

CITY OF LYNDEN

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Steve Taylor, Police Chief
(360) 354-2828



Public Safety Committee Meeting - 01/04/2024 Minutes

Police Department - 203 19th Street
4:00 PM January 04, 2024

Call to Order: 4:00 pm

Roll Call:

Committee Members Present: Chair Mark Wohlrab, Councilor Gary Vis, Councilor Lee Beld

Others Present: Mayor Korthuis, City Administrator John Williams, Fire Chief Mark Billmire, Assistant Fire Chief Kristie Watson, Police Chief Steve Taylor, Lieutenant Jeremy Bos, Police Support Services Manager Sharon Clark.

Approval of Minutes

Public Safety Committee Meeting minutes, December 7, 2023 – approved.

Items from the Audience - Scheduled

None Scheduled.

Unscheduled

Mary Lou Childs – 8661 Benson Rd, while gardening downtown, she saw a collision, and this made her consider the speed limit. Ms. Childs would like to propose that 25 mph is too fast for the downtown corridor and would like to change the speed limit to 20 mph between 3rd and 7th Streets. She provided a handout from the National Association of Transportation Officials, which recommends 20 mph.

Councilor Wohlrab added that this has been investigated previously, with the possibility of 15 mph or speed humps being a solution, however this did not work well for snowplows. Mayor Korthuis suggested the City put out traffic counters this spring. This would track the number of vehicles and speed for downtown and approaching downtown. This would provide an idea of the average speed. The State requires that the speed limit is not allowed to be below 25 mph. Also, it is noted that there are very few accidents downtown.

Committee Items

Fire Department Items

Public Safety FD Report - January 4, 2024

This was a busy month for inspections, education and interacting with the community. Calls were up by 44 from last month, EMS calls went from 150 to 175, and overlapping calls went from 40 to 64. These are back to back calls and leaves no units available in the city when this happens. Aid given was 20, aid received was 14 and there were 49 transports. The Chief is working on the annual report.

Councilor Wohlrab requested a chart/graph that shows how we are increasing in doubling up calls, leaving no engines or aid cars available. Chief Billmire said that the graph has been very consistent, remaining at 30%. Mutual aid is requested, when necessary, to be able to cover all calls. About 10 – 15% of EMS calls are to elder care facilities.

Inspections are coming back after 2 years and have been going well. It is an education and process to get businesses back to being compliant.

Police Department Items

Public Safety PD Stats - January 4, 2024

There were 917 calls for service, up from 675 last month. The PD finished the year at 9,500 calls which was up from 9,280 in 2022 and 7,474 in 2021, calls are increasing each year. Several officers participated in a traffic safety emphasis patrol, each shift was 6 hours, there were 60 vehicle stops and 6 DUI arrests. Thefts are up – a lot of porch pirates during this time of year.

Hiring update – Officer Belt retired at the end of October, and the PD is working to get that vacancy filled. Previously we could rely on lateral applicants, but this number has been dwindling. This position was opened to include entry level officers. 8 officers were scheduled to interview but 1 did not show up – 3 lateral and 4 entry level. 4 officers (2 lateral, 2 entry) have moved on to Chief's Interviews. The candidates will then be ranked and presented for approval by Civil Service. A conditional offer will then be offered. It will take at least a year for an entry level officer to 'hit the street'. There was a possibility of a regional academy to speed up the process, but the one for this area is not ready. We will need to look at ways to attract more lateral officers.

Added Items

Civil Penalties – after questions arose at the Council meeting, clarification was sought from the City Attorney regarding non-deferrable/non-suspendables. After discussion with the City Attorney, they are deferrable and suspendable because, if we give a letter to the individual from the appropriate authority, we want to have an opportunity to say, if you correct this, we will absolve the penalty phase, because we want compliance. This statutorily rests with the administrative person that has the authority to issue the citation, for the section of code applicable, and then it could then be appealed to Council.

Permit Fees – Counselor Beld was concerned about raising fees 25% in this economy, although he appreciates the user fee aspect. Permit fees for fire burning and fire extinguisher inspections have been removed.

Emergency Cold Shelter – The Senior Center is the official shelter. Counselor Vis was concerned that there are appropriate generators available, possibly attainable by grants. There is an agreement in place, if there is a major flood event, with North County Christ the King Church and Sonlight Church, limited to 3 days, with First Reformed Church being a backup.

Fluoride Water Alternatives – The City has been looking into alternatives. Another city south of us, used a community reverse osmosis station. It took the water, purified it further and made it available to the public. This would be available for current water customers only. We are uncertain as to the demand, but there are two options available. It would consist of a portable water station, swiping a fob and receiving water without fluoride.

There are 2 options – Option 1 is \$20,000 and provides 2,000 gallons in a 24-hour period, it has a 255 gallon storage and recharging capabilities. There would be additional costs for a building and supplies to operate. Option 2 is \$8,000, provides 45 gallons of storage and 1 gallon per minute. It also offers a possible lease option.

It is suggested that if we move forward, this be located at the water treatment plant. There was concern that this may have an adverse effect on local existing private water suppliers. Since we are purveyors of municipal water, there are very specific laws on how we can provide that water, and it must be paid for under the law. Municipal water cannot be given away.

Question from the audience – Carrie Brubaker, 387 W Front St, family of 8, would they have to provide their own containers/storage etc? It was explained that this is in the very early stages of exploration.

Adjournment: 5:05 pm