

Public Safety & Community Health Committee

Meeting Minutes – August 30, 2021

Call to Order: 1:16 PM

Attendance:

PSCHC Members Present: CM Kinnear; CP Beggs (arrived at 1:17 PM); CM Mumm; CM Stratton; CM Burke (left the meeting at 3:00 PM); CM Cathcart; and CM Wilkerson.

Staff/Others Present: City Administrator Johnnie Perkins, Mike Ormsby, Chief Craig Meidl, Justin Lundgren, Eric Olsen, David Singley, Michael McNab, Chief Brian Schaeffer, Seth Hackenberg, Mary Muramatsu, Tonya Wallace, Michelle Hughes, Matthew Boston, Tim Dunivant, Luis Garcia, Brian McClatchey, Tayla Tollefson, Giacobbe Byrd, and Hannahlee Allers.

Approval of August 2, 2021 minutes: Motion to approve by CM Mumm; M/S by CM Stratton. The committee approved the minutes from the August 2, 2021 PSCHC meeting unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Monthly Reports:

1. OPO Monthly Update – July 2021
2. Photo Red Update (SPD)
3. Sit and Lie Report (SPD)
4. September Strategic Initiatives Report (SPD)

Consent Agenda Portion:

1. WTSC Interagency Agreement for WTSC Priorities (SPD)
2. WTSC Interagency Agreement for Law Enforcement Liaison Program (SPD)
3. Application Approval for DOJ's Office on Violence Against Women FY2021 Firearms Technical Assistance Project Pilot Sites Initiative (SPD)
4. Purchase of Scott/3M Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) (SFD)
5. 2021-2023 Spokane County System Demonstration Grant Agreement (Consolidated Homeless Grant) (CHHS)
6. Approval of Contract Amendment for Special Counsel Contract (Legal)

STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION

Strategic Priority: Integrated 911/Dispatch

NONE

Strategic Priority: Integrated Response

SPD Adopts Online 911 Reporting for Non-emergency Incidents (2 minutes)

Chief Meidl talked about this enhancement in online reporting capabilities. He said SREC was able to implement this online reporting tool. He noted that this is not for in-progress crime reporting. Citizens

should call 911 or crime check for ongoing incidents. CM Cathcart asked about the timeline for processing incidents with this tool. Chief Meidl said that it will generally take 24hrs for an incident report to be generated. CM Stratton asked how this tool will be messaged. Chief Meidl said that SPD put out a press release last week. CP Beggs said that he thinks we need to spend a lot more time and resources promoting this tool. CM Stratton recommended sending out a mailer in citizens' utility bills.

Strategic Priority: Criminal Justice Reform

Community Court Update (5 minutes)

Seth Hackenberg updated Council on some of the happenings in and around Community Court. The court is maintaining online options as well as some public-facing services. Mr. Hackenberg highlighted a couple success cases. CM Wilkerson asked about the viability of the program in East Central and asked what follow-up happens if people don't show up. Mr. Hackenberg said there is not plan to consolidate and that the goal is to increase attendance. CM Cathcart asked about the benefit of a media campaign. Mr. Hackenberg said they are hoping to increase the number of walk-ins – people coming into the site to access services. CM Cathcart asked what happens if people have a repeated failure to appear. Mr. Hackenberg said in that case, warrants would be issued.

Strategic Priority: City-Wide Clean & Safe

NONE

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Tayla Tollefson interviewed for a position on the Chase Youth Commission.

Staff Requests:

Proposed AMR Contract Amendment for Utilization of BLS Ambulances in the COS Emergency Medical System – Chief Schaeffer (10 minutes)

Chief Schaeffer highlighted the briefing paper provided in the packet. He said there were a series of recent events that require consideration of the use of Basic Life Support (BLS) ambulances within the city to augment AMR's current compliment of ALS ambulances. He said that SFD is recommending the city permit use of BLS ambulances in the interest of patient safety and continuity of service. CP Beggs asked if this allows them to use EMT instead of paramedics, but they will have to charge a lower rate. Chief Schaeffer confirmed that. CM Wilkerson asked if we have the staffing levels to execute this proposal. Chief Schaeffer said these are additional units to the system. He said this allows the City to align its system to take advantage of those resources.

Council Requests:

Purchase of PepperBall Systems & Broader Discussion about SBO Resulting from Criminal Justice Legislation – CM Kinnear (15 minutes)

CM Kinnear requested a brief discussion on this topic and asked if there will be a strategic plan for using this funding from the state legislature. Major Michael McNab pointed out that PepperBall is a priority because they are a one-off purchase that is a less lethal tool for SPD. CM Kinnear asked what a PepperBall is. Major McNab said that it is a chemical irritant that creates distance. CP Beggs said that PepperBall makes sense but that he would like to see a priority list – including training and other items – and a public engagement process and Council collaboration. CM Cathcart said that it would be good to have a discussion about priorities, but that Council should provide SPD whatever tools they need. CM Wilkerson asked Chief Meidl what public engagement on this topic would look like from SPD. Chief Meidl said that SPDs capital needs are great and that they need a constant influx of money to keep up with the community's needs. He said that the state legislature actually encouraged less lethal platforms and tools in the bill – specifically PepperBall – that will allow officers to maintain distance and cover. CM Stratton asked how quickly they need these less lethal items. Chief Meidl said that, ideally, they would've had these items by the time the new laws went into effect (July 25, 2021). CM Stratton asked if there will be any training needed for these items. Chief Meidl said that they already train on using the PepperBall platform but there might be some additional training needed. CP Beggs clarified that he is supportive of using this funding for purchases like PepperBall and shields but cautioned against using this funding on broader capital needs. CM Kinnear expressed concern for both the safety of officers and the public.

Continued Discussion about Local Implementation of New Drug Possession Laws – CP Beggs (10 minutes)

Mary Muramatsu briefed Council on a proposal to adopt state law on drug possession. She said there are a couple of challenges to be aware of. One of these challenges has to do with SPDs authority to contact people. Development of probable cause is often needed in order to make those contacts and referrals. CM Cathcart said that he does not think officers will be able to come up with probable cause to make these referrals. Ms. Muramatsu said that developing probable cause to actually do something about drug use will likely take putting hands on that individual, which has legal implications. CM Cathcart asked if probable cause is needed in order to approach an individual. Ms. Muramatsu said she didn't think so, and that officers could approach an individual with reasonable suspicion, but it is unclear whether they have authority to use physical force to establish probable cause. CP Beggs asked if it would be fair to say that most of the drug possession charges are people who are arrested for something else where there is probable cause and then are searched and drugs are found. Ms. Muramatsu said she didn't know if it was the majority of the cases, but confirmed that drug possession charges as secondary offences do occur. CP Beggs mentioned that a warm hand off with behavioral health specialists would be much more effective than a paper referral form. Ms. Muramatsu said that this would be a policy question. Ms. Muramatsu recommended maintaining the language of the RCW. Major Eric Olsen said that there needs to be a local law on the books so that officers can take action at the time of contact. CM Kinnear said it would be ideal to pair up a mental health specialists so that we have someone there who can augment what the police are doing. That way we have not only an officer enforcing the law, but actually a mental health officer there to do the warm handoff. Major McNab asked the group to think of process – the situations when the majority of drug possession offenses occur. He pointed out that you would need a mental health professional with officers all over town. Instead, he suggested that warm hand off be a follow-up. CP Beggs supported that follow-up idea. CM Cathcart asked a process question regarding a hypothetical scenario wherein officers find illegal drugs on someone's person after arresting them for a different offence. CM Cathcart asked whether they would be charged for the main offence but receive a referral for the drug offence. Major McNab confirmed that and pointed out that there still

needs to be consensus about what a referral means. CM Wilkerson commented that is a one-off scenario when someone is shooting up on the street in plain view of the public.

Discussion about Capital Funds SBO – CM Kinnear (15 minutes)

CM Kinnear said that Council had one idea of how they wanted to move forward with capital and that doesn't seem to be occurring. CM Mumm clarified that Council determined that they were going to ween off of SIP loans for police and fire capital but not for everything. Tim Dunivant said that Council is looking to enhance the capital fund mechanism because the need is growing greater than what was originally projected. He said that earlier this year he created a few different options to increase the funding. CM Mumm said that we still need SIP for other things. Tim Dunivant confirmed that. CP Beggs said that the original plan was to take the 1% property tax increase and match it year after year, then COVID hit and the administration asked to take a pause on that. CM Cathcart said that he doesn't think we need to raise taxes in order to support our police and fire capital needs.

Update on Current Status and Enforcement of Mosquito Devises – CM Burke (5 minutes)

CM Kinnear mentioned that she has had conversations with staff about there being difficulty enforcing the mosquito devise ordinance. Luis Garcia has advised his team to send out courtesy notices to any location that receives a complaint. To date, he says there have been no complaints filed. CM Burke asked if she reports them, if the devises will be taken down. Mr. Garcia walked through the notification and citation process.

Update on SFD Vacancies – CM Kinnear (5 minutes)

Chief Schaeffer said that there are currently 27 open positions in SFD operations. He said the department's practice is to run a hiring process when Civil Service completes a recruitment and when enough vacancies arise to justify a class and when the department has the operational overtime and capital funding to support one. CM Kinnear asked what mandated overtimes means. Chief Schaeffer said for the first time in his career, he is mandating his staff to work. Chief Schaeffer talked about all of the external stressors contributing to these issues. CM Kinnear said that this is concerning on a number of levels. CM Cathcart asked how many of the 27 vacancies are people who are unable to work because they are out sick. Chief Schaeffer said that those are actual positions funded in their budget that are not filled. CM Mumm asked if there is any way we could speed up the EMT certification. Chief Schaeffer said that candidates come to them with EMT certification. CM Stratton asked what happens if a fire fighter is called in and refuses to work. Chief Schaeffer pointed out some scenarios and clarified that fire fighters cannot work past 72 hours a week.

Update on Process for Loaning Firefighters to Other Jurisdictions – CM Kinnear (5 minutes)

CM Kinnear asked how we know that other jurisdictions are requesting our assistance. Chief Schaeffer said they get dispatched – either through a dispatcher or through a phone call to an executive chief. CM Kinnear clarified that SFD waits until it has received that call before the department actually dispatches people. Chief Schaeffer said that it depends and that chief officers have an agreement that they can self-initiate under certain circumstances. CM Mumm said she is having some hesitation in participating in these agreements for what will probably be a busy September. Chief Schaeffer said that every situation is difficult. He talked about the variables that go into the decision to send resources out. CM Mumm clarified what costs are re-imbursed when firefighters are loaned out.

Update on SFD July Overtime – CM Kinnear (5 minutes)

CM Kinnear talked about her concerns about the amount SFD is spending on overtime. She said that this concern about overtime includes worry about the safety of SFD staff and the community. CM Cathcart

asked if we changed the structure of how the firefighters worked, how would that affect overtime. Chief Schaeffer said they would have to add staff to make a different staffing model work. CM Wilkerson asked for clarification on where the City is at in the overtime study. Tonya Wallace gave an update.

CM Mumm told Chief Meidl that City Council is getting a lot of feedback from the public that City Council has “defunded the police.” She asked if SPD is getting the same feedback and asked if SPD could help explain to people that Council has funded the police, given raises to the police, and are funding police initiatives. Chief Meidl noted that some of the frustrations that he is hearing from his staff involve aging vehicles and equipment. Chief Meidl said that some of what Council is hearing might have to do with SPD struggles getting proper funding for those. He noted, however, that it’s not appropriate for an officer to be talking to someone who is a victim about those types of issues.

State Legislative Update:

NONE

ADMINISTRATION REQUESTS:

NONE

Action Items: NONE

Executive Session: NONE

Adjournment: CM Kinnear adjourned the meeting at 3:01 PM. The next PSCHC meeting will be held Monday, October 4, 2021.

Respectfully submitted by:

Giacobbe Byrd, Legislative Aide to Council Member Lori Kinnear (PSCHC Chair)



Committee Chair Approval

Lori Kinnear Spokane City Council – District 2