



Minutes - Final

Public Safety Committee

Wednesday, September 14, 2016

6:30 PM

Council Chambers

Call to Order: Chairperson Hendricks, Affa, MacLean

Public Safety Budget Preview

From Council's Rules: Committee Review: In August and September of each year, the Standing committees shall conduct a public meeting where the administration shall review their budget priorities, goals and objectives, successes and failures, capital projects and any personnel or organizational changes being considered for the ensuing fiscal year.

Chief Keith Morris stated that he is excited to be here to talk about some of the successes the Allentown Police Department had in 2016 and talk about our goals for 2017. He recognized Assistant Chief Glen Dorney and Assistant Chief Gail Struss. Their commitment and dedication to the city is second to none. In 2016, we continued to make positive changes while attempting to achieve our organizational goals. Regarding our overtime budget it is on budget. We have 43 percent remaining with our overtime budget. In 2016, several of our officers were recognized for outstanding performance. These officers make me proud every single day and they are a credit to both the department and the city. In 2016, we were fully able NARC's program and all of our patrol cars have been outfitted with the overdose reversal drug. We had about 26 reversals to date in a two month timeframe. We are aware of the tragedy of the Jayliel Vega search that occurred in the beginning of the year. We have four people equipped with the project lifesaver technology with three officers trained for the use. We have 27 bracelets that are deployed in Allentown and five more is pending and 24 officers trained in this technology. In 2004 to 2015, we seen a trend downward. We are right about even to where we were last year. Our homicides are even at seven for the year, our rapes are down 20 percent, aggravated assaults are down two percent, larceny is down one percent, and arson is down 14 percent. They are close to their full complement of police officers. On Monday, our two newest officers started work and that puts us a 221. That puts us one shy of our full complement. The background officers were able to hire an additional 18 officers. He recognized the background negotiators. Retirement and attrition is always a possibility. We prepare to give the written test in 2018. They will take steps with the police department that mirrors the diversity that the city has to offer. In 2014, the President created a Taskforce to offer up

recommendations for best practices in policing. They are offering an online 24 hours a day training academy opportunity at the tip of every officers fingers. They are purchasing the force options simulators. They are going to expand the equipment and technology. They have 173 active feeds coming into the city. They are upgrading their evidence property room. They are updating Traffic and Crime software to issue traffic citation and accident reports. The body-worn camera program approval of the federal match. Continue to expand license plate system. They had coffee with a cop program. The citizen police academy continues to thrive and the ride along program, and Cops meet blocks. Completed the Youth Police Academy. The Allentown Police Department took strides to engage the community.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks thanked Chief Morris and stated excellent presentation.

Mr. Ray O'Connell thanked Chief Morris and congratulated him as Chief. We will have our confirmation hearing the first meeting in October. You have two outstanding Assistants. He thanked him about the premium pay. The community workshop at Sheridan was outstanding. He asked about Project Lifesaver bracelets and the cost. In 2018, that could be a big retirement year. He asked for projections. What is the biggest problem/concern facing the Allentown Police Department?

Chief Keith Morris stated upwards of \$700 - \$750. Ensuring that we continue to forge these bonds with the community.

Assistant Chief Glen Dorney stated that he agrees with Chief Morris. It is building the bonds or overall preparedness and training.

Ms. Candida Affa stated that she spoke with someone about community policing. She spoke about the police academy. The officers are more humanizing.

Chief Keith Morris thanked Ms. Affa. We have a great program lined up.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks thanked Ms. Affa.

Mr. Roger MacLean thanked Chief Keith Morris for the presentation. We have seen some transition and in your leadership team.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated that he had an opportunity to meet with Chief Morris prior to our meeting tonight to review this. This is truly an indication of your ability. Most people are content on what is going on in the community.

Mr. Roger MacLean asked about the new contract being retroactive to January of 2016. It goes to 2017, 2018 and we will be looking at another new contract in 2019.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked any questions from the public.

Chief Lee Laubach introduced his Deputy Chief James Weir and Eric Gratz, Operation Services. He went over the statistics with fire response of 7336. In 2015, we had 12,036 responses. We will have 500 more responses. Structural fires this year are 34. Cooking fires are the major problem in the city. We had 42 major damage cooking fires. We have 125 uniformed Personnel members. The fire department worked 7 days straight, 24 hours a day for the historic snowstorm. They average 60 calls per day. Fire prevention, they did a fire campaign in the Central Fire District. They installed over 200 detectors. We are trying to do it every six months. Public Relations and Education with outreach and ride to school program and we included Charter Schools this year. The program reached over 4800 students. Community outreach is the biggest thing to strive and look forward to. They are involved in Operation Playground. They have fire extinguisher programs. They have career days. They have fire safety classes. They have civilian emergency response team and Allentown Youth Academy. Hazardous Material Team was recertified through FEMA. Members are certified in Swift Waters. Confined Space for people that gets stuck. They started a program in the Allentown School District teaching Autistic Children about not being scare of people in uniform. Since 2011, They had a 52.7 drop in arson. The bomb squad recertified through the ATF and FBI this year. They have four certified robot operations. They have 20 certified in water rescue, swift water rescue. Boat rescue is department wide.

Mr. Ray O'Connell asked is there money that goes along with that or a grant for the city.

Chief Lee Laubach stated that it goes to the charity that actually raised him. Everything has been sponsored for Judge's K-9 care. Goals and priorities, hoping to update their fire engine fleet. They are trying to get special PA loan financing. Looking at alternate source funding. They are looking to add seven members for a safer environment. Fire prevention materials in Spanish and Arabic.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked any questions.

Ms. Candida Affa thanked Chief Lee Laubach for his service and congratulated Judge.

Mr. Roger MacLean thanked Chief Lee Laubach.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated that Council appreciates Chief Laubach ability to curb the sick time.

Chief Lee Laubach stated Deputy Chief Weir talk to the guys about the sick time and they are on par with our overtime.

Mr. Ray O'Connell stated that he is glad Mr. Hendricks talked about the premium pay. You were here a while ago and someone in the audience talked about equipment. Sometimes the fire department is not as visible to the public as the police department. You are needed and vital to the community. He thanked the fire department. He asked any projections on how many retiring this year. He asked why does a fire truck responds to an ambulance call before the ambulance get there. He asked about the waiting list to be a fireman. He stated that Jeanette Eichenwald and himself had a committee that was called PILOT (Payment In Lieu of Taxes) and what Lafayette is doing for Easton and Sands is doing for Bethlehem, we are trying.

Chief Lee Laubach stated that Ariel. As the city grows, the fire department has to grow. In 2011, we had 126 members and now we have 120 members right now. He stated that there contract is up to 2020. He stated that they are a very young department. We have EMT's on all of our engines. He stated that they have about 300 on the list. We are getting a lot more funding for the academy.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked Chief Laubach if he wants to share what they spoke about some of the calls you get.

Chief Lee Laubach stated that Eric Gratz can share that.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked any other questions from his colleagues.

Ms. Candida Affa stated that she has a question about what Mr. Ray O'Connell touched on. Do we go out and solicit these businesses or Muhlenberg. She asked about the hospitals.

Mr. Ray O'Connell stated that we did go to Lehigh Valley Health Network and they do a lot for the City of Allentown for doctors, and medical procedures. We went to St. Luke's too and they are a good partner. We did go to Muhlenberg, and Muhlenberg is a good friend.

Chief Lee Laubach stated that the hospitals work closely with EMS and

Eric Gratz. When we have a major fire, they bring their tent.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks thanked Chief Lee Laubach, Deputy Chief Weir and stated that when people call the fire department they want them there.

Mr. Eric Gratz stated that with a cardiac arrest, early defibrillation is the key and good CPR. The organizational chart, we restructured previous years. We assigned them to a platoon. The bill branch reports to Ms. Rafferty who is our billing supervisor. Staffing and call volume, as you can see every is an increase. We have two trucks in the overnight hours. Training and continuing education, bi-annually we have to complete a paramedic refresher course which allows us to maintain our certification. Advanced life support, pediatrics advance life support and CPR. Mass casualty disaster training and annual blood borne pathogen training. Professional development, we are looking at governmental leadership opportunities. Based on recent memory, the Mission Lifeline Gold Award that you graciously recognized us for last week. Lehigh Valley bought modems for all the monitor defibrillators. He talked about the stroke alerts and time is brains when it comes to strokes. They are taking extra steps by drawing lab work to see if it is a bleed or a clot. K2 was causing an excited delirium stage. It is irrational behavior. Ketamine is actually is an excellent drug for sedating folks and there is a trial that we were able to get on. Quality Assurance and Improvements, there is a direct observation and a chart review by the shift supervisors. There were 15,000 calls a year. We have a certified compliance officer. Our biller specialist is getting her certified ambulance training this year. Drivecam system and a mandatory EMS Operator Training that is tied to the certification. The technology is the knox-medvault has been implemented. Video screen view of the vocal cords. The locus II CPR device. Our return to circulation and cardiac arrest is above the national average, about eight percent. Specialty teams have additional training. There are four tactical paramedics. Special Operations, hazmet and rescue, 25 hazmet techs. We have paramedics that can do so. We have a bike team for special events and the Fair. There are five advance life support bicycles and 11 Ipemba and the same police certification that has an EMS course. Our cart is advance life support. Future goals, continue clinic improvements. Video Interscope and an automated CPR device in Shift Supervisor Vehicle. Reduce burn out and increase retention. It is a high burnout professional. It is a difficult job. It is physical and mentally draining. We want to improve revenue and paramedic recruitment. One of the big problems are the non medically necessary calls. Twenty-two percent of the calls are non medically necessary calls. There are high utilization callers. Folks that we see 20 - 25 times this year for things like a headache. Some are medically necessary and some are not. We have 28 full-time shift supervisors and numerous part-time professionals. We are bringing a mobile emergency

room to you.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks thanked Mr. Gratz and stated that it is a very comprehensive presentation. He asked about the repeat customers that are not medically necessary.

Mr. Eric Gratz stated that they explored options. We are looking at on average 10 calls per day. There needs to be some improvements on our end on documentation. They will reject the claim if they do not say X, Y, Z. I don't think a 50 percent improvement on our part is unreasonable, but we need to address the issue of what do we do with the high utilization callers.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated that we may be looking at the Solicitor's and drafting an ordinance.

Mr. Eric Gratz stated that it would be a revision to the current ordinance. That's what precludes us from balance billing the residents. our billing staff has done an excellent job in educating the public.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated that it may lead to citations being issued in the future.

Mr. Eric Gratz stated that if you call and it's deemed not medically necessary. There needs to be a recourse to recoup that. There needs to be an enforcement arm as well. The government is cracking down on reimbursements.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked Mr. Gratz to keep Council posted on that. It is important for us to move forward in that direction.

Mr. Eric Gratz stated that he knew Mr. Hendricks would be. He thinks now is the time. It is not going to get any better. It is only going to get tighter as we move forward.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks thanked Mr. Gratz and opened it up to his colleagues.

Mr. Roger MacLean stated that he kind of thinks it's a catch 22 here. The ones that are abusing the system, if we put an ordinance together for reimbursement are the ones who can't pay it any how.

Mr. Ray O'Connell stated that at the last budget season we approved two more paramedics. They have not been hired. He asked if they get paid during events. He asked what is your retention rate.

Mr. Eric Gratz stated that he checked on that and assumed he would get

that question. The request to post those two positions was submitted in March prior to my tenure. He stated yes, they get paid. Our hourly rate comparably industry standard, locally, it is very low. He stated that he has been with the city for 16 years, and 13 1/2 with EMS. I would say the last three to four years attrition rate or turnover rate has been lower than he can ever remember. It is an industry wide problem. Premium pay is on target as far as percentage of the year and percentage of premium pay.

Ms. Candida Afffa stated that she is sure that there are some nights you go home and feel so good of what you did because you possibly saved many lives.

Mr. Eric Gratz stated that is certainly true and his colleagues will share and when you get a little bit down, you get a call that is, now I remember why I do this for a living.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked any questions from the public.

[15-1099](#)

Public Safety Presentations

Attachments: [Council Presentation - Police](#)
[Paramedics Council 9-14](#)
[Allentown Fire Department 2016 Overview](#)

Adjourned: 7:53 PM