

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 16, 2002
TO: Michael G. Herring, City Administrator
FROM: Chief Ray Johnson
SUBJECT: PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING

The Public Health & Safety Committee met on January 15, 2002. Those in attendance included Chairperson Michael Casey, Ward III, Councilmember Barry Flachsbart, Ward I, Councilmember Bruce Geiger, Ward II, Councilmember Mary Brown, Ward IV, City Administrator Michael Herring, Chief Ray Johnson and Superintendent of Engineering Operations Bonn Hubert. Also in attendance was Mr. Bruce Morrison of Green, Hennings and Henry, and members of the public. The meeting was called to order at 5:45 PM by Chairperson Casey.

1. Approval of Minutes – September 21, 2001 and October 8, 2001

Councilmember Geiger motioned and Councilmember Flachsbart seconded to approve the minutes of the September 21, 2001 and October 8, 2001 meetings. The motion carried unanimously.

2. FAA/Spirit Airport Consultant – Scope of Work

Councilmember Casey introduced Mr. Bruce Morrison, an attorney specializing in Environmental Law with the firm of Green, Hennings and Henry. Councilmember Flachsbart noted citizen concern regarding the possible further development of Spirit Airport and the impact upon residents. Mr. Morrison related that his past experience has been tracking development regarding compliance to environmental law and that he had also worked with residents in Illinois to assess the possibility of stopping the construction of the Mid America Airport. The recommendation to the Illinois residents was to not pursue the halting of the building because the pursuit would result in failure. His recommendation would be to first request copies of documentation of records under the Sunshine Law. This would assure that all proper permits are currently in effect and would allow the monitoring of those permits. The cost for securing these records would be approximately \$500.00. Mr. Geiger stated that he would like to see a plan developed whereby the City of Chesterfield and St. Louis County (the owner and operator of Spirit Airport) could work together for mutual benefit. Mr. Geiger asked if there were any zoning issues that should be investigated regarding future City development near the Airport. Mr. Morrison replied that the Airport is responsible for Environmental Impact Studies. Mr. Morrison also recommended that the City contact a teaching professional who may be able to help investigate these issues.

Councilmember Casey requested that Mr. Morrison prepare a proposal relative to this discussion including the cost of his services. The Committee members will then evaluate the proposal and develop a plan for the scope of work needed relating to Spirit Airport.

3. Police Staffing Formula

Chief Johnson led the Committee in a discussion regarding the staffing policy of the Police Department. Chief Johnson informed the Committee members that the staffing ratio was originally developed by reviewing the staffing policies of other cities of comparable size in the surrounding areas. This formula of 1.7 officers per thousand population has been the baseline formula for hiring police officers: However, the 2000 census figures showed that the actual population is lower than projected and applying the formula to actual figures shows that there are five more officers than the formula requires. However, several of the officers are currently assigned to specialized units: One officer is assigned to the St. Louis County and Municipal Academy, four officers are assigned to the Parkway School District as School Resource Officers, one Drug Task Force Officer and three D.A.R.E. offices. The City is fully reimbursed for salary and all benefits for the officer assigned to the Academy. The City is reimbursed 75% for the four officers assigned to the Parkway School District (the officers work nine months of the year at the schools and three months they are assigned back to regular patrol duties). Although the officer assigned to the Drug Task Force is not reimbursed by any agency, the City shares in drug forfeiture money secured by the Drug Task Force.

There was some discussion regarding the recent number of burglaries. Chief Johnson noted that increasing the numbers of officers would not necessarily reduce the number of burglaries.

Chief Johnson noted that if the specialized officers are taken out of the equation, the staffing of the police department would be in line with the 1.7 per thousand population. He also informed the Committee members that he was comfortable with the current manpower allocation for the Police Department.

The Committee directed the Chief to re-evaluate current staffing levels and identify any changes that he would recommend.

4. National Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

The Committee discussed standards outlined in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). Mr. Herring noted that the City had already adopted the MUTCD. Mr. Herring also noted that the Manual is followed with the exception of the placement of stop signs in residential area where a City policy was set up in response to requests for signage, and in the case of one recent stoplight. Councilmember Flachsbart motioned to follow the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices explicitly with no exceptions. Mr. Geiger seconded the motion. Discussion followed whereas Chief Johnson reminded the Committee members that the City of Chesterfield has jurisdiction only over City roadways. State and County roadways are outside of the City's jurisdiction. The motion failed with Councilmember Flachsbart voting "yes" and Councilmembers Casey and Geiger voting "no".

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5. Federal Technology Grant

Chief Johnson informed Committee members that the City has received approval for a Federal Grant for the purchase of in-car computing equipment and one-year operating costs. This would allow the purchase of twelve (12) laptop computers to be installed in marked police units and will also cover all usage costs for the period of one year. This grant is a 75/25 match, which would provide the City with \$64,782.00 and require matching funds of \$21,594.00. Chief Johnson noted that acceptance of the grant does require matching funds that are not currently appropriated or budgeted. Councilmember Flachsbart motioned and Councilmember Casey seconded to recommend approval of acceptance of the grant and those matching funds be appropriated from the City contingency fund. The motion carried 3-0.

6. Traffic Signal Baxter at Ascension Drive

The Committee discussed the current issue of the placement of an electric traffic signal at Baxter and Ascension Drive. Mr. Herring updated the Committee noting that City Attorney Beach was working with the Prosecuting Attorney to enforce the City's Ordinance requiring this traffic signal. The refusal to erect the signal will result in citations being issued and a hearing in our Municipal Court. Mr. Flachsbart motioned to recommend that City Council direct City Attorney Beach to not cite the JCCA for this ordinance violation relating to the installation of the electric signal. The motion failed for the lack of a second.

7. C.E.R.T. – Proposed Program

Chief Johnson informed the Committee about a planned program whereby citizens would be trained as first responders during a large-scale disaster. This program would be a joint venture between the Chesterfield Police Department and the Chesterfield Fire Protection District. Chief Johnson noted that this would be a 20 hour training program and that enrollment would be first offered through the business community (Chamber of Commerce) and then through the Neighborhood Watch Programs throughout the City. It is planned to begin the first session of the program during the month of March. The Committee members commended Chief Johnson for his efforts.

8. Traffic Signal Cameras

Chief Johnson distributed copies of an article referencing cameras on traffic signals. The article referenced the many legal problems associated with the resulting summonses issued. Councilmember Casey suggested that future consideration be given to warning lights placed before major signalized intersections to help alleviate red light violations.

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9. Alarm Systems

Councilmember Flachsbart related information regarding possible industry lack of integrity in relationship to alarm systems. Mr. Flachsbart motioned to request that Chief Johnson and City Attorney Beach review the possibility of licensing alarm companies to help alleviate the problem of faulty systems causing future false alarms. Councilmember Geiger seconded. The motion carried 3-0.

10. Adjourn

Councilmember Geiger motioned and Councilmember Flachsbart seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried 3-0 and the meeting adjourned at 7:23 PM.

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