



Public Safety Board

March 30, 2015

3:00 p.m.

City Council Chambers

Members present: Councilor Amanda Grady Sexton (Chair), Mr. Jim O'Neill, Mr. Anthony Bourque, Mr. Steve Edwards, Mr. Jim Cotsana, Ms. Lisa Brown, Mr. Don Carter

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

Not Present: Mr. Michael Russell, Councilor Fred Keach, Councilor Stephen Shurtleff, Councilor J. Allen Bennett, Councilor Rob Werner, Councilor Brent Todd, Ms. Carol Hargrove

Call to Order

Councilor Grady Sexton called the meeting to order at 3:08 p.m. Board members and City staff introduced themselves.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

The board reviewed the minutes of December 15, 2014. Chief Andrus noted that will insert the name of one guest and add language to the section on adjournment. Mr. O'Neill moved to approve the minutes as revised. Mr. Carter seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Annual Report of the Public Safety Board

Councilor Grady Sexton asked Chief Osgood to present his report.

Chief Osgood reviewed his written report, including call statistics: 56,00 calls for service; 4,500 traffic citation, up by 1,100 over last year; 12,000 warnings; 1,107 traffic accidents; 150 DWI arrests; 590 criminal offenses per month, about 15% of which are felonies; 240 arrests per month; 42 juvenile arrests per month, and 27 domestic violence related arrests per month. Deaths from opiate overdoses are trending upward with 13 in

2014, four in 2013, two in 2012, and at least one so far in 2015. There have been 28 overdose calls so far this year. There were 474 drug offenses in 2014, up from 402 in 2013, and 363 in 2012. Heroin and overdoses are a problem. There have been 11 males and nine females with heroin overdoses since 2012. The median age of the males is 34; for females, the median age is 47. Mr. O'Neill asked how many arrests and ODs are Concord people. Ms. Brown asked Chief Osgood to say again the median ages. Mr. Edwards asked if there was any particular geography to overdose calls. Chief Osgood said that they occur all over the City. Mr. Cotsana asked about police use of Narcan. Chief Osgood said that Narcan was used about 100 times in the City last year by the Fire Department. The law has just changed and cost is being evaluated. The Fire Department has very quick response times and it is unlikely the Police Department will be using Narcan, however the PD continues to explore that possibility.

Chief Osgood said that it is not always clear that it is a heroin overdose. A question was asked about liability to responders. An unconscious patient can be treated under implied consent statutes. Mr. Edwards asked about side effects. Chief Andrus said that the only negative is that the patient can wake up quickly experiencing withdrawal symptoms. They can be violent and may run from the scene. A question was asked about repeat patients. Chief Andrus said that there was a recent case involving a heroin overdose. The person was unconscious and completely unresponsive and was revived using Narcan. They later learned the patient had overdosed in Manchester the day before.

Mr. O'Neill commented that the low price of heroin encourages its use.

Councilor Grady Sexton asked if there are any transients or homeless persons on the list. Chief Osgood said that he did not believe that there were any in the list of 20 he cited.

Mr. Edwards asked about gangs. Chief Osgood said that he does not see a big gang problem currently in Concord. We do have groups that think of themselves as gangs. The Brotherhood of White Warriors, a prison based gang, was controlled in the past year or so.

Mr. Edwards asked where the drugs came from. Chief Osgood said that they come from Worcester, Lawrence, New York City, to name a few. The Police Department has invested 140 hours of personnel time in drug related overdose cases this year alone (28 incidents). Mr. Carter asked what the community could do. Chief Osgood said that we cannot arrest our way out of this. It needs public involvement. There are a lot of users in Concord and the extent of dealers is under investigation. Ms. Brown asked what this (heroin) looks like. Chief Osgood said that it comes in a variety of packages and one called a "finger." Heroin is being cut or mixed with Fentanyl. You don't know what you are getting. Mr. Edwards asked how often an addict needs a "fix." Mr. O'Neill said that it can be as often as twice a day.

Chief Osgood talked about “spice.” Code names are often used with store clerks for getting access to it. Spice does not appear to be an issue in Concord at this time relative to stores selling it.

Chief Osgood covered other areas of his report. There was a pilot program with a problem oriented policing unit. It is not active right now, but had some very good results. One officer is assigned to the domestic violence unit, doing lots of education and a tremendous job overall. There are 250 registered sex offenders living in the City and all are required to register with the Police Department. There are two officers assigned full time to the Computer Crimes Unit. Chief Osgood also described traffic enforcement and the Motorcycle Unit, one (motorcycle) of which is entirely grant funded. He said that there are 84 sworn officers authorized, and will have two vacancies by the end of April. All non-sworn positions are filled or are being filled. Mr. Cotsana asked about veterans’ preference in hiring. Chief Osgood said that there are not very many applicants who are veterans. Some grants require the hiring of veterans. Mr. Cotsana asked about reports of gunshots on Loudon Road. Chief Osgood said that there have been no conclusive findings. Mr. Carter said that he can hear gunshots, sometimes several, from Portsmouth Street. Chief Osgood said that the police range is on North Pembroke Street. Mr. Carter said these are definitely in the Portsmouth Street area. Mr. Edwards cited a piece in the *Concord Monitor* and asked Chief Osgood if the City had a prostitution problem. Chief Osgood said not necessarily, but there is some activity linked to drug use.

Mr. Edwards asked about medical marijuana facilities. Chief Osgood said that two companies have applied and that he and the Fire Chief have met with both companies. His concerns are the impact to the community and on traffic. He does not foresee a problem from the law enforcement end. Councilor Grady Sexton asked what is driving the increase in traffic citations. Chief Osgood said that the use of motorcycles and the dedication of 1-2 officers per shift in a pilot program had an impact on enforcement.

Chief Osgood talked about his priorities. Community policing in the Community Services Division is important, addressing problems of drug use, homelessness, and untreated mental illness. There is a changing model of traffic safety. Councilor Grady Sexton asked about the New African American community. Chief Osgood said that he meets regularly with the leadership of New American Africans to address approaches to substance abuse, domestic violence, language barriers, and driving issues. Mr. O’Neill asked about whether the Lutheran Church is supporting this population. Chief Osgood said that the name is now Ascentria and that there is very strong support for the first six months. There are still issues with a fear of the police. Many children are fluent in English.

Ms. Brown asked about what has happened in the aftermath of police involved shootings in other states. Chief Osgood said that the Concord Police are not highly militarized and have a very strong reputation in and a very good relationship with the community. Mr. Carter stated his support for the Concord Police Department. Mr. Bourque asked if there

was anything needed from this board in terms of support. Chief Osgood said he is not seeking additional personnel beyond the authorized 84 sworn positions in FY16. However, if drug use and other factors continue to impact law enforcement response in the community he does not rule out seeking to increase sworn police staff in FY17 or beyond.

Councilor Grady Sexton asked Chief Andrus to review his report. Chief Andrus reviewed emergency call statistics, noting a 5.35% increase in calls overall and a record year at over 7,600 calls in 2014. Emergency medical services had 303 additional calls over 2013. There is no clear reason for what is driving that. Some of the factors likely include an aging population and demographic issues around substance use and mental illness. The cold weather shelters for the homeless close on April 1st and that presents several public safety problems from both the fire and emergency medical services perspectives. A few years ago, 38% of patients were over the age of 65. He will continue to analyze trends.

Chief Andrus reviewed 30 major accomplishments cited in his report. He said that there was not enough time to thank all of the people who made these things happen. He did point out the successful grant from the federal government for self-contained breathing equipment. Administrative Specialist Erin Newnan lead the work on this grant. After the original grant was announced, she challenged the basis on which the funding level had been obtained and received an additional \$111,690 for the City, for a total of \$483,516. The new breathing equipment will arrive in the spring and will incorporate two cycles of standard changes and will reflect the most current technology for firefighter safety. Ms. Newnan was also instrumental in procuring a grant for water rescue equipment. The Department has also applied for a grant for fire sprinklers for the four fire stations. Chief Andrus said that a department that he formerly worked for had a fire station fire on March 3rd that caused over half a million dollars in damage and forced the closure of the station for six months. Seven firefighters narrowly escaped with their lives, using a slide pole to escape the flames and smoke. Chief Andrus also thanked the Concord Fire Officers Association and the Concord Professional Firefighters Association for their hard work in major community support projects. Both unions worked successfully to obtain winter coats for 153 needy children in Operation Warm, as well as continuing the traditional boot drive for the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

Chief Andrus said that a large majority of the year's accomplishments were made through the efforts of Deputy Chief Sean Toomey. The department is fortunate to have a registered fire protection engineer as second in command of the department with his strong skill set in project management and technical expertise in building and fire codes.

Chief Andrus turned next to recommendations. It is critical to have a comprehensive study on station locations to assure that the service network is located with maximum advantage to provide services to the City, now and with growth and changing demographics in the future. He said that the stations range from 49 to 34 years in age and

it is important to assure that they are properly located and that a facilities needs study is necessary to assure that building systems needs are identified and addressed in a way that avoids costly repairs and potential service disruptions. He also identified the need for an additional person within the EMS and Professional Standards Bureau with the strong emphasis on quality assurance and emerging programs in mobile integrated health care, using emergency medical resources to address community health needs. He also pointed to increased workload demand in public assembly inspections and other unmet needs as signaling the need for an additional assistant fire marshal. One event that showed the need for additional prevention needs occurred in August, when it was discovered that the Vegas Block lacked critical fire safety features, such as a working sprinkler system. A fire would have taken dozens of lives, likely including firefighters. The Fire Marshal successfully defended a court challenge to the evacuation of occupants by bringing the judge on site and making a very compelling presentation that the building was uninhabitable.

A position in the Fire Alarm and Traffic Bureau was eliminated in 2009, leaving the superintendent to work alone. This bureau generates \$226,000 in revenue each year and needs additional staff to assure that appropriate maintenance is performed in a timely fashion. There is also a need to add an additional firefighter to the tower ladder company. The nature of ladder company work, including ventilation, rescue, and salvage, requires that the crew be split and, with a team of three, one person often winds up working alone in very hazardous questions.

Mr. O'Neill said that he is glad that the Fire Explorer program is going well. He encouraged the Police Department to consider starting an Explorer Post. Chief Andrus was asked if this is a possible way to recruit new candidates for the department. Chief Andrus said, yes, absolutely. He is pleased that, of 30 "graduates" of the program, nine are females.

Mr. Carter asked about the qualifications for the department's new breathing equipment. Chief Andrus said that all members with emergency scene duties are qualified with the equipment. Mr. Bourque asked about the need for an additional person in the EMS and Professional Standards Bureau. He said that much of that work has been performed in the past by the Paramedic Lieutenants. Chief Andrus said that the demands on the Paramedic Lieutenants have changed dramatically with their assignment as engine and truck company officers, a call load that has doubled over the last several years, and the implementation of a very robust quality assurance system requiring review of patient care reports. The state is also moving away from hours-based recertification standards to focus on competencies and this will also impact their traditional role in teaching. Mr. Bourque said that he voted against creating the Fire Marshal position several years ago because he felt that creating an additional chief officer position would not address fire prevention workload needs. Chief Andrus said that both workload needs and comparison with other departments clearly support an additional fire prevention position. Mr. Bourque said that he is concerned that the Department is getting too top heavy and that

deregulation and delegation are important. Chief Andrus said that he agreed and that the new positions were at the level of company officers, not chief officers, and that their work would be a direct investment in training and prevention with immediate benefit to the Department and the City.

**Motion: It was duly moved and seconded to accept both reports as written.
The motion passed unanimously.**

Next Meeting

The next meeting to review this matter will be scheduled at the call of the Chair.

Adjournment

Mr. Cotsana moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Carter seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board adjourned at 4:40 p.m.