

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

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING
JANUARY 9TH, 2024
6:01 PM

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

GUESTS: Auxiliary Officer Eric Buikema, Fire Chief Ken Baier, Nita Dubble with the Police and Fire Commission and Police Chief Jeremy Douglas

Alderman Barragree opened the meeting at 6:01 pm. There was no public comment. Auxiliary Officer Eric Buikema stated his department promoted him from Sergeant to Captain on 1/1/2024. The department's meeting was gear inspections and who would be available in the event of emergency calls. The details for the month were at 2nd & Walnut for a traffic control device that was down. Captain Buikema also stated he and another member of the department have checked the boat and the generator and are reorganizing the contents of the gear in the building. The next meeting will be February 6th at 7:00 pm

Fire Chief Ken Baier stated his department had 1 fire, 10 EMS assist, 15 ambulance, 3 MVA's, 1 automatic alarm, 3 auto aid calls, 1 mutual aid call, 1 CO Alarm, and 3 other calls for the month of December. Training for December consisted of ambulance training, auto extrication tool review, and hands on extrication. The Chief stated he has 6 personnel starting fire academy in January in Streator and they will be done in June. Chief stated he has found a replacement vehicle for 2961 and it's in Alabama. They have done a lot of checking with the previous owner, and they believe this will be a good fit for the department. They will go to pick it up on Thursday and drive it home. The cost is \$460,000 and half will come from the general fund and the other half will be borrowed from First Trust. Chief stated they had 400 calls for the year, which is an increase of 112 calls from 2022. Chief Baier stated due to the high number of calls and the short staffing he would like to start staffing the fire house Monday through Friday doing 12-hour shifts, starting at 7a-7p. No employee will work more than 32 hours in a week, which will keep employees below the hours for benefits. Chief stated it will cost an additional \$37,000 from February until April 30th when the new budget starts. Chief stated he figured it will cost the city about \$153,600 a year to staff. Chief also stated he and Nick will only fill in if needed. After more discussion **Alderman Cahoe makes a**

motion to recommend to the Council to staff the fire house Monday-Friday from 7a-7p with the employees only being part time and Alderman Anderson seconded. Roll call carried 9-0.

Fire and Police Commissioner Nita Dubble stated they have received 8 applications and only 5 showed up for the written test, and 4 of them passed. The agility testing was done last weekend and all 4 passed, next week interviews will be done and after that a list should be put together. Nita also stated that today is Law Enforcement Appreciation Day, and she thanked all the officers. Chief stated they have a spot reserved for school in May, it's a twelve-week course, so new officer could be on the street in September.

Chief Douglas stated his department had 250 calls for service during the month of December. He gave a quick review of the types of calls the department makes every month. He stated in 2023 they had 4487 calls. He stated some of the positive things for the department in the last year were the body and car cams, cops for kids, digital radios purchased, new squads with new equipment, the smart trailer, flock cameras, increasing training for all the officers, and crime free rental is working. Chief talked about social media and how it can be damaging for a case.

There was a short discussion concerning car 4 (Charger) it is now parked per Chief Douglas; Watseka Ford will be taking the car, and the department isn't sure what to do with Deputy Chief Kings Traverse. There was discussion about letting Code Enforcement Bill Walver drive it, but Chief stated they are looking into buying a car from a dealership north of us that has used vehicles. Chief stated they are still looking into a new design for the new squad, something retro possibly since this is the departments 75th year.

Alderman Barragree makes a motion to adjourn at 6:51 pm and Alderman Marcier seconded. Roll call carried 9-0.

Brandon Barragree, Chairman