

**TUMWATER PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 10, 2024 Page 1**

CONVENE: 8:00 a.m.

PRESENT: Chair Peter Agabi and Councilmembers Leatta Dahlhoff and Kelly Von Holtz.

Staff: City Administrator Lisa Parks, City Attorney Karen Kirkpatrick, Finance Director Troy Niemeyer, Police Chief Jon Weiks, Assistant Fire Chief Shawn Crimmins, Police Commander Jay Mason, and Police Administrative Supervisor Laura Wohl.

Others: Mayor Debbie Sullivan.

CHANGES TO AGENDA: Agenda items 4 and 5 were reversed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

JULY 9, 2024:

MOTION: **Councilmember Dahlhoff moved, seconded by Councilmember Von Holtz, to approve the minutes of July 9, 2024 as published. A voice vote approved the motion.**

POLICE STRATEGIC GROWTH PLAN DISCUSSION:

Police Chief Weiks reported in June 2024, the City Council received a briefing on the 2025-2029 Police Strategic Growth Plan. Additional questions from committee members have prompted another discussion to address the questions and review the timeline and communications strategy for the Strategic Growth Plan.

The committee received an outline of the focus group plan. The plan was created to guide the development process. Councilmember Dahlhoff noted that she did not receive the plan. Police Chief Weiks advised that the information would be resent to the committee. The detailed plan ensures development of the plan is inclusive, comprehensive, and defensible.

Police Chief Weiks displayed a graphic identifying the status of the development process. Currently, the process is in the implementation phase. The first two years of the plan are included in the 2025-2026 department budget request.

Development of the plan includes four areas of communication involving the Mayor and the City Administrator, the City Council, the public, and staff. The Mayor and City Administrator's involvement is operational oversight to ensure implementation of the Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan meets the City Council's strategic goals, ensures the Council is informed, and approves funding. Public engagement is important by ensuring the Strategic Plan

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meets public expectations.

Police reform began in January 2021 with the issuance of the Policing in Tumwater Report following 18 months of efforts beginning in 2019 with the passage of Initiative I-940 followed by police reform in 2020. Police command staff held multiple meetings with the City Administrator and the Mayor. Many meetings followed with the Council through the Public Health and Safety Committee. In January 2021, the Police Department published and released the Policing in Tumwater Report to the public.

Staff involvement was through ongoing trainings and discussions beginning in 2020.

The next step was a City survey. Although a significant portion of the survey focused on the Police Department, the survey also included other topics. The City hired a consultant to administer the survey and compile the results. The City Council received a briefing on the results of the survey in May 2022. The survey results reflected positive responses for the Tumwater Police Department.

In April 2022, the department hired Dr. Oliver Bowers as the department's Management Analyst, a big step in creating the Strategic Growth Plan. Department employees were briefed in May 2022 on the direction of the plan.

The next step is development of the staffing model. Prior police staffing models proved to be unattainable, outdated, and did not meet the needs of the Tumwater community. Dr. Bowers spent several months developing a staffing model specific to Tumwater. In January 2023, staff presented the model to the committee in addition to many meetings with the Mayor and the City Administrator. Those meetings occurred during the transition of a new Mayor and a new City Administrator. An accurate staffing model was necessary prior to development of Strategic Growth Plan. The staffing model was shared with department staff in January 2023.

Between January and November 2023, the department began developing the plan with public participation and focus group meetings. Dr. Bowers spent several months completing the thematic network analysis. During the development process, multiple meetings were held with the Mayor and City Administrator. Police Chief messages were released to the community beginning in August. Communication with staff was ongoing during that process.

In January 2024, focus group meetings were completed and Dr Bowers completed the thematic network analysis. Command staff reviewed the themes of the analysis and shared the information with focus group members to ensure the information was accurate.

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Command staff developed operational plans from the analysis that was reviewed by the department's leadership team. During that period, all staff members provided input. Over the next several months, the plan was finalized based on all input.

During February through April 2024, the department completed the draft plan and met several times with the City Administrator and the Mayor. The draft plan was forwarded to the City Council prior to releasing the plan to the public. Multiple meetings were held with the department's leadership team and staff members. In June 2024, the Council received a presentation on the plan. The plan was released to the public and to focus group members.

Communications with staff included 29 different instances of communications from January 2023 to June 2024 when the plan was released. Staff members were invited to participate during the development process.

Police Chief Weiks reviewed details of community outreach and messages distributed to the community via the department's Facebook page with over 12,000 followers, posting to Next Door to reach the community and all homeowner associations. Next Door has over 6,300 households participating on the site representing over 9,000 residents. Direct emails were forwarded to all City HOAs and police officers received handouts for distribution within the community. Police Citizens Academy members were contacted. Chief messages were posted online each week as well as through the City's website.

Councilmember Dahlhoff commented positively on the Chief's and the department's proactive style for outreach. However, she believes the touch points of contacting different segments of the community appear to be missing, such as the ASHHO Cultural Community Center or businesses that have encountered some negative experiences in the community.

Police Chief Weiks responded that the focus group process is a specific research-based methodology with protocols. To conduct a focus group, protocols are very specific to include not specifically reaching out to any particular group but rather disseminating the information as widely as possible to draw as many participants as possible. The department anticipated receiving 100 to 125 applications with a goal of narrowing membership to a diverse set of members. Unfortunately, the department received only 30 applications and all applicants were invited to participate. Notifications to the community were substantial using all methods available to the department.

Councilmember Dahlhoff responded that utilizing the limited focus of homeowners to define the next six years without input the City has received

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from some other demographics in the community is concerning. Police Chief Weiks pointed out that the demographics of the outreach and focus groups align with the City's demographics of the entire population.

City Administrator Parks added that within the agenda packet, specifically pages 9 through 13, the focus group plan is included. The information as to how the process was oriented and guided is included. Based on her understanding of conversations, there have been some misconceptions about reaching out to HOAs. HOAs were asked to disseminate the information to homeowners.

Councilmember Dahlhoff acknowledged the information adding that she has received contact from some individuals who live in Tumwater who did not receive any information to participate who have had negative experiences in Tumwater. There is room for improvement as some community members will be missed. The challenge is not reflective of the work or the efforts by the police department but ways to improve outreach to include missing voices in moving forward. She plans to meet with the Chief on ways to move forward to avoid missing individuals and groups.

City Administrator Parks agreed that the City can strive to find ways to increase outreach. The City's Equity Commission process is also a component of future work as the conversation about racism and negative experiences in Tumwater are obviously incidents that can be discussed in terms of criminal behavior while other incidents require a platform to engage in difficult conversations about those experiences that are not acceptable in the community. Multiple ways are available to address the issue of reaching out to the larger community and not just for the development in the Police Strategic Growth Plan but in the context of all City communications to the community.

Councilmember Dahlhoff acknowledged and appreciated the information as it speaks to the future. However, her immediate concern is occurring today and how the City is responding and engaging today. It speaks to Chair Agabi's previous comments about community policing and the Chief's conversations over the years about community wellness and community outreach. It is different to some community members. The challenge is how the City responds today. She expects the City to move forward with the Equity Commission process but her immediate concerns are what the City is doing today and how the City is responding to behaviors the City will or will not tolerate and how those efforts align with the development of the plan. Many community members feel isolated and have not received a response. It is important to continue building trust to ensure community members feel safe to reach out to the Police Chief.

Councilmember Von Holtz commented on her familiarity of working with different focus groups during her career. The plan is a good plan but it is

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specific to many community members engaged with the City who have access to social media and are willing to participate. The response of only 30 individuals speaks to the need for more outreach to cast a wider net. She looks forward to the work of the Equity Commission while recognizing that the plan is moving to the implementation phase and lacks sufficient equity.

Police Chief Weiks concurred with the comments. Creating relationships is an ongoing endeavor and never ceases. The department widely disseminated the information using available resources. Other ways to disseminate are likely possible. The plan was created as a living document that can be revisited and revised. The plan establishes the foundation for the department. The department relies on the partnership of the Council to convey the message to the community as well. The plan is the first of many plans. The department will continue to expand communications based on adequate resources and funding.

Police Commander Mason added that the intent of communication efforts was to connect to as many members of the community as possible and leveraging existing relationships. The department recognizes the need to build greater bridges, but needs assistance from the Council. Interactions with the public are often from past relationships with law enforcement or the City. If the relationship is a good one, the doors are open and it is possible to engage. However, if the relationship is negative, it is much more difficult to pursue better relationships. It is important for the Council to help build bridges by sharing information with the department.

Councilmember Dahlhoff advised that she has forwarded emails to the department and checked with a community member who has not received any contact from the department. She offered to forward the emails to Commander Mason for follow through.

Police Chief Weiks said the plan is intended to establish the foundation with the next step scheduled in 2026. The upcoming budget process will guide implementation of the Police Strategic Growth Plan. The intent is convene more focus groups and continue to adapt the plan as the community adapts and grows.

Police Chief Weiks invited additional questions.

Councilmember Dahlhoff asked for information on the feedback from patrol officers. Police Chief Weiks advised that the process of feedback involved note taking rather than any specific format. Each sergeant convened their respective team to receive feedback. The information was noted and reviewed by the leadership team. Many of the suggestions were already included in the plan. The output essentially is a list of ideas from conversations with patrol officers. The union did not participate in the process.

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Councilmember Dahlhoff remarked on her intent to include a budget amendment in the upcoming biennium budget to include body-worn cameras for the police department if not already included in the draft budget.

City Administrator Parks explained that the rollout and implementation of body-worn cameras is proposed for implementation in the next budget cycle. However, wearing of body cameras and tracking processes are not forecasted in the next biennium budget. Information will be presented to the Council about the timing of the process.

Councilmember Dahlhoff emphasized her intent to pursue an amendment to move up the process for full implementation of body worn cameras.

**FIRE
DEPARTMENT
STAFFING
BRIEFING:**

Assistant Fire Chief Crimmins briefed members on the current staffing level of the Tumwater Fire Department. Staffing is unique for fire departments with many different staffing models for fire service.

The National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) represents labor, management, and underwriters. Together, they developed a guideline or consensus standard for the fire service. FPA 1710 speaks to a minimum crew size on a fire engine. Nationally, the minimum is four firefighters on a fire engine. The fire department currently has three firefighters on a fire engine, which is standard across the state. Fire agencies with four firefighters on an engine are typically larger, such as Seattle and other larger metropolitan departments.

Fifteen firefighters are required to mitigate a fire emergency occurring at a single-family residence. As the department lacks sufficient staff to mitigate the emergency, the department relies on mutual aid for assistance. Apartments and strip malls call for 28 firefighters to mitigate a fire emergency. High risk or high-rise structures require a response by 43 firefighters.

The majority of the department's calls are for emergency medical services (EMS). EMS calls for cardiac arrest are labor-intensive requiring numerous personnel onsite. A minimum number of nine firefighters are required similar to the response required for motor vehicle accidents. If multiple cars are involved, additional personnel are necessary in addition to more apparatus to mitigate the emergency.

The Tumwater Fire Department daily staffing includes a 4-platoon schedule of 24 hours from 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. The schedule is 1-day on/2-days off and 1-day on/4-days off with minimum staffing of 11 employees per shift (platoon).

Councilmember Dahlhoff asked about any feedback after the fire department

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adopted the schedule. Assistant Fire Chief Crimmins replied that the Tumwater Fire Department previously utilized a 3-platoon schedule with 1-day on/2-days off. The feedback has been positive as the current schedule provides more time off.

Councilmember Dahlhoff asked whether the department has tracked burnout, fatigue, or an increase in incidents/accidents. Assistant Fire Chief Crimmins reported the department has 46 line personnel with 11 personnel assigned to each of the 4 shifts with two personnel serving as floaters to fill gaps. Employees work 91 shifts and receive 15 debits. Employee work approximately 48.9 hours per week. Debit days cover vacations and training. The goal each year when establishing the schedule is not allocating any overtime. However, as minimum staffing is 11 personnel per shift, the department lacks any additional capacity to cover sickness, injuries, or other circumstances encountered by personnel. The result is often an accumulation of overtime. The department has specific benchmarks prohibiting employees working longer than 48 hours voluntarily or 72 hours for mandatory overtime to ensure the well-being of the employee. In 2021, the department experienced 19 mandatory overtime events and 40 mandatory overtime events in 2022. The reasons vary for mandatory overtime such as an employee or employees out on long-term disability. The fire department converted to the four-platoon schedule in 2018.

Assistant Fire Chief Crimmins said the fire department also considers the number of employees required for each seat on the fire engines. Fire engines include three seats while a medic unit includes two seats. For one position on an apparatus, 4.5 to 4.7 employees are required to cover the one seat. Coverage of a two-seat medic unit requires 4.7 employees to cover four shifts, as well as vacations, sicknesses, and employees on disability.

Although minimum staffing is 11 employees, days outside of peak times include more staffing affording the ability to staff an aid unit.

Councilmember Dahlhoff asked how the department schedules time for required training. Assistant Fire Chief Crimmins said much of the training is scheduled and forecasted as far as 2025. However, if training is offered outside the department, personnel can participate in training while on a shift.

Councilmember Dahlhoff asked whether additional funding for staff would be from Proposition 1 funding from Thurston County. City Administrator Parks advised that funding for staff could be funded from Proposition 1 funds. The funding source is long-term but not a stable source because it is based on sales tax receipts.

**ADDITIONAL
ITEMS:**

Councilmember Dahlhoff cited an incident in May involving community members and two local businesses that were subject to racial slurs as they were walking in the City. Multiple people contacted the City about the

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incident. A partial license plate was identified. However, official identification of the vehicle did not fit the description of the vehicle. Recently while walking her dog, someone in a vehicle slowed down and yelled a racial slur to her. It speaks to another example of behavior that is unacceptable in Tumwater. She is seeking a response from the City, such as a recommendation to the Council to adopt a resolution against hate speech and discrimination and that it will not be tolerated within the City of Tumwater. She recommended a committee discussion on a proposed resolution to forward to the Council for consideration.

City Administrator Parks commented that one of the tools for establishing an Equity Commission includes identification of the reasons and the purpose of the Commission that are directly tied to issues as cited by Councilmember Dahlhoff. The process affords an opportunity for drafting a resolution establishing the Equity Commission in early 2025; however, if the Council prefers to act sooner, a recommendation from the committee to the Council would be appropriate for action prior to the end of the year. Staff could provide examples of resolutions for consideration.

Councilmember Von Holtz supported the suggestion based on several instances involving community members experiencing similar actions. Hate does not belong in the City. She wants to be part of taking a strong stance against the actions.

Chair Agabi said he would work with Police Chief Weiks and City Administrator Parks on the next steps moving forward.

ADJOURNMENT: With there being no further business, Chair Agabi adjourned the meeting at 8:59 a.m.

Prepared by Valerie L. Gow, Recording Secretary/President
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