

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

November 17, 2008

The Public Safety Committee of the City of Mesa met in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on November 17, 2008 at 3:30 p.m.

COMMITTEE PRESENT

Dennis Kavanaugh, Chairman
Dina Higgins
Scott Somers

COMMITTEE ABSENT

None

STAFF PRESENT

Alfred Smith
Trisha Sorensen

1. Items from citizens present.

There were no items from citizens present.

2. Hear a presentation and discuss temporary fire stations.

Fire Chief Harry Beck addressed the Committee and stated that the concept of temporary fire stations, which has been in existence for many years, has been utilized by the City of Mesa and other cities in the past. He said that temporary facilities enable the provision of services that would otherwise be delayed because of costs. Chief Beck introduced Deputy Fire Chief Jim Bloomer, who has responsibility for the Facilities Management area.

Chief Bloomer displayed a PowerPoint presentation (a copy is available for review in the City Clerk's Office) and noted that the most recent fire station to be constructed was Station 217 in 2003. He reported that in the intervening time period, the City has added nine square miles, the population has increased by 62,000 and the City's Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating has declined from Class 2 to Class 3. He added that emergency service response times continue to erode.

Chief Bloomer outlined the requirements for a temporary fire station and the associated costs (see Attachment 1), which were developed with the assistance of the City's Engineering Department.

Responding to a question from Committeemember Higgins, Chief Bloomer advised that temporary facilities must comply with the requirements of the *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA).

Deputy City Attorney Alfred Smith explained that although the station would have minimal public access, the ADA requirements must be in place in order to accommodate injured or handicapped individuals, including employees, who may wish to access the facility.

Chief Beck added that the Federal government does not allow any exceptions to this regulation.

Chief Bloomer continued the presentation by advising that the total cost of a temporary facility is approximately \$1.1 million of which \$791,000 would be "throwaway" costs. He advised that in the event the temporary station site cannot be utilized for a future permanent station, all of the costs for the site would be disposable. Chief Bloomer added that a permanent site could be used for a temporary facility as long as the building envelope for the permanent station is preserved. He added that approximately 66 percent of the costs for a typical temporary fire station are disposable.

In response to a question from Committeemember Higgins, Chief Bloomer advised that converting an existing home for use as a temporary facility would be very expensive and would require the construction of an appropriate structure for the apparatus.

Chief Beck stated that the department has considered the possibility of leasing a public space, such as the end unit of a strip shopping center where ADA compliance is in place. He added that the site must be able to accommodate the construction of a cover and security room for the apparatus.

Chief Bloomer stated that other issues to be addressed include the following:

- Gain the cooperation of residents and neighborhood associations and the approval of the Design Review Board.
- Obtain a management directive to Building Safety in order to proceed.
- Make a determination regarding the length of time the temporary facility would be utilized.

Chief Bloomer noted that at the end of a five-year period of use for a temporary facility, the cost to construct a permanent facility could possibly double and no cost savings would be realized.

Chairman Kavanaugh thanked staff for the presentation.

3. Hear a presentation and discuss the Fire Department's Connector Volunteer Program.

Chief Beck introduced Fire and Life Safety Education Specialist Warren Sprecher and Fire and Life Safety Administrator Deena Bolland. He said that the Connector Volunteer Program has been very successful, and he hoped that the Program could be expanded in the future.

Mr. Sprecher displayed a PowerPoint presentation (a copy is available for review in the City Clerk's Office) and advised that the primary goal of the Connector Program is to provide assistance regarding non-emergency service calls and to extend the types of services that enable fire crews to remain available for emergency calls. He added that Connectors interact with residents of a home that is impacted by a fire until the Red Cross arrives on the scene.

Mr. Sprecher advised that the Program began in 1998 with 20 volunteers who provided social service follow-ups and contact information between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.,

Monday through Friday. He said that the current Program has 111 active Connectors and operates seven days a week between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. Mr. Sprecher noted that the scope of the Program has been expanded to incorporate more than social service follow-ups. He reported that during the period of January 2007 through October 2008, the volunteers provided approximately 38,000 hours of service and responded to 5,600 calls, which saved the Fire Department an estimated \$740,000. Mr. Sprecher said that the types of calls that Connectors respond to include: calls related to motorists requiring assistance; smoke detector checks; working fires; fire victim assistance; transport of firefighters released from a hospital following treatment; social service calls related to elder care and assisted living; and special events, such as rehydration activity for the Secret Service during a recent Presidential visit.

Mr. Sprecher stated that new areas in which the Connectors could provide service include the mapping of landing zones for helicopters that transport victims; establishing a rehabilitation center for fire fighters at a working fire, and updating site plans of apartment complexes and manufactured home parks. He noted that the Connector Volunteer Program has received local and national awards, and he added the Fire Department recognizes the volunteers each year with service awards.

Responding to a question from Committeemember Higgins, Mr. Sprecher advised that recruitment activities include an outreach to Mesa Community College and information on the website. He said that a minimal amount of staff time has been devoted to recruitment.

Committeemember Higgins suggested that investing in additional recruitment efforts for the Program could result in greater cost savings for the Fire Department.

Chief Beck stated that the Volunteer Program has become an excellent training ground for future firefighters. He explained that the Fire Department has a partnership with Mesa Community College to promote participation in the Program. Chief Beck noted that the Program has evolved over the years to become an essential part of the system, and he added that one of the fastest growing areas of the Fire Department is the demand for social services.

Chairman Kavanaugh thanked Chief Beck, Mr. Sprecher and Ms. Bolland for the presentation.

4. Hear a presentation and discuss the Police Department's Off-Duty Employment Program.

Committeemember Somers noted that this agenda item appears to be a management and personnel-related item, and he questioned if this was an appropriate subject for Committee discussion.

Deputy City Attorney Alfred Smith noted that this item is agendized for a presentation and discussion only, and he added that staff is not seeking a recommendation from the Committee.

Assistant Police Chief Mike Denney said that Committeemember Higgins had requested that information on the Off-Duty Employment Program be provided to the Committee with regard to the possibility of proposing an ordinance that limited off-duty employment within the City of Mesa to Mesa Police Officers.

Mr. Smith advised that a recommendation regarding an ordinance is not included on this agenda and therefore, consideration and discussion of a recommendation to Council would have to be placed on a future agenda.

Chairman Kavanaugh stated that the Committee would hear the presentation by staff as an overview and introduction to the topic.

Police Commander Mark Wesselman introduced Lieutenant Mike Soelberg and advised that they were prepared to provide an overview of the current Off-Duty Employment Program.

Lieutenant Soelberg displayed a PowerPoint presentation (a copy is available for review in the City Clerk's Office) and advised that the Police Department operates the Program, which enables companies and organizations to hire off-duty officers to provide security for a variety of activities, events and construction projects. He said that City contracts, such as City-funded road projects, require the use of City of Mesa officers, but law enforcement personnel from other jurisdictions could be utilized for non-city projects and events. Lieutenant Soelberg added that all requests to utilize off-duty officers are processed through the Off-Duty Hiring Coordinator and are filled on a voluntary basis. He outlined the following process:

- The requesting person or organization submits a completed Temporary Employment Agreement.
- The organization must provide proof of Workman's Compensation coverage.
- The Off-Duty Hiring Coordinator announces the opportunity and any sworn member can request to be placed on the list.
- Jobs are typically filled on a first come, first serve basis.
- A supervisor is required for any job requiring four or more officers.
- Compensation rates, which were established in May 2006, are \$35 per hour for officers and \$40 per hour for supervisors.
- All jobs are based on a minimum duration of three hours.
- A survey of other Valley cities indicates that the median pay is \$45 per hour for officers and \$50 per hour for supervisors.
- Employers pay officers at the beginning of the job, although exceptions can be made for Mesa Public Schools and City projects.
- Officers are considered to be an employee of the temporary employer while performing the off-duty assignment and any injuries resulting from the off-duty employment are the responsibility of the employer.

Lieutenant Soelberg stated that requests received more than two weeks in advance are defined as "lottery jobs" and jobs received with less than two weeks notice are defined as "non-lottery jobs." He reported that in 2007, 5,867 jobs paid \$1,079,000 for 30,800 hours of off-duty employment. Lieutenant Soelberg added that this year to date, there have been 4,996 jobs paying \$960,009 for approximately 27,000 hours. He advised that fiscal impact is \$67,619 annually for the salary and benefits of the Off-Duty Hiring Coordinator. He outlined future considerations (see Attachment 2) that the Committee may wish to address at a future meeting.

In response to a question from Committeemember Higgins regarding the possibility of enacting an ordinance that requires contracts between two private entities to include a provision that only City of Mesa off-duty officers could be hired for security or traffic control, Mr. Smith said he

was unsure that such an ordinance was enforceable. He said that the City Attorney's Office would contact Chief Gascón regarding the issue.

Committeemember Somers suggested that staff provide examples of ordinances enacted by other cities, a cost analysis and cost recovery information for the administration of the program.

Chairman Kavanaugh stated that staff has direction to obtain additional information, and he added that this item would be placed on a future agenda for further discussion. He thanked staff for the presentation.

5. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Public Safety Committee meeting adjourned at 4:14 p.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Public Safety Committee meeting of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 17th day of November 2008. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

LINDA CROCKER, CITY CLERK

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Attachments (2)