

CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Cedar Falls Council Chambers

February 21, 2022

The City Council held a special work session at City Hall at 5:10 p.m. on February 21, 2022, with the following persons in attendance: Mayor Rob Green, Gil Schultz, Susan deBuhr, Daryl Kruse, Simon Harding, Dustin Ganfield, Dave Sires, and Kelly Dunn. Staff members attended from all City Departments. Members of the community attended the meeting and teleconferenced in.

Mayor Green introduced the only item on the agenda, Public Safety Director Position and Public Safety (PS) Model. He noted there would be no public input for this meeting. Mayor Green stated Council is looking for consensus on next steps for the Public Safety Director position opening: advertise for the position to be filled; appoint an interim Public Safety Director; or eliminate the position. Mayor Green also stated Council is looking for consensus on what, if any, additional information is needed to make further decisions. Mayor Green asked if Councilmembers wished to see the presentation put together by Public Safety on the current model or move to discussion; Council would like the presentation. Mayor Green introduced Police Chief Craig Berte, Fire Chief John Bostwick, and Public Safety Director Jeff Olson.

Chief Berte gave an overview of response to Police and Fire calls, including self-initiated activity and emergency medical response. He stated that research has been done on several other cities' models to see how they operate; he stated that there are many other cross-trained professions, including military, and that 2/3 of firefighters in the U.S. are volunteer or paid-on-call with a different main occupation. He stated the Public Safety model has: 2 divisions, budgets, and chiefs; staffing between fire stations and police; nearly all staff are cross-trained; police carry fire gear and respond to fire calls; the model increases the number of firefighters at a scene and also provides additional staff at police scenes. He stated what has not changed with the transition to the Public Safety model. Chief Berte shared an organizational chart of Public Safety staff: fire, police, and shared services. He reviewed the state and City of Cedar Falls requirements for firefighters and stated there are standard training requirements and an order but no official timeline. Chief Bostwick detailed specific fire station staffing and stated that each year in January the Public Safety Officers (PSOs) get to choose where they want to be for the coming year. Councilmember Schultz asked if that choice affects fire and police staffing, and is seniority a factor; Chief Berte responded placement after choice is based on seniority and union agreement and there are a small number who don't get the assignment or shift assignment requested, and there are some positions that are designated, not chosen. Councilmember Sires asked how many fire fighter II personnel; Director Olson responded 22, and gave numbers for other certifications. Mayor Green asked how many supervisors have been through fire school, and is there a difference in pay; Director Olson stated 7 have, 1 is waiting on test results, and there is no pay difference. Chief Berte stated firefighters have, past initial training, ongoing annual trainings and listed some. Chief Berte stated before the PS model, fire had minimum staffing of 6, now the average response is 12; officers on

police shift respond to calls first and can assist before fire arrives; 3 police vehicles are equipped with Compressed Air Foam (CAF) systems which have a place for use on small, exterior fires but are not a replacement for regular fire suppression. Councilmember Schultz asked if the CAF system can be operated outside the PS model; Chief Berte responded yes, and almost all staff were trained on it prior to moving to the PS model. Councilmember Ganfield asked if the minimum number of fire station staffing was ever more than 6; Chief Bostwick stated it was 11 when he came on 40 years ago, so more people, with varying assignments: 2 off, 1 fire dispatcher, 3 assigned to the ambulance, 3 at station 2, and 2 assigned to the main fire truck. Councilmember Dunn stated fire calls are down about 40% nationwide and Chief Bostwick agreed. Chief Berte referenced slides regarding 2019 fire calls and responses. Chief Berte spoke about the approximate cost of providing the same level of response with separate police and fire departments, estimating an additional 21 fire fighters and 9 police officers at about \$3,000,000 annually; Councilmember Ganfield requested more specific numbers including salary and benefits; Councilmember Sires asked for clarification on starting pay for PSOs; Councilmember Schultz asked for the national average; Chief Berte provided starting wage through maximum salary, and noted he did not know the national average but the City is more concerned with comparable Iowa cities. Chief Berte provided some examples of call responses; Councilmember Sires asked about Waterloo Police involvement in the stand-off; Chief Berte responded there were 6 or 7 officers from Waterloo with a Bearcat armored vehicle and drones, Cedar Falls utilized those assets from Waterloo. Director Olson stated that the teamwork in Black Hawk County, Waterloo, and Cedar Falls is great; Waterloo has equipment Cedar Falls doesn't; it's not a staffing issue usually when requesting help, it's asking for additional outside resources Cedar Falls doesn't have and it's also a cost-saving measure. Councilmember Sires asked about the 28E agreement with Janesville; Director Olson responded. Mayor Green requested clarification on the role of the PSO who rode to the hospital with the victim and how they are identified (as police or fire) and what is required identification; Chief Berte stated in that case, the first responder was identified as a fire fighter; Director Olson stated properly identifying oneself as an officer is necessary for information gathered to provide in court. Councilmember Schultz asked how to separate the role when acting in one capacity but there's a need to switch to the other; Director Olson stated fire trucks have storage for police gear (and it was earlier stated that fire gear is carried in police vehicles). Chief Berte spoke about a shooting in Cedar Falls stating there was initial police response, a Fire PSO rode in the ambulance, Fire PSO(s) provided medical treatment at the scene then assisted with crime scene investigation; that meant more responders at the site than with a traditional model. He stated Public Safety was able to provide additional officers to assist Waterloo during social justice protests and there is a larger pool for patrolling the Hill and Downtown where previously additional help was outsourced from the Sheriff's office. Chief Berte provided advantages and disadvantages of the PS model; he shared the ratings from Insurance Service Organization (ISO) for Fire. Councilmember Schultz asked about the cost of outfitting PSOs for both police and fire, and if gear can be reused; Chief Berte responded, referencing the slide for hiring more staff to separate departments, and state fire gear is

reusable up to 10 years. Chief Berte talked about the Cedar Falls Public Safety Special Report released in 2021 and the 7 main goals it holds.

Mayor Green opened for Council discussion. Councilmember deBuhr asked about staff morale; Chief Berte stated morale is phenomenal; the Mayor asked if there was data; Chief Berte responded no, just a general sense; Chief Bostwick agreed; Councilmember Schultz asked about recent grievances, and Chiefs Berte and Bostwick stated none recently, and Chief Berte added that issues are addressed early, and often facilitated with Union leadership. Councilmember Dunn asked: what evidence, if any is there that the model is not working and Director Olson responded he can't think of any; what can be done to improve current delivery of public safety, and Director Olson responded there is review areas with room for improvement, some trainings could be improved, shift staffing, and turn-over; are these issues unique to Cedar Falls or part of the current culture, and Director Olson responded it's not unique to Cedar Falls, but the department is significantly low currently; is the model sustainable, and Director Olson responded absolutely. Mayor Green asked about PSOs who stated under oath they didn't want to switch to the PSO model, and attitudes about it; Director Olson stated people become PSOs for a number of reasons, including pay, and there can be varying levels of participation in the system. Councilmember Harding asked if Council had concerns on any actionable items; he questioned the budget and if an outside entity should look at it; asked about an anonymous work survey to see if staff wants changes; asked about data on other cities' training and requirements; asked about outside hiring and promotional practices. Councilmember Dunn stated at goal setting there was discussion of a staff survey; there was agreement that it is important. Councilmember Sires questioned the 30 additional employees and financial requirement of that to split departments back to separate, can it not be done with current staff; Chief Berte responded the additional staff number is to stop cross training but keep the response numbers achieved currently. Councilmember Schultz asked about standard physical fitness testing; Chief Bostwick stated air consumption and competence drills are conducted and applicants are required to complete the Cooper test, rated on an age and gender scale; Councilmember Schultz asked about carrying someone out of a fire; Chief Bostwick stated they work as a team, 2 people, and that's industry-wide. Chief Berte provided additional information about the Cooper test and the CPAT and what tests other cities use; he stated that after the entrance physical, officers cannot be required to continue to pass physicals legally but they can be offered and some places offer incentives if passed and training if not; and Cedar Falls encourages physical fitness; Councilmember Harding asked for additional information about what other cities do versus Cedar Falls to provide to constituents and Director Olson stated that could be done. Councilmember Schultz asked how the City decided to use the Cooper test; Chief Bostwick stated the Cooper test is only one hurdle before becoming a PSO, there's also a written test, interview, field training, fire training, etc. Councilmember Kruse stated the 7 main goals have 66 sub-goals that cover everything Council wants to discover about the progress of the PS model and stated he is comfortable moving ahead and in 6 months gauging the progress of those goals. Councilmember Harding asked about a cost analysis/ benefit of not making everyone cross train; Chief Berte responded the only way to get the number of responders to fire is cross-training, and

you know that cross-trained officers are able to help, you don't need to figure out who's had cross-training and can be sent. Mayor Green asked if there are those who don't want to be cross-trained but are; Chief Berte stated it is a concern, of current staff (74) about 20 are from pre-PS model and all but 2 fire and 2 police personnel are cross-trained but to advance they would need to be. Councilmember Harding stated it's important to get consensus on if Council wants to look into offering the option of not cross-training or continue the current model. Councilmember Ganfield questioned if review should be internal or external and stated he wanted to re-implement career firefighters. Councilmember Dunn questioned what concern prompted a need for third-party review, and who that entity would be; Mayor Green stated he has information on consulting firms; she stated at goal setting it was discussed to use the Special Report to check in and to implement the employee survey; she asked if the department leaders have said the current model isn't working. Councilmember Kruse stated his support of the current model and that the Special Report lays out topics of concern to continue evaluating the model. Councilmember Ganfield stated Council needs results from the climate survey, stated concerns with PS budget, and reiterated external review on merits and demerits of this system and others. Councilmember deBuhr stated support of using the goals from the Special Report.

Mayor Green asked for consensus to move forward with the current model and use the Special Report; consensus reached. Mayor Green asked for consensus for third-party evaluation effecting no change right now; Councilmember deBuhr asked if that would replace the survey; Finance and Business Operations Director Jennifer Rodenbeck stated the survey is slated to be initiated (lay groundwork) July 1 for fiscal year 2023; Councilmember Dunn stated she would support third-party review if the survey results indicated significant unhappiness with the current system but not before; Councilmember Kruse stated the seven goals cover currently discussed concerns unless Council wants to add any. Mayor Green asked about the Public Safety Director position and Director Olson's upcoming retirement; does Council give consensus to appoint an interim director while Council works out the issues; consensus reached. There was brief discussion of what other options might be and Director Olson gave a brief description of his position; it was determined to hold a follow-up meeting to discuss that role moving forward.

There being no further discussion, Mayor Green adjourned the meeting at 7:56 p.m.

Minutes by Katie Terhune, Administrative Assistant