

**Public Safety Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
October 21, 2024**

**Call To Order**

Councilmember Prieto Duval called the Public Safety Committee meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Present: Councilmembers Naila Prieto Duval, George Garcia, and Cristian Sanchez  
Staff Present: City Manager Dan Ford, Chief of Police Joseph Mehline, Fire Chief Tim Smith, Information Technologies Service Manager Van Donley, Fire Captain Dale Northrup, Fire Fighter Trevor Oswalt, and City Clerk Heidi Riojas

**Roll Call**

City Clerk Riojas conducted roll call for each Councilmember to respond their attendance at the meeting. Councilmembers Prieto Duval, Garcia, and Sanchez responded their attendance during roll call.

**Executive Session**

At 5:01 p.m., Councilmember Prieto Duval called for the Committee members to go into Executive Session for potential litigation pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(1)(i). The approximate time for the Executive Session is 15 minutes with no action anticipated.

At 5:16 p.m., Councilmember Prieto Duval extended the Executive Session for another 5 minutes.

At 5:21 p.m., Councilmember Prieto Duval reconvened the meeting back to order.

**Approve Agenda**

Councilmember Sanchez moved, seconded by Councilmember Garcia to approve the October 21, 2024, Public Safety Committee meeting agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

**Public Comment**

Charlene Tillequots on behalf of the Yakama Nation Tribal Council, spoke to the extreme weather shelter.

Jenece Howe, Yakama Nation Village of Hope, spoke to the extreme weather shelter.

Esther Magasis, Yakima County Human Services, spoke to the extreme weather shelter.

## **Unfinished Business**

### **Continue discussion on strategies to deter drug use in parks.**

Chief Mehline updated the members the Prosecutor and legal counsel are in the process of reviewing the Stay Out of Drug Areas (SODA) and exclusion in parks ordinances. Councilmember Sanchez inquired about increased police patrols of the parks.

## **New Business**

### **Approve Minutes of the September 16, 2024, Public Safety Committee meeting.**

Councilmember Sanchez moved, seconded by Councilmember Garcia to approve the Minutes of the September 16, 2024, Public Safety Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Update meeting schedule to 5:00 p.m. on the 4th Monday of each month.**

City Manager Ford spoke to the Committee of the Whole as a Special Meeting to enable more Councilmembers to attend the meeting.

Councilmember Prieto Duval moved, seconded by Councilmember Sanchez to discuss the Committee of the Whole at the October 28, 2024, Regular Meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

The committee members discussed the proposed meeting schedule change. It was the consensus of the committee members to post-pone the discussion to the October 28, 2024, Regular Meeting.

### **Discussion on the extreme weather shelter.**

The committee members moved to the dais to allow the standing visitors to sit around the table to start the discussion of what went well and what did not go well with the extreme weather shelter last year.

Jenece Howe with Yakama Nation Village of Hope spoke to the services provided last season at the shelter at the Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic (YVFWC) building to feed and help people to be out of the cold weather during the daytime.

Caseymac Wallahee, Yakama Nation Tribal Council, spoke to the positives of staffing a 24/7 drug/alcohol free homeless shelter.

Brian Saluskin, Yakama Nation Tribal Council, spoke to the resources to help keep people off drugs.

Esther Magasis, Yakima County Human Services, spoke to the need for shelter in the lower valley.

Ethan Jones, Yakama Nation Legal Counsel, spoke to considering the Yakama Nation as a religious organization as defined by RCW 35A.21.360 to reduce restrictions to provide a low barrier shelter in the YVFWC building.

Caseymac Wallahee, Yakama Nation Tribal Council, spoke to the culture, land, and teaching for the members.

Esther Magasis, Yakima County Human Services, spoke to the extreme weather shelter being hosted previously by Grace City Outreach.

Councilmember Garcia moved, seconded by Councilmember Sanchez to forward the discussion of the extreme weather shelter to the October 28, 2024, Regular Meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

**Discussion on submitting letter to Legislators and Commissioners to share the City's need for more public safety funding.**

Councilmember Sanchez presented the letter he drafted for consideration. It was the consensus to include the needs of funding the firefighter shortage in the letter.

Councilmember Garcia moved, seconded by Councilmember Sanchez to forward the letter for discussion during the October 28, 2024, Regular Meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

**Receive comments from police regarding crime trends since last meeting on September 16, 2024.**

Chief Mehline updated members that the September 2024, calls for service were 776, which is an increase from the previous year at 530. He noted there was a decrease in violent crimes during the previous month. Chief Mehline reported that 23 of the 26 Flock cameras have been installed in locations based on crime trends. In closing, Chief Mehline restated that in order for his department to positively impact the community it requires more funding to hire a minimum of three additional police officers.

**Receive comments from fire regarding calls and medical calls since last meeting on September 16, 2024.**

Chief Smith updated members that 82% of the department calls in September 2024, were for EMS/rescue for a total of 89 of the 108 calls for the month. The department has responded to 1,058 calls so far this year, which is higher than 2023 with 1,034 at the same time last year. He noted that the majority of the calls are drug related or substance abuse aid calls. Chief Smith stated that the burden of the multiple reporting requirements for the EMS system updates to track data for EMS calls. He shared the training requirements for volunteers of 240 hours for fire and 240 hours for EMS. Chief Smith reported on the success of the Fire and Life Safety Inspections billing program.

**Set agenda for the meeting on November 20, 2024.**

It was the consensus of the committee to have the following on the next agenda:

- Develop goals and outcomes for Public Safety Committee
- Councilmember Sanchez to share his research to educate the public to report crime

**Adjournment**

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

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Heidi Riojas, CMC  
City Clerk