

MINUTES
Public Safety Committee
August 23, 2017, 5:30 p.m.
City Hall, Council Conference Room

The Public Safety Committee met on Wednesday, August 23, 2017, at 5:30 p.m., at the City Hall, Council Conference Room.

Committee Members Attending: Chairman Jim Gallagher
Councilman David Humphries

Committee Members Absent: Mayor Pro Tem Todd Pierceall

Staff in Attendance: Mr. Michael Peoples, City Manager
Mr. Todd Carpenter, Deputy City Manager
Ms. Laura Burton, Police Attorney
Chief Robert Helton, Gastonia Police Department
Assistant Chief James Smith, Gastonia Police Department
Assistant Chief Travis Brittain, Gastonia Police Department
Chief Phillip Welch, Gastonia Fire Department
Deputy Chief Mark Rutherford, Gastonia Fire Department

Guests: Mr. Jim Pass
Ms. Jennifer Stepp

Chairman Jim Gallagher welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

ITEM 1: FIRE DEPARTMENT STAFFING, RETIREMENTS, AND PROMOTION UPDATE:

Chairman Gallagher recognized Fire Chief Phil Welch for the purpose of staff presentation. Chief Welch gave an update on staffing, retirements and promotions.

Committee Recommendation: This item was presented for informational purposes only. No action required.

ITEM 2: FIRE PREVENTION AND INSPECTION UPDATE:

Chairman Gallagher recognized Fire Chief Phil Welch for the purpose of staff presentation. Chief Welch gave an update on the enforcement of fire code and ordinance, fire investigation, and public education by the Life Safety Division of the Fire Department. Staff fielded various questions of the Committee.

Committee Recommendation: This item was presented for informational purposes only. No action required.

ITEM 3: UPDATE ON WEST DISTRICT POLICE SATELLITE STATION AT LORAY MILL:

Chairman Gallagher recognized Mr. Todd Carpenter for staff presentation. Mr. Carpenter presented an update on the West District Police Satellite Station at Loray Mill.

City staff recommended to the Public Safety Committee to delay the plans indefinitely because of the cost of the project and because the original rationale for the move has changed and evolved since it was first suggested six years ago. Costs in 2011 for the move were estimated to be around \$90,000 for furnishings. Today the costs are estimated at approximately \$600,000 because they now include up-fit and furnishings.

Crime in the area has decreased over the past 10 years by 27%. The City remains committed to the area and will continue to apply community policing strategies, actively encourage and initiate community partnerships, and using tools such as our residential property and nuisance abatement ordinances to combat crime.

Unless otherwise directed, staff will no longer pursue the Loray West District Substation, but will continue to focus and direct public safety resources into the York/Chester area. In addition will work with the Loray to identify a better use of our resources and the space to promote economic development, job creation, and investment in the community.

Committee Recommendation: This item was presented for informational purposes only. No action required.

ITEM 4: ORDINANCE AMENDMENT, CHAPTER 8 – TRADES AND BUSINESS:

Chairman Gallagher recognized Ms. Laura Burton for staff presentation. Ms. Burton presented an Ordinance Amendment to Chapter 8: Trades and Business to increase public safety and curb the inconvenience and expense to traveling motorists when their vehicle is towed or booted.

Committee Recommendation: The Committee voted unanimously (2-0) to recommend approval of the Ordinance Amendment as presented to the full Council.

Action needed: Approve or reject the Committee's recommendation.

ITEM 5: BODY WORN CAMERA POLICY:

Chairman Gallagher recognized Police Chief Robert Helton for the purpose of staff presentation. Chief Helton presented the draft Body Worn Camera Policy which is intended to provide officers with instructions on when and how to use body-worn cameras (BWCs) so that officers may reliably record their contacts with the public in accordance with law. The policy also establishes guidelines related to the use, management, storage, and retrieval of the audio and video recordings from departmentally issued BWCs.

Staff fielded various questions of the Committee.

Committee Recommendation: This item was presented for informational purposes only. No action required.

ITEM 6: POLICE DEPARTMENT STAFFING, RETIREMENTS, AND PROMOTION UPDATE:

Chairman Gallagher recognized Police Chief Robert Helton for the purpose of staff presentation. Chief Helton presented an update on the Police Department staffing, retirements and promotions.

Committee Recommendation: This item was presented for informational purposes only. No action required.

ITEM 7: MID-YEAR CRIME STATISTICS UPDATE:

Chairman Gallagher recognized Police Chief Robert Helton for the purpose of staff presentation. Chief Helton gave an update on crime statistics and noted that Gastonia's crime rate has been steadily decreasing, on average, 5 percent for the last 10 years and acknowledged that we still have many challenges ahead of us as we continue to grow and change and strive to remain a City that is safe to live, work, and play in.

With no other items to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.