



**MINUTES**  
**CITY OF WAUPUN POLICE & FIRE COMMISSION**  
**Waupun Safety Building – 16 E. Main Street, Waupun WI**  
**Wednesday, September 22, 2021 at 4:30pm**

*Upon reasonable notice, efforts will be made to accommodate disabled individuals through appropriate aids and services. For additional information, contact the City Clerk at 920-324-7915.*

**CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting convened at 4:30pm by PFC President in the Waupun Safety Building.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: John Bett, Zak Dickhut, Tara Rhodes, Michael Thurmer, Nancy Vanderkin (City Council Liaison), WFD Chief BJ DeMaa, WPD Chief Scott Loudon, WPD Deputy Chief Jeremy Rasch

Guests: Mayor Julie Nickel, Kathy Schlieve (City Administrator / Director of Economic Development)

Member(s) absent (excused): Teresa Heidemann

**MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

Minutes from the August 25, 2021 meeting were presented for approval. Motion to approve by Z. Dickhut (J. Bett second; all in favor). Minutes approved as presented.

**GENERAL DISCUSSION AND EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION CONCERNING THE NORMAL OPERATIONS OF THE WAUPUN POLICE DEPARTMENT AND/OR WAUPUN FIRE DEPARTMENT**

WPD Update:

- Recruitment and retention strategy: K. Schlieve, guest, provided an update related to discussions/decisions between the WPD and City Council. Burnout, pay and inability to take time off were the officers' primary concerns; and it was determined that implementing a sign-on bonus would not successfully/adequately resolve these issues. After surveying other police departments and a discussion with union representatives, it was determined to focus on a retention bonus strategy. A proposal was ultimately recommended/approved by the City Council and is structured using a quarterly, scaled payment, totaling approximately \$30,000. With city budget deficits looming, quarterly payments scheduled for 2022 are intended to come from the local budget, but if not able to do so (considerable overtime hours due to staffing) will fund from anticipated stimulus funds. K. Schlieve noted the discussion with union representatives next year will be more difficult as it relates to wage structure.

Chief Loudon recognized the retention bonus has a significant factor in maintaining the current staff who are filling open shifts due to vacancies or leave of absences. It is hoped the timing of the retention bonuses, along with recent hiring successes will help to ensure full-staff by summer of 2022. Appreciate of the support from PFC and City officials for these discussions and decisions made.

Looking ahead, K. Schlieve shared the need to finalize a recruitment and retention plan which will be used for the next union negotiation period. For example, the current approach to recruitment is very passive (applicants must find WPD and apply) and in the future, a move to a more proactive approach which would help attract more candidates and diversify the candidate pool. Additionally, communicating to candidates "total compensation" (salary plus benefits) is a way we could steer candidates to WPD and stay competitive with other departments which may be offering higher wages but inferior benefits.

K. Schlieve acknowledged the growing concern around mental health issues in our community and the role officers and firefighters have in responding to these calls; there is research planned in this area to help determine the best approach to meet this community need. Federal Grants are available and are

awaiting decision on one already submitted; noting Federal Grants have strict guidelines and are often multi-year commitments.

- K9 program process, hiring and timeline: K. Schlieve shared with the PFC that Waupun strongly supports the K9 program as evidenced by \$50,000 fundraising since 2016. A K9 program has significant start-up costs (purchase of dog, initial training) and ongoing operational costs (training, food, overtime) which need to be considered. The budget includes \$25,000/year for the K9 program and will again be presented for inclusion in 2022 budget (not yet completed). In addition to the K9 program there are other requests which need to be discussed and prioritized (recruitment/retention plan costs, additional officer).

Chief Loudon shared that upon approval of a K9 program, there is a formal process that will be followed which includes finding out which offers are interested and selecting K9 Officer (Q1), selection of kennel and purchase of dog (Q2). Chief Loudon will begin formalizing proposal/plan as it relates to cost, training timeline, etc. He also noted the K9 program is important for use at Department of Corrections' sites.

- Current staffing: Chief Loudon reported one officer returning from leave in November and one will complete academy in December (expected to be on schedule in May). Newest candidate is moving through offer requirements and training will begin immediately after. Process underway for Lieutenant interviews and is going well.  
*Action: M. Thurmer requested a staffing update be added to the monthly updates which are emailed out to PFC; Chief Loudon will include going forward.*
- There will be a police presence at the WASD Board Meeting on Monday due to anticipated controversy related to masking discussion.

#### WFD Update:

- EMR update: all participants successfully completed testing last week; NREMT exam follows in the next 2-4 weeks with successful participants then progressing to focusing on department operational processes. Protocol being developed by local providers which is required as part of the application to the State.
- Staffing: Recently celebrated Wally Beekman (retired in 2017) and Paul Beder (retired in June); both combined have 76 years of service. One staff on leave. A survey was sent to 26 like-communities in Wisconsin, 10 respondents. Chief DeMaa noted a disparity in the amount of paid on-call staff. Currently, Waupun has a long-standing ordinance that caps total firefighters at 30; respondents to the survey are reporting in the 40-50 range. Information from this survey will be considered for future planning.  
*Action: M. Thurmer requested the survey results be shared with the PFC via email; Chief DeMaa will send out.*
- Budget: K. Schlieve noted a Code Enforcement role added for 2022 consideration as well as resources to "strengthen the EMR" program (i.e. vehicle).
- Brief discussion on apartment fire call (located behind Farm & Home); upon Chief DeMaa's arrival, tenants were already evacuating, and smoke was coming out of doors. Fire was completely extinguished leaving only one tenant displaced.
- N. Vanderkin thanked Chiefs Loudon and DeMaa for officer and firefighter participation in the Silent Parade which was held in remembrance of 9-11 (20 years).

#### CLOSED SESSION

The Waupun Police and Fire Commission adjourned to closed session under Section 19.85 (1)(c) of the WI Statutes to conduct interview(s) with qualified applicant(s) for employment for the Fire Department Cadet position(s).

(c) Considering employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility.

Motion to go into Closed Session at 5:27pm was made by J. Bett (second by Z. Dickhut; all in favor).

#### **OPEN SESSION**

The Waupun Police and Fire Commission reconvened in open session under Section 19.85(2) of the WI Statutes at 5:45pm after motion from Z. Dickhut (second by J. Bett; all in favor).

#### **ACTION FROM CLOSED SESSION**

Motion to accept applicant B. Beer, Fire Department Cadet, was made by Z. Dickhut (second by J. Bett; all in favor).

#### **FUTURE MEETINGS AND GATHERING INVOLVING THE POLICE AND FIRE COMMISSION**

Next Commission meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 20th at 4:30pm (the Commission meets quarterly, at minimum).

If necessary, please send any agenda requests to Chiefs BJ DeMaa or S. Loudon so appropriate preparation(s) can be made.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn meeting at 5:46pm made by T. Rhodes (second by Z. Dickhut; all in favor).

Respectfully submitted,  
Tara Rhodes, Secretary

*Cc: Commission members; WFD Chief; WPD Chief, Deputy Chief & Admin./Records; City of Waupun Mayor, Administrator / Director of Economic Development & City Clerk.*