

City of Watseka
201 Brianna Dr
PO Box 338
Watseka, IL. 60970

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING
JULY 13TH, 2021
7:00 PM

PRESENT: Alderwomen Ulfers and Musk, Aldermen Miller, Barragree, Cahoe, Rushbrook, Mayor Allhands

ABSENT: Aldermen Garfield and Marcier

GUESTS: Fire Chief Ken Baier, Police Chief Jeremy Douglas, Watseka Police Department Officers

Alderwoman opened the meeting at 7:00 pm. Chief Douglas gave the auxiliary report for Alderman Garfield. He stated the departments training for the month consisted of vehicle training procedures. The department helped with security at the street dance and with the 4th of July. There were no problems at either event.

The Watseka Police Department spoke during public comment regarding hiring Josh Douglas as a new police officer. Detective Marcot was the spokesman for the department. He stated the department has an officer that is leaving at the end of the month. The department would like for the city to consider hiring Josh Douglas (Chief Douglas's son) as he is currently an officer for Hoopeston. Detective Marcott stated there is a clause in the employee handbook that needs to be changed regarding nepotism. It was also stated the current handbook needs attention as it is somewhat outdated. Chief Douglas stated he has talked to Police Commission Chairman Terry Pence about hiring Josh. Chief Douglas stated the department is having a very hard time getting a new list because of the new laws in the State of Illinois regarding Police Officers. Currently Josh has been with the Hoopeston Police Department for 3 years, he lives in Watseka and could enter as a lateral officer, which would save the city money by not having to send him to school and since he has lived here all of his life, he is familiar with the city and the residents. If hired his direct supervisor would be Detective King. The committee is ok with the possible hiring of Josh Douglas. The department will begin the process and Mayor Allhands will talk to Attorney Mike Cankar regarding the nepotism clause in the handbook.

Fire Chief Ken Baier spoke next. He stated his department had 1 fire structure, 1 CO call, 2 automatic alarms, 2 motor vehicle calls, 1 mutual aid call to Crescent City, 6 odor investigation calls, 5 lift assists, 1 gas leak, 1 grass fire, 1 wire down, 1 fuel spill and 1 smoke in residents. Training for the month consisted of hose load and repacking, new struts had an in-service and training, drivers training and district familiarization, aerial truck operations and boat training. Chief Baier stated the department has 2 new applications that they will be processing to the reserve roster. Chief Baier stated new struts have been put on the heavy rescue for the first time in Watseka history. The department is also trying out a new dispatch ap called I am Responding. Currently the department is using Firehouse Software and that is going away so the department needed something more up to date. This new ap can be put on all of the

firemen's cell phones and they can see who is responding to a fire and which station they will be going to. With this new program the department will also be able to do the reporting that they need to do. Chief stated he hopes with this new program it will help to improve the ISO rating. This program is still in the testing phases and if the department chooses to go with it the cost is \$800 a year. Truck 2932 pump pack was repaired and is back in service. Chief Baier stated on July 2nd Firefighter Peters met with OSHA. A list of items was to be mailed to the department that needed to be corrected. They have returned the items requested and are waiting for the next step. Chief stated the department needs to get physicals for every firefighter. Chief has been in contact with Mary Kay Lavicka from IMH and they are going to have a doctor come to a Tuesday night meeting and do all the physicals at one time, the cost will be \$100/person. Chief Baier stated he has given the committee a copy of the bylaws for the foreign fire tax, he has been in contact with the city attorney and there is an ordinance on the books already this just needs to be added with it. Chief Baier stated the department won 1st place in the 4th of July parade. He stated they encouraged all of the members families to participate with the float if possible. Chief stated the department needs to upgrade the electronics in the department, such as the Wi-Fi router and a new printer. He would like to connect both computers from the stations together. Chief stated he gave everyone on the committee a copy of the goals the department has but together, these can be discussed at a later date. Chief Baier stated the departments 1st responder status expired a few years ago and he is in the process of getting recertified with Riverside. The department is looking into a couple of grants also, if they would get this it would go towards purchasing new portable radios as they are having trouble with them. Alderman Cahoe stated if the radios are bad get prices and bring them back. Chief reported he has heard of a possible COVID grant that they will apply for also. Chief stated with all of the expenditures they want it is all in his budget. There was some discussion concerning whether the stations are set up for fire alarms directly to ICOM. Chief will look into this.

Police Chief Jeremy Douglas spoke next. He stated the department had 361 calls for service in June. Chief stated Officer Bossong will be leaving the department July 25th. Officer Harris will cover his shift until a new officer is hired. Chief stated the department has received the new Tahoe and is getting the equipment installed. When the Impala was traded in the City received \$3,000 for that plus another \$6,000 in insurance money, makes the total cost for the Tahoe about \$31,000. Chief stated since this was just paid for it will be coming out of the new budget for this fiscal year when really it should have come out of last years budget. He would like to get the next Tahoe ordered as it could be several months before it would come in. He would like to trade in the Chrysler 300 as it is having a/c issues, and really hasn't cost the City any money. There was some discussion about trading in the Charger also but Chief would like to keep that for now as it only has 57,000 miles on it and is running just fine. The committee recommended him to move forward and get the new Tahoe ordered. There was a lengthy discussion about the fireworks that people were letting off on the 4th of July weekend. Next year the department will make the public aware of no personal fireworks are allowed on the 4th. Chief stated the department had trouble getting gas from Pence's when a storm came through a few weeks ago and knocked out their computers. It has been suggested to get a Casey's credit card for fuel for a backup. Mayor Allhands stated this card could be kept on file at Casey's for emergency use. The committee is ok with doing this.

Alderwoman Ulfers makes a motion to adjourn at 8:20 pm and Alderman Rushbrook seconded.
Roll call carried 7-0.

Monna Ulfers, Chairman