on to the current state of her budget, she revealed that the department was currently right on track and slightly under budget. She noted that the week of April 12th – 18th was National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week and urged all departments to acknowledge the department during this time. Commissioner Longley announced that he was very pleased with the visit he and Commissioner Clark had conducted with Ms. Marie earlier on in the month and commented on the recent renovations. He also expressed concern over the department's apparent lack of identity within the station. He suggested producing a sign above the Dispatch area which would differentiate them from the Police Department. He also inquired about the department's position in relation to Police and Fire. Chief Haigh remarked that there is a process in place but that all departments are still working to help make sure it is adhered to. Commissioner Clark noted that the visit had helped him to realize that there should be more regular visits and correspondence scheduled amongst the Commission and each department, as he found it very informative and helpful. Ultimately, Chief Strahan suggested a possible Charter change and all the Commissioners agreed on this point. Commissioner Clark also noted that he saw an improvement with the department's interactions with the public, possibly as a result of the new set up.

OPEN FLOOR: None

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

Chairman Hawkins moved to adjourn the regular meeting, seconded by Commissioner Provost. All in favor the motion passes. The meeting ended at 6:24 PM.

The next scheduled meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 8th at the Greenfield Police Department meeting room.

Respectfully Submitted,
Erin Nugent, Recording Clerk