

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

May 13, 2019

A meeting of the Public Safety Committee was held this date beginning at 5:16 p.m., at 80 Broad Street, City Hall, Council Chamber

Notice of this meeting was sent to all local news media.

PRESENT

Councilmember Shahid, Chair, Councilmember Seekings, Councilmember Wagner (by phone)

Staff: Stirling Halversen, Ashley Anderson, Chief Curia, Chief Reynolds, Steve Ruemelin, Lieutenant Sean Engles, Chief Baldwin, and Jennifer Cook

The meeting was opened with a moment of silence provided by Councilmember Seekings.

Approval of Minutes

On the motion of Councilmember Seekings, seconded by Councilmember Wagner, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the April 23, 2019 meeting.

An update on the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and related Fire and Police Department Training

Chief Baldwin said that the Fire Department was looking to do some fire tech evolutions with theatrical smoke, and a digital fire panel which allowed their firefighters to practice in a simulated structure fire without actually having something on fire. They were doing some search and rescue drills.

Councilmember Seekings asked if there was money allocated for the training. Chief Baldwin said that they had everything they needed and wouldn't cost anything additional. Chief Reynolds asked if the reason they were there was partly because of the location. Mr. Ruemelin said this was the property where they got the FEMA money to buy out the property, so they wanted to make sure that Council was fully aware of it. The training would be done at the property. Councilmember Seekings asked if they had talked to the HOA to make sure they knew it was coming. Ms. Halversen said this was the Bridgepointe Townhome Community, so it was a private area. They were in the process of dissolving the HOA at that point. There was one last townhome that needed to be closed, and they were waiting on that. It had a reverse mortgage situation going on, so they had been working with HUD and they were almost through that process. They would be ready to close on that very soon. In the meantime, they had been working with the HOA's attorney, and coming up with a dissolution plan and would be coming to Council on May 28th for approval. They were still working out the details, but the most important part was to

transfer the HOA common area to the City, so that the City had a title in its name. At that point, the Fire and Police Departments would be free to do their training exercises there. They wanted to go ahead and close out the HOA process before the transfer started, just for liability purposes.

Councilmember Seekings asked how many people would be training. Chief Baldwin said on the Fire side, it would be small training groups with maybe three apparatuses and a Battalion Chief, so under 20 at one time. Sergeant Sean Engles said that on the Police side, it would be about 25-30 at a time, and they would be requesting one day per week, during the day. Councilmember Seekings said he would suggest letting people in Shadowmoss know that that would be going on. Mr. Ruemelin said that the media would be notified, as well as the surrounding neighborhoods, and there would be flyers handed out and posted.

Sergeant Engles said that this would be for some of the SWAT Team's training and it involved an element of destruction. A realistic training environment was what was best for them to prepare for future incidents. They wanted to work on some explosive breaching capabilities and that would be where the notifications would come in. If there was any resistance to that, or if it caused a disturbance, they could scale things back to accommodate that. Chairman Shahid said this was Councilmember Griffin's district and Councilmember Seekings said they just needed to make sure they got a lot of notice up. Chairman Shahid said they should let Councilmember Griffin be aware of what was going on. Mr. Ruemelin said they had reached out to Councilmember Griffin and he emailed and said he was 100% on board with CFD and CPD using it as a training facility.

Chief Reynolds said that when they responded to an accident, whether it was a school, a residential community, there were a lot of things that they needed to be prepared for such as stress inoculation, tactics, and breaching. This was a unique opportunity to do this at no cost. They wouldn't normally be able to do things like this as their own training facility. Occasionally, when there was an opportunity like this, it paid dividends for their officers, to be able to go in as a team and do the things they would need to do in a real-life event. Chairman Shahid said the only reason it was referencing the grant was because they were using the houses to do training. Ms. Halversen said that the training exercises would happen in between the last closing on the last townhome, and/or transfer of the common areas, and the deadline date for when demolition had to occur. So, they were hoping to get everything accomplished so that they would have about a month and a half to two months to do some training exercises. The first townhome had a demolition deadline of July 30th. They were working under an extension period that was granted by FEMA because they were a little behind on getting all of the properties closed and getting a demolition contractor on board. They didn't have the demolition contractor yet, for this particular demo, so they were still working through that process. They did think there would be a good window of time to do the training while the buildings were still standing.

Miscellaneous

Councilmember Seekings said they had another car/bike incident on the Peninsula the previous night. There was a huge importance in the community about being vigilant when it came to bike/pedestrian/car interaction and safety. It seemed like they saw something like that every week and it was heartbreaking. He knew that Chief Reynolds had made that a priority and he encouraged him to keep going and try to make the roads as safe as possible. Chief Reynolds said those incidents were preventable and predictable. Impairment was a significant factor and they were working to build awareness and work on enforcement. They were working with Traffic and Transportation as a collective on some engineering issues. It was low-hanging fruit. There was another double fatality and six people had gone to the hospital. There was a collision on Clements Ferry Road a few weeks previous and the speed of impact was 106 MPH and the driver at .24. On prom night, there was a double fatality in Mount Pleasant that involved alcohol. There was a lot more they needed to do. The incident the previous night was a 67 year old man on a bicycle who was struck by someone who had been drinking and driving. It was something that they couldn't accept. They had a lot of work to do.

Chairman Shahid said he had asked for an update on the audit at the next meeting and an update on the recent changes with the personnel.

Having no further business, the Committee adjourned at 5:28 p.m.

Bethany Whitaker

Council Secretary