

Spotsylvania County, Virginia
Public Safety Committee Meeting, October 8, 2020 Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ernest Bartosh, Citizen Representative, Committee Chairman
Jay Cullinan, Fire Chief, FREM
Matthew Embrey, Emergency Management Coordinator, FREM
Roger Harris, Sheriff
Barry Jett, Board of Supervisors, Livingston District
Kevin Marshall, Board of Supervisors, Berkeley District
Ed Petrovitch, County Administrator
Jane Reeve, Director of Information Services (IS)
Becky Skebo, 911 Communications Manager

STAFF PRESENT: Donna Curry, Secretary, FREM

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Bartosh called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

Mr. Bartosh asked if there were any additions or deletions to the minutes of July 8, 2020. There being none, Sheriff Harris made a motion, seconded by Chief Cullinan and carried, to approve the minutes as presented. Ayes: Bartosh, Cullinan, Embrey, Harris, Jett, Marshall, Petrovitch, Reeve, Skebo. Nays: None.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Bartosh opened the floor for public comment. There being none, the public comment period was closed.

INFORMATION SERVICES (IS) PUBLIC SAFETY PROJECTS STATUS REPORT

Jane Reeve, Director of Information Services, reported on the following:

- NG911: Removal of the Legacy phone lines has been completed. Fairfax County went “live” last month.
- GIS: The GIS Hub Project was presented to the Board of Supervisors in the spring, and is now complete.
- Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD): CAD training is currently underway. The Project is moving along very well and thanked everyone for their cooperation.

Chief Cullinan commented on Image Trend and stated that it is working very well.

Mrs. Reeve stated that she has growing concerns regarding the existing CAD system. She noted field issues and dispatchers “losing their systems”. She indicated that she has urged Mr. Pusso and Ms. Magee to keep the current system running while pushing the vendor of the new system to get the project completed as soon as possible.

Sheriff Harris echoed Mrs. Reeve’s concerns. He noted that there will be longer shifts with additional costs if officers have to come into the office to complete their work.

Mrs. Reeve explained that the software in the current system continues to erode. IS will continue to monitor the system and aggressively push the new vendor.

Mr. Marshall stated that he has received AT&T service complaints.

Mrs. Reeve indicated that the service was supposed to have improved but the County is actually experiencing a degradation. She reported that IS is working on the issues from a First Net perspective and have not seen results but they are committed to correcting.

Discussion ensued including: grant opportunities but failing to meet the installation deadlines; construction of new towers in specified areas; issues with acquiring property for additional towers; and issues with getting vendors to co-locate on existing towers.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

STATUS OF PUBLIC SAFETY CAPITAL PROJECTS

Chief Cullinan updated the Committee on the status of the following Capital Projects:

- Apparatus Update: Tanker 5 and Engine 4 have been put into service. He indicated that engineering is currently underway for a new heavy rescue which will replace a 2001 vehicle in the spring. Chief Cullinan stated that two (2) ambulances are anticipated to be delivered in February, 2021 and in service in March.

Sheriff Harris stated that the Spotsylvania County and Louisa County residents are thrilled with the new fire boat and noted that it is a very useful purchase.

- Station expansion/replacement:

Station 6 Expansion Project: Chief Cullinan indicated that the plans for the Station 6 Expansion Project are currently under review by Code Compliance.

Station 3 Replacement Project: Chief Cullinan reported that the Station 3 Replacement Project is moving forward as preliminary talks begin with the selected engineering firm for this Project and the construction of Station 12.

Training Center Project: Chief Cullinan stated more serious discussions have begun concerning classrooms at the Regional Training Center.

Sheriff Harris reported on the status of the following Capital Projects:

- Animal Shelter Project: The Animal Shelter Project is coming along very well and indicated that the new section should be opening very soon.
- Courthouse Expansion Project: The Courthouse Project is not progressing as well as expected. He indicated that he has seen more progress in the last several months. He noted that when the project is completed, it will be one of the most secure buildings in the County.

Mr. Petrovitch stated that the County never had an issue with the quality of the work being done on the Courthouse Project, the issues have been getting them on schedule to get the work completed.

CIVIL UNREST STATUS/IMPACTS

Sheriff Harris stated that numerous meetings have been held with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). He indicated that during the first meeting, he requested that they provide a list of demands. He happily reported that the issues/concerns that they had, had been previously addressed. He reported that the City of Fredericksburg had requested assistance from the Spotsylvania Sheriff's Office during a recent event. Sheriff Harris explained that he sent the SWAT unit to guard the Police Department and noted that the City Manager and City Mayor were very appreciative of the County's support. He assured the City officials that if they are in need of assistance that the Spotsylvania County Sheriff's Office would be happy to help. He stated that he is trying to avoid any aftermath coming into the County. Sheriff Harris also reported that he had met with demonstrators and advised them that there would be no blocking of roads or streets.

Mr. Bartosh inquired if the Sheriff had received any intel concerning the upcoming elections. The Sheriff indicated that they were prepared and had a plan should it be necessary. Sheriff Harris stated that the NAACP has requested that there be no law enforcement vehicles located at the polling places. He explained that their concerns are in regards to license plate readers. He stated that the election is going to present problems but is hoping to keep them out of the County.

STATUS UPDATE REGARDING STAFFING - Sheriff

Sheriff Harris stated that recruitment is going well and noted that they are down approximately four (4) positions in the Patrol Division. He indicated that he had been utilizing School Resource Officers to assist with the vacancies; however, now that school is back in session, that is not an option. Sheriff Harris reported that the Sheriff's Office is down six (6) call takers which they are hoping to fill quickly. He indicated that interviews are scheduled within the week. Sheriff Harris explained that they have been receiving employee retirements as they no longer want to deal with the public.

Sheriff Harris stated that the Regional Jail is currently down eighty-nine (89) employees and pay is the issue. He explained that the starting salary is \$39,000 and they are losing seasoned employees to higher paying jobs. Sheriff Harris indicated that they are down to a critical point and may need to close the jail.

Mr. Petrovitch stated that the Jail Board approved a compensation package in its FY21 Budget which is similar, to what the County approved for public safety employees. He indicated that the Jail will be able to fund the pay raises in January for its employees and will be an ongoing expense to the County budget totaling \$350,000 annually.

Sheriff Harris concluded by saying that things will improve at the Jail once the pay increase goes into effect; and if not, inmates will be sent to other jails in the surrounding area.

STATUS UPDATE REGARDING STAFFING – FREM

Chief Cullinan reported that FREM staffing is doing very well. He stated that a new Recruit Academy began on October 5, 2020 with eight (8) students. He noted that three (3) of those students are from King George County. Chief Cullinan indicated that the smaller class size is more conducive to learning. These recruits should complete the Academy in six (6) months. He stated that he is currently looking at the feasibility of stretching out the Paramedic class. He indicated that he is in the process of preparing a Request for Legal Opinion concerning the current contract. Chief Cullinan reported that FREM continues to struggle with overtime funding with regard to training. He indicated that he has been working with Bonnie Jewel and Chief Irby to determine what an adequate number should be.

Mr. Bartosh inquired about the Volunteer Academy. Chief Cullinan stated that it began approximately one week before the Recruit Academy and currently enrolls 16 students.

INSURANCE SERVICES OFFICE (ISO) CLASSIFICATION PROCESS

Chief Cullinan stated that he called the Insurance Services Office to confirm that the information had been submitted and is currently awaiting the results. He noted that the original visit was three (3) years ago. He concluded by saying that he feels the results will be positive but is uncertain as to how positive they will be.

911 CENTER PERSONNEL CLASSIFICATION LEGISLATION UPDATE

Mrs. Skebo stated that the proposed legislation is sitting in the House. There is no known projection as to when it will progress. She noted that dispatchers are now classified as clinical workers.

VOLUNTEER POLICY DEVELOPMENT FOR NEW COMPUTER AIDED DISPATCH (CAD) SYSTEM

Mrs. Reeve stated that Mr. Pusso is beginning to start the process for developing a volunteer policy for the new CAD from a Security/Administrator perspective. Chief Cullinan stated that the volunteers currently fall under County policies. Mrs. Reeve indicated that she is hoping to work with the Human Resources Department for “across the board” tracking. Chief Cullinan offered to share his information with Mrs. Reeve.

NEW BUSINESS

COVID-19 STATUS/IMPACTS

Mr. Bartosh reported that COVID-19 cases are beginning to trend upward.

Chief Embrey reported that there is not a significant spike with COVID-19; however, the County is now dealing with flu season and they present very similar. He explained that the County has good processes in place. He indicated that the Center for Disease Control (CDC) is predicting that flu levels are going to be lower this year; however, FREM is preparing for the worst.

Mr. Bartosh urged FREM to make certain to have enough personal protective equipment (PPE) available for first responders.

Chief Embrey reported that the County has learned much during this pandemic and indicated that he is in the process of drafting a Plan for future use. He noted that the situation is very dynamic and changing; they are managing as best as they can.

CITIZEN COMPLAINTS

Sheriff Harris stated that his office has received several complaints of speeders by the S-Power site. He explained that there is no place to pull over which causes a back-up of nearly fifty (50) cars at the 4-way intersection near Millers Farm. He reported that Orange County citizens are complaining about S-Power trucks. Sheriff Harris indicated that he has spoken with Sheriff Amos, Orange, County, regarding the complaints received. Sheriff Harris concluded by saying that he doesn't feel that it is a speeding issue but more of a congestion issue.

Discussion ensued including: safety issues; dump trucks exiting Fawn Lake during peak traffic hours; and conditions of the Special Use Permit with regard to trucks on Orange Plank Road during school hours.

REQUEST FROM VDOT

Sheriff Harris received a request from the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) with regard to lowering the speed limit on Route 793 from the grandfathered 55 MPH to 40 MPH. The specific section of road is 4/10 of a mile from Old Courthouse Road to Buck Acres. The request is a result of an accident approximately one month ago when a trash truck hit a car.

CARES ACT FUNDING

Mr. Bartosh inquired how the CARES Act funding will impact Public Safety in Spotsylvania County.

Mr. Petrovitch explained that the County will be receiving funds from the CARES Act totaling \$23.8 Million. These funds will be used for public safety salaries, technology, and Broadband. He noted that the stipulation for the funding is that it must be spent by December 30, 2020.

Mr. Bartosh inquired if the funds could be used to offset revenue shortfalls. Mr. Petrovitch explained that the funds can pay back the stabilization reserve fund. Mrs. Reeve stated that \$30 Million has been earmarked for Broadband; however, using the funds by December 30, 2020 is going to be very difficult so they are hoping for an extension. Mr. Petrovitch indicated that the only way an extension could be approved is if a second stimulus is approved. He explained that the funds have to be spent and the project completed in order to use the funds.

Mr. Bartosh inquired if the funds could be used at the Bowman Center. Chief Cullinan stated that this location is temporary storage for CPAT testing and not a long term solution as the renters change frequently. Mrs. Reeve inquired about the estimated timeframe for the Logistics building. Chief Embrey indicated that FREM has a recommended solution. Mr. Bartosh inquired if the current Station 3 would be an option. Chief Cullinan stated that the facility is owned by the Spotsylvania Volunteer Fire Department.

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Mr. Marshall stated that he is currently drafting the County's legislative agenda and indicated that the following items have been requested for inclusion:

- Boater Safety – maintaining a perimeter of 100 feet from the shore line;
- Request change of 100 feet off of the shore line across the board.

He explained that the Lake Anna Advisory Committee sent correspondence to Dominion Power regarding bridges and canals, requesting that there be no tow zones or wake zones. Sheriff Harris stated that the last conversation that he had with Mike Christie, they don't care what happens in the water but they want people to stay off the islands. Sheriff Harris noted that they now have three (3) boats but need the manpower to operate them on the Lake.

Discussion ensued with regard to adequately measuring 100 feet from the shore line.

REPORTS

ED PETROVITCH, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Mr. Petrovitch had nothing to report.

JAY CULLINAN, FIRE CHIEF

Chief Cullinan stated that call volumes have returned to normal.

MATTHEW EMBREY, DIVISION CHIEF OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Chief Embrey stated that the Christmas Parade discussions are forthcoming. The Dominion exercise has been scheduled for January/February timeframe. The Emergency Operations Plan will be updated in April, 2021. He concluded by thanking Mrs. Reeve for her GIS Staff and the GIS dashboard. He noted that the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) was very complimentary of the information. Chief Cullinan echoed Chief Embrey's comments.

Chief Embrey concluded by saying that he is working with the Rappahannock Health District and the National Guard for organizing COVID testing sites within the County.

BARRY JETT, BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, LIVINGSTON DISTRICT Mr.

Mr. Jett had nothing to report.

KEVIN MARSHALL, BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, BERKELEY DISTRICT Mr.

Mr. Marshall had nothing to report.

BECKY SKEBO, 911 COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

Mrs. Skebo had nothing to report.

JANE REEVE, DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION SERVICES (IS) Mrs.

Mrs. Reeve had nothing to report.

ROGER HARRIS, SHERIFF

Sheriff Harris had nothing to report.

ERNEST BARTOSH, CITIZEN REPRESENTATIVE

Mr. Bartosh congratulated Spotsylvania Volunteer Rescue Squad on its 34th Anniversary.

NEXT MEETING

Mr. Bartosh reminded the members that the following items will be included on the January 13, 2021 Agenda:

- Organizational Meeting;
- 2020 Annual Report for the Board of Supervisors;
- Proposed Resolutions for 2021.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, Chief Embrey moved, seconded by Mr. Marshall and carried, to adjourn the meeting at 3:40 p.m. Ayes: Bartosh, Cullinan, Embrey, Harris, Jett, Marshall, Petrovitch, Reeve, Skebo. Nays: None.

The next meeting of the Public Safety Committee will be held on Wednesday, January 13, 2021 beginning at 2:00 p.m. in the Public Safety Building/Community Room, located at 9119 Dean Ridings Lane; Spotsylvania, VA 22553.