

**CITY OF CONWAY
CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC SAFETY
COMMITTEE MEETING
229 MAIN STREET - CONFERENCE ROOM
MONDAY, JUNE 10, 2019 – 3:30 P.M.**

PRESENT: Mayor Barbara Jo Blain-Bellamy and Council Member Larry White
Absent: William Goldfinch (business trip)

STAFF: Adam Emrick, City Administrator; Dale Long, Police Chief; Le Hendrick, Fire Chief; Taylor Newell, Public Information Officer; Kevin Chestnut, Director Public Works; Barbara Tessier, City Clerk

OTHERS: Kathy Ropp

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Blain-Bellamy called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Motion: Mayor Blain-Bellamy made a motion, seconded by White, to approve the City Council Public Safety committee meeting agenda for June 10, 2019 as presented. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

A. Discussion of Corporal and Detective realignment and reclassification of grades.

Long informed committee members that the Police Department had a current structure of 5 detectives at pay grade 12 and 6 corporals at pay grade 11; however, both positions are considered first level supervisors. Detectives and corporals undergo the same testing to promote and same requirements to promote. When using a corporal as a detective, it is considered a promotion, but to use a detective as a corporal role, it is considered a demotion.

In order to best position employees where the greatest need is, reclassifying corporals and detectives in the same grade creates a pool of 11 to move where experience or expertise is needed. The reclassification also allows officers serving in corporal roles to receive training as investigators and to serve if needed. Using the larger pool, the Conway Police Department can better place its resources, experience, and expertise where needed without undergoing additional testing or process.

The salary impact is approximately \$5,400, and will be met through open positions. Three corporals are being given salary adjustments under proposed pay plan implementation. Changing the other three at this time will be the lowest impact to salary outlay.

Committee members agreed that this would be in keeping with Council's desire to hire from within.

Motion: White made a motion, seconded by Blain-Bellamy, to move this request forward to Council with their approval. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

- B. Discussion of speed tables/bumps in Pecan Grove Subdivision.** Long advised the committee that the police have received speeding complaints from the neighborhood and installed covert data collectors to record speeds. Data collected indicates the average speed was 26 mph in a posted 25 mph zone. Long noted that 42% of the traffic is at or below the speed limit, 41% is one to ten miles over of the limit, and 17% is over 10 miles over the limit. The peak traffic hours are from 6:00 a.m. to the middle of the day, which seems to be delivery and construction vehicle traffic. Traffic enforcement was present during the last week and the average speed during that time was 28 mph. Enforcement was also done with unmarked vehicles with hand held radar guns. Long informed the committee that he had received seven pages of a petition from the neighborhood against the installation of speed calming devices.

Long commented that he had spoken with Fire Chief Hendrick and Sanitation Director Jenerette about what impact traffic calming devices might have on their vehicles. Hendrick noted that fire apparatus would have to come to a complete stop to drive over the devices and that would add additional time for them to reach their destination. Jenrette said the speed calming devices would ruin the underside of some of his vehicles.

Staff's recommendation is not to install speed calming devices at this time.

Discussion followed about the long stretch of road at the front of the subdivision and that perhaps stop signs would be a benefit. The Mayor noted that it is hard to judge speed, and that 25 or 26 miles could seem much faster if you are just observing.

David Doran, a member of the HOA, indicated that people said drivers slow down when they see the police cars. Long mentioned again that they also used unmarked vehicles. Doran asked about lowering the speed limit to 15 mph. Consensus was that 15 mph was too low a speed to travel.

Doran was asked if there were small children in the neighborhood, which led to discussion about signage alerting drivers to children. Chestnut commented that the signs tend to give children a false sense of security, and Emrick noted that there were insurance liability issues with this type of signage.

Mayor Blain-Bellamy said speeding was an issue for the city, the county, and the state, but that the City would use its resources as best it could and that staff would do more research on the installation of stop signs before this item moved to Council.

- C. **Discussion on change to Bird Sanctuary Ordinance.** Long informed the committee that Section 5.1.15 of the UDO permitted hunting within the City limits in certain zoning districts on parcels that were a minimum of 15 acres, and that no person shall hunt within 300 yards of a residence without the permission of the owner/occupant. The City of Conway Code of Ordinances; however, Section 6-4-5 declares the City as a bird sanctuary making it unlawful to trap, hunt, or shoot any wild fowl or birds. Staff requests to amend Section 6-4-5 of the City of Conway Code of Ordinances to be consistent with the UDO.

Motion: White made a motion, seconded by Blain-Bellamy, to move this request forward to Council with their approval. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

- D. **Discussion on rebuilding Riverfront and Sherwood Parks I & II** Emrick informed the committee that the public has the impression that the City is not doing anything to repair the damage from the flood. The deck board replacement is moving along. Problems were found when the old decking was removed that had to be fixed prior to the new boards being installed. Every crew available has been working on this project. During the last two weeks, the park's irrigation system has been worked on. The entire system is being rebuilt from scratch. The new landscaping cannot be planted until the irrigation system is working. The City is changing its policy on rental of the park. There can no longer be tent spikes because a lot of the irrigation problems have been because of tent spikes driven into the pipes. The electrical pedestals are now removable and can be taken up prior to any potential flooding.

Emrick had a presentation showing the damage to the rip rap at Riverfront Park, the rocks have washed away and there is nothing stabilizing the banks. The repair costs would be approximately \$210,000. He suggested instead that a seawall be installed because it would give a more defined edge and be lesser upkeep.

Staff has learned from our interest in an amphitheater, that the current stage is not large enough. It should be 60 x 40. The current stage is close in size and it could be revamped. There is no covering or appropriate sound or electrical. As it stands, it is not a good set up for any concert. It had been suggested the walkway in front of the stage, be removed as it is taking up prime space for seating.

Emrick showed a photograph of the fountain at the park, which is unimpressive and can be updated inexpensively and made more attractive. The playground equipment must all be removed and replaced, but cannot be done until the City has approval from FEMA and the insurance company. Emrick showed a rendering of a pirate ship for the playground noting that something along those lines would have a big price tag, but it was not out of

the realm of possibility. All of the landscaping, bushes and mulch, need to be replaced with much nicer landscaping. Emrick showed renderings of the original plans for the bathroom facilities, noting that all that needed to be improved was the façade. Mitigation money may be coming to upgrade and elevate the lift station.

Emrick informed the committee that the Tennis Center, if rebuilt in its existing location would need to be elevated by approximately 4', with the building 2.5' above the Florence flood level. A wall and landscaping between the wall and the road could be installed to make the site look natural. The site would also have to be ADA compliant. The design for the new building could be that of the original plans. Emrick noted that the United States Tennis Association was willing to work on a grant with the City to rebuild and suggested that an 8th court be added for tournament play. ADA courts of clay could also be used for tournaments. Emrick commented that the City hoped to salvage the light structures and move them to another facility such as Collins Park or Smith Jones Park.

Emrick then showed a rendering of an arch across the road similar to those already at park entrances, but signifying the entrance to the Conway Marina. He also showed original rendering of an extension of the Riverwalk.

To replace the slides at Sherwood Park may cost as much as all new equipment. A rendering of a similar play structure as shown for Riverfront Park was reviewed. Discussion followed and consensus was that Riverfront Park should be the destination park in the City.

White asked if Collins Park and Smith Jones were getting new equipment. Emrick noted that Riverfront Park and Sherwood Park were being rebuilt with funds made available by FEMA.

This was informational and did not need a motion.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

- A. Speed studies.** Long informed the committee that the police had done speed studies in other areas of the City as well. From the reports, police enforcement will need to be increased at Janette and Perry Streets. The average speed in this area is approximately 10 miles over the posted limit of 30 MPH.

Complaints were received for the New Road area near the three-way stop sign where it turns to dirt. Once past the stop sign, there are no speed bumps. Studies show that enforcement and some type of speed calming might be necessary in this area because one-third of all drivers were 10+ miles over the posted speed limit.

At Hwy. 378 and Belladora (the entrance to Rosehaven subdivision), the majority of the vehicles are traveling at 1-10 miles over the posted speed limit. The department will continue to monitor and provide traffic enforcement. It is a U.S. highway and the City cannot install speed calming devices.

- B. Increase in B&E auto cases with stolen guns.** Long advised the committee that between January 2019 and the present, 24 guns had been stolen out of unlocked vehicles. This is not all of the B&E into autos, but just the ones where weapons have been taken.

Long noted that the department was doing PSA messages, including the 9:00 pm lock up message that was sent out nightly on Twitter and Facebook.

Long commented that when several break-ins occur in a neighborhood, officers either put door hangers out bringing the event to homeowners attention or they speak to homeowners by going door to door. Long noted that they sometimes get videos from neighbors, but the suspects are usually in hoodies pulled tight and they don't touch the vehicles with bare hands making identification impossible.

Discussion led to the 911 system and that sometimes the line is busy or is not answered. A concern was raised about the amount of questions the dispatcher was asking. Emrick commented that while the questions are being asked, the call has already been dispatched to the police. Long explained that the personnel in the call center were dispatching for fire, EMS, and police and sometimes the person answering the call is not the dispatcher. The person taking the call has to key in the information for the dispatcher to receive, which does cause a short delay.

A question arose about the City having its own 911 call center, but Long explained it would be too cost prohibitive between purchasing equipment and manning the center. As the system is now, a County officer can hear and respond to a call in the City if he/she is closer than a City officer. Mayor Blain-Bellamy asked if it would be feasible to have a 911 line for true emergencies and another number for other calls. The Mayor asked Long to create a task force to look at the shortcomings of the system, which would be how to get response as fast as we can from the right person from the system we have.

- C. Development of drone policy.** Long informed the committee that a drone policy was being developed for the City for the use of a City-owned drone. The policy must be multi-faceted because it would be used by Police and Fire use would be different from information gathered for public use. Long noted that the City had no drone pilot as of yet, but that Charlie Crosby was going through the certification training. Emrick commented that Jeff Leveille was a certified pilot, but until the City has a policy in place, the drone cannot be used for public safety reasons. Long informed the committee

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that the FFA considered drones to be airplanes and was the reason for such stringent rules.


Long noted the City policy would be modeled after the MASC policy, but more tailored to City needs.

Long informed the committee that the City had a detective assigned to the Attorney General's Internet Crimes Against Children Taskforce. If the City is participating with them, the AG's office puts out the press release statewide. The City is given information and have made arrests.

A brief discussion followed about who was in charge of putting out information dealing with the City. Consensus was that all news should come from the Public Information Officer on the City's social media accounts.

ADJOURN: Motion: Blain-Bellamy made a motion, seconded by White, to adjourn the meeting. **Vote:** Unanimous. The motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: this 3rd day of September, 2019.


Barbara A. Tessier, City Clark