
City of Bethel, Alaska

Public Safety & Transportation Commission

November 3rd, 2015

Regular Meeting

Bethel, Alaska

I. CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Public Safety and Transportation Commission was held on November 3rd, 2015 in the Bethel City Hall Council Chambers.

This meeting was called to order at 7:00PM

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Joan Dewey *Chair*
Naim Sabani
Eileen Henrickson
Julene Webber

Absent: Chuck Herman *Council Representative*
Bill Howell *Fire Chief*
Deborah White

Ex-Officio Present: Andre Achee *Chief of Police*
Christina Him *Recorder and Transportation Inspector Designee*

III. PEOPLE TO BE HEARD

None

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOVED:	Sabani	Motion to approve the agenda.
SECONDED:	Henrickson	
VOTE ON MAIN MOTION	All in favor.	

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOVED:	Sabani	Motion to approve the minutes from the regular meeting of October 5 th , 2015.
SECONDED:	Webber	
VOTE ON MAIN MOTION	All in favor.	

VI. SPECIAL ITEM OF BUSINESS

A. Resignation of Vice Chair, Alisha Welch

*Resignation of Vice Chair Alisha Welch, due to being elected to City Council.
Resignation accepted by PSTC.*

VII. CHIEFS' COMMENTS

Chief Andre Achee – Fire Chief Howell is busy with the Kilbuck, KLA School Fire. At this time, there is an open investigation of the fire; there are no obvious signs of anything; that is for the experts to determine. I stopped by the scene and there have been great community support from members of the public. This was also the first time I've ever seen, the DOT's (Department of Transportation) fire truck assisting with the fire.

This week, Bethel is hosting a Sexual Assault Response Training. This is being hosted regionally, and troopers from around the state and locally, as well as many officers from the Bethel Police Department are attending. The training covers a variety of different disciplines including the medical aspect, counselor aspect and law enforcement aspects. The training is being held in the Cultural Center.

The City of Bethel is also hosting a first line, two-day supervisor/leadership training course. Christina Him and our Dispatch Supervisor, Natalie Hayes is attending it, in addition to about 15 supervisors from the City attending. There are about 25 City employees attending this training course.

Dispatch is at full staff and our last dispatcher that was in field training just got off training last week. We have 4 independent dispatchers and a dispatch supervisor, which is nice because it has been at least 6-9 months that we were not at full staff in dispatch.

Our grant funded position, CSP (Community Service Patrol) is at full staff. We still have a vacancy for the CSO Animal Control Officer position – there are contractual issues dealing with the collective bargaining agreement. Our CSO program was developed as a recruitment pool to develop local talents for prospective officers to work their way up.

We are below half staff in patrol. Lieutenant Joe Corbett tendered his resignation and accepted a job at a correctional center. We are busy trying to recruit, and we have interviewed people, however there is an issue –cost of living, and trying to compete with other positions offered in Bethel. There are good applicants that qualify, however we do not have the budget for them. State positions starting salary begins at a higher rate than a starting officer and the State also has a great benefits package. The Average officer is working about 84 hours a week; however our officers are working 120 hours a pay period due to staff shortage and are getting burned out. If we were at full staff, it would be different, however we maintain minimum staffing especially at night time, where we have to have at least 2 officers on because of the safety aspect. There has been a lot of difficulty in recruitment and retaining; switching over from an urban to a more rural road system, as well as social Media portraying only the negative aspects, which unfortunately is all that people see.

With recruitment, we have a set of standard procedures that include full backgrounds, polygraphs and psychological tests. This is a standard for most law enforcement agencies. We had an option of a one week-on, two week-off program, and we tried to push for it, however we were told that this was not possible due to something administratively or some matter pertaining to PERS or retirement. The Kotzebue Police Department had the same issues that we are

currently having, but ever since they implemented the two week-on two week-off schedule, they never had a problem with recruitment. The biggest concern for me with the two week-on, two week-off is that those officers may not become a part of the community.

It is hard to compete with other agencies that have a road system and better benefits packages. Another concern is trying to retain the experienced bodies here. Police Officer salaries starts about a little over \$40K annually, where as a Correctional Officer starts at about \$31/hour; unfortunately we are unable to compete with that salary. Another issue is the City's V&E (Vehicles and Equipment) department not having enough personnel to maintain our fleet, which makes it difficult for us.

The majority of our officers are looking for jobs elsewhere right now. There was debate about a two-on, two-off schedule to help recruit and retain officers, however we were told that we could not do it, but the State is able to do it.

Housing is another factor in recruitment, most state jobs included housing in their packages, however the Public Safety Housing will be available this month and there is an open invitation to Public Safety.

This week is our APSIN (Alaska Public Safety Information Network) audit. APSIN is equivalent to NCIC (National Crime Information Center), and our dispatch supervisor, Natalie Hayes is doing great by getting her statistics done and making sure we are in compliance with the state standards. We can further discuss the recruitment for vacant police positions at the next PSTC meeting under new business, once we get more statistics and figures, including how much overtime have been expended out of our budget, to address this issue.

VIII. TRANSPORTATION INSPECTOR REPORT

See Report in Commission Packet

IX. COUNCIL MEMBER'S COMMENTS

Council Member Herman – *Absent.*

X. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Drug Screening Policy for Chauffeurs *(Commission Member Sabani)*

Discussed, no action taken, will continue discussion at the next scheduled PSTC Meeting.

B. Formal Recommendations/Clarification for disapproval of Ordinance #15-19, 15-20, 15-21 *(Council Member Herman)*

Discussed, no action taken, requesting City Attorney Patty Burley's and Council Member Herman's presence at the next scheduled meeting to discuss this more thoroughly.

C. Curfew Policy *(Council Member Herman)*

Discussed, no action taken, requesting City Attorney Patty Burley's and Council Member Herman's presence at the next scheduled meeting to discuss this more thoroughly.

D. Ordinance #15-31 Amending Operation of Low Speed Vehicles

Discussed, no action taken, postpone discussion to the next scheduled PSTC meeting to consult with City Attorney, Patty Burley.

E. Ordinance #15-32 Repealing and Replacing BMC 5.08, Alcoholic Beverages

Discussed, no action taken.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Ordinance #15-28: Complete Streets

MOVED:	Sabani	Motion to pass Ordinance #15-28 Complete Streets.
SECONDED:	Henrickson	
VOTE ON MAIN MOTION	All in favor.	

XII. COMMISSION MEMBER COMMENTS

Joan Dewey – *Today reminded me of just how important each day is and being grateful for a lot of good people in this town who rallied when we had an emergency, pretty impressive. Also, welcome to our new members as well, it is wonderful to have the energy and our old members for being here.*

Naim Sabani - *Good job to the police department with everything they are going through and hopefully we can resolve their issues.*

Julene Webber – *Thank you and I look forward to serving this community.*

Eileen Henrickson – *Thank you, it's very interesting so far. Nice to see how some things work that you are not always familiar with.*

Chief Andre Achee – *The one thing about small communities is that everyone comes together, I was just so surprised seeing all the people down there and people dropping off food. Thank you for joining the commission and volunteering for it. Kudos to the fire department, their total staffing is 5, they get their business done by their volunteer firefighters and EMTs; and those are your neighbors, they did a phenomenal job today.*

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

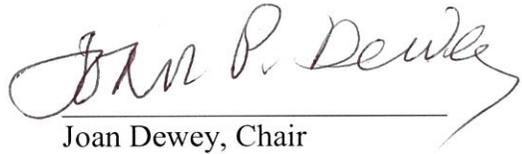
MOVED:	Webber	Motion to adjourn.
SECONDED:	Sabani	
VOTE ON MAIN MOTION	All in favor.	

Meeting adjourned at 8:32pm

APPROVED THIS 1st DAY OF December, 2015.



Christina Him, Recorder



Joan Dewey, Chair