

PUBLIC SAFETY STANDING COMMITTEE

**Regular Meeting
Oak Harbor Fire Department
May 20, 2010**

ATTENDANCE

The meeting began at 7:00 a.m., with the following in attendance: Council members Severns, Almberg (for Munns) and Dudley, Mayor Slowik and Paul Schmidt.

Staff present: Police Chief Rick Wallace; Lt. Tim Sterkel; Administrative Assistant Martha Folsom; Fire Chief Mark Soptich; Administrative Assistant Romy Velasquez.

Others present: None

POLICE

Jail Contracts

Chief Wallace advised that this item will be on June 15th Council agenda. It is a proposed Interlocal Service Agreement between the City of Anacortes and the City of Oak Harbor for contractual jail services. We are finding that jail space is an issue with many municipal, county and even state agencies. Lt. Sterkel has been looking into the possibility of renting jail bed space, based on our average daily jail population figures, and without impacting our operations. He and Bill Hawkins have been working on a contract with Anacortes. As part of that contract, there is no expectation on the part of that agency for bed space. Rental time would be limited and our agency would not be liability for any medical costs. We can terminate the agreement at any time. We believe this is a method where we can offset some of our budgeted expenses for corrections services. Currently, San Juan County and Department of Corrections (DOC) are also indicating that they could be frequent users. The fee will be \$65 per day, per inmate. This is the industry standard in the region, based on Lt. Sterkel's studies. We would need to do separate Agreements with each agency; the current agenda item is for the contract with Anacortes.

Committee Discussion

Mr. Severns asked if \$65 would cover our costs, and Chief Wallace said that our costs are much more than that. He said that, if you used the formula of actual jail costs, the jail space rental cost would be prohibitive to other agencies. In response to a question from Mr. Dudley, Chief Wallace replied that more prisoners would not increase the major portion of the jail budget, which is wages and benefits. He said that this will not be allowed to increase our overtime costs; that we would discontinue renting out bed space if that were to occur. In response to another question from Mr. Dudley about reaching the max on our number of prisoners and getting in a situation of not having open bed space for our use, Chief Wallace said that it is a common and acceptable practice to run 25% over bed space, for short term periods. Chief Wallace said that we are hoping to find, in a year or so, that there will be a reasonable amount of money coming in to offset jail costs. In response to Mr. Almberg's question, Chief Wallace said that there should be no negative impact on the budget, and we will monitor that closely. Lt. Sterkel and the Jail Supervisor will be impacted somewhat in increased workload, as our goal is to be closer to full than half-full in jail population. Mr. Almberg asked if we would have any prosecution obligations, and Chief Wallace said no, unless a crime was committed in our jail. Mr. Severns asked if the jail is inspected by another agency, and Chief Wallace said there is not a State regulatory body which routinely inspects our jail, however, a Federal agency has inspected our facility in the past, as well as DOC recently, as a part of the pending Interlocal Agreement.

WAIF Contract Update

Chief Wallace reported that this agenda item was a misunderstanding on his part, and that it should have dealt with the status of taking over another building aboard NAS for animal shelter operations. He advised that he had been hoping to have an update on this, but that it is still pending, and the Navy is still looking at the Real Estate Contract. He is hoping to update at a future meeting with more information on this issue.

Committee Discussion

No discussion

FIRE

Agreement for EMS Services with WGH

Chief Soptich advised that for about 11 years we have had an agreement with Whidbey General Hospital, wherein they provide funding to help offset the cost of our response to medical calls at their request. This is under a Mutual Aid Agreement, which we are currently reviewing, and hope to have something for Council soon.

Committee Discussion

No discussion

Grant Update: Defib Units

Chief Soptich advised this grant application was initially turned down due to insufficient funds; however, they have come back and said they now have funds available. The plan is to purchase 42 units in the County. The City will get ten units; two will go to the senior center, four to the Fire Department and four to the Police Department.

Committee Discussion

No discussion

Grant Update: Assistance to FF Grant

Chief Soptich advised that we are applying for two grants. One is for equipment, such as bunker gear and an extractor, and a second one for probably a rescue unit. We are working with a consultant on the grant applications, and he has a 70% success rate and has helped obtain \$191 million in grants for other agencies. The consultant's fee is fixed and small, (\$300). Chief Soptich said he will report back later on the status of these grant applications.

Committee Discussion

No discussion

Grant Update: Ready*Corps Application

Chief Soptich said that we were just advised that we did not receive this grant and were encouraged to apply again in the future. Grant funds were intended to hire a 40-hour per week employee, which would have cost the City on \$5500.

Committee Discussion

No discussion

Additional Agenda items requested by Chief Soptich:

Structure Fire

Chief Soptich advised that there was a single-family dwelling fire last night (5/19/10) at around 9:15 p.m., in the area of SW Roeder and SW 2nd Court. There was approximately \$150,000 in damage, a pet was lost in

the fire, but there were no other injuries. We received aid from North Whidbey Fire, with an engine and a rescue unit. We held the scene overnight, and will go back this morning to complete our investigation, so Chief Soptich was unable to give a cause at this time.

Committee Discussion

No discussion

DUI Drill at OHHS

Chief Soptich advised that we will have the annual DUI Emphasis drill at OHHS at 8 a.m. this morning. Students are not aware of the drill, and they are brought out and seated in stands. The purpose is to make them aware of the problems of drinking and driving, especially at graduation time. Some of the victims are students whom they know and this is pretty emotional for some students watching. The Coroner will be there, and they remove one of the deceased and put him/her in a body bag, which is quite an "eye opener" for the students. Chief Soptich said that, if we prevent just one of them from drinking and driving, this drill is worthwhile. It should be finished by 9:00 or 9:30 a.m. It will be held up behind and just northeast of the stadium, in the bus turnaround area.

Committee Discussion

No discussion

ADMINISTRATION

Standing Committee Rules and Procedures

Mr. Schmidt advised that this is on the Council agenda for June 1st, if Council wishes to formalize the Standing Committee Rules and Procedures. He said that, previously we have utilized Ad Hoc Committees and workshops, so we looked at a way to more equitably divide the labor between the groups. He said this is fairly common in other mid-size cities. He said that some advertise as a public meeting, and some do not. If you do not advertise, you are restricted to a non-quorum. The item he emphasizes is that there is no action taken, which lends itself to the public not being concerned that there are things going on if they are not in attendance. Our basis is that we conduct public business in public and he feels that this is still a good means in which to disseminate information for all the things that City Council is required to address. This item has been in front of all four standing committees now.

Committee Discussion

Mr. Severns asked if there have been any questions from the other standing committees. Mr. Schmidt said that there have been brief discussions of videotaping the Standing Committee meetings, and that this is Council's prerogative. He feels that, like anything else, there are pro's and con's to videotaping. We would want to look at the direct cost increase, as well as indirect costs for staff and resources. Also, if we videotaped, meetings would probably be held at the Council Chambers, and we would possibly then invite public comment as a regular occurrence. Mr. Schmidt advised that another issue of discussion has been is whether there is any violation and it is still staff's position that there is no violation. He said that, with this proposed Ordinance, we would be even more within bounds. Mr. Severns asked if there has been discussion from Department heads and staff about being in agreement with the current setup, and Mr. Schmidt said that the overall sentiment is still that they prefer to have the opportunity to have "face time" with council members to discuss these items, rather than discussing them for the first time in front of the full Council. He said that there is strong support from the staff. Mr. Schmidt said that discussion has not been held with staff in regards to videotaping the meetings, in answer to Mr. Severns' question.

Mr. Severns asked about the differing times and locations of the Standing Committee meetings, and Mr. Schmidt says it has not been a problem, and that those times and days were set by the Council committee members. He said that meetings should be set at the Council's desires. Mr. Severns asked if anyone had looked at the costs of videotaping meetings, and would that information be brought forth at the June 1st meeting. Mr. Schmidt said that was not part of the proposal coming to Council, but if Council wants to look

at that there could be a directive. Mr. Schmidt said if that is to be researched, he would prefer to have it done for the upcoming budget preparation. Mr. Severns asked if there have been any challenges elsewhere around the statue and if we have actual law to look at. Mr. Schmidt said that he could only answer that secondhand from City Attorney Hite, from a recent seminar she attended, and that there doesn't appear to be any information on challenges. As we know, the Attorney General's Office made a statement about the standing committee meetings, and that office can bring forward formation action if they think there is a violation.

Mr. Severns brought up the issue and discrepancies in the abilities to produce agendas and notes from the previous meeting, in advance of the meeting, as four different people are doing this now. Mr. Schmidt said that we are working on getting agendas up at the website at least one week in advance. Mr. Dudley asked, in reference to the standing committee meeting dates/times, if the Ordinance is adopted, would changes to date/times be at the discretion of the Chair. Mr. Schmidt said the meeting dates/times would be set and fixed by Ordinance. The meeting would occur, even if with only one member present. If for some reason, all three could not attend, we would note "no attendees, no meeting". Discussion returned to meeting dates and times, and Mr. Schmidt reiterated they were set by the Committee members and that if we want changes to the meeting schedule, June 1st would be a good opportunity. Mr. Schmidt said that we respect Council's time and that should be the priority. Mr. Dudley asked if a council member would need to go through a formal process if they knew they were going to miss a meeting, and Mr. Schmidt said that it is included in the proposal that attendance is not mandatory. Mr. Severns said that he has been reluctant to attend a standing committee meeting where he is not sitting, and asked if these rules will address that. Mr. Schmidt said that, from a legal standpoint, it removes any remaining doubt that you can have more than three attend, and that only the committee members are deliberating of part of discussions. Any others in attendance will be observing only. In response to Mr. Severns' question, Mr. Schmidt said that if a Standing Committee meeting was held, only 2 members were in attendance and a third non-member Council person was in attendance, that person could "sit" at the meeting, as the names of committee members are not listed.

Discussion returned to videotaping committee meetings. Mr. Schmidt offered his comment about the amount of time and preparation by staff that goes into a Council meeting is growing and we are trying to find a way to improve upon that. He discussed larger cities, where there are actually budgeted positions for putting proposals together, etc. In larger cities, Council members also have staff, such as administrative assistants, and this is usually in cities with over 100,000 in population.

Mayor Slowik wished to add that he believes the committee members have a chance to meet with staff at these meetings, as opposed to only with the Department Heads at Council meetings. This gives the advantage of being able to "drill down", as staff are very informed. He feels that we would not have been able to do the kind of projects we've done over the last 2½ years, without these committee meetings, because committee members would not have had the understanding that staff is able to provide. He feels that these meetings are where members get the most information. He said that there is no need to make decisions at these meetings, and that Council members' questions give staff a direction, they "get" what committee members are thinking.

NEXT MEETING June 17, 2010

**MEETING ADJOURNED
8:05 a.m.**