

**VILLAGE OF MOUNT HOREB  
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING**  
Via videoconference  
September 21, 2020

**MINUTES**

A regular meeting of the Public Safety Committee was called to order by Chairman Jason Fendrick at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, September 21, 2020. Attendance was noted as follows: Committee members Steve Holum, Jessica Jackson, Mike McNall, and Cathy Scott were present. Police Chief Doug Vierck and Public Services Director Jeff Gorman were also present. Tracy Lien served as recording secretary.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

On a motion by C. Scott, seconded by S. Holum, the Committee

VOTED: To approve the minutes of the August 17, 2020, regular meeting as printed and distributed.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no requests to speak at this time.

**POLICE CHIEF REPORT**

Chief Vierck provided an update on activities and plans for the Police Department.

**Update on Staffing**

The patrol officer hiring process has begun to replace Officer Blankenship, who retired in August 2020, and establish an eligibility list; applications are due September 24. Leadership training will be a priority in 2021 in anticipation of promoting an officer to sergeant in 2022.

**Budget Status**

The only changes from the budget proposal reviewed on June 15, 2020, are (1) the proposed squad and body cameras cost estimate is \$3,000 less than anticipated; and (2) the Community Service Officer vehicle cost estimate is \$1,000 less than anticipated. Management plans to add an officer in July 2021 to fill the officer position vacated when Officer Jarvis was promoted to sergeant.

**Calls for Service**

By year-end 2020, the annual number of Calls for Service (CFS) will likely increase 50 percent since 2016. During this time, staffing levels have increased 20 percent.

Officers have endured some traumatic calls in the past couple months, including an infant death and a juvenile suicide. Management is monitoring officer reaction and ensuring services are available if needed.

### **Annual Report Progress**

A template has been prepared for an Annual Report, which is expected to be released in January 2021. The Police Department has not issued an annual report for many years.

### **ORDINANCE UPDATES**

The Village is in the process of updating the ordinances. Chief Vierck has attended meetings on this subject, asked for input from staff, and identified suggestions for additional ordinances or revisions to existing ordinances. He introduced and invited discussion on the following proposals:

#### **Parking Within 15 Feet of Intersection or Stop Sign**

Current ordinances and State Statutes do not prohibit vehicles from parking close to intersections or stop signs. Adding “no parking” stripes to every intersection every year would require a lot of work, time, and expense, and the stripes would not be visible when curbs are covered in snow. The Police Department requests a way to enforce a 15-foot parking restriction, and J. Gorman stated it would assist with snow plowing if cars were not parked near intersections. It is the intent for notices to be put in the newspaper and social media and that the Police Department would issue warnings to educate the public before ticketing offending vehicles.

The Committee AGREED to recommend an ordinance forbidding vehicle parking within 15 feet of an intersection or stop sign. Chief Vierck will draft an ordinance for the Board’s consideration.

#### **Add November to 7.07(6)**

Village Ordinance 7.07(6) outlines alternate side parking regulations that are in effect from December through March. There was a suggestion to start enforcement in November. The Committee discussed the feasibility of allowing no parking on Village streets during winter months and agreed that is not realistic. J. Gorman noted that changing the dates would require replacing or updating about 3 dozen winter regulation parking signs, and the estimate to apply decals to existing signs is \$150 for decals plus staff time.

Chairman Fendrick noted that snow accumulating in November or April melts quickly so there is less reason to restrict parking in those months and that adding November to the ordinance would be controversial. The Committee discussed several suggestions, including moving the start date to November 15 instead of November 1, enforcing the ordinance in November only during major snowfalls, and notifying the public of any changes.

Chief Vierck stated his intention to delay enforcement of the added month until 2021 and to put warning slips on windshields of vehicles in noncompliance. He stated the change was proposed now with other ordinance changes to avoid another change a year later.

In response to a suggestion, Jeff stated that no parking is allowed in the downtown area from 2:30 a.m. to 6:00 a.m. and there would be no benefit in expanding those hours because Public Services doesn't clear that area before 2:30 a.m.

Chairman Fendrick noted that the Committee had not reached consensus on a recommendation to amend the ordinance addressing alternate side parking but was open to options. The Committee AGREED to take the proposal to the Board for discussion. Chief Vierck will draft a revised ordinance for the Board's discussion.

*[Note: J. Gorman left the meeting at this point.]*

### **Pre-pay/Pay at the Pump**

Requiring patrons to pre-pay for gasoline or pay at the pump would reduce the number of gas drive-offs. The Police Department expects an increase in drive-offs when Casey's General Store opens on the east side and Kwik Trip opens a second location.

Chief Vierck intends to check with the business owners for reaction and requested the Committee's input first. One alternative is that gas stations not be required to adhere to the ordinance, and, if not, the Police Department wouldn't follow up for civil case drive-offs. Business owners can get plate owner information from the state for \$5 and send offenders to collections; the Police Department could then issue a citation, which would be dismissed if the charge is paid. Currently, the Police Department is acting as a collections agent.

Chairman Fendrick supported the option for station owners being able to choose not to enforce a pre-pay/pay at the pump ordinance and the Police Department not investigating drive-offs for them. He noted, however, that this practice could open a possibility of bias if some but not all patrons were required to pre-pay or pay at the pump.

It was the CONSENSUS of the Committee that Chief Vierck would gather input from local businesses in the next couple weeks and draft information for discussion at a future Board meeting.

### **Public Urination**

Public urination is not specifically prohibited in current Village ordinances, and officers have requested an ordinance prohibiting this offense. It could be addressed through a new ordinance or added to an existing Disorderly Conduct ordinance. Chief Vierck has an example that would be easy to add and noted that this change would not affect many people. He was asked to check whether there is a State Statute prohibiting public urination.

Chief Vierck will draft a proposed ordinance for Board review.

### **48-hour Parking – Abandoned/Junk Vehicles**

On-street parking is not limited to 48 hours except for “junk vehicles,” which have a specific definition. Therefore, if the registration is valid and the vehicle appears to be operable, the Police Department cannot require it to be moved. The Department receives many complaints about vehicles parked on the street for long periods and requests an ordinance limiting on-street parking to 48 hours.

Junk vehicles, but not abandoned vehicles, are addressed in current ordinances. Officers are requesting added verbiage to address abandoned vehicles.

Chairman Fendrick polled the Committee members, and all were in favor of presenting 48-hour Parking and Abandoned/Junk Vehicles ordinance changes to the Board for approval.

### **Timing of Ordinance Proposals**

Chief Vierck requested a timeframe to develop the proposed changes for presentation to the Board. The Committee directed him to plan the presentation of the changes with Village Administrator Nic Owen.

### **ANIMAL LICENSING ENFORCEMENT**

The Committee reviewed and discussed a suggestion that the Community Service Officer check compliance with animal licensing when people are out walking their dogs. Chief Vierck will check whether the ordinance requires only that animals are licensed or that the license be visible. It was suggested that, if the ordinance does not require tags to be visible, the ordinance should be amended. Chief Vierck stated that, if the ordinance requires visible tags, the CSO could ask pet owners if the pet is licensed, but he believes a lot of people would object to this. There did not appear to be a consensus on this suggestion.

### **STEWART LAKE PARK UPDATE**

Chief Vierck reported that, as discussed in the August 17, 2020, Committee meeting, he initiated contact with the Dane County Sheriff's Office on the subject of the Mount Horeb Police Department patrolling Stewart Lake Park. In discussions with a DCSO Lieutenant and a Community Deputy, he was told that DCSO has had only 4 or 5 calls at Stewart Lake Park in 2020 and those calls were minor. DCSO representatives have determined there is no justification at this time to progress with discussions about the Mount Horeb Police Department patrolling or adding enforcement hours at Stewart Lake Park. DCSO, MHPD, the Park Ranger, and DCSO Community Deputy agreed to work on joint initiatives in the spring of 2021 to stem issues before they start.

Chief Vierck stated that DCSO may not be notified of all problems at Stewart Lake Park, which are instead reported to the Mount Horeb Police Department. He requested that anyone receiving complaints or concerns about the area contact DCSO.

### **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Chairman Fendrick summarized the status of recent/outstanding Committee agenda topics. Proposed ordinance changes will be presented to the Board in October or November. Traffic signals at roundabouts is on hold until school is back in face-to-face session. The Police Department has prepared and submitted its proposed budget. A hiring process is underway. There is no pressing business pending.

After discussion, all Committee members AGREED to cancel the regular meeting that would normally be held October 19, 2020.

### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next regular meeting of the Public Safety Committee has been scheduled for Monday, November 21, 2020, beginning at 6:00 p.m.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by C. Scott, seconded by J. Jackson, this regular meeting of the Public Safety Committee adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

Jason Fendrick  
Chairman  
Public Safety Committee