

City of Willowick
Lake County, Ohio
Minutes and Proceedings of the Safety Committee Meeting

Date: July 2, 2019

Place: City Hall

Time: 6:30 PM

Present: Chairman Pintar, Ms. Turk and Ms. Koudela

Absent: None

Also present: Mayor Regovich, Councilman Reho, Chief Posipanka, Mr. Pauley

The Safety Committee meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Mr. Pintar.

Topic of discussion: First topic of discussion was parking on side streets by Manry Park. There have been numerous complaints regarding parking on side streets.

Chairman Pintar will contact baseball league President, attend next Recreation Board meeting and seek input on possible ideas and/or resolutions.

Mayor Regovich's second item is Fire Department staffing. There was a News-Herald article which discussed that part-time firefighters are hard to come by. To attract employees we need to pay them what they are worth and be the highest paid part-time, or go full-time. Local departments are all pulling from the same pool of people. Negotiations are in progress with all Willowick unions.

Chief Posipanka said this is not about negotiations, city and firefighters. It is about a system put in place many years ago and through negotiations have been able to retain employees. It has worked to some degree, but no longer. The Fire Department has always been a financial benefit to the city because the city has not had to invest into it. We are paying for it now. We are part-time and require them to be Paramedic, EMT and Firefighter. That is three different certifications which is 2 ½ years of training. Police only need five weeks of paid training to become an officer and make \$27.64/hr. Fireman are better trained, and they make less than a dispatcher. It is the city's responsibility to invest in the employees. In order to attract fireman to this city, we need to make it financially beneficial for them. Everyone else has benefited from them being part-time. We probably have about 15 open shifts in July right now. Administration (Captains and Lieutenants) tasks are not getting done because they are trying to fill shifts instead.

Mayor Regovich believes they are worth more pay. The savings to the city comes from the savings in retirement and medical. We are competing with smaller departments such as

Reminderville, for example. We need to update testing and hiring practices. If they made more money here, they might stay and be more flexible.

Chief Posipanka said our staffing is low. We pay \$16.52/hr to start. He is just waiting for the day no one comes to work.

Chairman Pintar asked the Mayor if there was a plan in place for increases.

Mayor Regovich stated that was something the firefighters proposed, but it was rather complicated and he was not sure it was going to work. When it comes down to it, they just want to be paid. We need to push some kind of levy or something so we can offer more. His goal is to pay them more. For every \$.50 raise, figure \$52,000.

Chief Posipanka said he puts money into wages. They are highly skilled and we need to pay them. An investment in current firefighters would be a good start. If everyone made equal pay, if that were the case, in 2018 it would have cost the city about \$700,000 more. This is just paying them what they are worth. If you pay the most, you'll get more people to work.

Mayor Regovich said if the income tax is approved and once it hits the General Fund, we would need to talk with the Finance and Law Directors as to how we could ensure some of the money would go toward firefighters' wages. This discussion will continue throughout the year, monthly or quarterly.

Chairman Pintar had some residents inquire about Ordinance 505.08 regarding the number of animals one can have. The ordinance specifically states dogs and cats. Some residents have brought up concerns regarding other animals people seem to have around the city these days.

Mayor said someone reported to Councilman Malta that there is a resident who has 17 boa constrictors in their house. This is a concern was since young children are living in the house.

Meeting adjourned: 7:14 pm

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ken Pintar', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ken Pintar
Chairman, Safety Committee