

City Council
Alan Wintersteen, Mayor
Donna Chris
Kent Harding
Buford McComas
Tad Miller
Don Tubbs
Peter Twitchell
Connie Tucker, City Clerk

CITY OF BETHEL
P.O. BOX 388
BETHEL, ALASKA 99559

Public Safety Committee
Gary Vanasse, Chairman
Kent Harding, Council Rep
Paul Gregory
Tom Hildreth
Harold Jones
Roger Rothschild
John Wallace

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Minutes of January 4, 1995

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was convened at 7:10 PM, at the Log Cabin, Bethel, Alaska by Chairman Vanasse.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Vanasse, Harding, Hildreth, Wallace

Absent: Gregory, Jones, Rothschild (Excused)

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

motion M/M by Wallace, 2nd by Hildreth to amend/approve the minutes of the December 7, 1994, regular Committee meeting by/as presented. Voice vote. Motion carried unanimously.

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

motion M/M by Hildreth, 2nd by Wallace to approve/amend the agenda by or as amended. Voice Vote. Motion carried unanimously.

Changes: Delete Old Business Item A: Marine VHF Emergency Channel/Radio.

V. CHIEF'S REPORTS

Fire Chief Young reports that the Fire Department is assisting other City of Bethel Departments with the OSHA Policies. The Fire Department just conducted an Infection Control Meeting with Paid and Volunteer EMT's at the January 3, 1995 EMT meeting. Training is important and with new volunteers, that they receive this information.

Chief Young also reports the number of firearms discharged December 31st/January 1st is less this year than past years due to the new policy of allowing fireworks to be discharged. Chief Young has had a lot of positive feedback from the community regarding this.

Chief Young also has received a request from a church group to discharge fireworks and will forward this to the City Manager.

Chief Young reports there were no calls for fire or medic units with regards to fireworks over the holidays.

Police Lt. Kevin Short reports that Chief Liu and AST F/Sgt Tanner put out a press release for the upcoming Citizens Police Academy. Three goals of the academy are:

1. Establish an Explorer Post
2. Residents of Bethel to have an active part in local Law Enforcement
3. Helping the Police Department and Alaska State Troopers/Recruit Reserve Program.

Current openings are 1 CSO. Robert Nelson has been rehired as Police Officer and will start the week of January 9, 1995. Officer Berlin promoted to W.A.N.T. Investigator. The Police Dept. had a Police Officer testing process in December, 3 applicants, 2 showed and 1 did not. Both applicants did not meet the requirements for hire. Police Dept. is creating an in-house Felony Investigator (patrolman) for Felony investigations.

Recent crime waves are Burglary and Snow Machine thefts. Police have put out Public Service Announcements on both subjects. Police have also received a lot of complaints about off-road vehicles on the road and will step up traffic enforcement for this.

Officer Chris Walker will be attending the D.A.R.E. Instructor school in California this month.

Mr. Harding asked how many on-going Felony Investigations are there? Lt. Short did not know and is currently developing a database for this.

Chairman Vanasse asked the progress on the Sophie Shomler case. Lt. Short could not answer as this is still under investigation.

Lt. Short gave Chairman Vanasse the new Bethel Police Department Policy and Procedures manual. Chairman Vanasse read the letter from Chief Liu to the Public Safety Committee regarding the new manual.

VI. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Hildreth supports the fireworks for New Years. Discharging of firearms is dangerous and the community appeared to have fun with the fireworks.

Mr. Wallace has received a lot of calls regarding snow machines on the roads. Is glad to hear the Police to step of traffic enforcement of this. Is concerned about the Police Procedures Manual. Why was this so secretive? Lt. Short said that it is not secret, just for internal use only. Mr. Wallace stated that the Public Safety Committee should have been able to make comment on this as well during its approval. Also echoed support of the fireworks, where discharging of firearms is dangerous and felt that this year was more quieter and safer. Mentioned a phone call from Sr. Capt Perry from the Fire Department about a call to Public Works to get the Fire Department driveway cleared of snow, Public Works told Capt. Perry tuff then hung-up. The Public Safety Committee twice now has addressed snow removal to the Public Works Committee. Would like this to be an agenda item for next meeting. Made comment on the decision of Lt. Short to now attend the Public Safety Committee meetings instead of Chief Liu. Mr. Wallace would like Chief Liu to be at the meetings once in a while. Lt. Short said that Chief Liu is currently busy working on the Community Police Academy and also the Grant for additional Police Officer positions.

Chairman Vanasse made comment regarding the Police Procedures Manual and how the Public Safety Committee can review the manual and make recommendations. Also, the Public Safety Committee will make an agenda item regarding snow removal. Chairman Vanasse did say that the Police Chief should be at the meetings, but it is OK for Lt. Short to be at the meetings.

Mr. Harding had no comments.

VII. PEOPLE TO BE HEARD

None

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

ITEM A: Police Department Turnover/Retention of Staff

Chairman Vanasse opens as this has been an on-going agenda item with the Public Safety Committee and were asked to bring some recommendations to pass this on to the City Council and to the Police Department.

Mr. Wallace would have liked to talk with the officers, both still on staff and those that have left to get input on this matter. Mr. Wallace asked Lt. Short why people leave?

Lt. Short states from his observations and tenure of 6 years is burnout is a big factor, case load burnout. The amount of cases an officer works is 200 - 300 a year. Being short handed and the amount of cases, officers get burnt out. How to solve the burnout factor is more personnel, and possibly scheduling changes. More in-house training is also being accomplished with other law enforcement agencies coming in to put on these classes, such as sexual assault.

Mr. Hildreth stated that Chairman Vanasse and Hildreth did talk with two or three of the officers that have left already, and have learned a lot. ~~One of the key topics was People Skills, or lacking by Chief Liu.~~

*CITY COUNCIL ORDERED
EXPUNGED FROM MINUTES
2/14/95*

**PUBLIC SAFETY
COMMITTEE MINUTES
PAGE 5
JANUARY 4, 1995**

* ~~Chief Liu does a good job with the budgets, the policy manual, but he also needs to have the people skills. The officers did enjoy Bethel, and the experiences that they got from Bethel.~~

Mr. Wallace made comment that the Police Department promote a step-ladder approach of in-house promotion. Example would be a CSO hired then becomes an officer, later promoted to sergeant then lieutenant such as the case with Lt. Short.

Chairman Vanasse has 15 recommendations that he has come up with, some are specific and some are broad.

- * 1. ~~Police Department Supervisors improve follow-up on staff ideas and suggestions.~~
- * 2. ~~Police Department Supervisor improve scheduling to accommodate the needs of the staff and department.~~
3. City Council and Police Department Supervisors seek to improve the quality and stock of equipment, i.e.: pagers, vests, shower, etc..
4. City Council, City Manager and Police Department Supervisors seek to improve pay of staff to match similar communities.
5. City Council seek to settle the ongoing negotiations with APEA and ratify a contract.
- * 6. ~~City Council and City Manager seek to provide professional management and personnel management courses for the Police Chief.~~
7. City Council and Police Department Supervisors seek to fund and provide as necessary on-going professional training for Dept. Employees.
- * 8. ~~Police Department Supervisor seek to provide consistency in internal policies and hiring practices.~~
- * 9. ~~Police Department Supervisor seek to provide consistency in expectations and discipline of staff.~~
- * 10. ~~Police Department Supervisor seek to provide continuity and positive Public Relations with staff and community by working occasional evening, night and weekend shifts on Patrol.~~
11. City Council, City Manager and Police Department Supervisor and Public Safety Committee seek to improve community relations.

* CITY COUNCIL ORDERED EXPUNGED FROM MINUTES 2/14/95

**PUBLIC SAFETY
COMMITTEE MINUTES
PAGE 6
JANUARY 4, 1995**

12. City Council, City Manager and Police Department Supervisors seek to fund, recruit, train and maintain a Reserve Officer program to decrease workload.
13. City Manager and Police Department Supervisors seek to fund, recruit, train and maintain a Reserve Officer program to decrease workload.
14. Police Department Supervisors and staff seek to improve community relations by increased sponsorship and participation in community events and training.
15. Police Department to consider providing a suggestion box within the department for staff. Suggestions to be monitored by the Police Chief and City Manager.
16. Police Department promote a Step-Ladder approach of in-house promotion through the ranks.

Chairman Vanasse gave the list of recommendations to Mr. Hildreth to be included with the minutes. Chairman Vanasse made comment that some of the above matters are already being addressed by the Police Department, but there are also other areas that the Committee is not even aware of. The committee has been working on this issue, but there are certain things that we can do, but a lot the department must do. One of the things we are trying to do as a committee is make the Council, the City Manager, the Police Department supervisor and staff itself that we have recognized a problem with retention of staff and recruitment of staff as well. We have had this problem for a number of years but it has gotten a lot worse in the last year or so. Chairman Vanasse would like to see the Reserve Program come on again, which the department has been working real hard on, which is something that can help the workload. Lt. Short hopes the department can develop a volunteer force with the Citizens Police Academy.

Mr. Wallace would like to let the officers know that this is really important, we want to know why everybody is leaving because we want them to stay so that we have a little bit of continuity.

Mr. Hildreth made comment on passing a cruiser on the road, waving at the officer, sometimes they look the other way, but after you keep doing this, sometimes the officer has initiated the wave.

Lt. Short said the main goal of the department is the citizen community involvement of law enforcement. This is the key to success for many departments.

Mr. Harding said that the committee support funding for renovation of the Braund Building for a new Public Safety facility.

motion M/M by Wallace, 2nd by Hildreth that the Public Safety Committee recommends that the list of recommendations concerning the Police Department Turnover and Retention is a high priority with the Public Safety Committee and should be forwarded to the City Council for their review. Voice vote. Motion carried unanimously.

I. NEW BUSINESS

ITEM A: Rotation of the Chair

Chairman Vanasse reflected on the previous meeting regarding his appointment as Chairman, but also reflected to the June 1994 meeting where possible rotation of the chair be every six months. Possibly one year would be more appropriate. Also, with the presentation by City Clerk to the committee later in the meeting is the Committee Rules and Procedures which recommends appointing a new chair each January.

Mr. Wallace suggests that changing of the chair occur in June just after budget as this is also when the new year starts for the city. Mr. Wallace recommends that we table this until the next meeting when the other 3 members can be present.

motion M/M by Hildreth, 2nd by Wallace to table until the February 1, 1995 meeting. Voice vote. Motion carried unanimously.

ITEM B: Ambulance Replacement

Fire Chief Young reports that within the last two weeks a structural failure of Medic 3, the newest ambulance, so was placed out of service until a part from Seattle could arrive. Medic 2 was then placed as the front line ambulance, and two to three days later, after dropping a patient off at the airport, the firefighter/EMT saw its lights dim and smelled smoke. Medic 2 was taken to the City Shop where they found some problems with wiring and had taken a day and a half to replace the wiring but also check other wiring out as well. The Fire Department had to then put back in service Medic 3 which was also broke which was an unsafe vehicle. Medic 2 is 14 years old, Chief Young has brought this up now for the past two years, Chief Barker as well has brought this up. Medic 2 needs to rotate out and be replaced. Chief Young is making the Ambulance Replacement his priority capital project request this year.

Medic 2 does have a unique front end and that parts for this are no longer available or even for repair. The old Medic 1 Ambulance which is at PHASE is out of service, in fact buried in a snow bank outside. PHASE is seeking funding to replace that ambulance. There is a mutual aid with the National Guard for their ambulance, but does not meet the state requirements for the ACLU certification. Chief Young requests support from the committee for the ambulance replacement.

Mr. Wallace reflects back to when the city purchased Medic 3, the problems with that, that we do not want to get into that situation again.

Chairman Vanasse requests that Chief Young come back to the committee with the type of vehicle, vendor, price and possibly source of funds.

General discussion regarding seeking local funding from the community as well.

motion

M/M by Wallace, 2nd by Hildreth to table until the February 1, 1995 meeting. Voice vote. Motion carried unanimously.

ITEM C: Committee Rules and Procedures

City Clerk Connie Tucker is addressing all committees regarding the proposed Rules and Procedures, as there has been no uniformity of the committees and the procedures in which to conduct business. The package delivered is a proposal subject to change.

If the Public Safety Committee has any recommendations or changes, please contact Connie Tucker so that everything can be looked at.

Chairman Vanasse spoke on items he thought were questionable, or to offer comment on.

Also requested comment for was the residency requirement for committee members. Chairman Vanasse said it should be the same as council requirements, registered voter and one year requirement.

ITEM D: Review Ordinance 9.08.050 Fireworks and Explosives

Chairman Vanasse stated this was brought by Fire Chief Young as he received a complaint from a citizen regarding the ordinance.

Chief Young reflected the past history of the ordinance and the change of the ordinance delegating a committee of three to make decisions on the fireworks issues. With the absence of the City Manager, and the Fire Chief in the position of Acting City Manager, Chief Young had a problem in making the decision without the third party.

General discussion regarding the ordinance, sale, discharge, etc..

Mr. Harding asked the question "What is the purpose of the ordinance?" If it is to prevent the use and sale of fireworks, then that is what it should do. If it has specific dates that you can sell and use fireworks, then that is what it should say.

Chief Young gave a short history of this years approval of the sale and use of fireworks.

General discussion regarding the committee of three, the absence of one of the members, an alternate should be appointed so that there is still a committee of three.

City Clerk Connie Tucker said that she can obtain other community Ordinance's regarding fireworks.

General discussion about the possibility of who the alternate might be, Chairman of the Public Safety Committee, Mayor, City Manager designee in his absence In case the Police or Fire Chief was the acting City Manager.

motion M/M by Wallace, 2nd by Hildreth that the Public Safety Committee recommends to the City Council reference the letter by Kent Harding to Connie Tucker regarding City Ordinance 9.08.050, Fireworks and Explosives that the Committee of Three as defined by the ordinance establish policy regarding Item #2 and the Committee of Three make a decision on blanket or individual waivers. Voice vote. Motion carried unanimously.

motion M/M by Hildreth, 2nd by Wallace to place this under Old Business at the February 1, 1995 meeting. Voice vote. Motion carried unanimously.

II. ADJOURNMENT

The next Regular Meeting of the Public Safety Committee will be held February 1, 1995, 7:00 PM, at the Log Cabin.

motion M/M by Hildreth, 2nd by Wallace to adjourn the meeting at 9:48 PM. Voice vote. Motion carried unanimously.

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS _____ DAY OF _____, 1994.

**Gary Vanasse, Chairman
Public Safety Committee**