

## MINUTES

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BISBEE, COUNTY OF COCHISE, STATE OF ARIZONA, HELD ON WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2011 AT 5:30 PM IN THE BISBEE MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 118 ARIZONA STREET, BISBEE, ARIZONA.

THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER BY MAYOR PORTER AT 5:30 PM.

### ROLL CALL

#### COUNCIL

Councilmember Boyd Nicholl, Ward I, Mayor Pro Tempore  
Councilmember Bennie Scott, Ward III  
Councilmember Luche Giacomino, Ward II      EXCUSED  
Mayor W.J. "Jack" Porter  
Councilmember Anna Cline, Ward III  
Councilmember Ransom Burke, Ward II  
Councilmember Ken Budge, Ward I              EXCUSED

#### STAFF

Stephen J. Pauken, City Manager  
Gloria P. Gonzalez, City Clerk  
Dee L. Flanagan, Finance Director  
Jim Elkins, Chief of Police  
Jack Earnest, Fire Chief

#### CITY ATTORNEY

John A. MacKinnon

THE FOLLOWING ITEM WAS DISCUSSED AND/OR CONSIDERED AT THIS MEETING:

1. Discussion of Public Safety Functions Regarding the Police and Fire Department.  
Stephen J. Pauken, City Manager

Mr. Pauken provided an introduction regarding a series of meetings planned during the May budget meetings. It had been decided that beginning in August, staff would present an overview of the functions and challenges in their respective department to setup a long term vision to improve productivity, efficiency and fiscal health of the City.

Fire Chief Earnest provided an overview of the Department by explaining the role and responsibilities of the 19 staff members which included 7 paramedics and 12 EMTS.

The challenges and long term vision of the department is as follows:

- Within the next 3 months, the department would lose two paramedics to retirement.
- The department's alarm activities continued to increase especially in the inter-facility transfers.
- In order to acquire equipment, the department would continue to apply for grants to keep expenditures down.

- One big challenge encountered consisted of the back-to-back-to-back Inter-Facility Transfers, but that they would continue to do as many of these runs as they could because this was what brought revenue to the City.
- The department needed to look towards technology in order to upgrade all the vehicles with on-board computers. The goal would require submission of grant applications.
- The department received on an average of 5-7 calls a day, with 89%-92% being EMS calls. The big challenge is obtain more Medics and get staff through school because the run load did not decrease; it either stayed steady or increased.
- A long term vision was that some of the training would now be conducted in-house because the Lieutenants were now certified trained instructors.

Chief Earnest conveyed that one long term goal was to acquire more ambulances. He added that the department budget was \$1.7M, personnel costs was \$1.4M and operation costs at about \$295,000. He indicated that the contribution to the Public Safety Retirement was \$625,000 between the two departments.

He explained that recently the department had been unofficially notified of a radio grant award for \$66,000 to improve their radio system which would enable them to be in compliance with a mandate that had to be in place by December 2012.

Mayor Porter commented that he was optimistic that the City would not be faced with the budget shortages next year, but if so, how could the department possibly cut 5-15% without reduction in services, employees or benefits. Chief Earnest replied that the department was already at minimum staffing and was not possible. He explained that scheduled overtime was required of staff for an additional three to four days a month to ensure coverage for all days when there was 5-6 staff on a shift. He added that ideally the department ran with 7 staff on duty in the event of an out-of-town transfer because it would then still leave five staff in town.

Councilmember Scott commented that not only did the ambulances need the on-board computers, but there was also a need for a GPS system. He commented that if grants were not awarded to the department, the City would eventually have to pay for some of this equipment.

Mayor Porter asked what the collection rate for billing was before Fry Fire took over. Chief Earnest replied that on a good day it was 50%, but that they were fortunate that Fry Fire took over the billing because they kept current with the changes for Medicare and AHCCS and also conducted training which was beneficial for the City.

Councilmember Cline commented that many people did not understand that staff did not only go out for calls, but the public also came to them for assistance at the stations.

Councilmember Burke asked what anticipated cuts were seen in reimbursement from Medicare and Medicaid and if there would be any substantial cuts. Chief Earnest replied that the last time this was discussed it was about a 5-8% cut with AHCCS and possibly Medicare.

Mr. Pauken mentioned that the City had a more than 100-year tradition of having a full-time Fire Department which was not just somewhat unusual, but was almost totally unique in a community of this size. He added that a full-time department was beneficial, but it also doubled the burden financially because of the pension contribution to PSPRS by the City. The ability to continue to do the transports which generated \$1M a year by EMS services contributed to 1/6th of the General Fund. He added that if it was decided to give up the transfer services to other hospitals

would cause approximately \$400,000 in revenue reduction, and in the current situation of the City, it would not be a financially feasible loss. One long term vision for future transfers, suggested by Mr. Pauken was to utilize volunteers interested in serving as part-time EMTs. He said there were a good number of volunteer EMT/firefighters throughout the County who might want to assist the City in working the runs as a part-time employee. He commented that the City could no longer do things the way they had always done them as the services need to continue to be provided to the citizens of Bisbee and needed to change the way business was conducted. He commented that he would like to see positive change that fundamentally reduced the cost of operation, while increasing the efficiency. He mentioned that after Melanie Greene left the City's employment, he realized that she had a gift unlike any other to creatively and effectively do grant work. He conveyed that she had been partially responsible for the \$66,000 radio grant and that he would continue to turn to Ms. Greene for grant opportunities.

Mayor Porter asked what percentage of ambulance runs were outside the City limits. Chief Earnest replied that it was pretty close to 15%. He explained that the department covered 400 square miles of ambulance within the City limits and 400 square miles outside the City limits. Mayor Porter asked why the City was doing this. Chief Earnest replied that the Certificate of Necessity (CON) was designed to abut other CONs within the County.

Chief Elkins, Police Chief provided a past and present overview of the Police Department and explained the roles and responsibilities of staff which consists of one Chief, two Staff Sergeants, two duty sergeants, seven patrol officers and one detective.

The challenges and long term vision of the department is as follows:

- Many of the other agencies have set up shop at the department, which enabled the department to access the detective.
- The annual service calls per year averaged 7500 - 8500 for the seven patrol officers. He added that when the department had 23 certified officers, the call level was the same and the department has coped with the situation as staff was doing the same with less staff.
- One benefit was the fully-staffed Arizona Ranger Company who volunteer their assistance in the field, as well as decreased the cost of overtime for the department.
- One long term vision to help the department was to hire experienced, retired personnel to provide coverage for the full-time dispatcher as permanent part-time dispatchers. This would definitely be a cost saving measure for the department to decrease overtime and the cost of training. He indicated that the department was open 24-7 on a daily basis, to include holidays. He commented that Dispatch also serviced the fire department in dispatching their ambulance and fire calls.
- He explained that the department had four full-time dispatchers and were recently approved to employ six part-time dispatchers to assist in covering for a full-time dispatcher when they were sick or took vacation time, as most of the full-time dispatchers had quite a few hours of vacation.
- He explained the benefit of the Spillman System and the installation of MDTs in all police vehicles.
- One challenge encountered by the department was to take advantage of technology and because of the expense to technological equipment; they would also continue to apply for grants.
- One advantage was the use of RICO and Federal Asset funding which has provided the funding to enhance their ability to do their job. He commented that the City of Bisbee

had not paid for a police vehicle since 1989 because of the RICO and Federal Asset money and took great pride on this benefit. Chief Elkins conveyed that they could not afford to lose anymore certified officers and actually needed more certified officers.

Councilmember Cline asked how many sergeants were on the force. Chief Elkins replied that there were four and explained their functions. Councilmember Cline asked if the Arizona Rangers were utilized for securing scenes and doing traffic control or were they doing investigations. Chief Elkins replied that they serve as deterrents to crime and traffic control. The responsibility is that if the Rangers get involved or sees an incident to immediately contact the on-duty officer in that area.

Councilmember Burke commented that he was moved by the innovative ideas and further praised the professionalism of the Arizona Rangers. He commented that these Rangers were the most productive that he has seen in a long time and thanked them for their great job.

Mr. Pauken commented that one thing not discussed was the goal to get rid of furloughs and restore the positions have been left vacant or laid off. He indicated that the reality is that the safe operation of any public safety service depended on the certain amount of personnel being available at all times. He said that his personal belief is that the City was running the ragged edge on both the police and fire. He added that as there was talk of different ways to staff in order to save money, the City also had to recognize that this did not relieve us from the reductions in force already made. The City needed to renew those commitments to the people of Bisbee so that we could maintain the safe environment to the extent we have provided in the past and into the future.

MOOTION: Councilmember Burke moved to adjourn the meeting.

SECOND: Councilmember Nicholl.

MOTION PASSED: UNANIMOUSLY.

ADJOURNMENT: 7:15 P.M.

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W.J. Porter, Mayor