

THE CITY OF STREETSBORO, OHIO

SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Monday, March 13, 2023

[Prior to the meeting Chrissy Motz, 825 David Drive, thanked everyone for the support they had given her for the Special Olympics Polar Plunge. This year's event was held in a pool due to safety issues at Lake Erie. She was the top fund raiser with over \$7,500 and her team, Portage Grin and Bear It, was the top fundraising team with over \$15,000 for Special Olympics in Portage County.]

[Prior to the meeting the Mayor swore in Dylan Conant as a new Streetsboro Police Officer.]

[Prior to the meeting Matt Coffman showed examples of the video recorder footage from the new cameras on the Service Department snow plow trucks and the GPS map the public could access regarding what streets the trucks had been on. The system would also track miles covered, how much salt was used, and how many hours used so the administration could make sure the equipment and supplies were being used as efficiently as possible.]

This Safety Committee Meeting was called to order on Monday, March 13, 2023 at 7:11 p.m. by Jennifer Wagner, Chairman. Mrs. Field gave an invocation and Mayor Broska led the Pledge of Allegiance. Mrs. Field welcomed the students in the audience and explained this evening's proceedings.

PRESENT: Justin Ring, Mike Lampa, Jon Hannan, Anthony Lombardo, Jennifer Wagner, Julie Field

ABSENT: Steve Michniak

ALSO PRESENT: Glenn Broska, Mayor
Frank Beni, Law Director
Patricia Wain, Police Chief
Rob Reinholz, Fire Chief
Matt Miller, Finance Director
Bill Miller, Service Director
Justin Czekaj, Municipal Engineer
John Cieszkowski, Planning Director
Patrick O'Malia, Economic Development Director
Greg Mytinger, Parks and Recreation Director
Shawna Lockhart-Reese, HR Manager
Matt Coffman, IT Network Administrator
Caroline Kremer, Clerk of Council

MOTION: TO EXCUSE MR. MICHNIAK.

Moved by Mr. Ring, seconded by Mr. Lombardo. Upon voice vote, **motion carried.**

MOTION: TO RECESS THIS MEETING TO GO INTO THE REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING.

Moved by Mr. Hannan, seconded by Mrs. Field. Upon voice vote, **motion carried and the meeting recessed at 7:15 p.m.**

MOTION: TO RECONVENE THIS SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING.

Moved by Mr. Hannan, seconded by Mrs. Field. Upon voice vote, **motion carried and the meeting reconvened at 7:15 p.m.**

Disposition of Minutes

MOTION: TO ACCEPT THE REGULAR SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 13, 2023 AS WRITTEN.

Moved by Mr. Lampa, seconded by Mrs. Field. Upon voice vote, **motion carried.**

Old Business

None.

New Business

T-7398 Application for SAFER Grant

Chief Reinholz said, based on the last Council meeting, they went back and revised the SAFER Grant application from six fulltime firefighters to three fulltime firefighters. The application was due this Friday and there was no guarantee Streetsboro would get the grant, but if Council was comfortable applying for three fulltime firefighters, this could be approved tonight and submitted tomorrow.

Chief Reinholz explained again that it was about \$130,000 of benefits, wages, and pension per employee and over a three-year period it would equal about \$1.1 million that the City would save. Once the City maintained the manning, it had to keep the manning during that three-year period or else it would forfeit the grant. Once the grant was awarded the City would have 20 days to accept the grant. And then there were some time limits to actually appoint the people.

Mr. Ring appreciated the legal memo from Mr. Beni regarding Council's concerns on this issue regarding keeping the people after the grant term ended; it was very informative. Mr. Ring agreed with Mr. Beni that the City should consider an MOU with the firefighter union(s) before accepting the SAFER grant (if it was awarded). It was confirmed that today's legislation was just to apply for the grant, not necessarily to accept it. Mayor Broska said the administration could work on an MOU. Chief Reinholz said he had talked to the union president and explained the SAFER grant and the union was more than willing to discuss this. Mr. Ring thought the MOU should indicate that the positions hired under the SAFER grant may not be continued after the grant term, although the City would like to keep them, and also that those positions not be held in consideration in any future collective bargaining negotiations. The current union contract expired December 31, 2023.

Ms. Wagner questioned, if the City would do an MOU to get agreement from the union that the people hired under the grant could be let go after the grant period, what's the difference if the City hired 3 or 6 under the grant? She'd rather have the more manpower while it was free under the grant if it wasn't going to be a problem after the grant period. Mr. Ring was concerned about having to keep positions which the City could not afford. Mrs. Field thought if the City got three new fulltime firefighters under the grant, and then after three years of the grant, the Fire Department (and community) would have adjusted and grown accustomed to having that level of staff, it would be like going backward to let those staff members go. Chief Reinholz said over those three years there would have been some attrition too from retirements, etc. and you'd have to maintain the staffing levels during the grant period. After the grant period, the staffing would go back to what we have today. Chief Reinholz explained that Streetsboro was a combination Fire Department with full time and part time employees. Of the 25 or 26 parttimers, over 56% leave over time and he was never sure how many would be available for shifts since their priority was their full time jobs at other departments. The fulltimers scheduled their vacation time off for the year before January so he knew which three fulltimers would be on shift on any given day, but he needed to run a six man shift. The recruiting for part timers was horrendous.

Mr. Ring said Council understood the Fire Department needed more staffing for the increased call volume and Council would need to figure out a way to do that permanently going forward, but for now he wanted to focus on this topic. Mr. Ring understood Mrs. Field's point about the community having to return to a lower level of staffing (lower level of service) after the grant which would be bad. Ms. Wagner commented that it was very difficult right now to find people for the police and fire positions and then get them through the training process. She said if Streetsboro used the free grant money to get people and train them, then after the grant period, those trained people could fill any vacancies from attrition. Mr. Ring agreed with using the free money; his concern was how the union contract would impact the City's ability to release these people hired under the grant without a fight if the City could not afford to keep them. If the MOU could be done, that would alleviate his concern.

Mrs. Field said it would take some careful planning to be able to afford the three extra fulltime firefighters after three years, and the City needed to consider all the other departments that needed staff too. Mayor Broska confirmed that the City needed police officers just as bad as it needed firefighters, plus the need for staff at the Service Department. He didn't want to put all the eggs in one basket and go for six firefighters with the SAFER grant, but apply for three fulltime firefighters, and find a way to hire four more police officers too. He understood the grant was free money for three years, but at the end of three years the City would not be able to absorb the salary of six fulltime firefighters.

Mr. Lampa asked Chief Reinholz if three fulltime firefighters under the SAFER grant would help his staffing/scheduling. Chief Reinholz said it would help; "half a loaf was better than none." It was clarified that the Police Department had filled a position today and had another opening coming up that Civil Service would arrange testing for in April, then the Police Department would be at full staffing for what was budgeted. It would not increase the minimum staffing. Chief Wain said she just got communication today about a COPS grant, which was different than the SAFER grant; it was not 100% (it was about 75% and it was mandatory to keep the person for an additional

year after the three-year grant term). Chief Reinholz commented that the Fire Department was the only department with parttime staff to save money by not paying benefits; if it is such a good idea why doesn't the Police Department or Service Department use the same parttime staff system? Fire Departments evolved over time; it usually started with volunteers because the communities didn't have the money to have fulltime staff, then as the call volume increased, they tried to have someone on call during the day, then they had people on 8 hours or 12 hours shifts. Then as the call volume increased more and the finances got better, they might put one fulltime and have other parttimers coming in. The model had worked fine when the call volume was 1,500 or 1,800 with a core of fulltimers and some parttimers filling in spots on the shifts, but now the call volume had increase to 3,200 and he needed to have 6 people per shift instead of just three people. The EMS calls couldn't wait like maybe a police call that just needed to take a report, the firefighters or mutual aid had to respond right away, but sometimes mutual aid was busy too. The Police Department received a lot more calls than the Fire Department, but they were of a different nature.

Mr. Hannan asked if the City could apply to the SAFER grant for six, but then if it was awarded just accept three. Chief Reinholz said the grant was written based on NFPA best practices and when Streetsboro wrote the grant, they had to explain why they need what they applied for, and the grant would be awarded for what the application said was needed. And then the City would have to maintain the manning of the number of people they bring on.

Ms. Wagner explained that when a call came in police or fire would respond no matter what and it wouldn't show up in the records that any calls were skipped or delayed because they weren't, but it also would not show up how the staff was being exhausted and overused and needed time off and couldn't get it and kept stepping up and working overtime. Things were not changing and call volume and staffing was only getting worse.

Mayor Broska said there had to be something beyond what we are doing here. EMS stood for *Emergency* Medical Service but he felt there was a large portion of the calls that came in that were not emergencies. He thought the whole EMS system needed reviewed and more private ambulance transport systems should be used, especially by the private nursing home facilities or urgent care centers, but the private ambulance services could not get staff either. Ms. Wagner said when the 911 calls came in, the dispatcher wasn't comfortable making the decision if a call was a true emergency or just a need for quicker transportation than waiting hours for a private ambulance service to be available, so the City safety forces were sent. Mayor Broska said often there were calls to the hotels that turned out to be false alarms, but it took the staff away from the station. The fine for false alarms needed to be applied sooner. He said these issues were a system wide failure that needed to be resolved throughout the state/country.

Chief Reinholz said he had discussed the issue of using the Fire Department EMS for basic medical transport from the nursing homes with the various directors of the nursing homes in town, but the staff at the nursing homes kept changing and the message did not get relayed to the new director, so it all started again. It was a frustrating cycle. The City had applied two liens for false alarm fines that were not paid and it took years to get it resolved. Sometimes people were using the hospital ERs as primary care and using the City EMS services as transportation; it was a cultural issue. Chief Reinholz said 1/3 of the EMS calls were advanced life support, 1/3 were basic life

support, and 1/3 were BS, but you can't always know that from the initial 911 call so the EMS staff had to go to each call as if it was a life and death emergency.

Mr. Lampa wanted to give the Fire Department and the Police Department as many people as they needed, but Council needed to determine where the money would come from. The Fire Department had budgeted \$78,000 for overtime for 2023, which Mr. Lampa would like to see lower, but Chief Reinholz said he often went on calls to help keep the overtime costs down. Mr. Lampa supported apply for three fulltime firefighters for the SAFER grant and to work to be able to fund them all in three years.

Mr. Ring confirmed that Council had seemed comfortable applying for three and he was even more comfortable if the MOU would be approved. He thought, even with the MOU, the City would run into some obstacles in three years that the City was probably not even foreseeing right now. Council understood that more staffing was needed in multiple departments, but for now to write the grant application for three and start having discussion on how to have the money for more staffing in the future.

MOTION: TO MOVE THIS TO TONIGHT'S REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING.

Moved by Mr. Hannan, seconded by Mr. Ring. Upon voice vote, **motion carried.**

T-7399 Accept EMS Grant

Chief Reinholz said this was the State of Ohio PUCO seatbelt monies. Streetsboro was awarded \$682, which was drastically less than the \$2,500 the City had received in past years. He asked Council to accept the grant award so the Fire Department could use the money.

MOTION: TO MOVE THIS TO TONIGHT'S REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING.

Moved by Mr. Lampa, seconded by Mr. Lombardo. Upon voice vote, **motion carried.** Mrs. Field thanked Chief Reinholz for always seeking out grant opportunities and for doing an outstanding job as Fire Chief.

T-7400 Purchase New Duty Weapons for PD – Part 2

Chief Wain said the firearms were purchased last year, this year she would purchase the optics, flashlights, and the new holsters for the guns purchased last year. The quote was from Atwell's, who had been the City's vendor for firearms for many years, and provided great equipment, and they would buy back the current firearms each time the City needed to make a change.

She had taken Mr. Michniak's suggestion from the last meeting to get the better quality optics. They were priced at \$519/site for a total of \$17,127 to provide for the whole department and have a few extra on hand. The flashlights for the department were quoted at \$244/light for a total of \$8,052. The holsters were required to be provided by the union contract if the department was replacing firearms. The holsters were \$140/holster and were customized to fit the new firearms with the new optics and flashlights for a total of \$4,620. The last part of the project was the training equipment (the laser site and tablet combo with extra strike pads) for training with hundreds of

trigger pulls without using any ammo, which had also had supply issues since the pandemic, for a total of \$335.75. Chief Wain got all these quotes based on the purchases Twinsburg Police Department had done for their department. She asked for approval up to \$30,400 in case there was any price fluctuation prior to actually placing the orders with Atwell's and Amazon. The amount had been budgeted for 2023 in the 401- Capital Equipment account.

Mr. Ring was glad there would be laser training equipment to save ammo, but he said there was no substitute for actual use of the firearms on a gun range. Chief Wain agreed and said the officers would each have at least one full range day on this new equipment.

Mrs. Field wondered if the purchases from Amazon would be professional enough for police use. Chief Wain said it was the same equipment Twinsburg had purchased and it had been successful for them.

MOTION: TO MOVE THIS TO TONIGHT'S REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING.

Moved by Mr. Lampa, seconded by Mrs. Field. Upon voice vote, **motion carried.**

T-7401 Contract w/Hall Public Safety to Upfit K-9 Car

Chief Wain said during the swap out of the cruisers over the last two years going from the Ford Explorers, to the Dodge Durangos, to the Chevy Tahoes, they expected to take an older Ford Explorer that was still in good condition and convert it into the new K9 car because the current K9 car was always in need of repair. If the K9 car was out of service, the K9 was not available. Because it was a different model year than the old K9 car, they just realized new upfit equipment was needed, but it had not been included in the new budget. This legislation was to upfit the new K9 car with the new equipment and reinstall some of the equipment from the old K9 car that will still fit. It was not budgeted for 2023, but the department had received some money from an asset forfeiture from a very old case that just happened to come in at the end of 2022. The use of the forfeiture money was restricted, but K9 cars/police equipment was applicable, so this money was available for this purchase in account #208-11-5745. The account number listed in the ordinance was incorrect and should be changed to #208-11-5745.

There were also three Installation Cases for the new Tahoes that had been missed in a previous approval for Hall Public Safety than needed to be included with this legislation to house all the radio equipment for the new cruisers.

MOTION: TO CHANGE THE ACCOUNT NUMBER IN T-7401 FROM #401-11-5745 TO #208-11-5745.

Moved by Mr. Ring, seconded by Mrs. Field. Upon voice vote, **motion carried.**

MOTION: TO MOVE THIS TO TONIGHT'S REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING AS AMENDED.

Moved by Mr. Lampa, seconded by Mr. Lombardo. Upon voice vote, **motion carried.**

Citizens' Comments

None.

Announcements

A Service Committee Meeting will immediately follow this meeting.

There being no further business to be addressed by this committee, and upon motion by Mr. Lampa, seconded by Mrs. Field, this meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

ATTEST:

Caroline L. Kremer, Clerk of Council

Jennifer Wagner, Chairman