

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE REPORT – NOVEMBER 13, 2023

Members: Buohl, Chairman; Richard, Vice Chairman; Ressler, Member; Barr, Alternate; McKim, Staff

Attendees: Committee: Buohl, Chairman; Richard, Vice Chairman; Ressler, Member; Barr, Alternate
Council: Musser, Martin, Reinhold, Zimmerman
Staff: McKim; Harris
Guests: Randy Gockley, Richard Gehman, Kim Stonebraker, Harley Yerkes, Mike Kiefer, John Schmidt

The Public Safety Committee met on October 16, 2023 at 6:30 PM at Ephrata Borough Hall, 124 South State Street.

Approval of Agenda:

Chief McKim provided confirmation of the following:

1. The meeting agenda was posted on the Borough's website and at Borough Hall no later than 24 hours in advance of the time of the meeting.
2. The meeting agenda included a listing of each matter of Borough business that will be or may be the subject of deliberation or official action at the meeting.
3. There were no changes made to the meeting agenda after it was posted.
4. The meeting agenda was made available to individuals in attendance at the meeting.

Committee Chair Buohl asked if there were any requests to add a matter of Borough business to the meeting agenda. Chief McKim reported that he had failed to include a request from Harley Yerkes in the original agenda, but that Mr. Yerkes was present and wished to speak. Chief McKim requested Mr. Yerkes be added to the agenda. Mr. Buohl asked for a motion to accept the meeting agenda as amended. Mr. Richard moved and Mr. Ressler seconded to approve the meeting agenda as posted. The motion carried unanimously.

Action Items:

1. Appointment of Police Officer Candidate – Chief McKim briefed the Committee on Brady Bixler who has taken action to remain eligible for employment as a police officer with the Borough. Chief McKim requested that Mr. Bixler's conditional offer of employment be approved by Council. The offer is contingent upon the candidate's successful passing of a physical, psychological and drug screening examination. Additionally, the candidate must attend and graduate the Reading Police Academy and successfully complete all necessary Municipal Police Officer Education and Training Commission certification requirements. He will be subject to a one-year probation period commencing upon the date he graduates from the police academy. The Committee will recommend a conditional offer of probationary employment for the position of Police Officer be approved for Brady Bixler. He is expected to start the academy in January.
2. 2025-2029 Ephrata Township Police Contract – Manager Harris briefed the Committee on the agreement with Ephrata Township regarding contracting police services. The Committee agreed to recommend the enacting of the contract and adopting of the appropriate resolution.

3. Completion of BWC Project – Transfer of Funds and Purchase – Chief McKim requested the reallocation of unused Capital Projects funds not to exceed \$5,012 to complete a full outfitting of sworn officers with Body Worn Cameras. The Committee will move the matter forward.
4. Reclass a Detective Billet to Sergeant – Chief McKim requested that an existing Detective position be reclassified to Sergeant to improve supervision. The financial impact of the change is just over \$7,600 and is in the proposed budget for 2024. The Committee will move this change forward.
5. Resident Harley Yerkes presented documents and concerns regarding long-term effects of climate change. The documentation included a letter from Mr. Yerkes, excerpts from authors of *TIME* Magazine, the *New York Times*, *National Geographic*, and the *Susquehanna River Basin Commission* executive summary to SRBC Publication #235.

Discussion Items:

1. Emergency Management Report - Emergency Manager Randy Gockley reported the Ephrata Fair went well from an emergency management standpoint. He attended the monthly emergency management meeting at WellSpan – ECH. He met with Ephrata Area Social Services' staff regarding disaster recovery. Northern Lancaster Chamber of Commerce requested and received a presentation regarding evacuation and sheltering in place. Mr. Gockley attended a joint meeting with Ephrata Township E.M. and Ephrata Manor regarding evacuations. Mr. Gockley spoke on a federally mandated Hazard Mitigation Plan which is being updated at the County and Municipal levels.

Kim Stonebraker of WellSpan – ECH spoke regarding the successful MS1 drill at ECH. She reported an increase in COVID-19 numbers, but not a concerning rise.
2. Police Reports (August & September) – Chief McKim gave the police reports for August and September.
3. 3rd Quarter Budget Review – Chief McKim reported that the Public Safety budget was at 72% and police services was at 74.2%.
4. Police Promotional Process (Informational) – Chief McKim discussed the upcoming promotional process for two (2) lieutenants and four (4) sergeants. Options have included Bartell & Bartell, PA Chiefs of Police, and Dr. Kimberly Miller. The Chief expressed the importance of selecting good leadership for the future.

Old Business Items:

1. None

Miscellaneous Items:

1. Nuisance Activity – Mr. Buohl and Ms. Martin reported a perceived reduction of nuisance activity in past weeks.
2. Security Cameras – Chief McKim briefed the Committee on the status of the examination of security cameras.

3. Chief Mike Kiefer, Pioneer Fire Company, spoke about the Fair where they staffed the station for over 260 hours. Chief Kiefer also spoke about the large-scale incident for the missing person saying a good job was done by all.
4. Chief Richard Gehman, Lincoln Fire Company, spoke about the Fair parade. Lincoln Fire Company had five (5) pieces involved with the parade. The engine is still on the agenda – possibly for 2026.