



PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

August 1, 2019 - 5:30 p.m.
City Hall Conference Room

Attending

Committee Members: Councilman Jeff Henley, Chair; Councilman Ron Erb; Councilman Travis Holleman; Councilman Vondell Richmond

Others Present: Mayor Joe Pitts, Police Chief Alonzo Ansley, Fire Chief Freddie Montgomery, Councilman Jeff Norris, Richard Stevens, Deputy Chief David Crockarell, Deputy Chief Richard Stalder, Kathy Gray

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Chairman Henley and it was noted there was a quorum.

DISCUSSION regarding recent crime activity in Clarksville, prior year statistics, and strategies related to crime prevention, public perception, and any additional resources CPD may need.

Chief Ansley distributed information to the committee relating to crime statistics and how we report crime to TBI and gave an overview of the hand-outs. He stated that violent crime is not up, however property crime is. Crime was reduced from 2017 to 2018 and is still down so far for 2019. We compare favorably with other cities in Tennessee and our clearance rate is very good. He gave a comparison to four cities similar in size and proximity to colleges and military bases, and we ranked lowest in crime. One of our biggest obstacles over the last few years has been heroin. Crack cocaine is actually down from prior years. We now have 2 officers per 1,000 citizens and he would like to see an increase to 2.1 officers over the next three years, which he has a plan for. We are now down 20 officers. Chattanooga is allocated 500 officers, which is 2.7 per 1,000 citizens. We have had 10 homicides so far this year. The highest year during his tenure has been 16. Crashes have gone up every year, to include fatality crashes.

Chief Ansley introduced Deputy Chiefs David Crockarell and Richard Stalder.

Chairman Henley asked what time curfew is for minors. DC Crockarell answered that it is 1am for 16 and 17 year olds and 11pm for 15 year old and under. Chairman Henley asked Chief Ansley if he felt that this should be amended and he said he does not. If minors are found to be violating the curfew, officers may take them home and may cite them.

Councilman Richmond asked if transparency in reporting to the media and public is new and Chief said no, he has encouraged this throughout his tenure, both to protect the public and ask for information regarding solving crimes. Councilman Richmond asked if increase in crime is related to growth in population, and Chief said yes, all cities suffer from increase in crime and crashes.

Mayor Pitts commended the CPD and said that outstanding police work gets lost in social media. Crime usually gets more attention than catching violators. Chief commented that there are usually witnesses to crimes, but they don't usually cooperate with police. He stated that we are doing more community policing than ever. He invited the Mayor and all present to attend a Crimeview meeting tomorrow morning at CPD Headquarters at 7am.

He will be interviewing for new officers next Monday and hopes to hire seven or eight. We get a large number of applicants, currently about 250, but lots of them do not get hired, either because they do not pass the written or physical test or they do not pass our extensive background checks. It takes six months to get them trained to be put on the street. He stated that he is very proud of our department and feels that we have some of the best officers. He works hard to stay competitive and keep professional officers on the streets. He appreciates the support of the Mayor and the Public Safety committee. There is a problem with retaining officers and we have lost several to the Sheriff's Office SRO program. Councilman Henley asked if their pay is more than the CPD and Chief Ansley said no, it is lower. Councilman Holleman asked the cost for training and Chief said \$2,500 just for the Academy. Total cost, to include training and equipment, is around \$7,500.

Councilman Henley asked how many deaths this year are gang related. Chief Ansley said that there were a couple of shootings that were clearly gang related, but some crimes migrate from other types of crimes. Mayor Pitts stated he was at a meeting at Ft. Campbell yesterday and military officers commended the CPD. Chief added that three businesses were black listed at that meeting.

Councilman Erb asked about technologies to help officers at crime scenes, such as flares and drones. Chief Ansley said that we do deploy flares, and we have a drone and a boat which have been helpful. We have a new CAD system, body worn cameras, and in-car cameras. We have excellent IT staff at the Police Department. There is other technology out there that is costly.

Councilman Erb asked if there are areas where police are not liked and if we can concentrate on those areas. Chief said that we work constantly doing this and have far better trust than in the past. The Community Relations Unit works at this constantly. Some of the events scheduled in the community are: Fuel the Bus, National Night Out, Kona with a Cop, and Coffee with a Cop. The community supports us, but there is always going to be 3 to 5% who are against police.

Councilman Richmond said that he has encouraged the pastors' group that he has been speaking with to contact the Chief and get a presentation on crime, and the Chief said he will be happy to speak with them.

Chief Ansley said to tell all “if they see something, say something” regarding crime and helping the police with solving crimes. He mentioned the “Ferguson effect” which is the idea of increased distrust of police which causes citizens not to take action for fear of prosecution.

He invited the Public Safety Committee to ride-along with officers at any time.

As there were no more questions, Councilman Holleman made a motion to adjourn and Councilman Erb seconded the motion. Meeting was adjourned at 6:14 p.m.

Submitted by:
Kathy Gray
Clarksville Police Department