



CITY OF BETHEL

P.O. Box 388 • Bethel, Alaska 99559

543-2297—Area Code 907

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

June 1, 1994

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Abrant called the June 1, 1994, regular meeting of the Public Safety Committee to order at 12:35 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Vanasse, Hildreth, Wallace, Abrant, Gregory

Absent: Twitchell, Tubbs

APPROVAL/MINUTES

M/M by Vanasse, 2nd by Wallace to approve the minutes of the May 11, 1994 meeting as presented. Voice vote. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL/AGENDA

M/M by Hildreth, 2nd by Gregory to approve the agenda with the following amendments: to add New Business Item A: Lights on Boat Trailers, New Business Item B: City Utility Benefits for Police and Fire Department Volunteers. Voice vote. Motion carried unanimously.

CHIEFS' REPORTS

-Lt. Meece stated that two officers had just completed SWAT training, and the drug investigator is currently at the Western States Information Network conference. Officer Ewing represented the department at the Alaska Police Memorial Day service in Anchorage. Meece mentioned that a woman from Nunapitchuk had drowned, and that police were investigating the incident.

-Chief Young stated that the fire department is currently at the full staffing levels, and the focus is on day training, so the new fire fighter will be able to cover a full shift as soon as possible.

COMMITTEE MEMBER
COMMENTS

-Mr. Gregory stated his concern for safety in the slough areas, due to the operators drinking and driving at unsafe speeds. Gregory extended an open invitation for someone to come with him to observe the situation.

-Mr. Wallace stated that his car had been stolen on Thursday, and it took one day for the police to make contact with him. Wallace suggested that perhaps too many officers were on training at once, leaving the department shorthanded. Wallace also reiterated his concern over the bootlegging problem, which he said is occurring in his neighborhood. General discussion followed about various approaches to combatting bootlegging.

-Mr. Vanasse thanked Chairman Abrant for his services to the committee and community.

-Mr. Hildreth requested information about the police department's ride policy, stating that it appears to be consuming a significant amount of the officers' time. Hildreth also wished Abrant good luck.

-Chairman Abrant stated that he did not see reason to pick apart such a small benefit as the ride policy.

-Mr. Vanasse recommended that Mr. Hildreth consult with the chief of police on department policy before bringing it to the committee.

-Chairman Abrant stated that the agenda needed Item C: selection of a new chairperson.

-Mr. Gregory stated that the U.S. Marshall had once come to Bethel to fight bootlegging. General discussion followed about the role and the potential of a U.S. Marshall in Bethel.

PEOPLE TO BE HEARD (none)

OLD BUSINESS

Item A: Fireworks

-Mr. Vanasse reminded the committee that fireworks decisions were made by a council of three, consisting of the city manager, fire chief and police chief.

-Chairman Abrant stated that he put the item on the agenda because the issue was sure to

come up, and the committee could make a recommendation to the council of three.
-Chief Young stated that he was not opposed to having Class C fireworks in Bethel. He explained that there have been relatively few injuries from fireworks in the community. Young pointed out that fireworks would be here, whether legal or not. People would have them mailed in. Young stated that the exploding varieties of fireworks are much more dangerous. He also stated that parents have not been adequately responsible for supervising their children's use of fireworks.

-Chairman Abrant stated that he was looking for the committee to support or oppose the sale and use of fireworks in the City of Bethel.

-Mr. Wallace stated that he does not support the sale, but would let people use fireworks at their own risk.

-Mr. Vanasse stated his support for sale and use, and said that parents must be responsible for the use.

-Mr. Hildreth supported the sale of fireworks, and agreed that they are the parents' responsibility.

-Mr. Gregory stated his opposition to the use of fireworks after midnight.

-Lt. Meece pointed out that the state law regulates the sale of fireworks through permits and insurance requirements. The last entrepreneur to approach the committee gave up when he was faced with the state's requirements.

motion

M/M by Vanasse, 2nd by Hildreth to recommend to the council of three to approve the sale and use of fireworks in the City of Bethel. Motion passed by acclamation.

Item B: Public
Safety Budget Proposals

1. Police
Resources

-Lt. Meece reviewed that the departments had been asked to prepare proposals for five and ten percent cuts to their budgets. Meece stated that operating with the ten percent

cut would have been virtually impossible, and would have pared overtime down to \$15,000. Meece reviewed that at the last meeting, council supported the additional police officer, and a new vehicle on a three-year lease. With these additions, the total budget would be within \$10,000 of Chief Liu's proposed budget.

General discussion followed with committee members reaffirming their earlier support and recommendation for the funding of the reserve program, with higher priority than the new vehicle.

Further, the group recommended that the three year vehicle lease funding be allocated to the fire department, rather than the police department.

2. Fire Dept. Captain Position
The committee continues to support its prior recommendation of no loss of personnel to the fire department.
3. Percentage of Budget with Relation to Council's Priorities for Public Safety
-Chairman Abrant stated that public safety is the number one priority. This community is forced to pay for a higher than normal level of public safety, due to outside influences. For each department to cut five to ten percent across the board does not match the priorities of the city.

motion

M/M by Wallace, 2nd by Hildreth that the committee recommend to City Council that in the future, percentage budget cuts should be in direct relation to the city's priority scale. Motion passed by acclamation.

NEW BUSINESS

Item B: City Utility Benefits For Police and Fire Volunteers

M/M by Wallace to table this item until the next meeting.

Item A: Lights On Boat Trailers

-Mr. Hildreth briefly described the problem's caused by boat trailers not being equipped with lights, and claimed that state law requires lights on trailers.

-Mr. Wallace stated that he does not support a crackdown on this issue because the police are already swamped with higher priority issues. Some other committee members expressed general agreement about the impracticality of enforcing lights on boat trailers.

Item C: Nomination -M/M by Vanasse to nominate John Wallace as of New Chairperson the new chairperson. (no second)

motion

-Citing the fact that Mr. Vanasse is the only person on the committee with much experience, M/M by Abrant, 2nd by Hildreth to nominate Gary Vanasse as the new chairperson. Voice vote. Motion passed unanimously.

Amongst the motions there was general discussion in support of the chair position rotating every six months.

motion

M/M by Gregory, 2nd by Wallace to adjourn the meeting. Voice vote. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

THE NEXT MEETING OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE WILL OCCUR ON JULY 6, 1994, 12:00 P.M., AT THE POLICE DEPARTMENT.

Connie Oldham
Connie Oldham
Police Department Admin. Asst.