

VILLAGE OF BROOKLYN HEIGHTS

MINUTES OF A MEETING SAFETY COMMITTEE

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A meeting of the Safety Committee of the Village of Brooklyn Heights, Ohio was held on November 24, 2020 at 7:00 pm. with Councilwoman Presot presiding.

Present at roll call:	Councilmen:	Blados, Lahiff, Lasky, Presot & Walsh
	Mayor:	Procuk
	Clerk/Treasurer:	Frank
	Police Chief:	Meade
	Guests:	Leahy, Zakrajsek, Jablonski, Coyne Kovar, Bailey, Angelone

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss personnel for the Police Department.

- Chief Meade stated the plan is to hire three (3) officers and swear them in on December 1, 2020 and then hire additional officers the beginning of 2021.
- Jaclyn Samson, Frank DiFranco and Meghan Blair will be sworn in on December 1, 2020.
- Mrs. Presot asked about female accommodations and Chief Meade responded that they have ordered lockers and have converted some space in the basement as a female locker room.
- Mr. Lahiff said that previously when the committee met, he was under the impression that we would hire two officers. Why the change?
 - Chief Meade said that the department is down four (4) officers with three (3) retiring at the end of 2020. He said that three (3) are set to retire in 2021.
 - Chief Meade stated that there are twenty-one (21) shifts per week. Eighteen shifts have two (2) officers on the road and three (3) shifts have three (3) officers on the road. Operating twenty-one (21) shifts with two (2) officers should be the exception NOT the norm.
 - Officers take vacation, holiday or comp time which could create overtime so that shift becomes two (2) on the road, so basically, we are operating the entire twenty-one (21) shifts with two (2) officers. This directly affects the officer safety and community safety. Two (2) officers on the road means they have to prioritize calls, so instead of being a good safety force, we become like Cleveland where lockouts, barking dogs etc. fall to the bottom of the list and we'll get to it when we can. We can't follow a school bus (which is a safety issue for the kids) if we have two officers tied up at an accident on the freeway.
 - Our detective bureau is swamped. Det. Tulcewicz, who does an outstanding job, is currently working on two very high priority cases within our borders, that when we make an arrest on them, it might even hit the news. Chief Meade will have to split a part-timer between the road and the detective bureau to assist him because he has some F-5 cases he can't even get to because he has to prioritize his calls.
 - Next year we have Police Reform Training. There are mandatory De-escalation training, Intervention Training and Military obligations (102 shifts) that will all create over-time.
 - There are warrants piling up because of COVID (can't deliver them).
 - Mr. Lahiff asked how many part-timers we have and Chief Meade said there are nine (9) on the books but they work less than four or five shifts per year. They are projected to fill thirty (3) to eighty (80) shifts this year. Between the training, military and vacations / personal time there will be about 313 shifts creating 2,000 overtime hours.
 - Mr. Lahiff asked if he could hire part-timers that he could count on and Chief Meade said they hired an officer, outfitted her, put her through fourteen (14) weeks of FTO training, she worked two (2) shifts and was hired full-time in another department so she had to resign because she couldn't work part-time anywhere while she was in her probationary period. The cost was about \$5,000 and was the most expensive two shifts in the history of Brooklyn Heights.

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- Mr. Lahiff said he works for Safe Choice Security and they have over three-hundred Ohio commissioned police officers that are commissioned somewhere else, working for them part-time so he knows they are out there. They handle all the Cleveland pools, Cleveland Rec Centers etc. He said Lindale and Newburgh Heights both use them.
- Chief Meade said that Newburgh Heights has sixteen (16) full time officers which are six (6) more full-time officers than Brooklyn Heights.
- Mr. Lahiff said that he knows that there are part-time officers available and by hiring more full-time officers you are adding 120 hours to the schedule, 480 hours per week when you only have 336 hours of patrol available.
- Chief Meade expressed his concern over hiring part-time officers because they are not reliable. They consider it a side job and are not committed as a full-time officer (career) does.
- Mrs. Presot asked Chief Meade about 8 hour shifts versus 12 hour shifts and he said that 12 hour shifts allows for four (4) platoons. More coverage on the road, more off days, you don't burn up the guys and this generation covets their off days. There are only two (2) departments in Cuyahoga County that still work eight (8) hour shifts and we are one of them. If we don't switch to 12 hour shifts we will lose half our officers because they will go to departments with 12 hour shifts.
- Mr. Lasky asked how many officers we had in January 2020 and Chief Meade said fourteen (14). Today we have ten (10). He also questioned the chief's statement about losing half the department to other departments that have 12 hour shifts. He said that we had over one hundred apply to take the test and asked if we advertised that we work 8 hour shifts and Chief Meade told him we did not.
- Mayor Procuik asked if any council member was interested in the budget numbers or if they just want to tell Chief Meade how to run his department. Mr. Lasky said that once they were done with the initial questions they would talk numbers.
- Mayor Procuik said that Clerk/Treasurer Frank and Chief Meade could talk to council about the costs and the budget that was passed for 2020 and Mr. Lahiff said that those numbers don't count because they would only get one paycheck from the 2020 budget but it will affect the 2021 budget.
- Mr. Blados said that we are not adding, but replacing what we've lost. Mr. Walsh said that it would be replacing officers with lower paid officers so we are saving money.
- Mr. Frank said that the 2021 Police Salary budget is \$30,000 less than projected last year and that included hiring three (3) new officers.
Mr. Walsh asked how it could be lower and Mr. Frank said that the overtime would be cut. Mr. Walsh asked when the 12 hour shifts would begin and Chief Meade said they would have to have everyone trained so realistically it would be January 2022.
- Mr. Frank told council that there is money in the Police budget to hire some new officers.
- Mayor Procuik told council that in order to bring the department up to seventeen (17) members Chief Meade will be asking for \$1,494,375 for his 2021 payroll budget which is an increase of \$107,178 over 2020. SAFETY IS OUR #1 PRIORITY. All Chief Meade is trying to do is bring our department back to full strength. He has been on the job just 10 months and has made extremely beneficial changes for our village.
- There were 106 who took the test and of those we had about fourteen (14) or fifteen (15) that rose above everyone. Two (2) of the fourteen (14) decided they weren't going to take lie detector tests and they dropped out. Then we had the rankings and we went with the lie detector tests and the interviews and we had the number one candidate who scored 99.9% on the exam turned down our offer. Today, our number three (3) candidate, who we worked very diligently with, turned us down after we invested \$1,300 in her psychological testing and physical so that list of

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- 106 is down to a bonafied, in our opinion, about seven (7) to eight (8) good hiring candidates. We have made conditional offers of employment to five (5) people. Three (3) are ready to be sworn in on December 1, 2020, one (1) who could be sworn in as early as December 17th and we will be very aggressive to get the other three (3) sworn in after the first of the year. That's our plan and that's the budget we are going to ask council to pass. After that we put up an ordinance and then the roll is called.
- Mr. Lahiff is fine with hiring three (3) but hiring six (6) will greatly increase the budget.
- Mayor Procuk agrees that with fringe benefits it will increase the budget but what he said that what he is looking for now is to replace the four (4) officers who retired this year.
- Mayor Procuk told council that there is a Memo of Understanding with the FOP that was agreed upon that we could bring on part-time officers to help with staffing but they had to be full-time officers in either Valley View or Cuyahoga Heights.
- Mr. Lahiff said that he is fine with the upcoming ordinance hiring three (3) to four (4).
- Mr. Blados is good with hiring three (3) to four (4)
- Mr. Lasky is good with hiring three (3) to four (4)
- Mr. Walsh is good with hiring three (3) and three (3) later
- Mrs. Presot is good with hiring four (4) now and additional later.
- Mayor Procuk told council that in 2020 the village received funds in excess of \$428,000 mainly from the BWC who through great investing was able to give refunds. He would like to see those monies put into the Capital Fund and not sit in the General Fund and he will have an ordinance drawn up to move the money before the end of the year.
- Sgt. Jablonski spoke to council regarding the comment made comparing Brooklyn Heights to Newburgh Hts. and Lindale. He also said the he is on the SWAT team and three (3) of the five (5) part-timers that work for us are also on the SWAT team so if called they would be pulled off or unavailable for shifts here. So the 460 hours you're comparing to are patrol hour numbers at full staff and we will never be at full staff.
- Mr. Blados apologized for getting upset earlier, but he said he moved to Brooklyn Heights because of their Safety Forces and if it comes down to hiring an officer or buying a chipper for the Service Department, he will hire the officer.
 - Chief Meade said that he understands that the bottom line is important but he is burning out his people. He is forcing his guys to work 12 hour shifts on Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Luckily they see the light at the end of the tunnel and are sucking it up and working those shifts. Council has to understand that there are lives, people and families involved here and if you burn out your people you are done.

Councilwoman Presot asked if there was any other business to discuss at the Safety Committee meeting. If there is no further business the meeting is adjourned



Jennifer Presot, Committee Chairwoman