

City of Watseka
201 Brianna Dr
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PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING
DECEMBER 12, 2023
6:30 PM

PRESENT: Aldermen Barragree, Cahoe, Marcier, Miller, Muench, Anderson, Alderwoman Rohlf, and Alderwoman DeLahr via phone and Mayor Allhands

GUESTS: Auxiliary Officers Mark Garfield and Eric Buikema, Fire Chief Ken Baier, Police & Fire Commission Nita Dubble, and Police Chief Jeremy Douglas

Alderman Barragree opened the meeting at 6:30 pm. There was no public comment. Auxiliary Officer Mark Garfield stated his department's monthly meeting was a recap of the last details and discussion of the pros and cons for 2023 and all contact information for the department officers were updated. Mark stated as of December 31st he will no longer be with the department, and he thanked everyone.

Fire Chief Ken Baier spoke next. He stated 2021 through 2023 there has been a 117% increase in calls, and these are more fire calls than Ems calls. The department had 18 Ems, 7 lift assists, 7 fire alarms, 4 MVA's, 8 fires, and 2 mutual aid calls for the month of November. Training for November was driver training and district familiarization of streets, building tour and preplanning at IMH, station cleaning, vehicle cleaning, and light maintenance, and updated members on use of training software. Nick Peters has completed NIMS 300 and 400 and Drew Douglas has completed a fire investigation class and Tom Sandeno is currently in a fire instructor class. Chief Baier also stated the department has wreaths up at both fire stations, they are lit up with red bulbs and if there is a fire within the city a red bulb will be replaced with a white bulb. The department also attended the winter fest uptown after the Christmas parade and gave rides on the fire engines. Chief Baier stated truck #2961 heavy rescue has a motor issued and could cost \$50,000 to replace it and this is on a 1988 vehicle. Ken stated the vehicle is worth less than \$30,000 and if something else would break on it there's a possibility of not being able to find parts to fix it. Ken would like to replace this with a reserve fire engine and a rescue truck into 1 truck. He has looked around some and the cost is from \$450,000 to \$700,000. A new truck would be about 1.4 million. There was some discussion about how to finance the purchase, paying from general fund/capital equipment line item or borrow some or all from a local bank. **Alderman Cahoe makes a motion to recommend to the council to let Chief Baier look around to see what he can purchase in the \$450,000 to \$700,000 price range and Alderman Anderson seconded. Roll call carried 9-0.** Chief Baier also stated the committee has before them a proposed ordinance regarding boarding up after a fire to secure it. There was some discussion from code enforcement Officer Eric Brandt that this is more of a vacant property registration than a board up ordinance for the fire department. If passed this will put the burden on code enforcement and not the fire department.

Fire and Police Commission Nita Dubble stated the commission met recently and went through 8 applications with 7 of them qualifying. The next step is the written test on December 20 and for the ones that pass the agility testing will be January 6th and oral interviews will be held January 17th.

Police Chief Jeremy Douglas stated his department had 333 calls for the month of November. Chief Douglas stated the department handed out Thanksgiving meals to 15 families and tonight they are hosting Shop with A Cop. The department took the kids and the parents to Monical's for dinner with Monical's helping some with the cost and then to Wal-Mart to shop. Wal-Mart has also donated to the event. Chief Douglas also stated the department was at Winterfest after the Christmas parade and handed out mittens and gloves.

Chief Douglas stated one of the new cars has been marked and 75 % of the equipment is here but the most needed equipment has not arrived yet. Chief stated Officer Kyle Puleo attended an FTO school for 4 days. Chief reported the department will be needing to sign a flock agreement for the cameras on each end of the city. This will be a 5-year contract that will cost \$5,000 per year. This will come out of the local cure grant COVID monies. Chief then discussed the wellness benefit the officers receive. If an officer works out at the local gym, they are given \$22.50 a month to go towards their membership. The current membership as of January 1st will be going to \$39.95 per month. Chief Dougals is asking to increase this to \$40 a month. He stated at this time about 5 officers use this benefit, and they must pay for it before they are reimbursed. **Alderman Cahoe makes a motion to recommend to the council to increase the wellness benefit for the police department to \$40 per month and Alderman Marcier seconded. Roll call carried 9-0.**

There was some discussion about the police department's stats and numbers.

Alderman Barragree makes a motion to adjourn at 7:11 pm and Alderman Cahoe seconded. Roll call carried 9-0.

Brandon Barragree, Chairman