

TUMWATER CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING

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CONVENE: 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Mayor Debbie Sullivan and Councilmembers Peter Agabi, Joan Cathey, Leatta Dahlhoff, Angela Jefferson, Eileen Swarthout, and Kelly Von Holtz.

Excused: Councilmember Michael Althausser.

Staff: City Administrator Lisa Parks, City Attorney Karen Kirkpatrick, Police Chief Jon Weiks, Fire Chief Brian Hurley, Transportation and Engineering Director Brandon Hicks, Water Resources and Sustainability Director Dan Smith, Police Commander Jay Mason, Police Administrative Manager Laura Wohl, Police Management Analyst Dr. Oliver Bowers, and IT Manager Lance Inman.

2025-2029 POLICE STRATEGIC GROWTH PLAN:

Police Chief Weiks briefed the Council on the 2025-2029 Police Strategic Growth Plan. Development of the plan encompassed four years of research, analysis, community involvement, and staff and Council input. Major elements of the plan were completed by Police Management Analyst Dr. Bowers and Administrative Manager Wohl.

The Police Strategic Growth Plan includes three elements of growth, community expectations, and increasing the department's credibility.

Growth projections are based on Thurston Regional Planning Council's *2023 Profile*. In 2016, the City completed a large annexation adding approximately 3,500 people to the City of Tumwater. At that time, the department added five police officers. During the last eight years, the population has increased by another 5,000 people with the department adding one police officer. The department lacked a staffing model to identify the appropriate ratio of police officers per total population. Another consideration is projection of growth in 2030, which is anticipated to increase by another 5,000 individuals. The plan addresses how the department will manage growth.

The process of developing the plan was based on an understanding of community expectations. Over the last four years, the Council has been involved in the police reform discussion that resulted in the *Policing in Tumwater Report*. Additionally, recent state legislation required changes in police tactics with an increase in the number of officers and time at police calls for service. The City's increase in calls for service is contributing to a decrease in proactive policing. The report was completed in 2021 and is included as Appendix A in the plan.

In 2022, the City conducted a Community Survey. Results of the survey were positive from the community. At that time, the department welcomed Dr. Oliver Bowers to assist the department in management

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analysis. Dr. Bowers reviewed survey results and validated the results (Appendix B).

In 2023, the department initiated development of the Police Strategic Growth Plan. The first question was why the existing staffing level was 33 police officers. After discussing the issue with Dr. Bowers, he developed a staffing model based on quantitative and qualitative data. The model was presented to the Public Health and Safety Committee in January 2023. The committee approved moving forward with the model (Appendix D).

The Police Strategic Growth Plan also includes different organizational charts beginning in 2025 through 2029, as well as a staff longevity chart forecasting pending retirements.

During 2023, the department conducted meetings with focus groups to seek feedback on services provided by the department. The process produced qualitative data complementing the quantitative data from the survey. Using research-based methods, Dr. Bowers grouped community feedback into three themes (Appendix C) used to develop the Police Strategic Growth Plan.

Development of the plan continues. The plan addresses services over the next five years, staffing, facility needs, and technology needs. During the first year of the plan, actions under new services include implementation of the retail corridor patrol (already initiated), implementing regional proactive investigations (Olympia & Lacey), establishing a volunteer program, and increasing the department's social media presence.

The Tumwater Police Department is at capacity with no room to expand. The department has explored options to lease space over the next two to five years to enable more discussion on the status of City Hall space. Leasing space enables the department to grow based on growth projections within the Police Strategic Growth Plan by moving the department's investigations and training units to provide space for a volunteer program and expansion of the Patrol Division.

The report also addresses staffing additions. The department promotes from within for detectives and sergeants with the department hiring replacement police officer positions vacated through promotional opportunities. Three positions are tied to the body-worn camera program to ensure a successful program. The positions include a sergeant, a network specialist, and a police services specialist. In 2025, the department will begin preparing for the body-worn camera program by hiring the positions. During that period, the department will ~~have~~ [be configuring](#) a new records management system.

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During 2026, new services include finalization of body-worn camera policies and outreach to the community, negotiation with the Police Guild on policies and pay compensation for body-worn cameras, and if approved, hiring three new positions. ~~assigned to the body-worn camera program to participate in the planning and implementation of the program. Additionally, the department will establish a records specialist position for body-worn cameras,~~ The department will implement a business liaison officer program, add a School Resource Officer (SRO) to elementary schools, expand the scope of the volunteer program, and partner with the Lacey Police Department to establish a Basic Law Enforcement Academy in Thurston County. No new additional space needs are anticipated in 2026. In late 2026, the new regional records management system will be online with procurement of body-worn cameras scheduled.

In 2027, new services include [implementing the body-worn camera program](#), adding a Youth Academy and refining the Volunteer Services Program. Staffing includes three new positions of two sergeants and one patrol officer.

~~By early 2028, the body-worn camera program will be implemented.~~

New services in 2029~~8~~ include connecting the Volunteer Services Program with other regional volunteer groups. Staffing includes two new positions of patrol officer and police services specialist.

During the last year of the plan, expansion of the SRO program will be examined based on interest by schools to expand the program. Staffing additions include one patrol officer and one SRO.

The projected cost of the proposal is between \$6.9 million and \$7.4 million over the span of five years. The proposed budget covers facility needs, technology, and staffing.

Police Chief Weiks invited questions and comments from the Council.

Councilmember Dahlhoff asked to receive more information on the composition of the focus groups. Dr. Bowers responded that the department outreached to the entire community through the City's social media platforms. A form was developed to enable individuals to provide basic information and reasons for participating. Three different focus groups were established comprised of a range of ages and demographics. Interests were represented from every side of the policing debate, all socio-economic levels, and all education levels, etc. Councilmember Dahlhoff requested access to the demographic information of the focus groups and whether the department outreached to other groups, such as nonprofits or groups that do not speak English as their first language, etc. Dr. Bowers explained that targeting specific groups can often skew the results. The

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intent is for the engagement component to be as broad as possible by encouraging everyone to participate to the extent possible. The department utilized the community representative to reach out to the community as well as outreach through department-established channels.

Councilmember Dahlhoff reiterated her request to have access to the data as the results of the survey reflect that many of the respondents were middle-aged Caucasian women, which reflects some data gaps in representation. Her interest is learning whether similar gaps existed in the focus groups.

Manager Wohl commented on the importance of differentiating between the composition of a focus group and a survey. Focus groups do not reflect the same number of participants similar to a survey. She and other staff members were responsible for communicating outreach to the community through social media, the department's website, and through the department's volunteers who have connections with local homeowner associations and the business community. Outreach also included individuals who attended citizen's academies and individuals who have partnered with independent investigation teams. The focus groups were smaller and represented the broad spectrum of the community.

Councilmember Cathey noted that the City's population is comprised of over 90% Caucasians, as well as a majority of the City's population has a household median or higher income. She asked about the percentage of police contacts and actions with the remaining percentage of the population and how that might impact department staffing needs in terms of types of crimes and frequency of crimes. Police Chief Weiks explained that the staffing model does not consider race or socioeconomic status but rather by services needed by the community.

Dr. Bowers added that the staffing model is based on expectations of the Police Department by the City and the community and how well the department meets the community needs, as well as identifying community needs to meet those needs proactively. The model utilizes historical data, type of engagements, and the length of each engagement over a period of many years.

Councilmember Cathey said information that would have provided additional clarification of the plan could include a breakdown of data, such as the number of women arrested and the reason for the arrest or, information on people of color. Caucasian professionals who live in Tumwater often place more demands on the Police Department in terms of expectations and wants. She is seeking a combination of equity and diversity and how much the department is proactively involved, not just in response to a service call.

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Police Commander Mason responded that one of the department's intentional actions is considering ways to continue to serve the community at a high service level. An important aspect of police work is relationships and building relationships with the community by building margins to enable proactive community conversations. Over the last decade, margins within the department have narrowed significantly. Dr. Bowers considered margins when developing the staffing model by accounting for calls for service to produce a model that affords the department some capacity to enable officers to build relationships with the community rather than only focusing on response to calls. The proposed service plan enables the department the capacity and margin to build relationships with the community for effective policing in Tumwater.

Police Chief Weiks invited Councilmember Cathey to visit the Police Department to review some of the statistical information.

Councilmember Von Holtz supported the focus on community and cited a local business owner who has not had a good experience in Tumwater. She supports the proposal for an officer dedicated to businesses to enable the building of relationships.

Police Commander Mason cited an email containing information from the business owner. A police sergeant visited the business owner and received some information about issues the owner was encountering.

Councilmember Agabi questioned whether the department plans to pursue a different source for updated data as the plan reflects data from 2019. Police Commander Mason clarified that the data is on crime victim by race from 2019 within the Tumwater Police - A Report to the Community published in early 2021.

Dr. Bowers added that the department contracted with a new vendor to provide more capabilities for completing analysis.

Councilmember Agabi requested that at the next presentation, the department break down statistical data by demographics. Manager Wohl offered to work with Councilmember Agabi to identify data for a future presentation.

Councilmember Dahlhoff said she searched the City's website and could not locate the Report to the Community. Police Chief Weiks affirmed the report was submitted to the City for posting on the website. Councilmember Dahlhoff highlighted how beneficial the annual reports are to help direct community members to information they are requesting. Posting the reports would be beneficial for everyone and provide more transparency.

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Councilmember Jefferson commented that some Community Survey respondents indicated that people of color do not feel safe in Tumwater. Today, people of color continue not to feel safe in Tumwater. She asked how the department plans to address the issue. Racial harassment in the community continues to increase with the Council receiving a threatening email with respect to displaying the rainbow flag over City Hall. She personally does not feel safe in the community. When dead chickens are thrown at local business owners, that action represents more than freedom of speech - it is racial intimidation. She asked whether the department is tracking incidents of hate crimes as Tumwater. In terms of the expansion of SROs in elementary schools, she is aware there are higher incarceration and arrest rates for marginalized children in schools. She would like access to data of those arrested in schools by gender, race, and age. Police Chief Weiks responded by inviting Councilmember Jefferson to visit the Police Department to review data. The department provided data to the Public Health and Safety Committee earlier in the day. Out of nearly 400 incidents involving SROs during the school year, .5% resulted in an arrest. Most incidents are handled by the school, through counseling, or with the families. Some incidents are sent to the prosecutor for review. Arrest is the last resort in schools. In term of hate crimes, the City does not experience a high rate of reported hate crimes. Although it likely happens, the department has not been contacted. Reporting on the recent incident involving dead chickens was not consistent. Within the Police Department, every opportunity is a chance to build a relationship.

Councilmember Dahlhoff inquired as to the steps necessary to move up implementation of body-worn cameras in alignment with the Flock System. Police Chief Weiks explained that body-worn cameras and the Flock System are not connected and are two different platforms with different requirements and funding sources. Councilmember Dahlhoff acknowledged the response and asked about necessary actions to move body-worn cameras implementation forward sooner. Police Chief Weiks replied that implementation is dependent upon staffing and implementation of the records management system. If implementation of the system had not already been initiated, body-worn cameras could have been prioritized sooner. At this time, the department does not have the capacity to implement both programs concurrently. Additionally, the department has two years remaining on the in-car camera system contract and wants to avoid having two different platforms. It is important that both body-worn and in-car cameras operate on the same platform to avoid any issues with records.

Mayor Sullivan thanked staff for compiling the data and preparing the plan.

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MAYOR/CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

City Administrator Parks reported on the attendance of approximately 1,000 people to the Dogs Day event at Pioneer Park on June 8, 2024. The K-9 demonstration by the Tumwater Police Department was a big hit and served as a good way to send off Officer Mize and K-9 James. Both recently retired. The Parks and Recreation Department also hosted the Rally in the Valley, an adult volleyball tournament of 46 teams representing an increase from 28 teams last year.

The Council meeting on Tuesday, June 18, 2024 has been cancelled because of the attendance of several Councilmembers to the Association of Washington Cities conference. The next meeting is a work session on June 25, 2024. Two consent items will be on the agenda because both are time sensitive from the General Government Committee for the community center design contract and the second from the Public Works Committee for authority to solicit bids for the Linwood Avenue Sidewalk project. The work session will be joint meeting with the Planning Commission to discuss amendments to the development code. The meeting offers both in-person and Zoom participation.

The July 2, 2024 Council meeting includes a presentation by Courtney Fuller from Tumwater HOPES.

The next joint meeting with the Planning Commission is scheduled on July 9, 2024 in a hybrid format. The topic of discussion is the new Climate Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Council recess is scheduled during the first two weeks in August.

Councilmember Dahlhoff advised that she would be unable to attend the June 25, 2024, July 2, 2024, and the July 9, 2024 meetings due to her trip to Australia.

Mayor Sullivan thanked and acknowledged Councilmember Dahlhoff for speaking on behalf of the City at the Olympia Air Show on June 15, 2024.

ADJOURNMENT:

With there being no further business, Mayor Sullivan adjourned the meeting at 7:09 p.m.

Prepared by Valerie L. Gow, Recording Secretary/President
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