

POLICE & FIRE COMMITTEE MINUTES FINAL
DATE: June 14, 2021

In Attendance:	Chairman	Alderman Johnnie Anthony	
	Members	Alderman Brian Whitaker Alderman Scott Ferguson Alderman Mary Stiehl-excused Alderman Roger Wigginton	Alderman Carmen Duco Alderman Shelly Schaefer Alderman Dennis Weygandt-excused
	Staff	Mayor Patty Gregory Police Chief Bill Clay Capt. Mark Heffernan Lt. Chris Mattingly	City Treasurer Sarah Biermann Fire Chief Tom Pour Capt. Todd Keilbach Asst. Fire Chief JP Penet
	Guests	None	

Chairman Anthony called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The Emergency Evacuation Plan was not explained.

Motion made by Alderman Wigginton, second by Alderman Ferguson to approve the minutes from the previous regular meeting. All present voted Aye, motion carried.

Public Participation

None.

Staff Reports

Fire Department

Chief Pour announced to the committee that he is retiring next month, and he has been planning this for a year. He has 29 years at Belleville, and 35 years overall in the business. His last day in the office is July 16th. Alderman Wigginton & Chairman Anthony both had kind words of thanks for the Chief, and those present gave him a round of applause. The only other thing that he mentioned was the adjusted fee schedule was going to Finance Committee tonight.

Police Department

Chief Clay asked that handouts be distributed to be read later. He then thanked Mayor Gregory for coming to the police department (by invitation) before her swear-in just to listen to a few things from the Chief and his Command Staff. He referenced in the meeting the letter dated July 2020 to the former Mayor (which was one of the handouts).

A powerpoint was then started by Lt. Mattingly – in February 2019 we had 79 sworn officers. Loss of officers and a hiring freeze in 2017 by the City has dropped the sworn officers to 68 currently. The union requires that there be a minimum staffing on Patrol on each given shift, therefore, certain specialized units had to be stopped so those officers could fill the gaps on the street. Lateral hires helped in 2018 & 2019, then COVID hit. We kept losing officers and additional lateral hires weren't interested due to the low starting salary compared to other local agencies, and health insurance costs.

Union members haven't had a pay raise since 2018 because of arbitration over the insurance. That has recently been settled, so talks are now underway to address a new contract, insurance costs, salaries etc. If those can be addressed, then hopefully we can attract more applicants to the department. Other contributing factors to the shortage are national headlines and legislation that has been passed in the state.

Chief reiterated that the City Council didn't know about some of these issues at the police department because the packet that was prepared and submitted to the previous administration in July of 2020 was never shown to them. Now that the committee knows about it, they can only move forward from here and try to address the salary and insurance issues in order to get viable candidates to test for the department and become competitive with other surrounding departments. Mayor Gregory said she is looking into other options where the health insurance costs are concerned.

Alderman Whitaker spoke about a program the County currently has & could it possibly work with the City as well.

Chief Clay concluded that this needs to be acted upon but not impulsively. He will report back to the committee as negotiations proceed and update them as needed.

Alderman Ferguson thanked the Chief for enlightening them with all of this information. Alderman Whitaker asked the Chief to think of things the department might need "Capital Project" wise with American Rescue Plan money.

The Committee did not go into Executive Session due to a lack of time.

New Business

Alderman Wigginton spoke about the 'racetrack' on Main Street and that we need to get a handle on it on major arteries.

Old Business

None.

Adjournment

Motion made at 7:06 p.m. by Alderman Ferguson, second by Alderman Schaefer to adjourn. All members present voted Aye, motion carried.