

CITY OF LYNDEN

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Steve Taylor, Police Chief

(360) 354-2828



Public Safety Committee Meeting Minutes

Online (Microsoft Teams)

4:00 PM March 04, 2021

Call to Order

Roll Call

Members present: Councilors Mark Wohlrab, Brent Lenssen and Gerald Kuiken

Members absent: Mayor Scott Korthuis

Staff present: City Administrator Mike Martin, Chief Mark Billmire, Chief Steve Taylor, Lieutenant Jeremy Bos, Lieutenant Russ Martin, Support Services Manager Holly Vega, and HR Manager Kim Clemons

Approval of Minutes

1. **Approval of February meeting minutes**

The minutes from the February 4, 2021 meeting were approved.

Items from the Audience

2. **Speeding concern in the Westview neighborhood**

Jeff Heinrichs, *1415 Westview Circle*, expressed concern regarding the speed of vehicles in the Westview neighborhood, which is full of families with young children. He noted that most of the residents tend to drive approximately 15 mph through the neighborhood, which he feels is more reasonable than the unposted 25 mph. He suggested possibly lowering the speed limit and/or installing official 'children at play' traffic signs. Councilor Wohlrab will discuss options with Public Works and respond to Mr. Heinrichs' concern.

Committee Items

3. **Code Revisions to LMC Chapter 5.04 - Alcoholic Beverages**

Not discussed.

4. **Public Safety Overtime - January 2021**

January totals were 231 hours for Fire, and 228 hours for Police. Chief Billmire reported that February is down to 169 overtime hours with 159 volunteer hours for Fire. Chief Taylor reported the total for Police in February is 164 hours.

Fire Department Items

5. Fire Monthly Report - February 2021

Chief Billmire presented the monthly report for February, noting 32% of calls were overlapping; three instances when no Lynden units were available, and we relied on auto aid from other districts. There was an increase in fire inspections for businesses re-opening and needing to know the occupancy. Progress on the station renovation continues with panels put up on the second floor.

There was one applicant for the Assistant Chief position on the second round, but they lacked the experience Chief Billmire is looking for. A volunteer firefighter at the top of the eligibility list was hired to fill a recent vacancy, although the list has now expired.

Police Department Items

6. Drug Possession Ordinance Draft

Greg Greenan, the City Municipal Court Prosecutor drafted the proposed ordinance from Washington State RCW, which was just recently ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court, so it will need to be revised if Council chooses to adopt it. There are varying legal interpretations whether WA State law preempts any municipal code regarding simple drug possession. Mr. Greenan raised concern that if Lynden adopts an ordinance and charges someone with a crime, we will likely face challenges from defense attorneys.

7. Police Monthly Report - February 2021

Chief Taylor presented the Police monthly report for February. There were several vehicle prowls in newer developments on the east side of town. Many homes have great video surveillance providing footage that assisted in positively identifying the suspect.

One officer is still on extended medical leave but is making good progress and may return to work sooner than anticipated. Upgrades to the evidence room recommended in the LEMAP evaluation have been made to add extra security for firearms, narcotics, and currency. Lieutenant Martin and Lieutenant Bos installed the new fence barrier themselves, saving \$2,300 in installation costs.

8. Police 2019 - 2020 Overview

Criminal and other activity statistics were provided for 2019 and 2020. Overtime totals and breakdowns were also provided showing a reduction of over 900 hours from 2019 to 2020 and still trending downward.

Added Items

9. Amendment to Contract Public Defender

City Administrator Mike Martin provided an executive summary and proposed amendment to the public defender contract. The changes to the rates are consistent with other jurisdictions. Judge Lewis and Mayor Korthuis both agree the amendment is fair and appropriate. It also extends the current contract an additional two years. The Committee recommends approval at the March 15, 2021 council meeting.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 4:44 p.m.

DRAFT