

**Council of the Village of Yellow Springs
Work Session Minutes**

In Rooms A&B @ 7:00 P.M.

Monday, July 20, 2015

CALL TO ORDER

President of Council Karen Wintrow called the meeting to order at 7pm.

ROLL CALL

Present were President Karen Wintrow, Vice President Lori Askeland, Gerry Simms, Brian Housh and Marianne MacQueen. Village Manager Patti Bates was present, as were Assistant Village Manager John Yung, Police Chief Hale and Village Solicitor Chris Conard.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bates welcomed Brad Ault as the new Water/Waste Water Supervisor.

PETITIONS/COMMUNICATIONS (7:10)

Askeland reviewed the communications received.
The Clerk will receive and file:

Parent and Jewett re: Policing
Kate Hamilton re: Policing

WORK SESSION

Discussion of Policing Policy. Wintrow introduced the topic, noting that each Councilmember would present her or his perspective, then hear from Chief Hale, then converse among themselves, then hear from citizens.

Wintrow explained her comments made at the previous meeting, stating that she did not believe a discussion of national events has a role in the Village discussion. She commented that the perception of abusive tactics and extreme prejudice is damaging and inaccurate regarding the Yellow Springs Police Department (YSPD).

Wintrow commented that Hale has made significant positive changes to the Department. Wintrow noted that there are very divergent perspectives regarding the YSPD within the Village. She acknowledged that events on a national scale have impacted policing overall, and acknowledged that the Department had moved in a more militaristic direction in years past, but that that trend has been reversed under Chief Hale.

Wintrow identified the two most controversial aspects related to the YSPD ó its participation in the ACE Task Force and the use of SWAT when needed. Wintrow opined that it is Council's job to weigh the need for involvement in the Task Force, but noted that its scope goes well beyond drugs to include child pornography and sexual assault. Wintrow commented that budget limitations necessitate scrutiny of the need for participation in the Task Force. She noted the need to prioritize safety, stating that for that reason, she would look to Hale for input regarding staffing needs. Wintrow considered that a decision will likely be made during the 2016 budget process.

Wintrow commented that she does not believe it is possible or appropriate for Council to ban SWAT from the Village.

Wintrow reminded those present of the high rate of tourist and shopper traffic present in the Village regularly. She stated that a recent very unfortunate incident (a reference to Yellow Springs Police Sargent Penrod) ðhas not and does not need to defineö policing in the Village, and praised the Department overall.

Askeland stated that every person has the right to an honorable police department. She read a passage from a book by Ta-Nehisi Coates, which speaks to the difficulties inherent in policing when policing reflects the fears and beliefs of American citizens, who are themselves fraught with racism.

Askeland spoke to her own culpability as a white person, using it as a springboard to address her perspective on problems inherent to policing, to which the Village is not immune.

Yellow Springs is not a bubble, Askeland stated, but is a part of larger policies and laws.

Askeland asked that the policies used to train police persons be rigorously examined and to address concerns about persons receiving prompt medical care.

Askeland asked for continued police presence at Mills Lawn School in the mornings, opined that Task Force presence be carefully examined, and stressed that policing is difficult, complex and dangerous work that should be better compensated and should include more and better training for officers.

MacQueen commented that the discussion is a difficult one because it is easy to become polarized. She urged that people see other people, rather than uniforms, and asked that citizens show respect if they expect to be shown respect.

MacQueen stated that back in the 70s, while one might not like the suit or the officer, one knew who he was, and vice versa. She asked that this element be brought back.

MacQueen addressed the areas of concern brought up by some members of the community. She noted the ACE Task Force, and commented that she would prefer to see drugs dealt with as a social rather than criminal issue.

Regarding Crisis Intervention Training (CIT), MacQueen noted that Hale has committed to seeing that all YSPD officers receive CIT, which she sees as a strong positive.

MacQueen opined that police presence in the schools as participants in education around policing would be a positive.

MacQueen brought up the idea of a citizen review board for those who believe they have been wronged by the police as one of the ideas held by some citizens.

MacQueen asked Council to look at the size of the YSPD in the future.

MacQueen made note of an attitude of relaxed approach to some laws, which is common in the Village, commenting that some officers might not know about this approach.

MacQueen asked that Council address the topic of Mayor's Court in the near future.

Housh noted his recent role as the Council Liaison to the HRC, and the policing forums held in October 2014 and March 2015. He commented on the necessity of forming a clear vision for community values around policing, for example "is cost a priority or is safety?"

Following the 2014 Local Policing Forum, Council stated that it would meet to discuss the outcome of that meeting, and Housh commented that he did not see this current discussion in any way repetitive.

Housh commented upon the hiring process in place for Chief Hale, stating that Bates had worked diligently to incorporate suggestions and concerns brought up at the Local Policing Forum. Housh praised Hale as showing strong leadership and addressing issues thoughtfully and effectively.

Housh reiterated the notion of communication being a two-way street, and the need for citizens to participate in those relationships, citing a specific example in which this could have avoided a misunderstanding.

Housh asked that citizens consider those things that would be lost if the YSPD's staffing was reduced. He made note of the various kinds of public services that our officers provide, based upon call logs, and stated that this is something Council will have to consider carefully.

Housh commented that if the progress of the YSPD is not recognized, a risk is run of discouraging the current team members.

Simms commented that he has lived in the Village for many years and has seen a number of police chiefs. Simms commented on the difficulty of finding officers able to afford to live in the Village. He commented that laws governing residency have changed, and employees cannot be forced to reside in the Village.

Simms commented that he has been diligent in getting to know our local police officers, and knowing the job that they do in the Village. He commented on the number of Villagers who leave themselves open to victimization.

Simms noted that when HRC meetings began to be televised, an avenue for discussion and review was lost. He asked that issues in need of change be identified, but also those in need of remaining the same.

Simms expressed hope that the forum could lead to formation of better policies, but noted that a priority must be that every officer should complete his or her shift safely, and noted that this needs to be in the forefront of any policy.

MacQueen commented on the overall policy matters, noting that safety seems to spring to the fore. Also mentioned was the need to effectively deal with persons who may be having mental health crises, with children, and others.

MacQueen commented that, overall, the kind of abuse of force seen at the national level is not seen here.

Hale commented that officers need to remember to serve compassionately.

Housh suggested that the above mentioned elements be used in creating a policy/vision statement.

Hale noted that the YSPD is affected by the community and must be responsive to it.

Council engaged in a discussion of enforcement, and whether it can be selectively engaged in, or whether enforcement needs to be consistent across the board.

MacQueen offered to work with Housh to develop a draft vision statement to bring back to Council.

Conard commented that he had participated in a similar process previously. He noted that typically a person's first encounter with the criminal justice system is identified with the initial encounter with the police officer. He noted that he is struck at the enormity of the effect on the situation that the officer has.

Bates stated that what she and Hale were expecting was direction as to the level of enforcement Council would like to see.

Bates responded to comments related to training, noting that there is a move underway nationally and in the State of Ohio to revise some of these training methods.

Hale commented that recent events are not new, but that the ability to film and share that information has changed. He commented that current training is black and white and, in his opinion, should be modified to offer more options for officers to not draw down on citizens.

Hale noted the difference between good cops who make bad decisions and bad cops, and commented that scenario-based training is a more effective method. He stated that he is attempting to train more officers in the ability to train.

Jeff Reich commented that he has worked with many officers in his professional and volunteer efforts. He spoke against the ACE Task Force in general, and noted the failure of the war on drugs. Reich commented against having an officer on the Task Force, stating that the funds would be better spent on training. Reich commented that police officers should live in town, and at least seek out opportunities to get to know citizens.

Joe Lewis commented on the length of time he has lived in town, stating that he has never had a negative experience with any police officer in Yellow Springs. He commented on the quick response times for our officers. Regarding the ACE Task Force, Lewis commented that he is in favor of the Village's involvement.

Lewis commented against micromanagement, stating his faith in the integrity of the Yellow Springs Police Department.

Angel Melevega identified herself as a first year Antioch student, and stated that she had had a negative experience with a police officer last week, and that it was a matter of how that person was engaging with the community. She noted that the officers are not known in the Antioch community, and that she can feel uncomfortable around the police, and that this needs to be examined.

Rose Pelzl commented that she was recently stopped at Gaunt Park, and that the officer did not identify himself. She asked for a definition of "safe", noting that many of the items in the mission statement for the PD need to be defined.

The discussion turned to level of enforcement, and how this affects citizens' sense of community but also can affect whether some citizens may feel targeted.

Cheryl Durgans commented that she values the services of the YSPD for its emergency responses, but questioned its role and perception in the community otherwise. She commented that it is naïve to think that people of color are not affected by national events.

John Hempfling commented that he and his friends felt threatened by the police, and asked that Council members identify policy level matters that they are able to address. He commented that drug enforcement is ineffective.

Leo Marine asked how a citizen review board could be formed. Marine commented that there is still room for injustices to occur.

Becky Campbell commented that she did not want anyone else to speak for her, stating that she pays her taxes and she wants safety.

Talis Gage commented that it will not be possible to stop drug use, and stated that there is no good use for the Task Force. He stated that he continues to be followed and profiled.

Steve MacQueen, as an HRC member, asked for a vote as to how many people in the room want to remain on the Task Force, and how many would like to see the Village leave the Task Force. Wintrow stated that it was clear as to the majority opinion of those in the room.

Sue Abendroth commented that well-trained, ethical and responsible police officers should be given the benefit of the doubt, and commented that there is often more to the story. She stated that YSPD officers should be capable of making complex decisions. She commented that in the Village, the way that drug use affects things is in ancillary crime. She stated that things would be worse without a police force that tries to enforce drug laws. She opined that the Village will lose good officers if they are restrained from performing their duties.

Abendroth noted that there are currently persons supervising adequately, and spoke against a citizen review board that she may not like or agree with and who cannot be held accountable in the same way.

Ken Odiorn expressed appreciation for some of the comments made by Hale and Conard. He stated that it would be wrong if a citizen review board took on a vigilante role, and stated that policing has lost its credibility in general. He asked that police and Council be held to a higher standard. He commented that there is work to be done to reestablish trust.

Talis Gage asked that the police reach out more and converse more with him. He commented that, from his former experience as an informant, the Task Force does not care about individuals, but just on getting dealers, which could cause more harm than good.

Askeland spoke to the dominant white nature of the community, noting implicit association as a national reality that causes danger to disenfranchised populations.

Wintrow asked for direction in next steps.

MacQueen offered to come up with clear next steps, and acknowledged Askeland's comments as on point.

Housh reiterated that the Task Force discussion will not simply be buried in budget discussions, and will be brought up in addition to in that context.

Wintrow asked that the vision statement be brought to the August 24th meeting and acknowledged the complexity of the issue.

Chief Hale asked that citizens bring complaints directly to him, and that he will deal with those to the best of his ability.

Bates commented that the only way to change behavior is to bring complaints to the Chief and allow them to be addressed.

Officers Beam and Charles introduced themselves, and Beam offered ride-alongs to citizens as a good way to get to know the Department.

Askeland offered herself and Council as places to share concerns.

MANAGER’S REPORT

Written report only.

ASSISTANT VILLAGE MANAGER’S REPORT

Written report only.

STANDING REPORTS

Askeland reported that there had been no Planning Commission meeting in July, and that Greene County Regional Planning had looked at development proposals.

Simms reported that Community Resources had not met, and that the Library Commission had discussed continued need to improve the exterior of the facility.

Wintrow made note that the Greene County Library plans to fund and install a Virginia Hamilton historical marker in collaboration with Arnold Adoff and the STEM school. The matter will come to Council for consideration. A spot outside the YS Library is under consideration.

Housh reiterated the value of the Dashboard Project, which the Energy Board is supporting. Housh noted that the CAP is looking into the Village creating its own on-line station in the future. The CAP will also be looking into drafting a social media policy for the Village.

Housh asked that all Council Liaisons check in with their commissions regarding the proposed changes to the commission ordinances.

Housh stated that the PAC is now taking nominations (through September 7) for the Fall VIDA (Village Inspiration & Design Award). They are also re-examining the Public Art Policy for possible improvement. The PAC will also be making suggestions regarding more standardization of Village identifiers.

MacQueen reported no School Board activity.

MacQueen noted continued work on the Climate Action Plan on the part of Environmental Commission. That group will also hear a speaker on alternatives to toxic pesticides at their next meeting.

MacQueen noted a grant made by the HRC to the YSKP to fund an autism spectrum friendly performance of The Farm.

Wintrow announced that the next Chamber meeting will discuss the Strategic Plan. The August 20th meeting will discuss how merchants can work with the new chip embedded in credit cards. There was no MVRPC meeting.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Policing Policy Follow-Up
- NO MEETING AUGUST 3
- Policing Policy Discussion
- Commissions Ordinance

Ordinance 2015-08 Accepting Planning Commission's Recommendation to Vacate
East North College Street Between Livermore and Corry Streets
Ordinance 2015-11 Accepting Planning Commission's Recommendation to Vacate
the East Herman Street Right-of-Way Which is Situated Between the Developed Portion of
East Herman Street and Corry Street
Economic Sustainability Discussion - this was changed to completion of the
Sidewalks Discussion (8-17-15)
2016 Budget Presentation
Levy Timeline

Sue Abendroth asked for further explanation regarding the format for Work Sessions.

Ken Odiorn expressed that he likes the set up in A&B as less formal.

MacQueen asked who would follow up with work flow information after Work Sessions.

Bates suggested a project timeline.

Bates suggested that the sidewalk issue be visited again on August 17th so that it can be completed before Yung's departure.

Housh disagreed, stating that Council could pick up the ball with sidewalks, and he wanted to hear Yung's thoughts on Economic Sustainability.

Bates suggested that the matter be addressed at Agenda Planning.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:30pm, Simms MOVED and Housh SECONDED a MOTION TO ADJOURN. The MOTION PASSED 5-0 ON A VOICE VOTE.

Please note: These notes are not verbatim. A DVD copy of the minutes is available for viewing in the Clerk of Council's office between 9am and 3pm Monday through Friday.

Karen Wintrow, President

Attest: Judy Kintner, Clerk