

## HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES

January 24, 2022

**In Attendance:** **Vermilion City Council:** *Monica Stark, President of Council; Steve Herron, Council At Large, Pat Stein, Ward One; Teresa Mayle, Ward Two; Greg Drew, Ward Three; Barb Brady, Ward Four; Brian Holmes, Ward Five.*

**Administration:** *Jim Forthofer, Mayor; Chris Howard, City Engineer; Amy Hendricks, Finance Director; Chris Hartung, Police Chief; Tony Valerius, Service Director; Chris Stempowski, Fire Chief*

**Call to Order:** Barb Brady, Chairwoman, RESOLVED THAT this Health & Safety Committee comprised of the committee of the whole does now come to order.

---

### **TOPIC ONE: Fire Chief's Report**

Chief Stempowski reported the fire department responded to 25 incidents in the month of December for a total year-to-date in 2021 of 260, which was a record for the fire department.

He mentioned that John Showalter retired after 50 years of service. He joined the force in 1972 and served as a firefighter and served on the Fire Prevention Bureau, and was a certified Fire Safety Inspector, and also served as a Fire Marshall. He thanked him for his many years of service.

He stressed the need for everyone to have working smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors as they do save lives. Recently, they had a structure fire and the folks luckily got out due to the Police Department's quick response and assistance. Also, he mentioned that other agencies assisted in battling this fire for multiple hours in freezing weather.

He reported the Fire Department was awarded a Regional Communications Grant of which they went in with LifeCare Ambulance Services. He said they were awarded the grant in the amount of \$617,000. Since they were awarded the grant they have been working on the specs for the regional equipment that was identified in the grant. He noted a copy of the grant specs were provided to Council. He said they want to go out to bid on the specs and asked Council to give authorization to make this happen as they would like to get this rolling as soon as possible. G. Fisher noted a motion to authorize them to go out to bid is required. A. Hendricks said Council could make this motion at the February 7 meeting.

B. Brady mentioned they have three new council members along with herself who haven't toured the new fire station, so she asked the Chief if they could set up a date. G. Fisher noted she has a Civil Service examination scheduled at the fire station on February 5. B. Brady said she will get with the Chief on a couple of dates to see what works for Council. M. Stark reminded her that only three members of council can attend at one time because they cannot have more than four as it is a quorum. Chief Stempowski said they can set up a couple dates and B. Brady suggested one date with staggered times.

C. Stempowski advised the new council members they need to take a National Incident Management System (NIMS 700) training course online as this is a requirement for all incoming newly elected council members. G. Fisher asked the Chief to send this course to her via email, so she can submit it to the new council members.

B. Holmes asked the Chief and/or Finance Director what the total training budget is for the fire department. A. Hendricks said she can give an average of what it has been. B. Holmes said he would like the total for a year. A. Hendricks said it depends on need, so it's not always the same from year to year, but she would provide him with an average.

B. Brady asked Mayor Forthofer for an update on the new Fire Chief's position. Mayor Forthofer said the advertisement is going up today before the Ohio Fire Chief's Association and now they have the opportunity to put it in local media.

## **TOPIC TWO: Police Chiefs Report**

Chief Hartung said nine individuals in the department got hit with COVID and 75% of their dispatchers were out. He said they had plans prepared in 2020 anticipating COVID that never came to fruition. He said everything worked out well. He noted they have the availability of switching their entire dispatch operations completely over to Erie County, but they did not need to do this as Detective Holmes and Captain Graham did a bang-up job dispatching. He said the department is back to 100%, but Sheriff Sigsworth was critical in providing deputies at the east end of the county that were able to provide support in the event Vermilion needed anything. He expressed his thanks to Sheriff Sigsworth.

He provided Council with information pursuant to purchasing replacements for the sedans. The sedans are legendary for maintenance issues. He that five cruisers and the K-9-unit needs replaced. He explained the quotes given to council include the Hybrid engine option, which adds about \$3,539.00 per car. The dealerships are providing an additional 10 miles per gallon they are recovering. He said over six years this could be substantial in cost savings. He said Statewide Ford Lincoln has done the city's last three orders and they have been happy to work with them.

He mentioned that Pete Burgos a long-time part-time dispatcher is retiring from the correctional system in the spring. He has been a fixture with Vermilion for the last 19 years. He wished him the best of luck in his future. He said Kyle Ancog was hired six months ago as a part-time officer, but he has accepted a full-time position with the Erie County Sheriff's department. He said Kyle was instrumental in getting the VPD through the great bridge divide as he picked up a substantial number of hours to keep their overtime costs down. He said he is a remarkable young man that will do great things in this career, so he wished him the best of luck. He said Dean Mayer is retiring on March 17 after 33 years on the force. He expressed the best of luck to his future endeavors.

He said they have upcoming trainings which include Use of Force training on March 13 and March 20 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Harbortown Marshall Arts. He invited council to watch the training if interested. They will have firearms recertifications in May, which is held at the Northern Ohio Tactical Training Center on Baumhart Road. He does not have dates as of yet as they are waiting to see if they receive their ammo shipment. He said it is tentatively done in May and Council members are welcome to watch the different types of training. They will do some Felony Traffic Stop training with simunitions. The officers have all undertaken 24 hours of

continuing education as required by the State of Ohio. Various topics include legal updates, use of force, mental health, diversity in domestic violence updates, etc. He has taken all of his online with the exception of the diversity component as it has to be instructor led and they are waiting on those dates from OPOTA. If they don't get the 24 hours of continuing education, then they lose their certification through the state. This is a legislative mandate that occurred back in 2007 and some years it is funded and some years it is not, but this is a year that it is funded, so they will recoup half of the hours back to the city as they will be reimbursed by the state.

He reported that Kinzie Rock has assumed the duties of Student Resource Officer from Ben Sargent. She is fitting in nicely and enjoying it. He noted that Ben is ready to get back on the road.

M. Stark asked if there is a delay in timing on the delivery of the police vehicles. C. Hartung said it is his understanding that Dodge is not filling law enforcement orders for the rest of the year, and neither is Chevy. Ford has discontinued the Ford F-150 for the rest of the year, and they will fill the SUV orders until they run out of parts, and it could be next year before they get their order. M. Stark said there could be a possibility they could get them if they get the order in soon enough. C. Hartung said ideally if they can at least get the letter of intent saying they intend on purchasing, then they can get this locked in. B. Holmes said everybody is going with the hybrid engine. G. Drew asked if there was a performance difference – has the hybrid been out yet or no. C. Hartung said he has not done anything with the Hybrid's, but the Chiefs he has talked with about them have been satisfied with them. He said most of their gas mileage is going toward idling and the police officers sit and idle a lot, so they are seeing savings from these types of engines. He said these Hybrid components of these particular units are warrantied for eight years and they are looking to get six out of them. B. Brady asked if there are enough miles on top of the eight years. C. Hartung said they just warranty the components for eight years. P. Stein asked how often the department gets new cars. C. Hartung said the department rotates six cars every three years. G. Drew asked what the plan is with the old cars. C. Hartung said the old cars will be used in the city by the building department, the water department, and the court's Crown Victoria will be replaced, and then the rest will go to auction.

M. Stark asked the finance director if the city financially can make these purchases right now. A. Hendricks said yes, and they mostly likely will have a slightly higher annual payment, but it is workable in the budget. B. Brady asked if this could be ready for February 7. G. Fisher said she can prepare legislation for the meeting of February 7.

**M. Stark MOVED;** B. Holmes seconded to authorize the clerk to prepare legislation for the purchase of six 2022 Utility Vehicles for the Vermilion Police Department. Roll Call Vote 7 YEAS.  
**MOTION CARRIED.**

B. Brady adjourned the meeting after no further discussion came before the committee.

*Next Meeting: Work Session for Transient Rentals followed by Committee Meetings - February 14, 2022 @ 6:00 p.m. at the Vermilion Municipal Court Complex, 687 Decatur Street, Vermilion, Ohio*

*Transcribed by:  
Gwen Fisher, Certified Municipal Clerk*