

Public Safety Committee

Meeting Notes

City of Tybee Island

4-25-19

Attendees: Police Chief Robert Bryson, Fire Chief Jason Patterson, Shawn Gillen, Wanda Doyle, John Branigin, Julie Livingston, Major William Mosely, Major Joseph Fobes, Raynette Evans, Mack Kitchens, Jenny Klosterman, Rob Klosterman, Jenny Rutherford, Asst. City Marshall Griesbach, Officer Dascal, Alice Jonsson

Wanda called the meeting to order at 9:59 AM.

Wanda moved for minutes from 4-11-19 meeting to be approved. Motion approved.

Wanda moved to present Disorderly House Ordinance to City Council as is, for the first reading. Could possibly have a final vote in two weeks. Motion approved.

Shawn Gillen – no update on public safety salaries. We need to keep this on every agenda. Finance Committee will meet next week. May take the Committee a few weeks to bring numbers.

John Branigin – will press for public safety salaries to be addressed in this coming budget year. Unless it's a horrific number would even propose going into the fund balance to make it happen.

Julie Livingston and John Branigin discussed frequency of Finance Committee meetings and meeting more often for special situations.

Shawn Gillen – gave update on sandbar situation.

Wanda asked how firefighters are monitoring the beach until lifeguards start.

Chief Jason Patterson – explained how firefighters are used to patrol the beach. Department tries to have two fire fighters daily patrolling and scanning the beach. Part-timers usually leave at 5:00PM. Most issues are historically occurring after-hours when staffing is lower (or when lifeguards go home). Will make sure firefighters are reminded about how to patrol and scan the beach. FD is stretched very thin to try to put people on the sandbar every day, on all tidal shifts. Roughly a third of the part-time shifts were open this month due to lack of personnel. Next month since the season starts FD is forcing overtime but with only six people that's going to be difficult. FD has calls that pull firefighters off the beach.

Wanda- whatever it takes to guard the sandbar, we need to be doing it. Group discussed options for guarding sandbar.

Jason Patterson – rough estimate for staffing needs in order to have firefighters physically there 24/7 is six people on duty, per day. That's a total of eighteen firefighters as a long range solution.

Mack Kitchens suggested using technology to assist in scheduling firefighters to monitor sandbar.

Chief Jason Patterson – we need six people for a response to the sandbar. Explained how calls work.

Shawn Gillen – two to three things we will immediately do. One, get a person on a jet ski near the sandbar in the danger zone, when staffing allows. We need a jet ski specifically for sandbar location. 'Emily' will be deployed soon. We will get two. The Emily will help with situations where multiple people are in distress in the water.

Wanda – we need to add personnel.

John and Wanda discuss how we keep people from walking out there in the first place. Could cameras and loudspeakers be used? Could fines be used? Who could write those tickets?

Chief Bryson and Shawn Gillen explained that we need to research open-water enforcement and jurisdiction issues.

Julie Livingston – Can ORCA be used?

Shawn Gillen – loudspeaker drops off at water, so would need to move it closer to the water. Perhaps prerecorded messages on the vehicles. Emily has loudspeaker capabilities. We need to expedite ordering of Emily's. Drones with loudspeakers could be used.

Wanda – can we use overtime to force staffing of sandbar?

Jason Patterson – we are already pushing it as hard as we can given our staff size.

Wanda – if we need to have an emergency meeting of the Council to approve spending for equipment to solve problem, then let's do it. Will bring it up to Council tonight. Discussed signage.

Shawn Gillen will talk to Danny about where we are with signage.

Wanda reads summary of solutions we have for sandbar issues.

- Personnel with jet ski on the beach.
- Two Emily's, perhaps available in two weeks.
- One rescue jet ski needs to be ordered.
- Orca deployed as soon as some legal details are worked out, according to Shawn.
- Signage – messages need to be agreed upon.
- Slip at AJ's.
- Speakers on vehicles.
- Move forward with drones.
- In next month or so, talk about staffing projections.

Group has discussion of sign messages.

Shawn Gillen would like to move forward with drones as well as recorded messages in vehicles. Drones can be ordered later, but will take time to train people to use them.

Julie Livingston - it's our duty to spend whatever we need to in order to solve the problem.

Chief Jason Patterson – a slip would really help- from AJ's.

Police Update - Chief Bryson gave update on Orange Crush weekends. Police have made almost twenty arrests related to the event already. Monitoring what's on social media. Monitoring OC events being held in Savannah. Checking out accuracy of advertising about OC related events. Police purchasing tickets for events that may or may not be real events in order to be able to charge people with theft by deception, one of whom might be George Turner. Gave update on some failed OC events, due to fake permits. People will still show up for those events and are still purchasing tickets for them.

Troopers will be added for Fri, Sat, Sun. License plate readers are helping. Police are well prepared. Traffic controls are decent. Physical presence and staggering officers will help. Savannah State, DNR, County Police, Sheriff Dept., and GSP are all contributing to staffing. TIPD are putting people at parking lots and officers are assigned to each agency supporting the department for OC.

Discussed Rock House's role in OC event and communicating with owner of Rock House. Chief stated cameras and officer stationed at the Rock House will help keep things under control there.

Wanda inquired about DOJ discussion pertaining to curfews and mediation. Inquired about public sex and loud music related to OC.

Chief Bryson – some officers are in designated areas and some are responding to calls. There was some sex on beach last year during OC. Police would clear people out and then people would return. TIPD is very busy all year long due to staffing. Human X-factor is something you can't control, but feels confident things will go well. Barricades and barriers are finally being put in place and Chief feels positively about them.

Shawn Gillen – explained how barricades will work for renters and residents.

Group discussed traffic backups and barricade placement.

Shawn Gillen gave North End traffic and stop sign update. Meeting had strong turnout.

Committee discussed potential one-ways, potential locations of stop signs, speeding and speed limits, noise generated by stop signs, blind spots, how future construction might necessitate more signs, traffic flow, potential timeline of implementation, bike lanes, vehicle and pedestrian safety, better way-finding signage, parking signs and parking issues, getting more lanes painted, turn lanes, curbs, sidewalks, speed bumps, plants and trees being removed or moved, broken security lights.

Shawn Gillen - put on agenda for next Public Safety Committee Meeting- show maps to the committee to facilitate discussion about potential sign and traffic flow changes.

Meeting adjourned at 11:16 AM.