

**VILLAGE OF MOUNT HOREB  
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING**  
Via videoconference  
January 19, 2021

**MINUTES**

A regular meeting of the Public Safety Committee was called to order by Chairman Jason Fendrick at 6:10 p.m. on Tuesday, January 19, 2021, via videoconference. A quorum was present, and attendance was noted as follows: Committee members Jessica Jackson and Cathy Scott were present; Committee members Steve Holum and Mike McNall were absent. Police Chief Doug Vierck was also present. Tracy Lien served as recording secretary.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

On a motion by Cathy Scott, seconded by Jessica Jackson, the Committee

VOTED: To approve the minutes of the November 16, 2020, regular meeting as distributed to the Committee members prior to the meeting.

**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.

**COVID Vaccine Update**

By the end of this week, two-thirds of Department personnel will have received their first dose of vaccination against COVID-19.

**Policy Update**

A retired police department administrator from the Milwaukee area is assisting with drafting Department policies. The process involves melding current policies, Village policies, the officers' contract, best practices in the state, and input from subject matter experts. There are 118 policies, and Chief Vierck estimates the updates will be complete in October 2021.

**Field Training Update**

Officer Rehfeldt completed field training last week, several weeks ahead of schedule because he had more than three years' experience in a Dane County agency when he was hired.

*[Note: Brian LaDow, owner of the Skal Public House, joined the meeting at this point.]*

## **Annual Report**

The Annual Report is complete except for budget numbers and should be issued in early February 2021.

## **Goals for 2021**

*[Reference: documents outlining three Department goals and a draft 5-year budget, distributed to the Committee prior to the meeting.]*

**Top Priority Department Goals** – The Committee reviewed and discussed the three goals outlined in the document, which were prepared with input from the Village Administrator and HR Manager. Chief Vierck noted the listed goals were only the top three priorities and outlined them as follows: (1) Chief, Lieutenant, and Sergeant are working on finding and maintaining efficiencies; (2) The Department is reviewing the officer training process to identify improvements and will likely switch from Field Training Officers to Police Training Officers; and (3) Management is concentrating on officers' mental health and the effect of responding to traumatic calls; considerations include implementing a peer support group and an Employee Assistance Program or mental health outreach program that employees can choose based on their individual needs.

C. Scott asked about the Police Department response to traumatic calls. Chief Vierck stated that a "critical incident debrief" led by a trained professional is conducted within 72 hours of the incident, and officers have had three traumatic incidents in the past year. He has had feedback from a part-time officer that his primary agency partners with a mental health place because some don't like their peers to know they are having a tough time. Chief Vierck plans to put several options in place.

**Draft 5-year Budget Considerations** – Chief Vierck highlighted parts of the draft 5-year budget, which are initial thoughts for major expenditures in 2021 through 2025. He stated that all items will go through the budgeting process and asked the Committee to let him know if they disagree with any of the basic premises outlined. In response to questions, he explained the transition from FTO (Field Training) to PTO (Police Training); the intention for a bike patrol; reasons for investing in a drone; and timing of re-establishing a K9 program.

The Committee acknowledged the long-range view for improvement; there were no objections to any proposals in the draft plan.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **Alleys in the Downtown Area**

The Police Department has heard concerns about big delivery trucks coming through to Main Street from blind alleys east of First Street and east of Second Street, which presents a danger to pedestrians on Main Street. B. LaDow stated he has security camera footage showing that more than 50 vehicles use the alley each week, some as wide as 12 feet, and his building balconies have been hit by trucks in the past.

Discussion ensued. The following suggestions were noted: Designate the alleys for one-way traffic only, limit the size and/or weight of trucks in the alleys, install caution signage, require deliveries to be made on Second Street, require vehicles to enter the alleys from Front Street, limit traffic going onto or from Main Street, prohibit big trucks from Main Street, install mirrors near the blind alleys, remove the parking spot if traffic is allowed in the alley, install cement barricades to force vehicles to back up to exit, install "Caution" or "No Through Traffic" signs on nearby buildings.

Chairman Fendrick noted that any decision would require a hearing with the Public Services Committee and a fully noticed hearing with all people affected. He requested more input from the Police Department to assist the recommendation decision, including accident reports over the past few years and reports of other calls in that area.

C. Scott questioned whether traffic in the second alley should be addressed, since there have not been problems reported there. Chief Vierck will gather information about both alleys, check with J. Gorman, and make a recommendation about pursuing changes in one or both alleys.

Chairman Fendrick directed that this subject be placed on the agenda for the February 2021 meeting. He suggested that affected landowners be invited to that meeting. He will check with the Public Services Committee Chairman about the Public Services Committee also joining that meeting.

### **Center Avenue – Exempt from Alternate Side Parking**

Chief Vierck explained that Center Avenue has been exempt from alternate side parking rules in the past but vehicle owners were ticketed this year. Public Services Director J. Gorman informed the Police Department that it would work best for snow removal to exempt Center Avenue from alternate side parking rules since Public Services employees pile snow in the median and drivers would have to walk through mounds of snow across the street to their residence. Letters were sent to all residents on Center Avenue instructing them to park on the curb side, not the median side, and that Center Avenue was exempt from alternate side parking rules. This information was provided for the Committee's information; no action was required.

### **Dog Licensing**

C. Scott stated that 295 dog tags were sold in 2020, which was a 14 percent decrease from 344 dog tags sold in 2019. She requested the Community Service Officer enforce the ordinance requiring dogs to be licensed.

Discussion ensued. Chief Vierck stated he is in favor of requiring licenses, which ensures dogs are vaccinated against rabies and helps identify owners of stray dogs. However, during the current national negative publicity about law enforcement, he prefers not to put the Department "in a bad light" as appearing to "shake people down" for increased revenue, and he stated that that police departments and courts should not be seen as a source of revenue. He reported that the Department recently got a call from a citizen asking if the CSO gets a commission for parking tickets issued. He stated that asking citizens about dog registrations will be seen negatively in the community. Chief Vierck stated that advising people of the ordinance requiring licensing and the reasons would be preferable to strict enforcement.

Chief Vierck suggested that prior to issuing citations, the rules, rationale behind the rules, and consequences of non-compliance should be communicated through a public education campaign through social media, the Village website, the local newspaper, etc. He will work with the Village Administrator on a coordinated campaign designed to have a positive impact. C. Scott requested a date for enforcement be set; Chief Vierck suggested the Police Department begin checking for compliance six months from the start of the media campaign.

### **Village Parking Lot Time Restrictions**

Chief Vierck has been asked why the Village parking lots are closed from 2 a.m. to 5 a.m. He requested the Committee's input before he talked to Public Services Director Gorman about this subject and asked if the Committee has interest in allowing overnight parking in those lots. He stated the reason for closing may be for clearing snow or preventing theft from vehicles, vagrancy, etc. It was suggested that if there is little on-street parking, there is no need to open the lot overnight. Chief Vierck will ask officers to do counts of vehicles parked overnight and bring information back to the Committee.

### **Permits for Parking in Lots**

Chief Vierck reported that the Police Department received complaints after issuing warnings for parking in municipal lots from residents who have been parking there for years without warnings or tickets. He was asked about parking alternatives for people living in apartments above downtown businesses.

Chief Vierck referenced ordinance 7.07(6)(c) Exceptions (1) Winter Parking Permit, which states, in part, "A person may obtain a permit from the Village Administrator to park a particular vehicle in a municipal parking lot or on the public streets..." He noted that the ordinance provides for winter parking permits but does not specify the application process, and that the Village has allowed this parking but has not required a permit.

Chairman Fendrick recommended that the Public Safety Committee present guidelines to the Board for approval. Chief Vierck stated that appropriate documentation would be required, and a formal permit should be drawn up. He noted the current ordinance states the permit may be obtained from the Village Administrator but it should be issued by the Police Department (with Village Board approval) since the Police Department enforces it. Requests for permits would go to the Committee and be added to the Board consent agenda if approved by the Police Department. He stated the intent would be to approve permits only in extenuating circumstances, such as residents who live downtown and don't have parking options, and not everybody should be allowed to park all winter for \$30. There was a suggestion that the fee be increased to \$75 for the season and \$50 for a shorter period.

C. Scott noted that the deadline for codification is the third week in March 2021. The Committee directed Chief Vierck to develop a process for approving winter parking permits, with input from Public Safety Director J. Gorman, and present it to the Committee at its February 2021 meeting for recommendation to the Village Board.

### **Updated Ordinance for Truancy**

Chief Vierck stated that virtual school attendance has caused truancy issues. Students will soon be attending school in session, and tracking attendance for those who elect a hybrid model may be difficult. Chief Vierck has been in discussions with the Municipal Court Judge, school officials, the Village attorney, and the School Resource Officer regarding truancy issues and enforcement and recommended changes to the ordinance.

The Committee reviewed the local ordinance regarding truancy and the following additional verbiage drafted by the Village attorney: "...absent from virtual school pursuant to the rules for virtual attendance and instruction adopted by the Mount Horeb Area School District."

The Committee recommended removing the word "virtual" from the added verbiage and agreed unanimously to ask the Village Administrator to send the revision without the word "virtual" to the attorney for consideration; and further agreed unanimously to present the final recommendation to the Board in the version the attorney recommends.

### **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Chairman Fendrick asked if there were suggested agenda items other than those mentioned during the meeting (further discussion on alleys in the downtown area, possibly in a joint meeting with Public Services; parking recommendations). C. Scott and J. Jackson stated they did not have additional agenda items.

### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Public Safety Committee is set for Monday, February 15, 2021, beginning at 6:00 p.m.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Jessica, seconded by Cathy, this regular meeting of the Public Safety Committee adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

Jason Fendrick  
Chairman  
Public Safety Committee