

VILLAGE OF BROOKLYN HEIGHTS

MINUTES OF A MEETING

Safety Committee

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The **Safety Committee** meeting of the Council of the Village of Brooklyn Heights, Ohio was held on **July 13, 2021 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
Special Proj. Coord.	J. Presot
GUESTS:	Stepka, Berzins

This meeting is called to discuss police new hires and speed signs.

Chief Meade stated:

- Would like to hire three (3) new officers bringing the total officers to seventeen (17)
- Move to twelve (12) hour shifts on January 2, 2022
 - This would be four (4) platoons of four (4) officers per shift and one (1) detective
 - There would be a supervisor on each shift thus reducing OIC pay. Currently on schedule to pay out 208 hours of OIC pay equating to about \$8,000.
 - Drastically reducing overtime. Currently on pace to pay out 1,700 hours in overtime equating to about \$100,000.
 - With four (4) officers on a shift and one calls off sick with another on vacation the shift would still have two (2) on shift and would not have to call others in .
 - Twelve-hour (12) shifts will help to recruit and retain officers. We are at a disadvantage with eight (8) hour shifts. Independence has been on twelve-hour shifts for about twenty years, Valley View about twelve years and Parma about fifteen years. The last time we were hiring we offered two candidates conditional employment. Both accepted and then turned us down with one going to Stow and the other to Lakewood. Both departments are on twelve hour shifts.
- With four (4) officers on duty Chief Meade would like to bring back the bike patrol thus beefing up security in the park and reducing fuel costs and wear and tear on the vehicles.
- Officer safety increases with four (4) on duty as does the response time.
- In the last eighteen (18) months, Brooklyn Hts. PD have taken nineteen (19) guns off the streets in traffic stops.
- Chief Meade gave a lot of statistics regarding officer safety, mental status, state & national
- Twelve (12) hours shifts is good for officer wellness. This job is tough, it beats you up mentally and physically. Twelve (12) hour shifts gives you three (3) days off every two (2) weeks to unwind and be with your family.
- Brooklyn Heights is still a safe place to live and fifteen (15) years ago when we had seventeen (17) officers it was a luxury and now it is a necessity. It takes the residents, businesses and a commitment from council to keep it safe. This is not the same village it was fifteen (15) to twenty (20) years ago. It's not the fault of the residents, police or council. It is society. If you leave your garage open, your car doors unlocked or your bicycle unchained, eventually something will be stolen.

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- Councilman Lahiff asked if we are aware of pending retirements and Chief Meade said there is a possibility of two retirements.
- Mayor Procuk asked if there is a mandatory retirement age and Chief Meade responded that he believes it is seventy (70) years old. Mayor Procuk asked who we have that would be approaching seventy (70) and Chief Meade said no one. We have one officer with thirty two (32) years who may or may not continue on the job and one with about twenty one (21) years who has a pension from a previous job and is building a retirement home out of state. Mayor Procuk said that we have two (2) with the potential of retiring but we don't know if that is two (2) weeks from now or two (2) years from now. We just don't have any idea.

Councilman Lasky asked about the part-time officers and how many the Chief reaches out to when he needs to fill a shift. Chief Meade responded that officer:

1. Worked zero shifts in three (3) years would like to terminate him
2. One (1) shift eight (8) hours
3. Five (5) shifts forty (40) hours Making more money working as hotel security
4. Two (2) shifts sixteen (16) hours
5. Two (2) shifts sixteen (16) hours
6. One (1) shift eight (8) hours
7. Six (6) shifts forty-eight (48) hours hired P/T by CH
8. Thirty-two and a half (32 ½) shifts two-hundred sixty (260) hours go to guy
9. Nine and a half (9 ½) shifts seventy-six (76) hours

Councilman Walsh said that when he can't get a part-timer to fill the shift we have to pay overtime and Chief Meade said that is correct. Chief Meade said there wouldn't be any scheduled overtime but...and every officer hates this... but you are ten minutes from your shift ending and a call comes in and you are stuck on the call for an extra hour, that's when overtime will be paid out. With four (4) on a shift if two (2) call off he can still man the shift without overtime.

Mayor Procuk said a sign of the times is that everyone wants to work a four (4) day work week whether it is ten (10) hour shifts or twelve (12) hour shifts.

Councilman Lasky said it is obvious that we don't have a part-time pool now other than two (2). Chief Meade emphasized that every open shift was offered to a part-timer before being offered to the full-timers and they turned them down.

Chief Meade said that Independence is paying officers \$40-\$45 dollars an hour for side jobs to sit in hotels while we pay our part-timers \$30 an hour.

Chief Meade said that because all three (3) of the candidates that he would like to make conditional offers to are OPATA trained and have experience from other departments so they would be on the road much quicker than a rookie thus saving on overtime sooner rather than later.

Councilwoman Presot asked about the bike equipment and what can be used. Chief Meade said that we may have one or two bikes salvageable. One of the potential candidates is a bike mechanic for Cleveland PD so we would be able to utilize his experience. Training for the bike patrol is forty (40) hours.

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The confiscated articles in the police garage can be auctioned and the income would go into the Law Enforcement Fund and that can be used for the Bicycle Unit.

Councilman Walsh, Councilman Blados wants to keep our businesses here and feels the addition of three (3) officers is an asset, and Councilwoman Presot is in favor of hiring another three (3) bringing the department up to seventeen (17) officers.

Councilman Lahiff said that, statistically at eleven (11) officers, we had more officers per square mile and per household than any other community and he is not in favor of hiring anybody.

Councilman Lasky questioned the two (2) possible retirements and Chief Meade said that the minimum age at twenty-five (25) years for sixty percent (60%) is fifty-two (52). He asked that if we go up to seventeen (17) and these two decide to retire, will Chief Meade come back and ask for two (2) additional officers to bring it back to seventeen (17) and Chief Meade responded that "you never know". He said he would probably be back asking council to bring the department back to seventeen (17). Mayor Procuk said as the administrator his job is to go by the ordinances of the Village of Brooklyn Heights and Councilman Lahiff argued we have fourteen (14) and that the ordinance says "up to" seventeen (17). Mayor Procuk responded that his goal, in his twenty-first (21st) year is to bring the department back to seventeen (17) as it was in his first eight (8) or nine (9) years sitting up there.

Councilman Lasky said we are in compliance with the ordinance, Councilman Lahiff agreed and Mayor Procuk said that is correct but if you are asking him, as the administrator, who he wants to hire and who he is asking council to fund, this city, this village, this police department, this northeast Ohio, it says up to seventeen (17), he will always, always, always try to keep it at seventeen (17). He said it was never his intent to do anything to be in compliance at fourteen (14). He said he doesn't care about statistics because there is no such thing as too many police officers patrolling the streets for safety.

Councilman Lahiff said you can't account for everything. Now you are adding salaries and now three (3) cars on the road so we are adding more cars and \$27,000 per each employee for health insurance. Mayor Procuk said this isn't about being right or wrong, he is telling council his opinion and Councilman Lahiff said he knows and then told Mayor Procuk he doesn't have a vote. Mayor Procuk asked Councilman Lahiff what he means by saying he doesn't have a vote. Councilman Lahiff said he doesn't have a vote as to whether council spends the money or not and Councilman Walsh said they have to have at least three (3) votes. Mayor Procuk said he can't hire or fire anybody without council's consent and Councilman Lahiff answered "exactly". Councilman Walsh said that is why they are discussing this tonight.

Mayor Procuk said if the question is "will he continue to seek seventeen (17) when people retire, the answer is yes.

Chief Meade said he sat in on Planning Commission meetings where people said they moved here because of schools (#1) and safety was #2.

Councilman Lahiff asked if we have compromised safety in the last ten (10) years and Chief Meade said that when he was first on the department they had a burglary once in two years, now they happen more often. Mayor Procuk said you had a neighborhood block watch program pop up.

Councilman Lasky said they, as a council fully support the safety forces. He said that when he asks for vehicles we do what we can with the budget, if they need equipment or training. He is disappointed in our

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part-time effort that we have one (1) or two (2) guys that help us. Mayor Procuk asked what he (Mr. Lasky) would suggest and he responded that it seems that other departments are hiring our residents and have we ever asked them to come and work for us. Chief Meade said part-time is not what it used to be as he talked about millennials and zenial. They enjoy their "off" days. They don't want to work for another city part-time. The older guys are getting old and retiring and will work for another city part-time. The other option is, if you remember Monica, we hired her part-time and we spent thousands of dollars equipping her, fourteen (14) weeks in the FTO program, worked two (2) shifts, was hired by Seven Hills and resigned. We paid about \$8,000 for her to work two (2) shifts for us. When you have a full-time officer driving around the city, they know which cars belong there and which don't. You are familiar with the city inside and out. A part-timer doesn't know what businesses are open at night or what vehicles should be on the street. This job is instinct and when you have a full-time officer working forty (40) hours a week and knows the community they are better officers than trying to substitute them in. Luckily, our Fire Department can bring in great people from other cities. We have a four hundred (400) page policies & procedures manual. The part-timers aren't going to learn it for the three (3) shifts they will work for the year.

It does make sense financially if you're counting beans, but as a boss, as a department head it is totally different. This is their career and they want to stop and talk to kids or play with them in the park. They want to catch the guy who is cutting off catalytic converters on the night shift where a part-timer looks at it as a side job and puts in his time to collect a check and not worry about the city. It's a different breed.

Councilwoman Presot asked Councilman Lasky what he is thinking and Chief Lasky asked if he could speak. He said he agrees with Chief Meade regarding getting part-timers to work. Today's kids don't want to work. They want to put in their eight (8) hours and go home. They are done. They don't want to work somewhere else, nor do they want to work overtime.

Mayor Procuk said that if there are three (3) councilmen in agreement to hire three (3) patrolmen then he would advise Chief Meade to make the conditional job offer and continue with the process. Councilwoman Presot asked what is left and Chief Meade said once they sign the conditional offer the will

go through the psychological and the pension physical. If they pull out they will owe us the cost of the testing. Councilwoman Presot asked if any of the three (3) are involved with the military and Chief Meade responded they are not. Councilman Lasky asked if they would be available to begin immediately and Chief Meade said they would be fast-tracked through FTO because they are all experienced officers. Mayor Procuk and Chief Meade are confident that if these three (3) are sworn in at the beginning of August they would be on the road in single cars by September.

Councilman Lasky asked if any of these three (3) are residents and Chief Meade said one is Dorset just into Seven Hills at Essex and another grew up on Lincoln and on North Street so he knows the area well.

Discussion: Safety Signs & Cameras

- Speed signs are a reminder to slow down. Cost is about \$2500
- License plate reader cameras are about \$2,500 per year including the insurance.
- Independence invested in thirty (30) cameras and they are installed along Rockside Road and at the Independence / Brooklyn Hts. border on Schaaf Road.

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- The cameras instantly alert us when a stolen vehicle enters our town.
- Chief cited several incidents that the cameras helped with solving crime.
- Chief Meade would like at least three (3) of these cameras to cover the west end of the village.
- Councilman Walsh would like to see one on Lancaster and Mayor Procuik is in favor of the cameras and said we can control speeding on Lancaster and Granger but there is a large concentration of young kids in the Schaaf Rd. area and speeding can't be controlled in that area. He would like to see one speed sign and the cameras on Schaaf Road. He asked council to go ahead with one speed sign and two cameras.
- Mr. Lasky asked to clarify the costs and Chief Meade said the cameras are about \$2,500 each per year including insurance and the speed signs are about \$2,500 and with the Cleveland weather will last about 2 years.
- Chief Meade said he has about \$4,000 in an escrow account for a radio but he won't have to use that so he could use it for a camera leaving the village to pay about \$1,000 so they could get two cameras.
- Councilman Blados asked if this is a long term contract and Chief Meade said it is a yearly contract.
- Mr. Frank asked if you know you are on camera and Chief Meade said not unless they tell where the cameras are.
- Councilman Lahiff said he would like to see us purchase three (3) cameras and no speed signs.
- Mr. Frank asked about the cost and Chief Meade said that it is a one-time charge of \$150 per camera for installation and then \$2,500 per camera annually.
- Chief Meade said that if a business wanted to purchase a camera for their property we would have access to it also. He also said that a license plate number could be punched in so that if that vehicle enters our village we would be notified.
- The image is saved for thirty (30) days but we would download it on our computers and it is there until we delete it.
- There would be a delay in installation if we would put them on CEI light poles due to paperwork, but if we install them on poles we own there is no delay.

Council is interested in purchasing three (3) of the cameras.

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

*Councilwoman
Jennifer Presot*

Councilman Jennifer Presot
Committee Chairman