

CITY OF LYNDEN

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Steve Taylor, Police Chief
(360) 354-2828



Public Safety Committee Meeting - MINUTES

Police Department - 203 19th Street
4:00 PM May 09, 2024

Call to Order : 1600

Roll Call

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

Others Present: City Administrator John Williams, Mayor Scott Korthuis, Councilmember Brent Lenssen, Fire Chief Mark Billmire, Fire Support Services Manager Kinsey DeHaan, Police Chief Steve Taylor, Police Support Services Manager Sharon Clark

Approval of Minutes

1) April 2024 Draft Minutes- Approved

Items from the Audience

Scheduled –

Simon Sefzik - 5851 Elder Rd- Harm reduction policies: Would like the Public Safety Committee to bring a motion forward to council that supports adopting a resolution that restricts/condemns harm reduction policies within the City of Lynden. Harm reduction policies include safe drug use sites/clean needle exchanges, housing first models without necessary supportive elements (ie treatment facilities and programs in place,) and are becoming prevalent throughout urban areas in Washington state.

Unscheduled (20 Minutes)

Audience members may address the Committee on any issue other than those scheduled for a public hearing or those on which the public hearing has been closed. Prior to commenting please state your name, address, and topic. Please keep comments under 4 minutes.

Cynthia Ripke-Kutsagoitz -7062 Guide Meridian #30- Wanted to express her thanks over security measures taken during Council meetings where hot topic items are being discussed.

Committee Items

- 2) Public Health, Safety, & Justice Facility Financing Agreement (PHSFUA) -Mayor Korthuis would like the committee to review with action to recommend it to the full council. See attached agreement along with memo from Tyler Schroeder.
 - a) Has been adopted by the County Council and most of the City Councils (including Bellingham) within Whatcom County aside from Lynden, Sumas, & Everson as of now.
 - b) Lynden sales tax will not be funding the jail after 4-6 years.

- c) Still do not know what the actual final cost or interest rate would be at this time, anticipated the anticipated cost of a new jail is \$150 million. The County is comfortable with a bond payment of \$6.5 million. The seven cities will commit up to 75 % for up to six years of their share of the new 0.2% sales tax until the bond payment is \$6.3- 6.7 million.
 - d) Lynden's share of the 0.2% sales tax is about \$600,000 per year. All the cities are committing 75% of their share to a "down payment" to drive the bond payment down.
 - e) Will be going for a Bond in two years.
 - f) Motion to recommend forwarding to council made by Committee Member Vis and seconded by Committee Member Beld.
- 3) Special Events Code Amendment – LMC 5.30
- a) Council Member Brent Lenssen- Requesting feedback from committee regarding:
 - i) Street closures addressed in section 5.30.020 – Special Event Permit Tiers - B.2(a)
 - ii) Language addressed in section 5.30.020 – Permit Exemptions – C.4After further discussion it was agreed that it would be sent back to the Community Development Committee to add the proposed language and it will be brought to Council for further review.
- 4) Additional Staffing Needs Conversation- Committee Member Lee Beld Council Member Beld wished to address that there are many people leaving the Police Department in the next couple of years, due to retirement, and he would like something in place where we could have a position open so that if a quality lateral were to come along, we are able to offer them a position and start the process. Chief Taylor suggested that we create a formula that would predict the number of officers that would be needed each year and add officers accordingly. Chief Taylor also mentioned that he has had very preliminary discussions with Lynden School District Superintendent David VanderYacht, regarding a school resource officer. Also, COPS grants are back and there are also SAFER grants that may assist. It was agreed to put the conversation aside for this meeting and bring it back for discussion at the next meeting.

Fire Department Items

- 5) LFD Monthly Report 4/2024
- a) Fire Chief Billmire presented the Fire Department monthly report. It was a busy month, but, encouragingly, response time was down. He provided a detailed update on what has happened in the Fire Department over the last month.
 - b) Mayor Korthuis asked the new PeaceHealth facility if misstarted could be brought there instead of all the way into Bellingham, and this has started the conversation.
 - c) Chief Billmire also mentioned that the Fire Grant Safety Act was passed by the House today.
 - d) Two part time firefighters started this week.

Police Department Items

- 6) Hiring Update LPD- Records Clerk Position
 - a) An official offer letter was sent to the new Records Clerk this week. Upon successful completion of the background process, it is expected that she may start at the beginning of June.
 - b) The newest entry level officer, Annika Bierlink will go to the Academy June 4th.

- 7) Lateral Officer Hiring- Potential Incentives?
 - a) Lateral Officer Hiring. Chief Taylor is not a fan of having a large signing bonus. He looked over the MOU from 2018 and it says that at the discretion of the City, Lateral officers can be started at any of the steps, deemed appropriate. It was also discussed that vacation and sick leave could be offered in advance as it is accruing, not additional time.

- 8) LPD Monthly Report
 - a) Public Safety Stats - April 2024: Chief Taylor presented the Police Department monthly report. Call volume was down slightly last month with an uptick in thefts. The Detectives have been very busy with several sexual assault cases and are doing a phenomenal job.

- 9) Body Camera Update – pursuant to the MOU with the bargaining unit with the FOP, we have 4 cameras, 1 camera each shift, each squad. This means we have cameras working almost 24 hours/day. This was done to work out the bugs and determine the extra workload before we rolled them out to everyone.

Adjournment: 1810