

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, September 22, 2021

Virtual

Present: Chair, Greg Jenson, Alderpersons Ozzie Doom, Jean Ligocki, Joyce Tikalsky, Members; Tricia Suess Charleston, John Basco, Staff; City Attorney Rachel Snyder, Mayor Swadley, and Police Chief Greg Leck.

Excused: none

Guests: Teresa Pellett, Ronnie Mckittrick, and Jim Blouin.

Call to Order: Chair Jenson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Old Business:

Discussion and possible action on setting up the Alcohol Policy Committee. Pellett led off by stating she would like to see this as a Sub-committee of the Public Safety Committee. The Committee would consist of Stoughton Wellness members, Alders, and community members to include an alcohol licensee. Attorney Snyder wanted to know whether this was going to be a short duration committee or something longer. Pellett advised she envisioned this being a longer commitment. Snyder stated that this could be done with a formal Resolution or Ordinance change. Mayor Swadley stated we could do a resolution and then added that the proposal needs more vetting on the suggested structure. Mayor Swadley then suggested a setup similar to the new Sustainability Committee that was just formed by the council.

Pellett stated that she envisioned the committee to initially have a considerable amount of work and then to taper off to less frequent meetings. The goal would be to have something policy decisions ready prior to the alcohol licensing period next year. Chair Jenson suggested that the Mayor and Pellett could work on setting the makeup of the committee and work on bringing it back for approval. Alder Tikalsky stated that she liked modelling it after the new Sustainability Committee setup. Mayor Swadley and Pellett will work on it over the next few weeks.

No further action.

Communications: Chief Leck gave a brief update regarding that the new Speed Board still has not arrived. Leck added that the annual Paul Kraby Memorial Service will be September 30th at 1:30pm at Riverside Cemetery and invited members to attend. Leck added that due to COVID there will be no Awards Banquet this year and that awards will be presented internally at a department meeting. Leck also stated that the Annual Law Enforcement Citizen of the Year is going to be renamed in honor of Greg Standard. Leck explained that Standard was the recipient of the first Citizen of the year and was a model citizen in the community. Standard recently died in an automobile crash.

New Business

4. Minutes of 8-25-21: Minutes to reflect proper "spelling" of Teresa Pellett's name.
Moved by Tikalsky 2nd By: Ligocki, to approve the minutes of 8-25-21.
Motion carried: 6-0 Doom abstained
5. Discussion and possible action of a change of agent for the Stoughton Opera House.

Leck presented the request for change of agent for the Stoughton Opera House. Discussion followed on some possible errors in the application and that it was not notarized.

Motion by Ligocki, 2nd By Tikalsky to recommend approval to the council contingent on the application be notarized. Motion carried 7-0

6. Discussion and possible action on approving the 2021-22 Snowmobile Route for the Viking Snowdrifters. Ronnie Mckittrick and Jim Blouin presented the proposal to the committee. Jenson asked Chief Leck if there was and issues last year. Leck advised there were none.

Motion by Doom, 2nd by Basco to recommend approval to council. Motion carried 7-0

7. Discussion and possible action on a resolution to the WI DOT regarding reducing Speed Limit on US 51.

Leck introduced the Resolution to the committee and explained why it was needed. Ligocki stated that she liked the resolution but felt in should have stronger wording regarding reducing speeds north of Velkommen Way. Leck reported that Planning Director Scheel has had conversations with DOT and that this wording is the best way for encouraging DOT to make the changes. Additionally with the upcoming development being proposed this are will be subject to change. Sues wondered how we would let people know if the change takes place. Leck advised we would do an educational campaign to include red/orange flags on any new signs.

After further discussion regarding the wording.

Motion by Doom recommend to Council, 2nd by Tikalsky. Motion carried 7-0

8. Discussion on traffic enforcement and strategies

Chief Leck started the discussion with a review of the department's ability to do regular traffic enforcement. Leck states that traffic enforcement complaints from citizens occur on a regular basis and they are from all over the city. Calls to Alders indicate how prevalent they are. As we have all witnessed, traffic issues have increased all over and not just in Stoughton.

Leck reported that both PM and Day shift patrols are routinely running from call to call with not a lot of time in between to do regular traffic enforcement. This especially occurs during peak times for traffic complaints which is also high call volume times for other incidents. There is just not enough staff available during these time.

Leck went on to advise that the only regular way that the department can put staff out to focus on traffic enforcement is through overtime. The department is able to put staff on overtime for the US 51 traffic grant we receive from the DOT. Unfortunately, these grants focus on US 51 and don't provide much help for the rest of the city. Leck added that staff doesn't always sign up for overtime and that it is sometimes hard to fill the required grant overtime.

Leck stated that over the years the department has tried several strategies to encourage compliance with traffic laws. Road design changes with traffic islands

have helped a lot. We use the Public Works traffic counters to help identify true problems and peak times. We have used our Speed Board, mannequins in squads, information boards, and selective enforcement. Since 2020 our Speed Board quit working and the new replacement is still on order. Due to the issues from 2020 we don't feel it is prudent to put an unoccupied squad on the street with \$30,000.00 of equipment inside.

There have been numerous citizen requests for speedbumps and stop signs. When these come in we evaluate and try to educate people. Public Works, of course, is not in favor of speedbumps because of the maintenance issues. Stop signs statistically do not slow traffic. Also most often when we review traffic counts and speeds, they don't always prove the public perception of the actual speeds.

Leck stated that the department is going to be trying some new ideas using a combination of information boards and enforcement in get a handle on the growing problem. As indicted by recent complaints hot spots can tend to be roads that have just been newly paved. The department utilizes a "Hot Sheet" for calls and concerns that the officer look at every day to try and address the items. Our lists are usually much longer than staff to take care of them.

Leck also stated that the department will resurrect the Residential Traffic Management Program that the City Council approved in 2015. The program has inadvertently dropped off the City's website and needs to be implemented. Committee member Suss remembered the program from her previous time on the council.

Leck advised he would send a copy of the program to Committee Members for their reference and will work on getting it back on the city's website.

No further action.

9. Discussion of the Police Departments personnel request for 2022.

Leck discussed the 2022 personnel request for the committee to make them aware of the justification. Leck reported that the request was for one new officer position, funding for anticipatory hiring, and fulltime hours for the Community Service Officer.

Leck explained that the department has not added any new position since 2013. Leck stated that because of the school districts decision to drop the SRO the city did absorb the position in the department. Leck explained that because of shift design of 6 days on and 3 days off, it takes 1.5 officers to increase 1 shift position.

Leck also discussed his concerns about recruitment. Leck advised that the applicant pool has been sinking over the last several years but has taken a nose dive since 2020. Peer agencies are reporting sometimes single digit applicant numbers. Agencies our size and smaller are starting to send officers to the Police Academy which adds 5 months to the already 6 months it takes to get a new officer to solo patrol. Leck advised that currently the PFC requires preservice (those that have completed an Academy) as part of the minimum qualifications. This will likely have to change.

Leck also added his justifications for the Community Service Officer hours to increase. The desire would be to cross train the CSO in dispatching to help with staffing struggles we have had there.

No further action.

Future meetings topics; Continue Liquor License process, EOC & Emergency Plan, Curbside pickup pilot.

Moved by Tikalsky, 2nd By Doom to adjourn at 7:18 p.m. Carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,
Greg Leck, Chief of Police