

MINUTES

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING

6:00 P. M., OCTOBER 21, 2024
AV ROOM, CITY HALL

Shawn Taylor, Chair, called the meeting of the Charleston City Council Committee on Public Safety to order at 6:00 p.m., October 21, 2024.

Present:

Shawn Taylor, Chair
Chuck Overstreet, Vice Chair
Caitlin Cook (over Zoom)
Mary Beth Hoover
Beth Kerns
Bruce King

Absent:

Kathy Rubio

Other Councilmembers Present:

Frank Annie
Emmett Pepper
Joe Solomon

1. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES –

Councilmember Kerns moved to approve the minutes of the previous meeting on 7-15-2024. Councilmember Hoover seconded the motion. There was no objection, and the minutes were approved.

2. To hear from public speakers on public safety related topics.

None

3. TO HEAR FROM PUBLIC SAFETY RELATED DEPARTMENTS -

- Charleston Police Department
- Charleston Fire Department
- Parking Department

Deputy Police Chief Webb stated that they have been heavily recruiting, using methods such as radio ads and social media. 19 people showed up for the last test, with 8 passing. They currently have 150 officers, with 173 is the goal. There is also a new signing bonus for officers who are already certified in West Virginia. Councilmember Kerns suggested reaching out to the military for recruitment and job sites. Webb replied that they have. They also recruit at universities. They are also hoping to make a recruiting video. Webb added that they also target other law enforcement careers, such as prison guards, for recruitment. Councilmember Overstreet confirmed with Webb that the process for already certified officers is a shorter as they do not need to go through the academy. Councilmember Cook asked how long the psychological evaluations remained valid. Webb replied that they are valid for 14-16 months.

Fire Chief Matthews stated that the department's new ladder truck has finally arrived. The new rescue truck will likely be ready in December. The completion date has again been delayed. Chief Matthews that there have been 19 structure fires, which is slightly higher than the 17 from 2023. Councilmember Taylor asked why there was a spike in fires this time of year. Chief Matthews replied that that it was due to people seeking warmth: unsafe furnaces, space heaters, candles, etc. He added that they are staffed at 167 with a goal of 169. They will be starting to accumulate a new recruitment pool as there will likely be high retirement rates in 2025 and 2026. The Chief confirmed that the department now has 100 ALS providers, which is the largest group in the state. The new Medical Director has proven to be a good working partner and has begun to implement changes in the EMS department. They have now been approved for field blood transfusions. From the audience, Councilmember Pepper confirmed with the Chief that 13 out of the 19 fires were from vacant structures.

Parking Director Terri Allen stated that their department have all received active shooter and stop the bleed training. They are preparing for winter safety.

Mayor Goodwin added that all City staff also received the active shooter and stop the bleed training.

Councilmember Taylor thanked all of the Directors for their updates.

Councilmember Hoover motioned to adjourn the meeting. Councilmember Overstreet seconded. Meeting adjourned.