



MINUTES

February 1, 2023

7:00 p.m.

Ralston Room, Albany Fire Department/VIRTUAL

Approved: 04/05/23

Call to Order

Cynthia Greene called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Members present: Adam Brenneman, Erik Anderson, Erik Rau, Cynthia Greene, Nicholas Fowler, Evan Church, Pat Kidd (virtual), Kevin Kreitman (virtual)

Members absent:

Staff present: Marcia Harnden, Police Chief; Shane Wooton, Fire Chief; Rochelle James, Administrative Assistant I; Kate Hennessey, Administrative Assistant, I; Julia Tremaine, Clerk III

December 7, 2022, Minutes were approved.

Staff Updates

Fire Update – Shane Wooton

Chief Wooton discussed the department report. The total number of responses is on pace to exceed last year. AFD is on pace to reach nearly 12,000 calls this year. There were a record number of calls in December – 1158 calls. Before this, just over 1,000 calls was the maximum number of calls reached in any given month. One of the factors leading to this large number was the December 23 ice storm event. During this period, there were a significant number of fall injuries. The day started with a fair number of car accidents and continued with almost 40 fall injuries occurring throughout the day. Some of those patients were transferred to a higher level of care the next day as some developed head bleeds. Chief Wooton advised AFD did a good job advising people of the dangerous road conditions. Social media messaging was also utilized advising people to expect delays. Chief Wooton stated there were 85 calls for service during this day with three to four calls waiting for AFD response at any given time. In hindsight, more messaging encouraging people to stay home may have been beneficial.

Chief advised response times remain consistent given the increase in call load. Chief Wooton explained the concurrent incidents table, which tracks when multiple incidents occur at the same time. There has been an increase in the frequency of three, four, or five calls occurring simultaneously.

Chief Wooton discussed the top 50 types of calls for service. The most common call for service was for a sick person, which totaled 992 responses. Chief gave brief descriptions on what types of calls the department responds to most frequently and the difference between lift assists and falls. Chief was asked if electronic monitoring medic alert type calls are included in the falls and lift assist numbers. Chief advised

these types of calls usually come in under the unknown medical call. Medical alarms are generally reported to AFD via a call center. The number of calls generated from nursing homes is decreasing. The Chief discussed the process of working with nursing homes and reporting compliance issues. In addition, the chief discussed how Community Paramedic Hillary Kosmicki is hosting collaborative meetings with assisted living facility directors at Station 11, expressing AFD concerns and assisting with training. Many people want to stay in their own homes. The community paramedic will reach out to the individual or family if falls become more frequent.

Chief Wooton discussed how the position of community care paramedic was established and funded and the impact the position is having in the community.

Chief Wooton was asked where the public can find AFD statistics. Chief Wooton advised statistics are made available in the annual report. Calls can be followed with the Pulse Point application and social media is utilized.

Chief advised four new firefighters were sworn in this month. All four are also paramedics. Recruitment is ongoing for potential upcoming vacancies.

Chief discussed the goals for the department in the next biennium.

The chief suggested that, together with the State Fire Marshalls Office, a community-wide self-inspection program be developed for low-risk buildings.

It is also a goal to improve the success rate of sudden cardiac arrest in the future through changes and investments. An Autopulse device, which is an automatic CPR device, is one of those investments. The devices have been purchased but have not been put into service as the training phase is still ongoing. Chief said they are working with one or both Rotary Groups in town, as well as the Albany Safety Foundation, to purchase an AED for use in a loaner program. The AED could be checked out for events where an AED is not required.

AFD went to council last week to purchase new turnouts before the next biennium.

Chief Wooton stated he will request the use of some federal grant dollars to hire four single role rural employees, which include two paramedics and two EMTs. There will also be a request to purchase an additional medic unit. Currently, an additional medic unit is being staffed on overtime three days per week, which is a large cost to the budget and a strain on personnel. The goal is to have an additional ambulance on hand during the peak times of 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

A question was asked regarding the disposition of the old turnouts. Chief Wooton explained how the turnouts have a ten-year life span, how the turnouts are replaced every five years, and how they are inspected and maintained. He also explained how purchasing turnouts every five years allows personnel to maintain a backup set.

Ambulance biller Susan Anderson has retired from her part time position. AFD is going to try to increase that position to full-time in the next budget process. The biennial ambulance revenue will exceed budget by approximately 1.4 million dollars. Those dollars go into the general fund to be shared across departments.

Police Update – Marcia Harnden

APD has 98.25 employees. Of those positions, 65 are sworn positions ranging from police officer to Chief. APD is within one position of being fully staffed. The second hiring is expected on 2/16/23, leaving the department with one vacancy. Retirements are expected in both March and July of this year.

APD is in year four of international accreditation. APD is one of three police departments in the State of Oregon that have international accreditation through CALEA, which is the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies. There will be an onsite review in April. APD will receive accreditation at the Washington state CALEA conference in 2023 (I think this is Sept/Oct 2023 – check with Merab).

Chief Harnden stated the city services fees have been put to good use and have prevented some jobs from being lost. This year's budgeting numbers are not available yet. Depending on the budget numbers, APD may ask for two more full time employees including adding a sergeant back in to the CSO unit and a dedicated full-time police clerk to process gun permits if Measure 114 goes into effect.

APD's strategic plan is in the process of being finalized. The information is available on our website. The 2022 Use of Force report was just approved. The Use of Force report is sent to the City Council quarterly. APD also compiles an annual crime report, which will be released soon and posted to the APD website. Laura Hawkins, our social media manager, shares the information on our social media platforms. APD is active on social media and utilizes it to provide information to the community.

APD has a critical need for dispatchers. APD has 11 positions funded in the budget but only eight are filled. APD is a secondary PSAP. All 911 calls go into a primary PSAP and then are routed to the APD dispatch center. A shortage of dispatchers is a common problem all agencies are struggling with.

APD fully embraces the 21st century policing model which dictates a lot of the department's values and practices. It has been our roadmap moving forward regarding technology, social media, and community trust.

Albany Police Department is the busiest police agency in the Willamette Valley. Violent crime is on the rise, as well as property crimes, which is a product of our drug epidemic. Many of the major local stores are reluctant to confront suspects because of liability and the risk involved. Auto thefts are our biggest issue. Cars are stolen regularly, and the suspects are running from the police as well, resulting in several elude type crimes. APD handles approx. 32,000 calls per year, which is up 2.5 percent. Priority P calls are the highest-level priority call to which the department responds. Priority 1 is the next level below priority P. Priority P and Priority 1 calls have increased 67.33% and 45.88% respectively.

APD started tracking overdose cases in the city limits and in Linn County in mid to late 2021. APD responded to 89 overdoses calls in 2022. Of those 89 calls, 71 resulted in the use of Narcan. On many calls, multiple doses of Narcan are used due to the presence of fentanyl. There were nine overdose deaths, exceeding the number of deaths from the previous three years combined. There have been eight overdose calls as of January 25, 2023. Fentanyl is the leading issue in overdose calls. APD detectives are responding to overdose deaths in Linn County and some of the surrounding areas to attempt to determine the source of the drug involved.

Oregon does not have a controlled substance homicide bill. House bill 2906 is in committee. There are ongoing efforts to get it pushed into the judiciary for public hearings. Chief Harnden will provide a contact list of members on the judiciary committee to the members of the Public Safety Commission. Chief Harnden

encouraged the commission members to contact those members to encourage them to support the bill. Chief Harnden described a conference call with the State of Maine, which is considering similar drug decriminalization legislation, and the opinions expressed by those on the call. Those on the call were supportive of harm reduction and addiction services, but also recognize the ramifications of decriminalization have been significant. Chief discussed fentanyl appearing in all drugs, such as marijuana, cocaine, and methamphetamine. The chief noted that property crime has a direct correlation with drug use.

APD hired 16 employees in 2022. On average, the department is hiring between two and four employees each year. Chief advised since arriving in January 2022 APD has hired 38 employees. APD is continuing its efforts to retain employees. APD bargaining employees received a very fair contract. Management pay is being addressed.

The Public Safety Commission supported APD in creating the Mental Health Intervention Specialist position. The Chief discussed a recent incident at city hall regarding a mental health subject. The subjects' actions were partly due to mental health issues and partly due to very high methamphetamine usage. The Chief noted long term or extreme use of methamphetamine can cause mental health problems by damaging the brain. Chief Harnden described how APD routinely deals with people two, three, or four times a day before being able to get them into some stability and level of care. There are no facilities available in Albany other than the emergency room or jail for persons in acute mental health crisis.

Chief Harnden was asked about the officer injured earlier in the week. Chief Harnden explained the call was an intentional ambush and the suspect called the police to lure officers to the scene. The suspect fired through an opaque window at the officer, who was injured by flying glass. The Chief said both officers involved were ok and Benton County Sheriff's Department handled the investigation.

In addition, Chief Harnden talked about how APD has received fake 911 calls, causing additional officer to respond to those locations due to heightened concerns. The Chief also stated the amount of aggression against police officers has risen, caused by sentiment towards police, mental health issues, and the drug picture.

The crime report will come out mid-February and it will include a ten-year snapshot. Through crime analysis, APD can see pockets of issues quickly. Chief advised the number one police user in the city is Walmart.

Chief Harnden was asked about the Park Services Officer and what her interaction with people in the city will be compared to other officers in the department. Chief advised there are four Community Service Officers in addition to the Park Services Officer. The primary responsibility for the Community Service Officers are livability issues, traffic issues, abandoned vehicles, and animal control. The Park Services Officer position is a cost sharing position, and her focus is to bring back a sense of safety in the parks.

A question was asked regarding supporting harm reduction and what that entails. Chief Harnden discussed the Tri-County Regional Harm Reduction Coalition, which is a partnership for substance abuse intervention and harm reduction. Grant funding is provided through this coalition. Chief Harnden also discussed her involvement with Oregon-Idaho HIDTA and its approach.

There was a question regarding the Helping Hands Shelter. The Chief explained that Helping Hands is not a low barrier shelter and the policy for admitting people to the shelter. APD responded over 200 times to Helping Hands in 2022. In the month of January 2023, APD has responded 27 times in 29 days. Chief advised there are concerns regarding safety and how Helping Hands is being run. There are reports of

prostitution and open drug usage. APD is working with the management and the board of directors to try to address these issues. Chief Harnden advised there is a Chronic Nuisance Ordinance in the City of Albany for properties that are a continual drain on public safety resources and do not make a reasonable attempt to address the problems.

Commissioner Erik Anderson serves on the board of directors for Helping Hands and commented there is no crisis facility to take people experiencing mental health issues or who are on drugs. He advised Helping Hands does have a rule of no drug use and all the people in the shelter do go through drug screening. Commissioner Anderson stated many people seen in front of the shelter and along the street are not allowed into the shelter. There have been issues with other agencies throughout the state transporting people from other areas to Helping Hands and leaving them at the facility. There are also individuals being dropped off that have high medical needs and many of the people in the shelter are of retirement age, will not re-enter the work force, and will need long term placement services.

Chief Wooton advised Samaritan Health and the mobile care unit will be back at Helping Hands on 2/7/23. The Community Care Paramedic will also be there.

Chief Harnden advised the city is in desperate need of the ability to have temporary tent cities at churches and other locations and admitted it is not popular with some members of the community. The alternative is continually chasing calls all over the city regarding illegal camping. Temporary tent cities offer structure and are low barrier. Currently, tent cities are not allowed by city code as there is not a city code to cover it. APD, AFD, Code compliance, and legal have been working on city code which would allow things like Quonset huts, would require a community sponsor, and conditions of a permit process.

Commissioner Erik Anderson advised that the new governor has declared a homelessness state of emergency in Oregon. Most of those funds are earmarked for other counties, not including Linn County.

Business from the Commission

Nomination: Member Nicholas Fowler nominated Member Cynthia Greene for the position of chair. Cynthia Greene accepted the nomination. There being no other nominations, Cynthia Greene was elected to the position of chair.

Nomination: Member Cynthia Greene nominated Member Nicholas Fowler for the position of vice-chair. Nicholas Fowler accepted the nomination. There being no other nominations, Nicholas Fowler was elected to the position of chair.

Next Meeting Date

The next regularly scheduled meeting is on Tuesday, April 5, 2023.

Adjournment

Hearing no further business, Cynthia Greene adjourned the meeting at 8:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rochelle James
Administrative Assistant I

Reviewed by,

Reviewer's Name
Reviewer's Title

**Documents discussed at the meeting that are not in the agenda packet are archived in the record. The documents are available by emailing cityclerk@cityofalbany.net.*