

# CITY OF LYNDEN

## POLICE DEPARTMENT

Steve Taylor, Police Chief

(360) 354-2828



### **Public Safety Committee Meeting Minutes**

Police Department - 203 19th Street

4:00 PM July 09, 2020

#### **Call to Order at 4:00 PM**

#### **Roll Call**

Members present: Mayor Scott Korthuis and Councilors Mark Wohlrab, Brent Lenssen and Gerald Kuiken.

Staff present: City Administrator Mike Martin, Chief Mark Billmire, Chief Steve Taylor, Lieutenant Russ Martin, Support Services Manager Sarah Silvas.

Scheduled guests present: President of IAFF Local 106 Robert Glorioso and Lynden resident Ryan Provencher.

#### **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from the June 4, 2020 were approved.

#### **Items from the Audience**

##### ***Scheduled***

1. Ryan Provencher - Latest on Captain's in Lynden Fire Department
  - A. Ryan Provencher, residing at 1744 Bradley Rd, Lynden, WA presented his questions and concerns regarding the City of Lynden Fire Department current organizational structure. Mr. Provencher shared that he has been a firefighter for 27 years, with the last 6 as a Chief Officer. Mr. Provencher advised that the City has grown over 27% in the last 10 years, and the need for adequate support for public safety in the community. He specifically addressed concerns regarding Mike Martin's decision to leave the organizational structure as it has been for many years, resulting in an increased risk of first responders and decreased level of service to Lynden residents. Mr. Provencher spoke regarding his understanding of Chief Billmire's advocacy for Captain's positions in the Lynden Fire Department and advising that Chief Billmire needs an Officer development program that is fully supported. Mr. Provencher shared that he believes the expectations of the Officer position have been unclear, the City's support has been inadequate, and that City Administrator Mike Martin's actions have been bias based on Mr. Martin's personal feelings on labor management relations. He concluded by asking the Public Safety Committee to look at current structure in the Lynden Fire Department and to evaluate Mr. Martin's decisions.

2. Robert Glorioso - Latest on Captain's in Lynden Fire Department
  - A. Robert Glorioso, 256 Whitetail Loop, Blaine, President of IAFF Local 106 Firefighter's Union discussed the Captain's position within the fire department and their availability to take an assessment center. Mr. Glorioso quoted from a letter sent by City Administrator Mike Martin to Michael Richardson, Lynden Firefighter/EMT and Union Representative, and referenced two news articles. Mr. Glorioso advised that Local 106 union would be pursuing the filing of multiple unfair labor practices with the Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC) and a social media public education campaign in Lynden. Mr. Glorioso requested Mike Martin to step down from the position of City Administrator, or the Lynden City Council to take steps for termination of Mike Martin's employment.

### ***Unscheduled (20 Minutes)***

*Audience members may address the Committee on any issue other than those scheduled for a public hearing or those on which the public hearing has been closed. Prior to commenting please state your name, address, and topic. Please keep comments under 4 minutes.*

1. Heather Brown, residing at 863 Main Street, Lynden addressed the events of July 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> weekend, including the march of two groups. First, Ms. Brown expressed gratitude to the Lynden Police Department. Second, she addressed the safety concerns of Lynden's citizens, especially the youth, that the marches presented. She witnessed men bearing arms and yelling slurs at youthful citizens and quoted a WTA driver's account of the situation that was reported in the Lynden Tribune. Ms. Brown asked for the following: 1) any future events on this theme, rally or marches, have more safety measures in place to protect the participants including physical barriers and road closures; 2) immediately begin developing and implementing policies and procedures for public safety measures to better serve neighbors that are black, indigenous or people of color; 3) City Council to issue a statement affirming they stand for racial equality.
2. Jetje Williams and son, Jakovy Williams, both residing at 150 Canbridge Drive, Lynden addressed the same events as Heather Brown in Item 1 above, reaffirming Ms. Brown's gratitude to Chief Taylor and the Lynden Police Department. Jakovy Williams spoke about his personal experience as a 10-year-old black youth in the Lynden community, recounting personal details of threats and derogatory remarks made to him by other community members. Ms. Williams spoke about her son's experience and requested additional safety measures to be in place so that Lynden Police Department is not overtaxed during these events and conversations and echoed the requests of Ms. Brown.

### **Committee Items**

1. Public Safety Overtime - May 2020
  - A. Chief Billmire presented overtime hours and reported 300 volunteer hours. He explained that the bulk of the overtime hours is due to the union contact language. Chief Billmire reported that he met with current volunteers for their participation requirements in May, and their participation has increased since that time which covers approximately 20 shifts per month on average. Also, Lynden

Fire Department has 5 volunteer candidates that are going through recruit academy this year.

- B. Chief Taylor presented overtime, which the bulk is attributed to the holiday (30%) and a range training day. Additionally, Officer Vanloo attended to help with marches in Bellingham. Overtime is expected to decrease as Officer Holland is coming off FTO on July 15<sup>th</sup> and will be able to take shifts on his own.

### **Fire Department Items**

- 1. Fire Monthly Report - June 2020
  - A. Chief Billmire presented the June 2020 monthly report. Chief Hatley held several trainings throughout the month for Lynden staff, totaling 186 hours, and outside agencies. EMS calls totaled at 135, which is an increase since call volume declined in April. There was 1 possible COVID case for the entire month. Chief Billmire explained that there were 36 overlapping calls, which means before the crew is clear from one call, another call is dispatched. Chief Billmire spoke about the airplane crash at Lynden Airport, which lead to the collaboration of fire and public works departments with the airport committee to update the airport response plan.
- 2. Alcoa Conex Box Donation Proposal
  - A. Alcoa has a training facility made of Conex boxes that they are looking to donate to a local fire department, which Chief Hatley has been pursuing after learning of the opportunity from a Lynden firefighter. Chief Billmire has been coordinating with Public Works Director Steve Banham to structure the move and location it would reside. The structure itself would be donated, and there will be a cost related to moving the Conex boxes. The Conex boxes interiors are set up already for firefighter training, so minimal cost is expected to prepare them for use. Chief Billmire shared with the Public Safety Committee for their comments and to ask for support to move forward, which was supported by the Mayor and committee members.

### **Police Department Items**

- 1. Update on Corporal promotion process
  - A. Chief Taylor advised that the assessment center was completed with members from Ferndale and Blaine police departments, and a candidate list has been developed from those results. The Civil Service Meeting is scheduled for July 21<sup>st</sup> to get candidate list certified.
- 2. Police Monthly Report - June 2020
  - A. Chief Taylor presented the June 2020 monthly report. Overall, thefts are down as there has been a decrease in unemployment insurance frauds. Chief Taylor discussed the Black Lives Matter protests and marches that have been occurring over the last month. Lynden Police are driving by and dropping in on participants to ensure the protests are kept peaceful and safe.
  - B. For the July 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> weekend marches, additional patrol occurred in downtown Lynden, and Officer's made route suggestions to the protestors to help mitigate concerns of business owners in downtown Lynden. The marches did not result in

any property damage or arrests, which Chief Taylor was complementary to the members of Lynden Police Department. City Administrator Mike Martin mimicked being proud of the department for how they handled the situation. Accolades were given to Officer Meyer, who mitigated a situation involving one of the marching groups attempting to join with the other, potentially creating an unsafe environment for the participants of both groups.

### **Added Items**

- A. Councilor Lenssen revisited Heather Brown's third request for a statement to be issued from the Lynden City Council. Councilor Lenssen and Mayor Korthuis suggested researching language for the type of statement City Council would want to give to the community. Councilor Lenssen also recommended that City employees complete a diversity and inclusion training. City Administrator Mike Martin advised that City employees do complete this training annually.
- B. Councilor Kuiken ask Chief Billmire about the validity of claims he had read on social media regarding individuals fainting due to wearing masks and their ability to breathe appropriately through the mask. Chief Billmire advised that the fire department has not been told of a direct correlation, however the Department of Health has cautioned wearing mask for certain health risks and underlying medical conditions.

### **Adjournment at 4:43 PM**

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Submitted by

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Approved by