

Proceedings of the Public Safety Committee January 8, 2014

Members Present: Councilor Warren Bender
Councilor Mick MacKenzie
Councilor Tom Fennessey

Others Present: Chief LaGesse, Chief Panger

Excused: Councilor Dan Olson

Councilor Bender called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and noted that roll call had been taken by sign up.

Approval of Public Safety meeting minutes of July 10, 2013.

Motion by Councilor Bender seconded by Councilor Fennessey and carried to approve Public Safety meeting minutes from July 12, 2013.

Standing Agenda Items

Fire Dept. update

Chief Panger gave the committee some year-end numbers for the Fire Department. There were 41 structure fires in 2013. The average loss was \$13,000 per fire. There was only one total loss for the year, a fatality in a Billings Park residence. Chief Panger talked about the numbers and attributed this to the excellent training that firefighters are able to receive. Chief Panger also said that 2013 saw a 5% increase in fire runs, and 79% of total runs were EMS calls.

There was some discussion that on New Year's day there was an issue with carbon monoxide at the Animal Shelter.

Chief Panger also noted that all Inspections were completed in 2013, and the department has several new inspectors starting in 2014.

Motion by Councilor Fennessey, seconded by Councilor Bender and carried to receive and file the Fire Department update.

Police Department Update

Chief LaGesse noted that the Police Department incident numbers will be about the same as the last couple years, about 24,000 calls. Chief LaGesse also said that Tower Avenue being torn up over the summer months lessened the calls, as did the fact that Duluth bars now stay open later. Chief LaGesse said that while the bar scene is not as big an issue for the department as it has been in past years, more crimes are being committed because of drugs, heroin in particular.

These drugs are often the cause of increases in property crime, and increased hours in narcotics because of many drug related crimes.

Chief LaGesse talked about the department retiring Blek, our current K-9, as he is over 8 years old. Officer Maas no longer wishes to be a K-9 Officer, and we have selected a new K-9 officer, Officer Nick Eastman. Officer Eastman will attend school in St. Paul for approximately 12 weeks. Chief LaGesse also talked about the newly formed Northland K-9 Foundation, which we hope to get some funding from for our new K-9. During the time Officer Eastman is attending training, we will be short an officer. Chief LaGesse also talked about K-9's being a great tool, especially with the current drug trends.

Chief LaGesse talked about our overtime expenditures from 2013. We were short five officers for a time, with injuries, resignations and retirements. We went to 12 hour shifts over the summer to help alleviate some overtime expenses. We should still have grant monies coming in to help with the 2013 overtime expenses as well.

The homicide trial that was scheduled to begin this past Monday was rescheduled for spring or summer. Chief LaGesse explained why the suspect was released on a signature bond, and could not be held until the trial begins.

The attempted homicide trial is scheduled to begin in Duluth, and is also another drug related incident.

The homicide trial will begin soon for the murder at Genesis.

Chief LaGesse said we are beginning a new testing process to establish a new hiring list.

Motion by Councilor Bender, seconded by Councilor Fennessey and carried to receive and file the Police Department update

Motion by Councilor Bender, seconded by Councilor Fennessey and carried to adjourn the Public Safety Committee at 5:25 p.m.