

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
October 5, 2021

Members Present:

Denise Bowden, Councilwoman
Jay Savage, Councilman

Members Absent:

J. Arthur Leonard, Mayor

Staff Present:

Michael T. Tolbert, Town Manager
Robby Fisher, Chief of Police
Bryan Rush, Emergency Management Coordinator
Tyler Greenley, Captain

Call to Order

Councilwoman Bowden called the meeting to order.

Public Participation

There was none.

Discuss CPD Staffing Levels

There was discussion about the Police staffing positions. Chief Fisher advised they have the position to be filled because of the officer who took the SRO position and he has in the budget for an investigator. He explained that he is opening the positions in-house first. He also explained that both of those positions won't do any good on the road. They are also looking at having 2 extra people on the midnight shift.

Councilwoman Bowden asked if this would give him 2 officers on every shift.

Chief Fisher advised it would, except for early mornings on the weekends. During the summer, the SRO will be back on regular shifts.

Councilwoman Bowden stated that they are looking to replace the position from the SRO, which is in the budget. They are also looking for an investigator and then 2 more officers to add to the next year budget.

Chief Fisher explained that that this will put 2 officers on duty for 24-hour coverage. His thoughts with the investigator position is that they may not actively be working on cases and would be expected to be called out to fill in a shift when needed.

Councilman Savage asked if these would be different job descriptions.

Chief Fisher stated that with an investigator the accreditation requires they have a policy for that investigator. The policy also lays out what the investigator job description is.

They discussed certifications and training, hiring from within, and advertising outside.

Town Manager Tolbert stated they are looking at staffing, salaries and 2 more officers which will use most of \$100,000. He added that if they hire someone without certifications, they will have the expense of the academy. They have to start with the budget process.

There was discussion about calls for service each year, advertising on a broader spectrum, and beginning salaries.

Councilwoman Bowden reiterated that they are actively trying to replace Cpl. Carmody on the road and an investigator. They will review the budget in the spring to add 2 new positions.

Review of Public Safety Funding Resolution

Councilwoman Bowden stated that if the EMS, Police, Public Works and Fire Company would need anything, they can come before the Committee.

Town Manager Tolbert stated that they can contact him and he will contact the chairperson of the Public Safety Committee and then schedule a meeting for the request. If approved, the matter will be sent to the Budget and Personnel Committee once approved it will go to full Council.

Councilwoman Bowden stated that if someone comes to Town Manager Tolbert, they should call a Public Safety Committee meeting as soon as possible. She asked if the funds would be retroactive in the budget as a line item.

Town Manager Tolbert advised that they have already been putting the money in a separate internal account since they began collecting the additional 1%. This is approved so that the monies can be spent with direction. He added that ideally this would be used for one-time expenditures and not salaries as this income is volatile. They don't want to lock it up.

Councilwoman Bowden hopes this will get them over some minor hurdles. She stated that she does not want to see this fix a parking lot.

Councilman Savage stated that this can be used during a State of Emergency for provisions.

Town Manager Tolbert stated it fits anything under public safety and it gives the Committee flexibility to decide. They have complete control.

Councilwoman Bowden doesn't want spending to be too broad.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Town of Chincoteague is responsible for the safety and general welfare of the public, both citizenry and visitors and provides services to protect the public within its incorporated limits; and

WHEREAS, maintenance and improvement of public safety can regularly require the establishment and funding of Department of Emergency Services, Police and Fire Departments and Public Works; and

WHEREAS, in recent years the increased tourism and visitation to the Island has strained the Town's resources causing potential reductions in the general welfare and public safety services; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council recognizing the need for increased public safety services voted at its November 4, 2019 regular meeting to increase the Transient Occupancy tax by 1% to be effective January 1, 2021 and that the funds resulting from this increase shall be accounted for in a separate fund and be used exclusively for the improvement of the general public safety of the Town's citizens and visitors; and

WHEREAS, the Town's standing Public Safety Committee, whose membership is composed of 3 members of Council, is charged with making improvements to public safety for the betterment of the community and its inhabitants.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that all proposals for expenditures from such public safety fund shall be presented to the Public Safety Committee at a scheduled meeting for review and approval and that the chairperson of the Public Safety Committee shall recommend to the Budget and Personnel Committee at its next regular meeting any expenditure so approved by the Committee; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that no expenditures from the Public Safety fund shall be made without a recommendation from the Budget and Personnel Committee and the approval of the full Council except they be part of a lawfully approved annual Town budget.

Recorded Vote:

Moved By: _____

Seconded By: _____

Yeas: _____

Nays: _____

TOWN COUNCIL of the
TOWN OF CHINCOTEAGUE, VIRGINIA

By: _____

Committee Member Comments

Councilwoman Bowden wanted an update on the high-pressure compressor that that Town donated but they are still waiting for the electronic component that was shipped from China. She advised that wanted to have this meeting so they could talk about the resolution along with the Police staffing levels. She asked Emergency Management Coordinator Rush how his staffing was working out.

Emergency Management Coordinator Rush advised it is working very well. He sees it being well maintained for the foreseeable future. He feels they will move forward for the community. He sees community projects they could be involved in because they have the staff.

Councilman Savage commended the job that their departments are doing.

Councilwoman Bowden stated she tries to take every opportunity to tell all of them how much she appreciates everything they do. She stated that having them in their positions makes her lay her head down at night. She couldn't ask for anything any better for this Town. She is thankful and pleased that the Town is in the position they are in. She sees such a difference in the departments. She commented the comradery between the Police and EMS.

Emergency Management Coordinator Rush added that it is a good team effort, and it starts with the elected officials right on down the line to the last person to do whatever it is they need to do.

Councilwoman Bowden added that it looks really good when you see the leadership the Town has, and she appreciates it.

Chief Fisher mentioned the meeting he had with the ES911 Commission and the Sheriffs about combining all of the dispatchers with 911. He stated that the Town is not part of the 911 Commission. They are looking to consolidate all dispatchers into 1 center. He and the Sheriffs are strongly against this.

There was discussion.

Councilwoman Bowden asked if they could put this on the workshop agenda for Council to send a letter to the 911 Commission.

Chief Fisher will find out if a letter is warranted.

Councilman Savage mentioned timelapse for contacting the different services for an incident.

Chief Fisher explained that neither he nor the Sheriffs have a problem with a 911 call to be dispatched through their channels. He added that Mr. Flournoy was in the process of

writing a policy for his agency for this. The DCJS came with a rule that in order for 911 to dispatch over a law enforcement radio the dispatchers have to have a specific training. He advised all of his dispatchers have had it. There were a couple of other technical things they would need to work out. They understand and want to do what they can to help. He will check to see if a letter is warranted.

Adjournment

Councilwoman Bowden adjourned the meeting.