

Minutes

**Asheville City Council Public Safety Committee Meeting
October 27, 2014
3:30 p.m.-5:00 p.m.
Training Room, Municipal Building**

Council Members: Cecil Bothwell, Jan Davis, Chris Pelly

Guests: Byron Greiner, Sally Bucher

Staff: Police Chief William Anderson, Fire Chief Chris Budzinski, Fire Chief Scott Burnette, Executive Assistant Alex Carmichael, Human Resources Director Kelley Dickens, Assistant City Manager Paul Fetherston, Captain Stony Gonce, Communications and Public Engagement Director Dawa Hitch, City Manager Gary Jackson, Assistant City Attorney John Maddux

Chairperson Davis called the meeting to order at 3:32 PM.

1. **Approval of the September Minutes:** Councilmember Pelly motioned to approve the September minutes. Councilmember Bothwell seconded. The motion passed with all in favor.
2. **New Business:**
 - a. **Hazardous Materials Regional Response Team 6 Grant** – Chief Scott Burnette, AFD
Chief Burnette presented a request for the acceptance of an annual Hazardous Materials Regional Response Team 6 Grant. This year's grant amount is \$27,400. Councilman Bothwell motioned to recommend the acceptance to the full Council. Councilman Pelly seconded. The motion passed with all in favor.
3. **Staff Updates:**
 - a. **Status of Noise Ordinance and Complaints at Ben's Tune-Up** – Captain Stony Gonce, APD
Captain Gonce reported that 15 calls for service were received at Ben's Tune-Up between May and August. On September 15, representatives from the Police Department and the City Attorney's Office attended a meeting with complainants. APD generates an incident report for all calls for service and now mandates a supervisor respond with an officer to a complaint at Ben's Tune-Up. The responding personnel go with the complainant to the location from which the noise is heard (rather than

observing from the street.) A second meeting was held with the management, who agreed to cease the ‘dance party’ night.

Six more calls were received after the September 15 meeting. APD personnel issued a noise citation for one call, but found that five of the calls were for noise that was not unreasonably loud. The citation was issued to the owners of the property.

The Committee discussed decibel meters, noise dampening techniques, and the “reasonable person” standard of the Noise Ordinance. The Committee elected not to recommend any ordinance changes the full Council, but directed staff to continue monitoring the situation at Ben’s Tune-Up.

b. APD Strategic Operations Plan – Chief William Anderson, and City Manager Gary Jackson

Chief William Anderson updated the Committee on the status of the six focus areas of the Department’s Strategic Operations Plan. *Recruitment and retention:* Staff is working with the HR Department on the Class and Compensation Study, modifications to entry level requirements, modifications to the entry examination, and a cost analysis of an in-house academy. *Leadership:* The Department is revising its disciplinary policies and instituting an ‘employee of the month’ program. *Training:* The Department is developing a leadership training program. *Organizational structure:* The Department is evaluating district boundaries through a call volume study, instituting centralized, re-structured roll calls, and instituting a 24/7 watch commander system. *Equipment and technology:* The Department is benchmarking vehicle replacement, benchmarking take-home vehicles, reviewing current and internal systems. *Quality of Life:* The Department is mapping call volume by neighborhood in order to improve ComStat analysis. *Agency outreach and communications:* The Department is working with HR and Communications and Public Engagement to develop a Communications Specialist position embedded in the Police Department. The Department has instituted “News Flash,” a weekly newsletter.

Chief Anderson noted that all employees have been involved with the development of the Strategic Operations Plan.

Councilman Bothwell asked about where officers go when they leave the Asheville Police Department. Chief Anderson replied that some go to other agencies; some go out of state; some leave to become civilians. Some of the reasons departing officer have cited are pay, family, and take home vehicles.

HR Director Kelley Dickens noted that HR is working with the Department to develop better, more formalized exit interviews.

City Manager Gary Jackson stated that the Police Department's Strategic Operations Plan demonstrates a commitment to positive change in the Department. He noted that it is a dynamic document with the flexibility to factor in comments from members of the Council. Because the success of the Department and its staff is so important, the City Manager is taking two actions.

- i. Fire Chief Scott Burnette will be the facilitator of APD's Strategic Operations Plan implementation. Chief Burnette successfully instituted a similar internal change process in the Fire Department. Chief Burnette will facilitate a team with resources from across the entire organization, which will allow Chief Anderson and the Police Department to stay focused on their mission.
- ii. The City will contract a management consulting firm to conduct an efficient and effective diagnosis that includes employee feedback, an examination of organizational culture, and an examination of how state statutes come to bare on the Department. The objective is to achieve a third party perspective. The time table will be one hundred twenty days after the awarding of the contract.

These actions will come to the full Council tomorrow, October 28th, and is before PSC to receive feedback first.

Chairman Davis stated that the Fire Department process was a good process. He would like PSC to stay close to the process; four months is a short time to turn a ship. Gary Jackson stated that an update can be a standing item on the PSC agenda. Councilman Bothwell stated that an outside consultant might be able to give voice to employees that might not have otherwise come forward. Councilman Pelly expressed appreciation for the focus on culture.

5. Public Comment:

- a. Byron Greiner informed the Committee that a buskers' leadership meeting will take place on Monday. The Noise Ordinance is high on their issues list.