

**Minutes of
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING: WORK SESSION on PUBLIC SAFETY**

Rooms A&B: 3-5pm.

Thursday December 1, 2022

CALL TO ORDER

President of Council Brian Housh called the meeting to order at 3:02pm.

ROLL CALL

Present were President Housh, and Council members Marianne MacQueen, Carmen Brown and Gavin DeVore Leonard. Village Manager Salmeron, Chief Burge, Corporal Raffoul, COS Randolph and Public Works Director Burns were also present. Fire Chief Colin Altman was in attendance. Kevin Stokes arrived at 3:08pm.

WORK SESSION:

DeVore Leonard provided an overview and introduction along with a statement of purpose and goals for the session. He noted that he will follow up with next steps and with the planning of a follow-up meeting.

Each Council member commented on the current state of the department, with a number of compliments regarding officers and the YSPD team.

MacQueen stated that despite her belief that the YSPD is “better than it has ever been”, she is not convinced that the department needs to be as large as it is. She suggested using mediation to respond to some needs, rather than using the YSPD. She noted that she would like to have officers carry guns less frequently if possible.

Housh responded to the comments regarding right-sizing the department, stating that he wants to focus on the desires of citizens with regard to the YSPD. Regarding Dispatch, he said, this service is highly valued by the community.

DeVore Leonard commented on budget limitations as a driving factor, stating that Council needs to determine what need is being met by the YSPD and examine those carefully, even when they may be controversial. He stated that any actions should be undertaken in a careful and phased manner.

Burge provided a powerpoint which laid out departmental structure and Mission, Vision and Values. Burge offered information regarding department priorities of 2022, then addressed the question of why two officers are needed on patrol at certain times.

Burge noted the shift relief factor used to establish minimum staffing levels for the department, and related those to Village Values. Burge stressed that this calculation is the minimum number required and is not the recommended level. She noted that two officers are scheduled only 50% of the time, and due to court, vacations, trainings, illness, etc. there are in fact two officers on duty only 37% of the time.

She noted that while Greene County provides assistance when needed, and while those officers are trained professionals, there is no way to guarantee that those officers have been trained along the same

priorities as have YSPD officers, who, for example, are required to have taken 40 hours of CIT training and additional de-escalation training.

Burge presented in depth regarding ideal department size, and that information is reproduced here as relevant to the ongoing discussion regarding department size:

YSPD Schedules single officer coverage 50% of time, double officer coverage 50% of the time. Out of the scheduled double coverage, we have ACTUAL double coverage 37% of the time excluding events (3242 hours out of 8760).

As previously addressed, the shift relief factor (handout) is a mathematical equation that establishes the minimum number of full-time staff needed to cover any given shift (7A-7P / 7P-7A). As shown, each shift would require 2.58 full time officers to staff 24/7/365. In an effort to operate with minimum staffing levels, an officer, typically a supervisor is scheduled as overlapping coverage (2P-2A). This officer can flex to either shift to cover vacation, sick, military, training, etc.

A second officer also provides the coverage needed to prevent overtime (kelly day)
Staffing double coverage ensures compliance with guidelines on Village Policing:
Safety
58 arrests between 2021-2022 (this could be in custody or released with summons)
89 calls types taken by YSPD – out of 89, 42 are handled most effectively with two officer's response, 18 are MUST have two officer response
Two officers make it safer for community, victim and officer
Officers are able to break away to handle additional overlapping calls

This is especially noteworthy when requests for specific officers/or citizens with specific needs arise. For example, many female victims feel more comfortable with a female officer, some officers have established rapport with citizens who call for police services more frequently, when we are able to we accommodate those requests.

Locally minded: Having a second officer on allows officers to effectively balance their workloads. Single officer coverage would limit community engagement activities. Officers would have to remain available for calls for service at all times, utilizing any down time with follow up/investigatory/administrative activities only.

Resolution Oriented/Safety Centered: As a part of our commitment to approaching every situation with non-violent conflict resolutions. Utilizing the least amount of force necessary, officers are assessing every situation with the safety of the community in mind first and their safety second. As a part of this constant assessment, we utilize what is called the action response continuum. This approach means that factors such as age/sex/size/skill level/relative strength and most notably officer to subject ratio are all considered before escalating.

Burge emphasized the latter point as key in being able to operate primarily in de-escalation mode.

Burge pointed out that by State of Ohio guidelines the YSPD is actually understaffed.

In response to questions from Brown, Burge stated that prior to her time, officers were on overlapping 10-hour shifts, but she realigned staffing to accommodate fewer staff, and officers are now working 12-hour non-overlapping shifts, so the perception of fewer officers out on patrol is not incorrect.

MacQueen stated that the community “assumes officers are just in there eating dinner” and don’t know what it is officers do “when they’re just in there in the building,” suggesting that it is incumbent upon officers to let citizens know what they do on shift.

Housh commented that while Burge is accurately delivering the status quo, “there are opportunities to shift thinking and create transformation.”

Responding to the frequent question as to why YSPD could not decrease the number of officers and increase the number of social workers, Burge stated that, “YSPD takes approx. 89 types of calls for service. Of those call types approx. 7 can be handled by a social worker. Of those 7 call types, 5 still require the presence of an officer for safety/unknown factors.”

Randolph commented on the above, stating that she is always accompanied by an officer on the calls it is appropriate for her to go on, and described her role in those calls.

In response to a question from Burge, Randolph stated that there are a few calls she would be comfortable going out on alone, but that she is more comfortable when accompanied by an officer who is required if the situation is deemed anything more serious than, for example, a welfare check.

Devore Leonard commented that the City of Dayton is sending social workers out on calls unaccompanied.

Randolph responded that those calls have been vetted so that the social worker knows exactly the situation at hand (filling out paperwork, for example.)

DeVore Leonard responded that there must be many calls that come in that could be handled by social workers.

Burge responded that in general, when citizens call in to the PD, they wish to speak to an officer.

Council decided to revisit the question as to department size in a later work session.

DeVore Leonard brought up the question of whether or not there would be significant savings associated with disbanding Dispatch locally and going to County services.

Burge noted that she had provided an in depth response to this question, but prefaced the information by asking that once the information is provided and discussed that the annual conversation around whether or not YSPD Dispatch provides a service worthy of funding be terminated. She stressed that this regularly publically asked question is very detrimental to morale in the department in general.

Burge noted that Greene County Dispatch is currently in contract negotiations, so cannot provide a specific cost quote. For that reason, she said, her numbers are 2022 numbers, and are likely to increase.

Burge went through the costs, noting that the current cost of operating the YSPD Dispatch comes in either very close to or under the cost of YSPD sharing Greene County services with three other communities.

Salmeron responded to a question from DeVore Leonard, stating that Dispatch is extremely specialized and cannot be outsourced to other than a dispatch agency. He added that many of the calls that come in to YSPD Dispatch are information requests, reports of utility problems, etc., which would not be fielded by an outsourced dispatch entity.

MacQueen stated that she “needs to understand what kinds of calls come in” and wanted further information about Dispatch services.

Housh stated that he has been clear in his support for YSPD Dispatch, but commented that he had not previously seen clear data comparing costs.

Several Council members indicated that while they did not see the need to discuss changing dispatch providers, they did want more information regarding what YSPD Dispatch does.

Brown stated firmly that she has enough information on the matter.

Regarding use of social workers and the suggestion that more social workers would be a positive, Burge commented that Randolph’s job is constant and difficult and that the level of community need is high. Assistance for Randolph would be “more than justified,” she stated.

Brown suggested use of social work students who need practicum assignments.

Randolph stated that the Village has been assigned a part time case worker to assist in finding housing for homeless individuals.

Housh asked that the insurance aspect of taking on volunteers be explored.

Other Council members agreed, asking that this be followed up upon.

DeVore Leonard raised the topic of merging police and fire.

Burge stated that she has done a fair amount of research on the topic.

Altman responded to the topic, stating that the concept started in the 1970’s and is successful in a very small percentage of the total fire departments in the US. Altman cited the very high up-front cost of cross training both departments, and commented that persons going into fire vs policing or vice versa have different mind sets, which further complicates the notion.

Altman described some of the differences in tasks and associated mind sets, then noted that there are areas where services and training can be shared. He stated that training officers as EMTs is a great idea.

Burge agreed with Altman’s assessment that merging the departments would be very expensive and not necessarily successful for a number of reasons.

Council agreed that the topic should be raised at the next joint meeting of School Board/Council and Miami Township.

DeVore Leonard raised the topic of sending everything possible to Mayor’s Court.

Burge stated that she had met with the Mayor and discussed the fact that all possible cases are being sent to the Mayor, and many of those are waivable. They are now taking the next step of looking at restorative justice options.

Burge stated that she has recently met with the Mediation Program Coordinator to discuss working more closely with that program as part of a “progressive enforcement” approach.

Council agreed that this does not need further discussion.

MacQueen stated that she would like information as to whether Mayor’s Court continues to be a needed service.

DeVore Leonard brought up the topic of use of weapons/equipment.

Burge stated that she is willing to address concerns around weapons, but stated that if Council were to determine that they wanted an unarmed police department, they would likely lose the department.

MacQueen opined that there are countries where police do not carry guns, and expressed her opinion that “having an armed officer can be disturbing to many.” She asked that the possibility of officers not carrying guns at times be discussed.

DeVore Leonard commented that weapons are expensive and “we have a problem with militarization in this country,” stating that he would like to see “a different relationship”.

Stokes suggested the idea of Community Resource Officers, or Citizens on Patrol.

Burge commented that “if you want police officers you will get police officers, who will be armed and wearing protective gear.” She pointed out that no one would expect a lineman to work without protective gear, and that this is no different for an officer.

Burge provided statistics for officers’ survival rates with and without protective vests, for on the job discipline and for reduction in racial disparity in enforcement when wearing body worn cameras.

Housh commented that he would like variety in uniforms to be discussed at some point.

All Council members stated that they would like to continue conversation on this topic.

DeVore Leonard asked for each person in the room to comment on what they had learned.

Stokes stated that he is “112% in favor of the PD.” He expressed appreciation for the wealth of information presented and the conversation.

Housh asked for follow up on student social workers, and stated that he had learned positives and negatives around merging fire and police.

Brown asked for follow up on student social workers, noting value they could contribute. She stated that she had learned about the use of police equipment as tools, which was not something she had previously considered.

MacQueen stated that she had learned more about Randolph’s work load. She found the difference between the mind-sets of police and fire personnel interesting, she said.

DeVore Leonard stated that he was convinced that merging police and fire services would not be feasible, and that he is left wondering if a levy will be needed.

Burge commented that she learned more about where others at the table are coming from.

Salmeron commented that service delivery ideas are closer together than he had thought.

Altman stated that he likes the idea of student social workers.

Randolph said that she had learned more regarding mind-sets of fire and police service providers. She clarified that she is not able to supervise practicum students because her position is that of social services provider, not social worker.

Raffoul stated that he understands that “quality over quantity” is desired, but commented that this also requires that officers be properly trained and equipped.

Kintner commented that she sees a need for continued conversation, since much information was provided, but mindsets did not seem to change as a result of this.

Burns commented that Burge had gone over and above in providing such thorough information. He stated that every Council member needs to “not just go on a ride-along” but immerse themselves in the day of a dispatcher or officer—spend a whole shift, he said.

DeVore Leonard stated that he will be back in touch with next steps.

At 5:08, MacQueen MOVED and DeVore Leonard SECONDED A MOTION TO ADJOURN.
The MOTION PASSED 5-0 ON A VOICE VOTE.