

City of Watseka  
201 Brianna Dr  
PO Box 338  
Watsoka Il. 60970

**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**SEPTEMBER 12<sup>TH</sup>, 2023**  
**6:30 PM**

**PRESENT:** Aldermen Barragree, Cahoe, Marcier, Anderson, Miller, Muench, Alderwoman Rohlf, and Mayor Allhands

**ABSENT:** Alderwoman DeLahr

**GUESTS:** Resident Jennifer Kucher, Auxiliary Officer Mark Garfield, Fireman Greg DeVries, Nita Dubble with the Fire and Police Commission, and Police Chief Jeremy Douglas

Police Chief Jeremy Douglas and Fireman Greg DeVries presented Police Officer Cory Hamlin with a plaque for helping to save a resident from a house fire in April 2023. Officer Hamlin has been at school and has just graduated.

Alderman Barragree opened the meeting at 6:30 pm. During public comment Jennifer Kucher from 319 W Park Ave talked about the neighbor's siren and how it's disrupting her life. Mayor Allhands suggested Ms. Kucher check with her neighbors to see if the siren is bothering them.

Auxiliary Officer Mark Garfield stated his department's monthly meeting was an equipment check and overview of the Family Festival. Call outs for the month consisted of the Watseka Family Festival, homicide on North St and an accident on E Walnut St. The department is also working on the pre plan for the October Fest. Mark stated he has heard people complaining about city employees working at the Family Festival, he reported the Auxiliary department was contracted by the festival and they were paid \$648.00. Mark then reported he will be leaving in January after 25 years of service.

Fireman Greg DeVries stated the fire department had 3 fires, 2 EMS assists, 18 ambulance, 3 MVA's, 4 automatic alarms, and 3 auto aid calls for the month of August. Training for August was station duties, fire ground ladders, hose deployments flowing water, building construction and inventory new air packs. Greg stated the department has received 30 air packs. The department also worked at the Family Festival, and they are providing EMS for Watseka Football and have installed 39 smoke detectors in the month of August.

Nita Dubble with the Fire and Police Commission stated the committee has an ordinance to be passed at full council dealing with members on the commission going from 5 to 3 members. She also stated there is one lateral on the list that may have to come off and that will leave 2 left. The commission is asking for new applications to be turned in with a deadline of November 30<sup>th</sup> and they will meet again in December to start the process again. Nita also stated the city needs to be thinking about the pay scale for laterals as it is low compared to other communities close by.

Police Chief Jeremy Douglas stated his department had 450 calls for the month of August. He gave a quick overview of what the calls consisted of for the committee. He also stressed once

again that when someone is having an issue, they need to dial 911 so that documentation can be on record. The Chief stated the body cams and car cams are up and running. The Chief stated these car and body cams are a huge asset for the department. He stated the video footage can be seen in the squad immediately after a call. The Chief stated the department is going to be needing to be looking into updating the mdc's that are in some of the squads as they are becoming outdated along with the software that is used for the mdc's. They have checked into using central square public safety software solutions for a start up cost of \$19,000 and the yearly maintenance cost after that is \$6428. The Chief stated he still has \$76,000 of the COVID money left that could be used for this. The Chief stated the sheriff's department also uses Central Square Public Safety software and they will be signing an intergovernmental agreement with ICOM and the Sheriffs department. Chief report 2 of the mdc's are still using windows 7 and the cost to go to windows 10 is \$200.00 or they could patch it for now. He will be using his COVID money for the upgrade on this also. The committee is ok with this. Chief Douglas stated 2 officers attended an active shooter class at Unit 9 and Sgt. Harris and Patrol Officer Quincy attended a workforce development class. The Chief stated there was a communication mix up with the Gold Star Motorcycle/Jeep run but there were no problems. The department had a booth at the Family Festival for Cops of Kids. The Chief also stated Officer Hamlin donated his time on Saturday and there were 2 officers that were paid directly from the festival committee.

Staffing was discussed next, Chief stated that since he has been chief, he has had 4 officers retire and 2 have resigned and Deputy Chief King will be retiring March 2024. He went on to say he has never had 12 officers, but it would be nice.

The Chief reported he was given information about a dealership in Matteson Illinois that has a white Ford Explorer police package for \$40,294 and he does have one in his budget. **Alderman Cahoe makes a motion to recommend to the Council to purchase a White Ford Explorer from the dealership in Matteson for \$40,294 and Alderman Anderson seconded. Roll call carried 8-0.** The Chief stated the charger will be traded in for this. The Chief also stated Deputy Chief King's car is the oldest in the fleet, it's a 2015 Traverse with \$136,000 miles on it. The dealership in Matteson also has a black Ford Explorer for \$40,557 but this is not in the budget. The committee is ok with this purchase also. The cost for this will come out of the capital equipment line item. Alderman Cahoe stated that each vehicle needs to have new equipment installed also.

Chief Douglas gave the committee an update on the Safe T Act that will take effect September 18<sup>th</sup>. This act is going to make the police officers jobs even harder to do. There was a lengthy discussion about what offenses can get jail time for and what can't.

After some discussion **Alderman Marcier makes a motion to recommend to the Council to hire the 12<sup>th</sup> officer for the police department and Alderman Anderson seconded. Roll call carried 8-0.**

**At 7:34 pm Alderman Barragree makes a motion to enter executive session for union negotiations and Alderman Muench seconded. Roll call carried 8-0.**

**At 7:38 Alderman Cahoe makes a motion to go back to regular session and Alderman Barragree seconded. Roll call carried 8-0.**

Alderman Barragree stated no action was taken in executive session. Alderman Barragree makes a motion to adjourn at 7:40 and Alderman Anderson seconded. Roll call carried 8-0.

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Brandon Barragree, Chairman