



City of Oak Harbor
PUBLIC SAFETY Standing Committee
Meeting Notes

January 22, 2010, 7:00 a.m.
Oak Harbor Fire Department

Notes - Information Only

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Severns called the meeting to order at 6:57 a.m.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mayor Slowik, Paul Schmidt
Council Members: Bob Severns, Jim Palmer, Scott Dudley
Police Department: Chief Rick Wallace, Lt. John Dyer, Admin. Asst. Martha Folsom
Fire Department: Chief Mark Soptich, BC Chief Ray Merrill
Also Present: Eric Johnston, City Engineer

Chairperson Severns welcomed Mr. Dudley to the Committee.

1. Lava Lounge Nightclub License Update – R. Wallace

Chief Wallace said that Lava Lounge still has their temporary permit, but the process has been halted while the State Liquor Control Board is conducting an administrative investigation into ownership issues. The liquor license for Lava Lounge has been canceled, and Lava Lounge is going to appeal this decision. The business has remained open during this process. If Lava Lounge wins the appeal and regains their liquor license, we will continue with the Nightclub permit process. If they lose their appeal, then Chief Wallace said we will need to determine if the temporary permit needs to be revoked by the Council. Chief Soptich advised that they have been working with the Lava Lounge business on some code violations pertaining to their sprinkler system. They are not in compliance as yet.

2. Speed Limit Changes – E. Johnston

City Engineer Eric Johnston handed out the Draft Agenda Bill for proposed speed limit changes to Heller Street and Oak Harbor Street, as well as the proposed changes to the City Code. Mr. Johnston said that there is a need to "clean things up" as a result of annexations, and the moving of speed limit signs, etc. The proposal is to lower the speed limit on Heller Street to 35 mph, from Swantown on the south side, north to the City limits. At that point, it becomes County Road, with a 45 mph speed limit. This will alleviate the problem of varying speed limits on Heller Street. The second proposal is to lower the speed limit on Oak Harbor Street from 35 mph to 30 mph for consistency and safety. Street improvements are in the future for Oak Harbor Street, and this is a good time to lower the speed limit. As well, the area of Oak Harbor Street and NE 7th is one of the high accident locations in the City, and a speed limit reduction should help with that. Chief Wallace advised that, when changes such as these proposed, the Police Department will typically do an "education" period, or a grace period, where violators will not be ticketed, depending on the circumstances. After that period, violations would be subject to enforcement. Mr. Johnston said that they will often make efforts at public education about the changes.

3. Reorganization Update – M. Soptich

Chief Soptich said that Council approved the reorganization in December, and they are working with Legal on finalizing the Job Descriptions, and setting up a testing process. They will then go to Civil Service for approval on the process, and will then test to establish a hiring list. Mr. Severns clarified that there were 36 Paid on Call (POC) positions now, and Chief Soptich said yes, eight more vacancies. Mr. Severns said that he had asked previously, but perhaps didn't get a clear answer, if Chief Soptich could tell the Council, during budget time, the costs for hours worked by the POC staff vs. the paid (Career) staff. Chief Soptich said that there are three areas where POC staff is paid:

1. **Emergency Responses.** This cannot be predicted, but he uses an average of 12 people per call.
2. **Weekly Training.** He budgets for all personnel to attend
3. **"D" Shift Program.** This is the program where POC staff are paid to cover shifts. There are 4 on duty at night, and one during the day. He can plan for that, using an average pay per hour.

Chief Soptich will break these figures down into dollars for the Committee. Mr. Severns asked if POC staff were on the City's benefit plan. Chief Soptich said no, that they are covered under the Washington State Board of Firefighters, and they can be covered under State L&I, or under this Board. The City and the volunteer also pay into a retirement plan, which – for example – after 25 years would provide a \$300 per month retirement. POC Staff also have the City's EAP (Employee Assistance Program) available to them. He said that there are some benefits available, but nothing like a career position has.

4. Rescue Unit Purchase – M. Soptich

Chief Soptich advised he hopes to go out to bid on a rescue unit within the next six weeks, and will bring this matter to Council. Mr. Severns asked if Chief Soptich had any idea on cost, and Chief Soptich said between \$150,000 and \$200,000, and that there were funds in the Equipment Rental Fund for this purchase. Mr. Dudley asked if they would be “swapping” out a vehicle in the purchase process. Chief Soptich advised that they had moved a 1985 unit into the rescue unit function, but that it is not a safe vehicle for this purpose. Therefore, when a rescue unit is purchased, the 1985 unit may be dropped back into a support role.

5. Marine Unit Research – M. Soptich

Chief Soptich advised the Committee that we lost our marine rescue unit several years ago and we are now dependent on North Whidbey Fire & Rescue for response. Response time is typically 12-15 minutes to launch. We are trying to improve response time, and currently have a boat we received from DNR. We are trying to determine if it is seaworthy, and what the cost would be to put it into service. Motors were also received from DNR, and we are trying to determine if parts from six can be made into two motors. Mr. Severns asked how common the need was, and Chief Soptich said there are maybe an average of 12 responses per year. Mayor Slowik asked where the boat would be kept, and Chief Soptich advised that the plan would be to keep it on a trailer, at the Fire Department.

6. Mobile Command Post Research & Opportunity – M. Soptich

Chief Soptich advised that he and Chief Wallace have been trying to come up with a way to obtain a Mobile Command Post, as neither department could use it enough on their own, but collectively they do see a need. This unit could be utilized at a criminal or fire scene, or at the scene of a large scale event, and would have all the communications and operations run out of the unit. We have a bus from Island Transit available to us at no cost, and would try to equip it through grant funds. Chief Wallace said that a unit such as this is often cost prohibitive for a city our size, but with the donation from Island Transit, we could slowly fund the needed purchases over time, to make it useable for us. Chief Soptich said there is also interest from the Island County Sheriff's Office and the other fire districts, as well as even Island Transit, for a need/use of the unit. He said he would also like to pursue this need issue with the School District. The unit would then be available to other organizations through a Mutual Aid Agreement. Chief Soptich said to think of it as an EOC (Emergency Operations Center) on wheels. Mr. Severns asked what would happen if both (Fire & Police) had a need for it. Chief Soptich said it would be operated under a Unified Command System, where if the Police need it, they would take it and Fire would respond in support. Police would be the Incident Commander, and vice versa.

7. AHAB Testing Schedule – M. Soptich

Chief Soptich advised that, regarding the AHAB testing equipment installed at the Whidbey and Heller tank site, they are working with us on a testing schedule. They would like to have monthly testing. We feel that this is not a problem, as long as they educate the public that it is a test, and when it is going to occur. Mr. Dudley asked if it was a siren, and Chief Soptich said yes, as well as several units and organizations can broadcast over it and give instructions. It sits on a 60-foot pole, and has 12-16 100 watt speakers, he believes. It can be heard a mile away.

8. Emergency Operations Center Relocation in the Station – M. Soptich

Chief Soptich advised that they are moving the EOC (Emergency Operations Center) from the north end of the station to the south end. This move will double the size of the center. WE have been using grant money to do this in phases. When it is completed, we can go up and tour it during one of the PSSC meetings.

9. Union Contract – M. Soptich

Chief Soptich advised that we are in the 2nd year of a 2-year contract, and we will be starting negotiations this year, as the contract expires at the end of the year.

10. POC Testing Results – M. Soptich

Chief Soptich said that we do POC testing every year, which we completed in December, and have taken on four additional people. Three are new and one is a lateral, who worked here previously and left due to the military.

11. SR-20 Clean-up Agreement – M. Soptich

Chief Soptich advised that their 2-year agreement with Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) expires next month, and he anticipates bringing a new contract before Council. This is the Adopt-a-Highway litter cleanup program, which the Fire Association started initially, and Fire has done ever since.

Additional Items

A. COG seminar - M. Soptich

Chief Soptich advised that the Council of Government is planning to sponsor/host training on February 24th, from 9am to noon, which will be about Emergency Planning for Elected Officials. This will help educate elected officials' on what their responsibilities are during an emergency operation. Chief Soptich will try to get the information and agenda out before the training.

B. Committee Member Assignments – Mr. Palmer

Mr. Palmer advised that he may be moving to the General Governmental Services Committee, and he understands there may be some other moves. Mayor Slowik advised that there has been some discussion about re-shuffling all committee assignments, as well as all the ancillary committees on which they serve. He believes there may be a consensus, after approaching all Council members individually, and this may come before Council at the next meeting. Nothing has been changed at this point.

Next Meeting

The next Public Safety Standing Committee meeting will be **February 18, 2009**, at 7:00 a.m., at the Oak Harbor Fire Department.

The Public Safety Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 8:00 a.m. on 1/21/10.
Notes prepared by M. Folsom