

Spotsylvania County, Virginia

Public Safety Committee Meeting, October 3, 2018 Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ernest Bartosh, Citizen Representative, Committee Chairman
Greg Benton, Board of Supervisors, Livingston District (*entered the meeting at 2:09 p.m.*)
Jay Cullinan, Fire Chief, FREM
Matthew Embrey, Emergency Management Coordinator, FREM
Roger Harris, Sheriff, SCSO
Kevin Marshall, Board of Supervisors, Berkeley District
Jane Reeve, Director of Information Services (IS)
Becky Skebo, 911 Communications Manager, SCSO
Mark Taylor, County Administrator (*entered the meeting at 2:02 p.m.*)

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.

PUBLIC COMMENTS/PRESENTATIONS

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

ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

Sheriff Harris made a motion, seconded by Mr. Cullinan and carried, to adopt the meeting minutes of July 11, 2018 as presented. Ayes: Bartosh, Cullinan, Embrey, Harris, Marshall, Reeve, Skebo. Nays: None. Absent: Benton, Taylor.

INFORMATION SERVICES (IS) PUBLIC SAFETY PROJECTS STATUS REPORT

Mrs. Reeve reported that the IS Department is now fully staffed. She provided a status update on the following projects:

- ImageTrend;
- Body Cameras;
- Geographic Information Services (GIS);

- Radio System;
- Digital Alert; and
- Judicial Center Security System.

Sheriff Harris thanked Mrs. Reeve and the IS staff, specifically Ms. Magee and Mr. Pusso, for everything they have done for public safety.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

REVISED BYLAWS ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ON SEPTEMBER 25, 2018

Mr. Bartosh thanked the Board members for adopting the revised Bylaws. He stated that the Public Safety Committee had reviewed and revised the Charter and the By-laws, and had sent both to the County Attorney's Office for review. It was then learned that earlier this year the Board of Supervisors revoked the charters of the Board Committees that had charters and merged any substantive provisions into the bylaws. Also, the Board of Supervisors appended all of the Board Committee bylaws to its (BoS) bylaws, so now all of the Board Committee bylaws are easier to find and update per the County Attorney's Office.

Mr. Bartosh inquired as to why the Committee was not notified of these changes at the time they were made so the Committee would not have wasted time on the proposed revisions. Mr. Bartosh indicated that there seems to be a breakdown with information coming from the Board of Supervisors to the Committee.

Mr. Taylor stated that there were inconsistencies with several of the committee charters, so if it was determined that having committee bylaws was sufficient. Therefore, there is no need for a charter.

Mr. Bartosh voiced concerns that information from the Public Safety Committee has not been acknowledged in the past and inquired as to the best way to get information to the Board members when the Committee is seeking feedback from them. Mr. Taylor stated to send it through the County Administration Office and it would get to the Board members. Mr. Bartosh indicated that had been the process in the past but there had been no acknowledgement of the information. He requested that some type of acknowledgement be received from County Administration confirming receipt of the correspondence.

NEW BUSINESS

PROPOSED COMBINING QUARTERLY SHREDDING EVENT WITH DRUG DROP-OFF

Mr. Bartosh stated that he had requested that this item be added to the agenda. He explained that it would be convenient for the citizens if the County could combine a drug drop-off with the quarterly shredding event.

Sheriff Harris stated that drug "take back" days are held twice annually in conjunction with the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) and other federal departments. He reported that the drug box placed in the lobby of the Public Safety Building typically collects 200 pounds of prescription drugs per month. He noted that the Sheriff's Office is in the process of negotiating prices for shredding services for a community shredding event. He concluded by saying that both of these events are advertised heavily on social media, as well as, the Sheriff's Office webpage and the County website.

Discussion ensued including: education campaigns, rack cards throughout County buildings, contacting funeral homes and pharmacies advising of drug collection dates and times, message boards at convenience center locations, and the possibility of inserts in Dominion Virginia Power bills.

POSSIBILITY OF A PUBLIC SAFETY COMPENSATION PLAN

Chief Cullinan requested that this item be added to the agenda. He stated that the recruitment efforts from other localities have attracted the attention of County employees and many are leaving. He reported the Sheriff's Office and Fire/Rescue have an equal level of turn over within their respective departments which prohibits the opportunity to build depth within the organization. Chief Cullinan stated that he had recently received a mailing from Albemarle County which is currently offering new employees year for year credit based on the scale in their department. He noted that competitors can propose what a new employee should be making by retirement age. He stated that he is concerned with where people are currently placed in grades and suggested that the County make sure that pay bands are competitive. He indicated that he had worked with Sheriff Harris on a proposed compensation plan for public safety employees, likened to a step program, and would be performance driven. He stated that he would like to see a revised compensation plan for the County as a whole and felt that this could be the first step to drive discussion.

Mr. Taylor inquired if Albemarle County's compensation package is contingent upon localized training. Sheriff Harris stated that they will train the employee on their processes and procedures. Chief Cullinan stated that FREM Recruit Academies have a high level of success with individuals who have no training which affords the opportunity to train on County processes and procedures.

Chief Cullinan stated that there needs to be ways to attract and keep employees. He stated that he is supportive for a County-wide compensation plan but feels the need for a public safety compensation plan at this time.

Sheriff Harris stated that the County typically invests \$80,000 to \$90,000 in training new recruits. He concurred with Chief Cullinan concerning the need for a revised County-wide compensation plan but feels that there needs to be something now for public safety.

Chief Cullinan stated that salary compression and "leap frogging" has created a fair amount of discrepancies with people in the same grade and same length of service. He noted that the compensation plan needs to be heavily tied to performance.

Sheriff Harris stated that the competitive compensation increases knowledge and work performance. He indicated that an employee's longevity, training, and education should contribute to excelling an employee; unfortunately it can be detrimental in the current plan if they are promoted. That employee would have to go back to the street to get a pay raise.

Chief Cullinan stated that 99% of the employees who leave, like the Department and the County, but go to other localities who pay more and they can support their families better.

Mrs. Reeve stated that there needs to be a mechanism in place to move employees through the steps.

Mr. Bartosh inquired whether Chief Cullinan had presented the proposed compensation plan to the Human Resources Department or the local Union.

Chief Cullinan stated that he had not as this is just the beginning with the presentation to the Public Safety Committee.

Mr. Marshall stated that there needs to be a look at the County as a whole as special pay adjustments create parity issues elsewhere.

Mr. Benton stated that the County just implemented Phase 2 of 3 of the Evergreen Study and inquired as to whether there had been a positive effect on retention. Chief Cullinan

stated that the pay scales are now a couple years old. He indicated that there are not a vast amount of Advance Life Support (ALS) certified officers and noted that he just submitted paperwork to the Human Resources Department to change definite inconsistencies.

Mr. Benton stated that he has never been a fan of the Evergreen Study. He indicated that public safety needs to be separated from general government employees and suggested that the County let it play out until all three (3) phases of the Evergreen compensation plan be implemented. Chief Cullinan questioned whether additional disparity will occur if the County moves forward with the third phase implementation.

Mr. Benton stated that Chief Cullinan makes a good point.

Chief Cullinan stated that he doesn't know that the discussion should be postponed until after the third implementation.

Mr. Marshall stated that merit raises went away and that base salaries have increased. He noted that compression issues are County-wide. He explained that this is a very basic formula issue which he could demonstrate if there was an available white board.

Chief Cullinan stated that the cost to implement the proposed compensation plan for FREM and the Sheriff's Office is roughly estimated at \$2.5 million.

Mr. Taylor stated that multiple pieces of the Evergreen Study were considered to fight back the compression issue.

Mr. Marshall stated that the County pay scale has a minimum, mid, and maximum; and it is uncertain what the career length will be and no path to get there.

Chief Cullinan stated that he is not sure what the Evergreen Study looked at.

Mrs. Reeve stated that the County appears to be operating by exceptions and not the rule.

Mr. Taylor explained that the Evergreen Study was driven by the market economy. He stated that the County needs to do a good job of treating our fundamental employees well.

Sheriff Harris stated that many employees leave the County due to money; however, the majority who leave want to return within a year which says a lot about the organization. He stated that Chief Cullinan has spent a lot of time drafting the proposed compensation plan for public safety.

Chief Cullinan asked that the members review the information and provide input to him. Chief Embrey concluded the conversation by asking who is going to do what by when. It was determined that the members will review the information and provide comments and suggestions to Chief Cullinan.

Mr. Taylor echoed and affirmed Mr. Marshall's perspectives and explained that the County's implementation of Evergreen has included the gradual implementation of selected step increases. He expressed concern that performance must also be considered in relation to pay adjustments.

Mr. Marshall also noted that, due to the constraints of the FY2020 budget process driven by the One Solution implementation, action to implement changes of this sort and magnitude would be programmed for no sooner than FY 2021.

REPORTS

BECKY SKEBO, 911 COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

Mrs. Skebo commented briefly on the following:

- New Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) System;
- Text to 911; and
- NG911.

Mrs. Skebo explained that the NG911 is a mandatory change as the analog system is being replaced by a digital IP based GIS. Mrs. Reeve stated that funds have been budgeted for years for this change. She indicated that it has been heavily advertised and promoted. The County will be participating on a contract with AT&T. She concluded by saying that the Commonwealth of Virginia has committed funds for paying for two (2) years of costs for this transition. She stated that the County wants the public to be confident that when they dial 911, the calls will go through.

Mr. Bartosh commented on the challenges with technology risks; cyber threats; and cyber-attacks. Mrs. Reeve assured the Committee and the public that the County has built in multiples layers of redundancy for protection.

MATTHEW EMBREY, EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Chief Embrey updated the Committee on the recent VOPEX drill. He stated that from an operations standpoint, it was very successful; however, an issue was discovered in the Plan which had been directed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The County Plan has been corrected per FEMA's instructions and accepted.

Chief Embrey commented on Hurricane Florence, which happened to be a good training exercise for the County since the track of the storm changed before making landfall. He noted that the County is very fortunate to have the level of expertise from all departments. Chief Embrey concluded his report by advising that an application had been submitted to the Local Emergency Management Planning Grant (LEMPG) to purchase a dispatch console in an effort to enhance communications capabilities in the Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

GREG BENTON, BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, LIVINGSTON DISTRICT

Mr. Benton had nothing to report.

KEVIN MARSHALL, BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, BERKELEY DISTRICT

Mr. Marshall had nothing to report.

MARK TAYLOR, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Mr. Taylor had nothing to report.

ROGER HARRIS, SHERIFF

Sheriff Harris stated that the Sheriff's Office had recently purchased a new boat for more consistent patrolling on Lake Anna. He reported that they are currently training boat operators in an effort to enforce laws on the lake. Sheriff Harris concluded by saying that they are currently in the process of building a large shed for storing equipment so that it won't have to be left out in the elements. He thanked the Board members and County Administrator for their support of the project.

JAY CULLINAN, FIRE CHIEF

Chief Cullinan distributed response statistics and asked the members to remind their friends and neighbors to take care of their chimneys. He reported that Recruit Academy 20 is at the half-way point. He indicated that the Academy began with twenty-five (25) recruits and are now down to twenty-one (21) with the anticipation of two (2) additional departures. Chief Cullinan stated that staff is currently looking at another Recruit Academy in January, 2019 due to the additional vacancies in the field. He stated that the Department will need to request additional funds to cover the overtime created by the vacancies. Chief Cullinan noted that Spotsylvania

Volunteer Rescue Squad (SVRS) has been struggling to fill spots at night and on the weekends. He indicated that both SVRS and the Spotsylvania Volunteer Fire Department (SVFD) have been assisting with coverage during the day in order to meet minimum staffing requirements. Chief Cullinan stated that the County has received another Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant through FEMA for twenty-one (21) individuals. He indicated that this grant will provide the foundation for the volunteers to build on, thus the reason for the proposed compensation plan.

Sheriff Harris inquired as to whether the County has the proper equipment on hand to cover a large apartment fire. Chief Cullinan stated that it does and noted that as the County grows, future investments in apparatus will be needed. He reported that several new pieces of apparatus are due in service during this fiscal year which includes:

- Engine 5;
- Rescue Engine 8;
- Tower 1; and
- Two (2) new ambulances.

Chief Cullinan thanked the Board members for its support of the Department and the community. He concluded his report by stating that he is looking forward to the new CAD and Records Management System as it will provide useful information for call response. He indicated that he feels there will be a significant improvement in response times due to the Tone Alerting System and the CAD.

Mr. Benton inquired about the three (3) new School Resource Officers (SRO) recently employed by the Sheriff's Office. Sheriff Harris stated that there is currently one (1) SRO located in every Spotsylvania County public school and thanked the Board for its support. He noted that this is not the answer to the problem but it is the first line of defense. He indicated that the community is thrilled!

Sheriff Harris stated that he would check with the DEA to see whether the drug "take back" could be held quarterly. Mr. Marshall stated that he is fine with twice annually and asked that information be heavily distributed to get the word out in the County.

JANE REEVE, INFORMATION SERVICES DIRECTOR

Mrs. Reeve reminded Sheriff Harris and Chief Cullinan that there needs to be a Volunteer Policy in place for the new CAD System.

Mrs. Reeve stated that the new Radio System was designed to last fifteen (15) years and noted that the Public School System is one-third of its highest users. She indicated that she continues to work with School representatives on the issues.

ERNEST BARTOSH, CITIZEN REPRESENTATIVE

Mr. Bartosh complimented everyone on the customer service recently received by first responders when his mother-in-law passed away. He noted that they were all very caring, compassionate and professional.

Mr. Bartosh advised the Committee members that officer elections will be held at the Public Safety Committee on January 2, 2019.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Greg Cebula requested the Chairman's permission to make public comments. He stated that there is a push by the Virginia Boating Alliance for everyone to have life jackets on Lake Anna. He also noted that there is consideration being given to separating property damage and personal injury.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 3:48 p.m. The next meeting of the Public Safety Committee will be held on Wednesday, January 2, 2019 beginning at 2:00 p.m. in the Community Room of the Public Safety Building.