

**TUMWATER PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
JANUARY 9, 2024 Page 1**

CONVENE: 8:00 a.m.

PRESENT: Chair Peter Agabi and Councilmembers Leatta Dahlhoff and Kelly Von Holtz.

Staff: City Administrator Lisa Parks, City Attorney Karen Kirkpatrick, Finance Director Troy Niemeyer, Fire Chief Brian Hurley, Police Chief Jon Weiks, Assistant Fire Chief Shawn Crimmins, Police Commander Jay Mason, Communications Manager Ann Cook, and Police Administrative Supervisor Laura Wohl.

CHANGES TO AGENDA: Election of the Chair was added to the agenda.

ELECTION OF CHAIR: Chair Dahlhoff nominated Councilmember Peter Agabi to serve as Chair of the committee for the next two years.

No other nominations were offered.

VOTE OF AFFIRMATION: **Through a unanimous vote, Councilmember Agabi was elected to serve as Chair of the Tumwater Public Health and Safety Committee during 2024 and 2025.**

DISTRICT COURT UPDATE: Frankie Peters, Thurston County District Court Executive Officer, provided an update on services provided by the Thurston County District Court.

Thurston County District Court is a court of limited jurisdiction handling misdemeanors, civil cases, and infractions. The court receives approximately 35,000 filings each year countywide. Some trends pertinent to the City of Tumwater have improved. During 2022, an increase in cases across the state increased by 30% for DUI cases. However, the number of cases for the City of Tumwater has continued to decline with fewer filings based on efforts by the City and the Police Department to improve public safety.

Access to people who use court services continues. With advent of the pandemic, open access to court services moved on a fast track for all community members. Within several weeks of the announcement of the pandemic, the court was able to live stream all court proceedings and provide virtual options for anyone wishing to attend hearings. With the court's virtual capabilities, the percentage of failure to appear and warrant rates have decreased with more people appearing for court matters. The court continues to live stream all court proceedings on YouTube for those involved and for educational purposes for the community.

Court programs include substance monitoring program initiated in June 2022. The program offers assessments of offenders to determine the risk

TUMWATER PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
JANUARY 9, 2024 Page 2

factor to the community as well as reducing the number of individuals who are jailed. Often, sentencing an individual to jail does not help the individual but serves as an alternative for ensuring community safety. The court provides another alternate to jail that still ensures safety to the community while ensuring the offender is able to stay active in the job force and to take care of their families. The program essentially pays for an individual's alcohol monitoring device. Individuals charged with a DUI are often required to wear a monitoring device at the cost of \$13 to \$15 each day. Eighty percent of individuals facing a DUI charge are indigent and do not have the ability to pay for monitoring resulting in the individuals charged with violating court-ordered conditions. The only alternative was to sentence the individual to jail if unable to pay for the monitoring device. The court provides other options while ensuring community safety and enabling individuals to remain active in the community. The program has been successful serving approximately 500 individuals with the jail population reduced for district court-related offenses. The daily compliance rate for the program is 98.9%.

Councilmember Dahlhoff asked whether the program was initiated as a pilot program. Mr. Peters replied that initially the program was a pilot program; however, the court was successful in securing funding through 2024 from the American Rescue Plan Act. The court is working closely with Thurston County to identify other funding sources to maintain the program. The program is supported by prosecutors, defense, and other departments and offices within Thurston County.

Thurston County District Court also offers Mental Health and Veterans Courts. During the pandemic, the courts experienced some decline in participants. Eleven participants from the City of Tumwater participated prior to COVID with some reduction experienced during the pandemic and because of some program changes. Some programs changes have occurred to accommodate space for veteran services. Veterans Court is connected to the Mental Health Court. Programmatic changes enabled the program to serve more participants in veteran services. Currently, five Tumwater individuals are participating in Mental Health Court and five Tumwater individuals are participating in Veterans Court.

Supervised probation services provide resources and support to ensure individuals are compliant with conditions of the court. Services and resources include counselors providing resources for housing, jobs and the labor market, working with families to rebuild relationships, and child care resources to ensure individuals continue to be successful complying with court-ordered conditions.

This year due to budget cuts by Thurston County because of decreased revenues and an increase in the cost for services, non-mandated probation services will not be provided by the court for the general case load. Some cases are being referred to a monitoring program comprised of record

TUMWATER PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
JANUARY 9, 2024 Page 3

checks and ensuring submittal of compliance reports or treatment reports. The court at this time does not have the ability to staff the program to support supervised probation services. Staff continues to work with County Commissioners about potential funding sources to offer the program.

Alternatively, the court was able to secure an additional mental health probation position. In 2019, the successes of the Mental Health and Veterans Court were recognized with a goal to expand those programs to continue to provide mental health services at every stage of a case. A mental health probation division was established to provide similar ongoing resources as the Mental Health and Veterans Courts provide. The court hired a second mental health probation counselor.

Councilmember Dahlhoff asked whether the services provided by supervised probation were reassigned to other staff or whether the program is accounted for in other areas of the court. Mr. Peters responded that the service has not been reassigned as the position is a very specifically trained and supported role to provide supervised probation. Existing staff do not have the ability to provide or absorb the program's roles and responsibilities. All other mandated services are provided by the court. Additionally, statewide conversations are occurring as supervised probation services have changed dramatically. Thurston County is one of the more progressive county's offering probation services. Many counties understand the need for probation services because it is another stage or lifecycle program that continues to provide resources.

Chair Agabi asked whether the recent successful county public safety levy could allocate some funds to the program. Mr. Peters explained that Proposition 1 dedicates 75% of the revenue to the Sheriff and law enforcement with the remaining 25% allocated to auditors, public defense, and prosecutors. At this time, there is no funding from the levy allocated to the courts.

Councilmember Von Holtz thanked Mr. Peters for providing the update. She supports a wraparound approach.

FIRE
DEPARTMENT
STAFFING
ADJUSTMENT:

Fire Chief Hurley reported the fire department currently has 53 authorized FTEs. Fluctuations often occur in the positions of firefighters and firefighter/paramedics. Currently, the department is fully staffed with 53 FTEs. The department anticipates three retirements in 2024 of the Fire Prevention Officer and two Firefighter/Paramedics. In addition to those vacancies, promotions often create entry level vacancies. The request is to temporarily increase the allotted number of FTEs from 53 to 56. Some considerations include the time required to onboard a new employee comprised of the academy and completion of Emergency Medical Technician training. Funding for the positions is available because of open positions resulting in 2023 that can carry forward to 2024 to cover the

**TUMWATER PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
JANUARY 9, 2024 Page 4**

additional costs of overlapping additional positions. The goal is to fill the positions with individuals completing all training requirements to fill positions vacated by retiring employees.

Councilmember Dahlhoff asked about the timeline for the additional FTEs. Fire Chief Hurley said it is dependent upon the timing associated with hiring, academy dates, and identifying retirement dates. The overlap period is unknown at this time; however, the fire academy is scheduled soon necessitating the hiring of individuals so they can participate in the academies located in Lacey and North Bend.

Chair Agabi asked about the likelihood of recruiting applicants willing to accept a temporary position. Fire Chief Hurley said the initial positions would be temporary with the individuals transitioning to regular positions following retirement of the incumbents.

MOTION:

Chair Agabi moved, seconded by Councilmember Von Holtz, to recommend the Council temporarily increase the number of allowed Fire Department FTE's from 53 to 56. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.

**ADDITIONAL
ITEMS:**

Chair Agabi proposed a change in the monthly meeting time. Currently, the committee designates an hour for a monthly meeting. He proposed extending the meeting length to 90 minutes and retaining the current meeting date each month.

The committee agreed to extend the monthly meeting to 90 minutes on the second Tuesday of each month at 8 a.m.

MOTION:

Councilmember Dahlhoff moved, seconded by Councilmember Von Holtz, to schedule the Public Health and Safety Committee meetings on the second Tuesday of each month from 8 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. virtually. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT:

With there being no further business, Chair Agabi adjourned the meeting at 8:34 a.m.