

MINUTES

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING

5:30 P. M., DECEMBER 9, 2019

A/V CONFERENCE ROOM

Keeley Steele, Chairperson, called the meeting of the Charleston City Council Committee on Public Safety to order at 5:30 p.m., DECEMBER 9, 2019, in the Audio/Visual Room in City Hall.

Committee Members Present:

Keeley Steele, Chair
Chuck Overstreet, Vice Chair
Naomi Bays

Upon taking roll call, the Chair determined there was not a quorum present.

1. Chief Smith – Joint Task Force

Chief Smith (Charleston Police Department) stated that the Joint Task Force was very successful due to the dedication of the officers. It is comprised of CPD, SCPD and ATF. The ATF help with maintaining the National Integrated Ballistics Information Network, which allows the CPD to match shell casings. The Task Force was searching for violent gun crime offenders in the City. Two offenders were located, as well as four other arrests and the seizure of 2 pounds of marijuana and a 1/4 pound of pure fentanyl. The CPD currently has one officer deputized by the ATF, and are looking to get 6 more deputized. This will give the CPD more resources.

Councilmember Bays asked how the seized drugs were disposed. Chief Smith answered that the Metro Drug Unit stores the drugs after they are sent back from the lab until they can be destroyed.

2. Appreciation of First Responders

Councilmember Steele asked Mayor Goodwin what events, activities, etc. the City does for its first responders (which would include Police, Fire and EMS). The Mayor answered that there are several things done throughout the year, some of which are: Appreciation Weeks, Thanksgiving Supper for CPD, Administration visits during Roll Call, and Firehouse visits and Public Safety Banquets.

3. Recruitment/Retainment Strategies for CPD

Major Redden shared with the Committee the various outreach/recruitment strategies that have been employed, some of which include:

- Change in policy regarding beards, tattoos, night shift pay balance and age requirement
- Attends/promotes college career days, community events/meetings, school talks, etc.
- Promotions through radio ads, news promos, social media
- Designated officer for the Criminal Justice Program at Capital High School
- Owning the written test (mobile and faster results)
- Sign on bonus for certified officers
- Tests are given more frequently

Councilmember Bays confirmed that CPD currently has 158 officers, with 28 that could retire in the next two years.

4. Miscellaneous Discussion

The Committee and those present discussed alternatives to the problem of citizens not reporting leads/information for fear of retaliation. The discussion included calling in anonymously to 911 and the Chief's Office, as well as a way to text the CPD anonymously.

Councilmember Bays asked how the CARE office would be staffed. Mayor Goodwin answered that, working with several other officers, there will be a CARE Director, QRT Director and an Outreach Coordinator. There will also be a board of community members. The Administration will be sharing valuable data that they have gathered in coordination with the University of Charleston. There is also a goal to create a "safe space" where officers can take individuals with possible mental health needs for assessment and evaluation.

Meeting adjourned