



MINUTES

June 7, 2023

7:00 p.m.

Community Room, Albany Police Department/VIRTUAL

Approved

Call to Order

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

Roll Call

Members present: Erik Anderson, Erik Rau, Cynthia Greene, Pat Kidd, Kevin Kreitman, Evan Church

Members absent: Nicholas Fowler, Adam Brenneman

Staff present: Marcia Harnden, Police Chief; Shane Wooton, Fire Chief; Julia Tremain, Clerk III

April 5, 2023, Minutes were approved.

Staff Updates

Police Update – Marcia Harnden

Chief Harnden started by saying Albany is entering the high season for crimes and the call load is busy. The person-to-person crime numbers are static, with the numbers in 2022 at 143, and in 2023 at 141. Property crimes have decreased, but she does not expect that to continue. She clarified that the statistics it reports three homicides, however, that is only because aggravated attempted murder counts as a homicide. She is concerned by the assaults, particularly in the schools. There is a large increase in self-initiated calls due to full staffing. Pat Kidd asked about the prevalence of gangs in the area. Chief Harnden shared that Albany Police Department (APD) has a task force that is a member of a group called High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) which let APD know that in Portland there are 13–15-year-old Honduran children that are being used as mules. This means that when APD goes on a call and there are kids that match that description, they know to be more cautious as they have intel that drugs are moving up I-5. Most of the drugs crossing the border are crossing through legal means, like on commercial semi-trucks. The biggest threat to the community is Fentanyl; it increases in mental health crises, as well as exacerbating the homeless dilemma. Kevin Kreitman asked about the Narcan numbers, and the Chief confirmed that the number reported is the total times it has been used and not the number of doses administered.

For hiring, APD is doing very well: from the 16 vacancies in 2021, as of June 16, they will have no vacancies. Two more positions are opening, with people already in training for the future openings. Albany now has a similar dispatcher turnover rate along to the rest of the state, but steps are being taken to remedy that.

Albany has an approved a car and camp location on the corner of 9th and Jackson, with construction starting on June 8. This lot was picked because Second Chance is within walking distance and can assist with food and supplies. Without this ordinance, camping would be legal anywhere, which resulted in a ten-thousand-dollar cleanup cost for just for one location. This ordinance helps Albany control where camping occurs, as well as sets regulations on the behavior that is allowed.

APD is wrapping up some larger events that require police presence, like the PRIDE event. This event has been a rich target for hate groups so they will have a “subdued but strong presence” there as well as at River Rhythms and the block party on Labor Day weekend. APD received a grant for a security trailer that gives them better monitoring capabilities at events. This also comes with getting an additional sergeant position, as well as expanding code enforcement with red light speed cameras.

Fire Update – Shane Wooton

Chief Wooton began his message by reporting that call numbers have increased, but the call times have stayed consistent. The frequency of one incident happening is declining, but multiple incidents occurring at one time is increasing. Our lift assist numbers have increased because we have more individuals who want to live at home as long as possible and have partners who are unable to help them. Commonly AFD has calls categorized as falls when there is an injury, but lift assists typically have no presence of injuries (however that status can change upon arrival). Some facilities were over-using our services, but Community Paramedic Hillary Kosmicki worked with the Oregon Health Authority to have them take more responsibility for what they should be accomplishing on their own.

Albany’s fire service area is 84 square miles, and the ambulance service area is 210 square miles. AFD also contracts with Albany Rural Fire as well as Tangent, Millersburg, Palestine, Lebanon, Halsey/Shedd, and North Albany Rural. Mutual aid is provided, as well as any extra coverage, thereby causing a very broad response area. In the upcoming budget, AFD has been approved to receive grant dollars to hire four people to staff an additional ambulance. These positions have been posted and will close at the end of the month.

The peer support team was started in 2010. It is now being remodeled to adapt to changes and keep personnel mentally sound, as well as give people the opportunity to provide their peers with support and advice. Safety camp is on June 26th-29th at Oak Grove Elementary School and partnering with APD.

Fire extinguisher training was not well-attended so another attempt will be made. If the response is the same, the public might not be searching for that kind of training. The Youth Cardiac Screening event partners with a non-profit from the East Coast to do 12-lead EKGs on children, which were then sent to a pediatric cardiologist to determine if further evaluation was needed. Open burning was closed early due to the lack of rain and high levels of heat. By the next time we meet AFD will have an additional ambulance in service.

AFD is going to council in a week to update the fire code, which will allow the use of the state fire marshal’s office on more items. Last biennium, AFD lost a fire marshal position, so AFD is trying to

work with the State to partner more with the larger facilities that says we have adopted the Oregon fire code. AFD is also asking permission to provide an alternative to builders in the community; if their facility is more than 50,000 sq ft, they are required to install an additional radio component in their building. This can cost well over 100,000 dollars. Instead of installing their own system, they can now pay a fee to help update the radio system to bypass the chance of not having radios work in the building or malfunction. The department will still be a simulcasted VHF system to continue to provide the most interoperability and improved communications. In the long-range, AFD would like to improve and obtain better systems but still wants to be able to partner in the best way possible with the other departments in the area.

Recruitment and retention are going well, except for paramedics (because of the degree requirement). The State Ambulance Association is looking to waive the degree requirement, and OHA is looking at giving an individual two years to obtain their degree after becoming a certified paramedic. Currently, a person may not be a paramedic in Oregon or Kansas without an associate degree. Retention is decreasing as employees are leaving for more competitive pay combined with more time off and fewer calls. Smaller communities don't have the tax base to keep up with large organizations that have better resources. Chief Wooton wants to make it clear in the recruitment process how much our department transports as well, and that we are not just a fire response department.

A few individuals asked questions about the AFFCAF golf tournament, wanting information on what records are kept and how much AFFCAF gives back to the community. Chief Wooton brought up adding a guest speaker to the next meeting to give the community more information about its activities and programs.

Business from the Commission

Guest speaker Eric Rau

Eric asked to alternate meetings with guest speakers from different departments who can give the board more information about programs and events. There was consensus to have a guest speaker about mental health in the area, and human trafficking, as well as on AFFCAF and other things that would benefit the board to be aware of. Chief Harnden asked the board to reach her or Chief Wooton before the next meeting to give topics they would like to hear about.

Next Meeting Date

The next regularly scheduled meeting is on Wednesday, October 4, 2023.

Adjournment

Hearing no further business, Cynthia Greene adjourned the meeting at 8:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Reviewed by,

Julia Tremaine, Clerk III

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.*