

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the regularly scheduled meeting of the Spring Lake Park City Council Worksession was held on April 10, 2023 at the 1301 81st Ave NE, at 5:30 PM.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Nelson called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Nelson
Councilmember Ken Wendling
Councilmember Barbara Goodboe-Bisschoff
Councilmember Lisa Dircks

MEMBERS ABSENT

Councilmember April Moran

STAFF PRESENT

Administrator Daniel Buchholtz
Building Official Jeff Baker
Police Chief Josh Antoine

2. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Police Department Staffing Study Presentation (Antoine)

Chief Antoine provided an overview of the Spring Lake Park Police Department staffing study. He stated that the last time the patrol staffing increased was the addition of the School Resource Officer in the late 1990s. He stated that he completed the study using both the per capita approach and the workload based approach to determine the recommended staffing levels for the city. He said the per capita approach would result in need of 13 officers, using the Minnesota per capita average of 1.8 officers per 1,000 residents. He stated that the workload based approach showed that the Department needs 9 patrol officers (not including administration or specialized positions such as investigations).

Chief Antoine stated that the Department currently has 8 patrol officer units (seven patrol officers plus the two Patrol Sergeants counting as 1 patrol unit).

Chief Antoine stated that the benefits of an additional police officer would be continued proactive law enforcement, community outreach, support existing patrol staff with increasing calls for service, and officer safety.

Chief Antoine noted that the Department has determined that two Records Technicians can complete the work generated by the officers. He stated that a third Records Technician position has been held vacant pending the results of the study.

Chief Antoine explained that the salary and benefits of an officer at Step 3 of the salary schedule is \$107,909.55. He said the officer salary/benefits would be offset by \$92,880.21 with the elimination of the third Record Technician position. He stated that adding a new officer position would result in a budget increase of \$15,029 for the 2024 budget. Administrator Buchholtz noted that this could be funded with possible increases to state aids or an increase to the property tax levy.

Councilmember Wendling inquired what the impact would be to the property tax levy for adding another police officer. Administrator Buchholtz stated that the levy would need to increase by 0.5%.

Councilmember Dircks inquired as to the frequency of staffing studies. Chief Antoine stated that he intends to complete a new staffing study every three years.

CONSENSUS of the City Council was to direct the Administrator, Clerk/Treasurer to include the addition of an additional Police Officer full-time equivalent (FTE) in the 2024 budget and to reduce the authorized FTEs for Records Technicians by 1.

B. Policing Overview

Chief Antoine provided an overview of how policing has changed since the murder of George Floyd, highlighting the ban on choke holds, the increased standard for the use of deadly force by officers, and emphasis on an officer's duty to intercede when present and observing another police officer using force in violation of Statute. He stated that the Department has focused on looking for individuals who have strong communication skills to de-escalate situations as they arise, noting that de-escalation skills are just as important as tactical skills. He stated that hiring officers that are known to make good decisions when put in stressful situations minimizes the likelihood of a critical incident occurring.

Chief Antoine noted that officers go through a hands-on Field Training Program upon hire, where they are taught to make critical decisions that promote officer safety and foster a mindset that encourages respect and safety to those we serve in the community. He stated that all officers receive mandated training in use of force, firearms, persuasion and de-escalation, autism spectrum, implicit bias, duty to intervene and other topics.

C. City Hall Renovation/Expansion Project Update (Buchholtz/Antoine)

Chief Antoine stated that staff is taking security features for the City Hall building very seriously. He stated that physical security includes crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED), upgraded electronic door locks, upgraded security cameras, shatter resistant film on all windows, polycarbonate windows in the Link and the vestibules, well-placed bollards and removable window coverings.

Chief Antoine provided a brief overview of civil unrest contingency plans and how those plans integrate with the security features proposed for the building.

Councilmembers discussed the information provided and expressed confidence in the Chief's leadership.

D. Discuss Request to Remove Section (F) from SLPC 5.08.010 (Dircks)

Councilmember Dircks reported that she received correspondence from Rebekah Buck, property manager for Suntide Commercial Realty, requesting the City Council remove the dumpster enclosure requirement from the City Code. She stated that she reviewed the dumpster enclosure requirements from surrounding cities and found the City's code in line with those cities.

Building Official Baker reviewed the enforcement history for 8409-8421 Center Drive NE. Councilmembers discussed the request and past enforcement history. The Council came to consensus that SLPC 5.08.010 (F) be amended to clarify that dumpsters must be stored within the dumpster enclosure except on collection day. Councilmember Dircks noted that the proposed clarification would conform with the standard for residential properties.

CONSENSUS of the City Council was to direct staff to draft an amendment to SLPC 5.08.010 (F) to clarify that dumpsters must be stored within the dumpster enclosure except within 24 hours of collection.

E. Discuss Sending Letter to Dominion regarding rents (Dircks/Goodboe-Bisschoff)

Councilmember Dircks stated that the City Council received a request from Columbia Heights Councilmember Justice Spriggs to send a letter to Dominion requesting a limit on a rent increase for the next twelve months for the Legends of Spring Lake Park. Administrator Buchholtz presented a letter to the City Council and asked Councilmembers to provide feedback on the letter.

Councilmember Goodboe-Bisschoff inquired about supporting SF 2590/HF 2676, which would limit rent increases to five percent in any 12 month period for rental units to qualify for the Class 4d property tax classification. Council expressed support for the proposed legislation.

CONSENSUS of the City Council was to direct the Administrator, Clerk/Treasurer to prepare a resolution of support for SF 2590/HF 2676.

3. REPORT

A. City Council and Staff Reports – None

4. ADJOURN

Mayor Nelson adjourned the work session at 7:35 pm.

Robert Nelson, Mayor

Attest:

Daniel R. Buchholtz, Administrator, Clerk/Treasurer