



CITY OF **SALIDA** POLICE

CITY COUNCIL Executive Session

MEETING DATE: June 4th, 2024

AGENDA ITEM: Resolution 2024-36

FROM: Chief Johnosn

Many years ago, the Salida Police Department was located on Third Street. When the City decided to move to the Toubert Building, the Police Department was included in that move because we were out of space at our current location. Since then, we have been located on the second floor of the Toubert Building. This location has served us quite well and has met the needs of the department and community up to this point.

Over the last several years, we have been seeing a large increase in our call volume here in Salida. In 2019 we had 5,381 Calls for service and in 2023 we had 10,660. That is a 98% increase in just five years. Since the beginning of 2024, we are on pace to have well over 11,000 calls for service. This isn't unique to Salida, most agencies across the state are also seeing increases.

The problem we face is that Salida is rapidly growing, and we are seeing tourism increase each year. We are also the hub of Chaffee County and many people from surrounding areas come to Salida to work, shop, and play. Because of the major increases in call volume and people in our community, we are going to need to add additional staff. We currently have added one more Community Service Officer and moved our second SRO back to patrol since 2019. Only adding two personnel during a 98% and climbing increase had been challenging and we are nearing a breaking point.

We have been adding technology to assist with our day-to-day operations and that has helped. We are also adding a detective position in the coming months. We are adding this position because we had 98 calls land in the Detective Office in the first three months of the year. The current staff of two cannot keep up with the increase in cases without adding additional staff. I currently have a person working out in a hallway office part of the time and I have no room to put a new Detective without remodeling our current space. We are simply at a point where we have outgrown the current Police Department.

Because of our growth and uptick in call volume, a new police station was included in our long-term capital plan. During the planning phase of the new fire station, it was brought up to construct a public safety complex. That idea was shot down and we were left wondering how we were going to obtain a new police station in the coming years. Since then, I have been looking all over town for a location where we could construct a new building so we could obtain the land before someone else builds on it. As I was doing this, I wasn't successful in finding a location that would fit our needs near the downtown area. I was also trying to figure out how we would fund a new Police Department with an estimated cost of seven to nine million dollars.

Several months ago, a building on Hwy 50 became available and it piqued my interest. This building has a wide-open blank canvas on the interior, has a quarter of an acre behind it that can be turned into secured parking, has good public parking area with an entry way, and has some available space for building an addition many years down the road. I contacted the realtor and looked at the property. As I walked through it, it was almost too good to be true. It definitely has enough space for today and room to add on, years down the road. I kept thinking if done right, this could be the Police Department for the next forty plus years.

After looking at the building, I brought this idea to City Staff and they seemed interested as well. At this point, we have the opportunity to obtain an 8,000sqft building for \$150 per square foot. This is well below the cost of constructing a building of that size and somewhat similar to the size of building the Buena Vista Police Department recently remodeled.

This project does not need to be rushed. If we can get the building purchased now, we can spend the next two years working on the design and remodel project. We have the opportunity to take this slow and go after DOLA and other grants to help offset the cost of remodeling the interior. I believe we can keep the cost of this entire project to one third of what it would cost us to build a new building in the future.

Getting this building allows up to have the following:

- Secure parking to avoid smashed windows and slashed tires
- Secure one level building on first floor
- Building we can open to the public when needed (Current building has different hours and limits access to our offices)
- More inviting area for the public to access
- More space for Community Service and Patrol to work from
- Meeting room off entry way to avoid taking people through entire PD to speak with them
- Convenient location to access highway near midpoint of town

- Better interview location for interviewing individuals (Current one is in the middle of the busiest hallway in the PD)
- Modernization with new equipment
- Technology storage and space (Body cameras, tasers, printers, e-ticket writers)(Shoved in a corner now with cords everywhere)
- Evidence room built to meet new standards (Current one has been retro fitted and works well)
- New building and amenities to assist with future recruiting
- Space to expand and grow in the future
- Opens our current space or rent or City use

I could keep listing things that make this a great fit for us, but I think the point has been made. This is definitely a great opportunity for the City of Salida to solve a problem at a reasonable cost by making a budget conscious decision. I can assure you that the budget and future costs were considered heavily before bringing this forward. I wouldn't have asked if I didn't think this was the right situation at the right time. Thanks for your consideration.

Thanks,

Chief Johnson