



Allentown

435 Hamilton Street
Allentown, Pa. 18101

Minutes - Final

City Council

Wednesday, November 9, 2022

5:30 PM

Council Chambers

Special Council Meeting: Public Safety Budget Review

This is a Special Council Meeting to Review the Proposed 2023 Budget and Conduct other General Business. The City Budget documents can be found on the city website:
<https://www.allentownpa.gov/Government/City-Budget>.

Roll Call

Present: 7 - Candida Affa, Cynthia Mota, Daryl Hendricks, Ed Zucal, Ce-Ce Gerlach, Joshua Siegel, and Natalie Santos

Public Safety Budget Review: Fire, EMS, Police

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated that they will begin tonight with Public Safety and will start off with the Police Department.

Chief Charles Roca stated that he has one slide to setup. He talked about 2023 Police Budget. He stated that it is pretty simplistic and simple. It is a Paradym of professionalism in Police excellence where they have personnel, equipment, and training. He talked about creating a foundation by addressing personnel and investment into the workforce. The community calls out for a police presence. There is an increase need in the community. He is committed to increase the authorized officers from 228 to an authorized compliment of 233 officers. Historically, the staffing levels have been hovering around 212 officers from 2000 to current year. They are making strides to meet 228. He talked about the potential retirements. Calls for service: 100,995 and year to date there were approximately 80,000 calls for service. Recovered 277 firearms from the streets. He talked about safe streets, safe neighborhoods and safe outcomes. He talked about the many dedicated men and women officers that serve: Assistant Chief of Operations Becker, Assistant Chief of Support Services Gress, Captain Diehl, Captain Pammer, Captain Anderson, Captain Gross, Captain Conjour with her team of Detective Sergeants Sergeant Leonard, Sergeant Williams and their team. They are a department that is committed to accountability. They are looking to upgrade their body cameras, in-car cameras and tasers. Their current uniforms need to be addressed which will save the city money if they make the investment now. Training: he can't emphasize how important having funds for training. In 2022, the department received and successfully

completed Implicit Bias Training through the Pennsylvania State Police Heritage Unit. They complete the ABLE Training which stands for Active Bystandingship through Law Enforcement. They are not separate of the community, but a big major part of the community. He introduced Dr. Scott Hoke for the Police Center for Innovation at Cedar Crest College.

Ms. Cynthia Mota congratulated Mr. Siegel for his win. She wished him the best on going to Harrisburg. It is a big gain and a big loss for the city.

Dr. Scott Hoke, Cedar Crest College, stated that on March 2021 the city and Cedar Crest College entered in a three-year agreement for a Center of Police Innovation and Community Engagement. He provided a summary of the major projects that they engaged the city.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach asked Cedar Crest College looked at the transferability of nationally recognized police interventions. She asked about national strategies. She asked questions about the CSI program.

Dr. Scott Hoke talked about working with the county and the city on working on evaluating a mental health response system. As a center, they provided a Brief of the three models in the mental health community. He spoke of the entirety of Lehigh County that will be eventually broken down to Allentown. Much as what they done is a data collection system.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked about the total duration of your study for 2023 in May.

Dr. Scott Hoke stated that they are measuring entire emergency response system for mental health in Lehigh County. It is a three-year study concluding in May 2023.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked if there were any questions from his colleagues or the public.

Chief Charles Roca thanked Dr. Hoke for making himself available to answer any questions today. He stated that they have Dennis Wetherhold as well.

Mr. Ed Zucal asked questions regarding information in the detail book.

Ms. Danielle Yanek stated that it was moved under Building Maintenance. She talked about investigators and reimbursements. Federal milage reimbursement increased drastically. They haven't received donations.

Chief Charles Roca stated that the city is not getting reimbursement for

school crossing guards. It is something that they are working with the school district to get a partnership. He stated that they are a walking school district. The safety of our kids come first.

Ms. Danielle Yanek stated that the Police Department did submit from the last school year.

Mr. Ed Zucal asked questions from the budget book about positions.

Ms. Danielle Yanek stated that the Office Manager is replacing the Clerk III - Confidential.

Chief Charles Roca stated the calibrations of certain machineries. He talked about the police retirement and the community that calls for a police presence.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated that they agreed to do 10 officers.

Mr. Seth O'Neill stated that the section that they are referring to is not an interpretation. It is a spell out section that says that you can increase staffing to pre-great recession levels in the public sector. Putting it in the General Fund will change the shape of this budget since the city has to balance it.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated that it is permissible, but at the end of 2026 after all the funds have run out, as of you know it will be on the backs of the taxpayers.

Mr. Seth O'Neill stated that it is a reasonable way to characterize that.

Mr. Ed Zucal went over the Sergeants' salary. He asked about electrical power.

Ms. Danielle Yanek stated that they reclassified one of the Sergeants.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that it would have to be an error because the city does not have a single employee that makes \$185,000.

Ms. Danielle Yanek stated that all department electrical has been moved to Building Maintenance citywide.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks followed up on the school crossing guard. Who is the current contract with? When was the contract signed?

Ms. Danielle Yanek stated that All City Management Services and it was signed last year.

Ms. Candida Affa asked about the crossing guards and the contracts. Is this the same one we had for the past several years.

Chief Charles Roca stated yes. They were the ones who helped us out through the pandemic time during when the kids came back during hybrid times.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked if there are any other questions from the dais or the public.

Mr. Dennis Wetherhold, Communications, talked about where they moved money and where they increased and decreased. One of the major purchases was radio purchase. Radio system upgrade in 2018, at that point they upgraded radios for Public Works, Parks, and all non-emergency personnel. They did not do Police, Fire and EMS. It will be a loan. He went over the Access Control - Swipe Card System replacement. Emergency Lighting and Siren Equipment Cost has gone up due to inflation. He is trying to get newer technology. They are working on camera system replacement and expand footprint.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked if there were any questions from his colleagues.

Mr. Ed Zucal asked about a plan to increase the number of people monitoring the camera system.

Mr. Dennis Wetherhold stated that they are working on a plan.

Chief Charles Roca stated that they absolutely want to create something that is going to take time to come up with a solid plan that is mindful to taxpayers.

Mr. Jeffrey Glazier commented on Mr. Wetherhold's presentation. The Radios account will be changing from 42 to 72. The city will own the radios. Specifically, to the Chief's presentation, the 26 Account, the Parking Authority for the tickets. According to the Chief so far, in 2021 they wrote over 3,000 tickets and in 2022 year just shy of 2,700. The city has an agreement with the Parking Authority to get revenue. The city did not get any in 2021 or 2022.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks appreciates Mr. Glazier bringing it up and stated himself and Ms. Affa are on the Parking Authority board and will look into it.

Ms. Candida Affa asked for the figures again.

Mr. Jeffrey Glazier stated that in 2021, the Chief said the officers wrote 3239 tickets for various things. This year, year to date is 2,699. He discussed the 42 Account. He spoke about \$6,000 and street signs. He talked about accreditation. He stated that they will look at Fleet on the 16th of November when they look at the 83 Fund.

Chief Efrain Agosto stated that he has Deputy Fire Chief Christian Williams, and EMS Chief of Operations Mehmet Barzev and stated that he will briefly go over their profile. The Allentown Fire Department consists of 133 positions with 131 uniformed, two being administrative and 129 being bargaining units. Two civilian positions that handle payroll. Housed at six fire stations with seven engines, and two ladder trucks. He went over the 2021 call volume responding to 13,293 calls and on pace to have the most busiest year ever. They promote fire safety and got out with the Red Cross to do some home fire campaigns. They have a Public Affairs office. The goals for 2023 is to restore staffing. he stated that they need to work on replacement plans for the vehicles. He thanked the current and former administration and City Council. A big goal is to continue to get back into the schools, senior citizen facilities, and private organizations to educate the public the importance of fire safety.

Deputy Chief Christian Williams spoke directly regarding staffing requests. He stated 97 percent of the budget is personnel costs. They are looking to bringing in 29 firefighters on full-time and how they plan to pay for it. They want to staff all of the companies, all of the time. He stated there was a landmark 2010 study that was done by (NIST) National Institute of Standards and Technology. They took a two-man company to see how long it would take to rescue from a fire. The other aspect is total firefighting force. How many people you can get on the scene quickly in order to fight the fire? He urged Council to read the study that he will provide them. They are proposing to not wait and restore themselves.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks thanked the Chiefs and stated that it is very interesting. He complemented them reinstituting Fire House Fridays where the Fire Department agreed to do and have done before the Pandemic hit where they feed the children coming home from school. This is for children that are less fortunate.

Chief Efrain Agosto stated that they appreciate Mr. Hendricks support.

Ms. Candida Affa asked if they could go over it again. You want 29 firefighters on duty at all times. You have six stations with a three-man station.

Deputy Chief Christian Williams stated that it is a three-man company. They are not all the same.

Ms. Candida Affa talked about Deputy Chief Christian Williams time element for a fire and the response. It is amazing.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated that if Council were to agree to give you eight more firefighters, and there are eight shifts. You would have to train those firefighters anyway. Where are you going to get the eight firefighters now. He stated that they would have to have overtime for each time.

Deputy Chief Christian Williams stated that is correct.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated that is not fiduciary responsible. He will be more than willing to give them eight guys.

Deputy Chief Christian Williams stated that he does not know if the number is eight right now. He stated that he would rather have them safe now, pursue those grants and have the federal government pick up the tab to bring more guys.

Mr. Joshua Siegel stated that the story of our Fire Department is regrowth and revitalization. The city has made amends with the neglect of department whether making sure you guys had adequate trucks. The evidence more than substantiates taking this path. The goal in the long run should be to increase the staff. He stated that he wants to make a general comment, not a question.

Deputy Chief Christian Williams thanked Mr. Siegel and stated that they are rebuilding.

Ms. Cynthia Mota stated that she would like to say she agrees with Mr. Siegel. She stated that the Fire Department does such a great job. She spoke the car explosion on Lumber Street and in a matter of minutes, the Fire Department showed up and saved the day.

Chief Efrain Agosto stated that they have a great group of members. The guys are well trained, highly aggressive when they have to risk life and limb.

Ms. Candida Affa stated that she speaks to the citizens about taxes and budget. They state that they want to spend their money on public safety. She thanked them for their service.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked Chief Agosto when will you know on the Safer

Grant.

Deputy Chief Christian Williams stated in August or September. They have not announced the funding cycle.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks commended the Fire Department for looking at different options. He asked if there were any questions from the public.

Chief Efrain Agosto stated that they want community and engagement and want to get out there more and be able to provide the information and be a part of the community.

Mr. Ed Zucal asked about in the Detail Book under fuels and oils. Last year, it was \$51,500.

? stated that all the electric will be under Building Maintenance. You will see that across the city.

Chief of EMS Operations Mehmet Barzev stated he has the Director of Training and Special Events, Scott Brokaw. He is the face of the organization. Education and Special Events side of Allentown EMS has turned them from a reactive service to a proactive service. They answered 89 requests for special event services. They give safety tips on your bicycle. They taught 500 people CPR or stop the bleed. They are asking for four additional full-time paramedics. They have four during the day and three at night. Last year, they had 17,200 responses. They are probably going to meet that in the second week of December. The busiest 12-hour block is from 10:00 AM - 10:00 PM. The busiest hours are from 2:00 PM - 7:00 PM. When an Allentown ambulance is not available, they don't hold the call. They have to give it to a county resource. On average, it is 700 - 1500 calls they turn over. The primary goal is to decrease the workload on the staff. He went over the revenue stream. He discussed the premium pay and how it went down on usage. He discussed burnout and fatigue and went over the monthly and yearly call volume. They still is slated to recover 90 percent of their operational cost. They want to be revenue neutral.

Mr. Ed Zucal asked about the Detail Book, Page 99, Account 42 - Number 5, Out of Fleet Repairs. What vehicles are you talking about if they are out of fleet.

Chief of EMS Operations Mehmet Barzev stated that he was made to understand that there are items if they are under \$500 they have to pay out of their budget to make repairs.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that it is a co-pay.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated that it doesn't come out of Risk Management.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated in the Budget Book, Page 133, under the titles of Personnel. Changes the EMS Shift Supervisors to of Assistant Chief of EMS. How much do you bring in?

Chief of EMS Operations Mehmet Barzev to fall in line with the other rank and structures of other city bureaus. He stated that they bring in \$4.3 million.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated you want four paramedics. Why can't that come out of the General Fund?

Mr. Seth O'Neill stated that again, given the available of the funds and the express intent of the regulation that allows the city to restore public sector employment levels to what they were before 2008. Every Director mentioned their FT levels are down from historic norms. This is what the administration was able to give without a tax increase. They thought it was the way to go and a policy decision that was sound. He stated that he stands by the decision.

Mr. Ed Zucal asked about Page 134 - Other Contract Services tripled. He asked if they have an Emergency Management Coordinator.

Chief of EMS Operations stated that there were things that they were contractually obligated to provide. Payment for use of their medical command calls. They resumed paying the stipend.

Chief Efrain Agosto stated that position is moved over from Risk. That is Lee Laubach.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked if there were any questions, comments, or concerns from the public.

ADJOURNED: 7:13 PM

[15-5389](#)

Budget Information

Attachments: [Budget Schedule](#)[Building Standards and Safety - Rental](#)[APD proposed Budget 2023](#)[2023 EMS BP V2](#)[2022 Police PP 1](#)[2010 NIST Study](#)[Cedar Crest College - Police Summary of Services Report](#)[Human Resources Department Current Organizational Structure](#)[Human Resources Department Proposed Organization Chart](#)[COA Active Litigation Nov 2022](#)[Legal fees for the 2019 through 2022](#)