

## CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Cedar Falls Council Chambers

February 17, 2020

The City Council held a special work session in the City Hall Council Chambers at 5:00 p.m. on February 17, 2020, with the following persons in attendance: Mayor Robert M. Green, Frank Darrah, Susan deBuhr, Simon Harding, Daryl Kruse, Mark Miller, and Dave Sires (arrived at 5:03 pm). Staff members attended from all City Departments. Andrew Wind from the *Waterloo Courier* attended, as well as members of the community.

Mayor Green introduced the only item on the agenda, Public Safety Program Update. Mayor Green read an opening statement regarding tonight's work session. Jeff Olson Director of Public Safety Services reviewed calls for service for both fire and police operations and how they compare to the regional and national calls for service. He stated the Public Safety Program was reviewed and discussed at the past Council Goal Setting in December. He then reviewed the history of the alternative staffing leading up to the Public Safety Officers job class. He stated they received resistance at first from both collective bargaining groups; however in 2014 city staff received a letter from the Teamsters Union to create a Public Safety Officer Job class. Director Olson stated in 2016 all new hires were to be Public Safety Officers, rather than a police officer or a firefighter. He explained this combination position allowed for employees to be assigned to a 24-hour shift in fire operations, which started in 2019.

Director Olson reviewed other fire operation models throughout the United States and Iowa. He explained city staff and some council members visited Kalamazoo, MI, a public safety model city. He said they received similar resistance through the transition process, but they are now 100% a public safety model. Director Olson reviewed the current staffing levels; he stated they currently have 60 employees who can report to police operations and 67 employees who can report to fire operations; 53 employees are Public Safety Officers.

Director Olson explained the compressed air foam (CAF) system which has aided to the public safety employee's response to a fire incident. Two separate videos were played to demonstrate the CAF system. Director Olson stated the second video shows what can happen when the Public Safety Department works together as a team to take immediate action to mitigate a fire. A brief discussion was held about the CAF system.

Director Olson proceeded on with the current hiring standards for a Public Safety Officer. He stated the Cooper Physical Agility Test is used and is similar to military testing and to what the City of Ames uses. He explained the prior Candidate Physical Agility Test (CPAT) a firefighter candidate took has been considered discriminatory; this is why they have gone with the Cooper Physical Agility Test. He stated the Cooper test is an entry level test and a current Public Safety employee is not required to take this physical agility test again after passing it upon hire. Director Olson stated new employees have various police training they are to complete within the first year of their employment. He explained a new hire has three years to complete and pass all of the required fire training. He explained a new employee is given the tools to succeed, throughout the different training phases. Council asked questions with regards to the

fire training. Director Olson said there are five different modules and they must take a written test and pass, and also pass a skills test, both administered by the State of Iowa. He explained they have a large monthly training event for all fire operations employees and each Public Safety Officer will have a specific monthly checklist for their own training needs.

Director Olson explained their Public Safety staffing has increased the number of personnel responding to police and fire calls. Stating before the Public Safety program, there may be 7-8 personnel responding to a fire call, and since implementation there is anywhere from 12-23 personnel responding. He reviewed the advantages and efficiencies gained by the Public Safety model; stating Public Safety staff is able to work on police duties during downtime, which is efficient use of the employees. Director Olson explained the ISO rating process and in the past we reported the number of personnel responding as the minimum staffing of six employees and now we can look at the Public Safety employees average hours worked, less vacation and other benefit hours, this shows an increase to 15 employees for 2019. He stated the City of Cedar Falls' ISO rating is a three, which is in the top 3.5% in Iowa. A brief discussion was held. Director Olson reviewed the ISO visit and the information they gather, which goes into their rating. He stated Cedar Falls Utilities and Black Hawk County Dispatch supply information in addition to the City's. He stated the City of Waterloo has an ISO rating of two.

Director Olson reviewed testimonials they received from residents, stating seeing the program in action made them believers of the Public Safety model. He reviewed six fire calls from 2019 and reported the number of firefighters and PSO's who reported to the calls. They had as many as 23 personnel reporting to two of the fire calls. Director Olson reviewed three different Public Safety Department organizational charts. He recapped the advantages of the program. Director Olson reviewed three Public Safety model options:

1. Full implementation of Public Safety Model; allows for more responding at less cost and more efficient use of employees (down time).
2. Modify Public Safety Model.
3. Return to separate police and fire; significantly less responders or more costs.

Mayor Green opened it up for questions from the Council. Councilmember Harding commented on the concerns he has heard; retention of training knowledge and budgetary increases, cited a meeting with a panel of experts to review the Public Safety program is needed. Director Olson stated the monthly checklist which has been implemented has made improvements on training retention. Councilmember Taiber asked about incorporating the CPAT after 1-year on the job. Director Olson stated the current Cooper Physical Agility test has worked well for a new hire and currently there is not a physical test after hiring. Councilmember Harding stated there should be a meeting with fire personnel to gather their views. Director Olson stated they have tried to meet with the fire union to discuss the Public Safety program, but they canceled a meeting that was set up with Public Employment Relations Board (PERB). Councilmember Kruse commented the cross-training better utilizes the fire operations employee since the Public Safety Officers can work on police duties during their

downtime. Councilmember Miller commented the fire union is unwilling to work with the program and the remaining staff deserves the credit for carrying through with the Public Safety program. Councilmember Sires stated we should hire fire personnel who graduate from the Hawkeye Community College program and have 15 core firefighters. Councilmember Harding motioned to have a work session for discussion with a panel of experts to hear from both sides. Councilmember Darrah seconded the motion. Councilmember Darrah stated there have been no positive suggestions that have come forward from the fire union personnel. Councilmember Taiber stated we have professional staff here at the City and we implemented the program to use our resources efficiently. Councilmember Kruse commented we have heard from the fire union through the grievance process, not through positive suggestions regarding the Public Safety program. He said we have adjusted and implemented changes with regards to training.

Mayor Green reviewed a slide which outlines a plan to fully vet the Public Safety Program through six work sessions over the next 18-months. He said this would also include an anonymous employee survey completed at an estimated cost of \$2,000. Mayor called for the vote on the motion. Motion failed. (Aye: Darrah, Harding, Sires; Nay: deBuhr, Kruse, Miller, Taiber) Councilmember Miller motioned to a full implementation of the Public Safety Program and hold a special Council meeting on Thursday, February 20, 2020 to have Director Jeff Olson review the steps in the process. Susan deBuhr seconded the motion. A brief discussion was held. Councilmember Taiber asked for constituents to pass their concerns on to their Councilmember. Mayor Green called for the vote on the motion. Motion passed. (Aye: Darrah, deBuhr, Kruse, Miller, Taiber; Nay: Harding and Sires) Councilmember Miller motioned to have the meeting held at 5 p.m. on February 20, 2020, seconded by Councilmember Kruse. After a brief discussion, Councilmember Kruse amended the motion to 6 p.m. on February 20, 2020, seconded by Councilmember Miller. The Mayor put the question on the amendment. The motion passed as amended. (Aye: Darrah, deBuhr, Kruse, Miller and Taiber; Nay: Harding and Sires) The Mayor put the question on the original motion. The amended motion passed. (Aye: Darrah, deBuhr, Kruse, Miller and Taiber; Nay: Harding and Sires)

There being no further discussion, Nick Taiber motioned to adjourn the work session, Mark Miller seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously. Mayor Green adjourned the meeting at 7:23 p.m.

Minutes by Lisa Roeding, Controller/City Treasurer