

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES

September 14, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m.

Members Present: Deb Groat, Tracy Richardson, Alan Seymour

Others Present: Chief Golden, Chief Riley, Taylor Evans with Journal Tribune, Terry Emery, Holly Zweizig

Approval of Minutes: The minutes for the meeting on July 13, 2015 approval was postponed until the October meeting.

Agenda:

Comments from Citizens:

Discuss Additional Fire Prevention Officer for 2016: Mr. Emery said we have been approached in the budget process with what we consider to be a viable request from the Fire Department for an additional Fire Lt or Prevention Officer. Since we are in the budget process and it will soon be going to Council, we thought it would be good for the Fire Chief to come in and talk about what he is thinking.

Chief Riley distributed a handout to the Committee. He said there are two people in our Fire Prevention Bureau. We do approximately 800 inspection a year as far as code enforcement. We also do plan reviews for any new business coming in to Marysville. When we do code enforcement inspections it takes a few trips to the businesses to get through. With increasing our public education to help prevent injuries, illnesses and get out the fire safety message we are now seeing between 4000-4500 people a year. Chief Riley said right now we are turning down opportunities to speak and educate because we do not have enough people. He said we are having to curtail our school programs because we do not have enough staff to do it.

He said another part that he had envisioned for this position is a safety officer. Currently throughout the fire division we do not have a safety officer. Chief Riley thinks that this would be a good time to take this fire prevention position and make it a dual role. It would be 40% public education, 40% safety officer and 20% inspections and reviews. In a couple years, we will have some people retiring, so we could phase those positions out and phase this new position in. Chief Riley feels that this is a mentoring opportunity for them and it is a good way for us to decrease our accidents at the scene by having a safety officer present.

Mr. Emery said it was presented during the budget with a not so distant retirement coming it would be good to bring someone in during the interim, to get this person trained while that person is still here. He said once that individual decides when they are

retiring, we will have someone in the position already trained. We might find having three people in this position is worth the investment.

Mrs. Groat asked what is the salary range you are considering. Chief Riley said their pay is based on contracts with the IFF local. He said we initial discussed this being a prevention officer/fire fighter, but with the authority we are giving them, it would have to be a lieutenant position which would be at least \$69,067.00 plus benefits. Mrs. Richardson stated that this would be a real leadership position.

Mrs. Groat asked if there was someone in that specific rank that they could bring to the position and then rehire for their position. Would that be an easier hire? Chief Riley said they have that option, where they can hire within and back fill that position. If we cannot find the right candidate, we could look outside. Mrs. Groat said the net increase would be one person. Chief Riley answered yes, one person.

Mr. Emery said we feel that it is important for Council to be consulted when discussing new positions, and we are going through the budget process now. He added there will be a similar agenda items for Public Service Committee regarding a position. He said there is a time down the road with a retirement that we can go back down to two Fire Prevention, if needed.

Mrs. Groat said one of the most important goals has to be educating kids and if that is where we are having to cut back now to keep the City safe, then she supports this position.

Mr. Seymour stated this position is a replacement position. He said once the retiree retires then we will not replace that position. Chief Riley said they would like to re-evaluate the process at that point. Mr. Seymour asked where is the return on investment for this person relative to those programs you are teaching. Chief Riley said when the fire prevention people go out and do code enforcement which we are required to do. Mr. Seymour asked who they are required to do this by. Chief Riley said the State Fire Marshall's office, because we are the authority having jurisdiction. He said when they go out and prevent an overloaded extension cord that could have caught on fire and burnt the uptown down. He said it is hard for us to put a number on that. He said we have had classes touring the fire department and we get a call and have to leave. Then we have had to call classes and cancel tours because we were so busy. He said the run call is up 15% from what it was last year. In 2011 we did around 2700 runs, this year we could see runs around 3700. Mr. Emery said we do not want to get in a position where we are not being proactive and we move into 2016 and an individual decides to retire. Then we are not proactive, we would have to bring someone in and put them out there and not be trained on this position. Mrs. Groat said or juggle personnel and lose someone else out of the education component.

Chief Riley said our fire prevention officers are our number one ambassadors because they are into the businesses every year. They have to work with those businesses to keep them viable. He said we do not just go in and cite people, we want to work with them and

that takes several visits to go back and make sure it gets fixed and get ideas on how they can fix that for the least amount of cost for the business owner.

Mrs. Richardson asked are the two we have now both Lieutenants. Chief Riley answered no, we have one Lieutenant and one Fire Fighter/inspector. Mrs. Richardson asked what the difference in compensation is between the two. Chief Riley answered about 11%.

Mr. Seymour asked if we identify this as an additional head count for 2016, will that stay an additional head count in 2017 until that person retires. Mr. Emery answered yes. Mr. Seymour asked how we know when to reassess the situation again.

Mrs. Richardson said in looking at the 2016 budget, she noticed there are three new positions already in the budget. She asked if this is one of them. Mr. Emery answered yes, there were only two positions that came through the budgeting process that we felt warranted coming before Council. He said there is another position that will go before Public Service Committee. Mrs. Richardson thinks they have brought a good compelling argument and need for this position.

Mr. Emery suggested if for anyone on the committee to spend some time with Keith Watson, he can explain what their normal days are typically like. He would be a good resource.

Mr. Seymour asked what qualification this person would have to have to fill the position. Chief Riley said they would have to be a firefighter two through the State of Ohio, a state certified safety inspector and we require them to be an EMT or Paramedic.

Mrs. Richardson thanked Chief Riley for bringing this to the Committee.

Legalization of Marijuana Town Hall Meeting: Holly Zweizig with the Drug Free Coalition spoke to the Committee regarding the Town Hall meeting the Coalition is holding September 16th. She said we all have a concern regarding the bill to legalize marijuana for medicinal and recreational purposes. This would make Ohio the first state to legalize recreational before medicinal. Mrs. Zweizig said it would allow for use 21 and older and allow up to five recreational stores. She said it would be similar to how we do alcohol outlets in the State. The legalization would allow for marijuana dispensaries throughout the State. Anyone 18 and older with the prescription from a doctor would be allowed to receive medical marijuana. Parents would also be allowed to provide children under the age of 18 marijuana with consent from a doctor.

Mrs. Groat asked if it was a script from the doctor or just a recommendation. Mrs. Zweizig said the term prescription or medical is a term that gets confused because the only one that can regulate medication is the FDA, and they do not recognize marijuana as a medication. It would only be a recommendation from the doctor. There is no training for recommendations from doctors. She said because the recommendation from the doctor allows people to use when and how much they would like to use.

Anyone 21 and older could purchase a license for \$50.00 to grow their own marijuana for recreational use.

Employers are still going to be allowed to do pre-employment drug testing and they could fire someone who test positive for marijuana. However, it also states that if the person is holding a medical marijuana card, it allows them the right to use the marijuana just as anyone else would who has a prescription. Since marijuana is not seen under the federal level yet, it is not covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

She said another thing to consider is how the schools are going to act when employees/students have a recommendation to use during the day.

Mrs. Zweizig said another part to make this a little more confusing is HB 2, which is a resolution that was brought forth by a number of state leaders as an anti-monopoly measure. She said if passed this would supersede HB 3 even if both pass.

Mr. Seymour asked how this passing would affect our smoking code. Mrs. Richardson said it is not part of the smoking ordinance because it is not tobacco.

Mrs. Richardson asked Mrs. Zweizig to come to help share some of the concerns that the State, County and City will be facing.

Mr. Seymour asked when it would go into effect if it were passed. Mrs. Zweizig said it would be ninety days (90) after the election.

Discuss Training Facility Site Proposal: Mr. Emery said within the past several weeks the Administration, the Mayor, and myself have been approached by Chief Golden and Chief Riley and they have been working with Union County Officials as well on a concept that they would like to continue to look into. It would be called the City of Marysville/Union County Safety Training Site. He said tonight we are bring forward their thoughts and ideas. Chief Riley passed out a hand out.

Chief Riley said they have come up with a concept for a training site to be used by all the City Departments as well as the Union County (Sheriff, EMA & Engineer). We would be able to hold outdoor training opportunities to prepare us for a community risk. He said they would like to look at public and private partner to help with the funding of the training props.

Mrs. Groat asked if they have talked with Honda regarding this idea. Chief Riley said they have approached the idea with Dave Thomas, who worked out there but has since retired. He said they would have to restart the discussions.

Chief Riley discussed the proposed timeline for the training site. Mr. Emery said all of our safety department employees have to attend confined space training. He said we see several benefits to different divisions of the City.

Mrs. Richardson asked if the City would be the caretakers of the facility. Chief Riley believed that it would. Chief Riley said that he would like to create a site where we can perform safety training.

Chief Riley said they worked with Mr. Hoyt and he said that the most expensive part would be the infrastructure. He said we are looking at land that the City and County already own. If we own the land then we could apply for grants.

Mrs. Groat asked if all the County and City departments have been working together on this proposal. Chief Riley said it started with Chief Golden and himself and the idea started to grow. Mr. Emery said the City would control the site.

Mrs. Richardson asked if there are other communities or if there is a certain number of residents that would make it necessary to have. Chief Riley answered the ones that he has seen have been county wide. Wayne County has a Regional Training Facility and all the local fire departments use it.

Mrs. Groat asked Chief Golden how he felt about the site. He said she asked the question of what they used before this proposed site, a lot of things we have done is training by opportunity. He gave examples of the old City building before it was taken down was used for a training site by the Police Department and Fire Department.

Mrs. Groat asked what they needed from the Safety Committee. Mr. Emery said they did not need anything from the committee. They were there just informing the Committee about what they are considering.

Mr. Seymour asked if they would need staff funding then as well to maintain the building. Chief Riley said they would include that in the rental of the facility.

Mrs. Richardson asked the Committee if there was any objections with moving forward on the proposal. Mrs. Groat said no but requested that they keep it inclusive with all the City partners that would be involved.

Review of No Texting and Driving Law: Mrs. Richardson asked Chief Golden to come forward and talk about this issue because we are starting another school year. It has been about three years since Ohio came down with no texting and driving laws. Chief Golden said there are two no texting and driving laws, one for people ages 18 and older and another for under 18 years of age. The difference between the two is reading, writing or sending a message is illegal. If you are under 18 and you have a cellular phone you cannot use it at all. If you are over 18 then you can use it to make phone calls but not for texting. The other difference is for 18 and older it is a secondary offense, you cannot be stopped if an officer sees you texting. If you are under 18 you can be stopped for using your phone. Our City has a distracting while driving code, which is easier to cite people than the texting laws.

Mrs. Groat asked if seatbelt is secondary. Chief Golden said that is a secondary offense for everyone.

Mrs. Richardson brought this topic up because she wanted to remind people, to be cautious and do not text and drive.

Adjournment: Mrs. Richardson adjourned the meeting at 6:35 pm.