



CITY OF CONCORD

New Hampshire's Main Street™

Public Safety Board

April 9, 2018

3:00 p.m.

City Council Chambers

Members present: Mayor Bouley (Acting Chair), Mr. Anthony Bourque, Mr. Don Carter, Mr. Michael Russell, Ms. Carol Hargrove, Ms. Lisa Brown, Councilor Allan Herschlag, Councilor Fred Keach, Councilor Mark Coen, Councilor Dan St. Hilaire,

City Staff Present: Police Chief Brad Osgood, Fire Chief Dan Andrus (Staff Liaison), Acting Deputy Fire Chief Sean Brown

Not Present: Councilor Amanda Grady Sexton, Mr. Jim O'Neill, Mr. Stephen Edwards

Call to Order

Mayor Bouley called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

The board reviewed the minutes of April 24, 2017. Ms. Brown asked to have the minutes amended. The Board agreed on the amendment. Mr. Russell moved to approve the minutes as amended. Mr. Carter seconded the motion. The motion passed with no negative votes and with Councilors Bouchard and Herschlag abstaining.

Annual Report of the Public Safety Board

Mayor Bouley said that this was a very important report as the City Council relied on the Public Safety Board recommendation in formulating the annual budget.

Chief Osgood reviewed the Police Department report. He reviewed the statistics on crime and stated that crime is basically flat. Drug offenses have decreased slightly. The Computer Crimes Division is up and coming with two officers staffing it at present.

That number of officers is expected to increase to three to four detectives in a few years as volume is forecasted to increase. He talked briefly of the sex offender tracking program. He spoke about the work of the Community Services Division. National Night Out is the pinnacle event of the year held every August. As part of Operation Granite Shield and Operation Granite Hammer, the Drug Enforcement Unit has done a fantastic job. They took out several drug infested residences during the year.

Chief Osgood said that there were nine police officer vacancies in the Department. Five new officers start today and they move forward with four vacancies. Officer Christy Spaulding is back in her position as the Domestic Violence Officer. Officer Ryan Howe should be back in the next few weeks in his role as Community Resource Officer. Both Christy and Ryan were reassigned to Patrol over a year ago due to staffing shortages. There will be 19 officers eligible to retire by the end of 2019, which could have a significant effect on staffing. Mayor Bouley asked about other positions and Chief Osgood said that there are 11 staffed positions that are not filled at the present time due to military leave, academy training, and field training. Mayor Bouley asked how that impacted staffing. Chief Osgood said that additional shifts are required of officers, with increased use of overtime and that they are unable to transfer officers to the detective or drug enforcement areas. Mayor Bouley said that the City Council had added additional positions and asked how that is working out. Chief Osgood said that Lenny O'Keefe is working now as the Community Service Aide and has worked out. Mr. O'Keefe has been a tremendous asset to the Department. A CSA position is requested in the upcoming budget and if approved would go to the Evidence Property Room. There is much work to do with the Department's older software that tracked evidence. A new Property Room CSA would work on getting older evidence into our current system. The Department's current system holds evidence from 2010 to present. For evidence, a chain of custody is essential for integrity. Mr. Bourque asked if there were any resources that would help with staffing. Chief Osgood replied that the issue is nationwide, that there are not enough people applying for police positions. Mr. Russell asked how long it would take before the five new hires are out. Chief Osgood said that they would be out in January 2019. Two of the recent recruits took a year to be hired.

Councilor Herschlag referred to the drug report submitted by the Police and Fire Chiefs. He noted that arrests are down, but calls are up for both Police and Fire. He asked if there is a correlation between the two. Chief Osgood said that they did see an uptick in overdoses. Many responses are for methamphetamine use. Councilor Herschlag asked if drug offenses are arrests. Chief Osgood said not necessarily.

Councilor Coen asked about recruitment of police officers. Chief Osgood said that the Dallas Police Department has about 200 vacancies. There are some generational differences that influence this. Some new recruits have military backgrounds. Mr. Carter asked about the year long time frame to bring on a new recruit. Chief Osgood said that the police academy offers three classes each year. Job offers were made in February to bring recruits in for the April class. He talked about the background investigation process and said that there is a test on April 22nd. Mr. Carter asked how we compare with other cities. Chief Osgood said that background investigations usually take two weeks with other cities and take about three weeks here. Councilor St. Hilaire asked if they are still doing psychological testing. Chief Osgood said yes, that is done in Manchester. Councilor St. Hilaire asked if they are still doing drug testing. Chief Osgood said yes, at Horseshoe Pond.

Mayor Bouley asked that, with the paving on Loudon Road, if there have been more accidents. Chief Osgood said that he was not sure. Mayor Bouley asked about calls to homeless camps. Chief Osgood said that they are getting officers back on the bikes. Mayor Bouley talked about the ornamental fence on Constitution Avenue that has been vandalized and said that there is a decision as to whether it should be repaired. Chief Osgood said that homeless persons are more in sight now, and more in mind. He mentioned panhandling. Mayor Bouley said that there have been several burglaries recently and asked why it takes so long to get people's property back to them. Chief Osgood said that if it is evidence in a criminal case, it is up to the Prosecutor on when it is returned. He added that they would prefer to have it go back. Councilor Herschlag asked about panhandling activity around the Friendly Kitchen and the City Library, as well as more incidents at the Friendly Kitchen and asked if that is noticeable. Chief Osgood said that the Friendly Kitchen staff do a great job. He also said that many of the clients don't get along. They have expressed an interest in a police detail for an officer presence. Chief Osgood said that he hopes to reinstate the problem oriented policing unit sometime this year.

Councilor Herschlag asked about hypodermic needles in the library and whether they were working with the Police Department. Chief Osgood said that he is aware of photos, and questioned if they were possibly staged. Councilor Herschlag asked about panhandling and about signage to tell people where to direct contributions. Chief Osgood said that Manchester has signs. There are laws to enforce panhandling restrictions on private property. He said that panhandling in Concord is much better than it was three years ago. He does not support putting up signs.

Mayor Bouley said that some Florida cities have used old parking meters to collect contributions for agencies serving homeless persons. Chief Osgood said that the company that manufactures the City's parking kiosks offers this.

Councilor Bouchard asked how crunched they are in the current police headquarters. Chief Osgood said very crunched. They started construction in 1975 and a third floor was added in 1985. There are safety concerns with prisoner

transports that remain unresolved. Mayor Bouley asked if Department members go through media training. Chief Osgood said that Sean Ford has. Mayor Bouley said that, with the new City Public Information Officer on board, what is the relationship with the Police Department. Chief Osgood said that is a good question. They need someone to assist with social media and the website. They need a person to assist in getting the message out. Mayor Bouley asked if he thought that anyone who represents the City should go through media training. Chief Osgood said that there is a media relations module in supervisor school. Mayor Bouley commented that there are some very good resources on this board.

Mayor Bouley asked what his number one priority was. Chief Osgood said adding police officers. He said that the Council had added radio upgrades. Mayor Bouley asked about Sunshine Week. The overtime numbers reported by the Concord Monitor just give a gross number. He added that much of the overtime for police details is reimbursed to the City. Mr. Carter asked if police detail work is calculated into an officer's pension. Chief Osgood said that no outside details are included for officers hired after 2012. Councilor Coen said that the reimbursement funding should be highlighted. Chief Osgood added that some of the overtime is funded by grants such as Granite Shield and various Highway Enforcement grants.

Mr. Bourque moved to approve the Police Department report. Councilor St. Hilaire seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Mayor asked Chief Andrus to review the Fire Department report. Chief Andrus reviewed the statistics. He said that it showed emergency medical responses increasing significantly with a decrease in service calls. This is partially due to a new practice of classifying "lift assist" calls as EMS calls in alignment with State EMS rules. Other areas, including false alarms and good intent calls are down, and building fires both inside and outside of Concord, increased during the year. Chief Andrus said that the #1 call in the City is for fall patients. For patients 60 and over, falls account for 20% of the calls to that age group. He said that the Fire Department participates in a falls prevention collaborative with the Visiting Nurse Association and other agencies for fall prevention programming. The Fire Department provides data on "hot spots." Chief Andrus moved on to the "Accomplishments" section of the report. He noted that, with the acquisition of the new Engine 7, the City completes a five year capital program to replace all front line vehicles. The City's front line firefighting fleet comes from a single manufacturer which greatly improves training and provides several advantages to the Equipment Services Division in terms of repair and parts procurement. He thanked the City Council for their support of this program. He mentioned the community benefit work of the union locals, including the MDA boot drive and Operation Warm and Operation Elf, the latter two of which are generously supported by Cheers Restaurant. The focus has been on providing for the needs of children in our community. He said that it is an involved and engaged employee group and that all of the accomplishments had several names of people who were working hard to advance the department and serve the citizens.

Chief Andrus talked about turnover in 2017. Eight employees retired and three resigned, two of whom were paramedics who returned to their prior departments and one of whom went to work at the State Fire Marshal's Office as a fire investigator. The hiring process to replace them went very well. The Department establishes hiring lists, typically at the end of each summer and has done so for the last three years. The first two years saw about 140 applicants, but last year several people had realized that they had to have the minimum levels of certification and there were about 90 applications. The list is narrowed to about 20 candidates and there is a follow up water capabilities test, followed by an oral board. The background investigation takes place after a conditional offer of employment and is very intensive. Chief Andrus said that he is extremely pleased with the quality of the new hires.

Chief Andrus reviewed the recommendations. The recommendation for a station location and facility study is being addressed through the Capital Improvement Program. A fourth ambulance and a fire alarm and traffic technician remain as priorities. A new data analysis program introduced by the Department's EMS Officer indicates that all three ambulances are out of service for about an hour a day on average. For the month of December, ambulances were out of service for 29 of the 31 days. For the three districts that have ambulances in the stations, between 17 and 21% of calls are answered by an ambulance from another district. He said that it is getting critical to have a replacement for the fire alarm and traffic superintendent. That person has a wealth of knowledge about the City's infrastructure, including the fiber optic network. It will be important to bring someone on who can begin to accumulate that knowledge. The Fire Department has a budget request to bring a fire alarm and traffic technician on board mid year in the next fiscal year.

Mayor Bouley said that it is not like it was in the past, when an ambulance went on a call, took a patient to the hospital, and returned to the station. They are now answering calls as soon as they clear from the hospital. It is also very common to see all three Concord Fire Department ambulances at Concord Hospital.

Councilor Coen asked how many times a fire engine on an EMS call goes from that call to a fire call. Chief Andrus said that he did not have that number, but on the most major fires, including those occurring late at night, there is an engine on a medical call that responds from there to the fire.

Councilor Coen asked about the practice of sending an engine with the ambulance and whether the rates charged reflected the additional personnel. Chief Andrus said that rates for emergency medical services are based on market surveys of other communities and reflect care levels established by Medicare. He said that for the lowest priority "Alpha" and "Omega" calls that ambulances are dispatched without an engine, although it could be requested if needed. Engines are sent on the more serious calls for patient safety, patient care, and responder safety.

A question was asked about how often the Department was going on mutual aid. Chief Andrus had a report that indicated that, for the first three months of this year, mutual aid was received 51 times and given 81 times. He said that it is often more of a 2 given for every one received. A discussion on mutual aid followed. The Mayor commented that providing emergency medical services was becoming unsustainable for other communities. He asked if a fourth ambulance would allow for greater ability to provide mutual aid. Chief Andrus said yes, that with that resource the City would be better positioned to respond to requests outside the City. Chief Andrus was asked if the City would still need a fourth ambulance if it were not providing mutual aid. Chief Andrus said yes, the demand for services within the City has grown to the point where it would justify a fourth ambulance. Mr. Bourque asked how many ALS calls were being missed because units were out on mutual aid. Chief Andrus said that he did not know. Mr. Bourque asked how much more revenue could be realized with a fourth ambulance. Chief Andrus said that the revenue increase would be minimal, and that the primary impact would be seen in improved service through better response times.

There was a discussion about the possibilities of a regional approach to providing emergency medical services. Mayor Bouley asked the members representing the public for their opinions.

Mr. Russell moved to accept the report. Ms. Brown seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Bourque moved to ask the City Council to address mutual aid and regionalization. Ms. Hargrove seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Bourque said that Mr. O'Neill has moved from the City and suggested that a thank you for his long service is in order.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be scheduled at the call of the Chair.

Adjournment

Councilor Keach moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilor St. Hilaire seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 4:49 p.m.