

## Minutes for June 8, 2021 Safety Committee meeting

Meeting was called into session at 6:30pm in Council Chambers at City Hall.

In attendance:

David Phares - Chairman

Councilman Malta - Committee member

Councilwoman Bisbee - Committee member

Mayor Regovich - Safety Director

Councilwoman Antosh

Councilwoman Koudela

Brian Turner - Police Chief

Lt. Rob Daubenmire

Lt. Jeff Mastroianni

Abigail Bell - Assistant Law Director - sitting in for Law Director Stephanie Langraf

The first item covered was farm animals. Law Director Stephanie Langraf put together the ordinance regarding farm animals. Chairman Phares stated that there were a few things Stephanie left out that we had discussed at the previous Safety Committee meeting. One of them was having a separate ordinance for chickens. Councilman Malta confirmed that we did talk about that at the last meeting. Mayor Regovich wanted a reminder of why a separate ordinance was discussed and Chairman Phares stated that we wanted a separate ordinance for chickens because we wanted to cite specific details about how many chickens were allowed and requirements for the chicken coops. Assistant Law Director Abigail Bell suggested leaving it as one ordinance and Councilwoman Bisbee agreed that we should leave it as one ordinance. The idea that having a separate ordinance that allows chickens and another ordinance that prohibits farm animals could cause confusion. Mayor Regovich also stated that having less ordinances is better.

Another issue was specifying the number of chickens allowed. Mayor Regovich asked Assistant Law Director Bell if there are state regulations pertaining to coop size, lot size etc. It was determined that we wanted to make the number of chickens allowed to be similar to the number of dogs and cats allowed which is five. So a range was set at 4-6 for the number of chickens and roosters were taken out of the paragraph as discussed at the last meeting.

It was also decided that the same permit fee required for exotic animals should be added for chickens to allow the city to track who has them.

Chief Turner asked if residents who have chickens now will be fined or will they be in compliance if/when this ordinance passes. Chairman Phares stated that if you have chickens at the time of the passage of this ordinance and you fail to register them, then yes, you will be subject to a fine.

The second item covered was exotic animals. Law Director Stephanie Langraf put together the ordinance regarding exotic animals. Chairman Phares stated that one item left out of the

ordinance was the penalty fee that was discussed at the previous meeting. We had previously discussed a minimum fine of \$250/animal/violation. Councilwoman Koudela asked if that would include a per day fine also. That way a violator doesn't just pay the fine and continue to not comply. It was determined that "per day" should be added to the language for the fine. It was also discussed that even though this "per day" fine is automatic with a zoning violation, it should be stated in the ordinance to avoid any confusion. Mayor Regovich suggested after the first \$250 fine, five days are given and then the fine doubles every five days after that.

The next issue discussed was beekeeping. Chairman Phares reviewed the Wickliffe ordinance that allows beekeeping but puts forth specific regulations. Councilman Malta and Mayor Regovich discussed some of the history of the beekeeping ordinance in Willowick. Mayor Regovich mentioned that most other cities have ordinances allowing beekeeping and it would be a shame to penalize the responsible beekeepers by continuing to prohibit it. Another fact is that the State of Ohio has regulations concerning beekeeping and it was discussed that we could write our own ordinance pertaining to beekeeping, modeled after Wickliffes and also cite the ORC section on beekeeping. Councilwoman Koudela stated that she would support just changing the prohibition to allow beekeeping and stating that compliance to the ORC section pertaining to beekeeping is required. Chairman Phares commented that he would have to look at the beekeeping section in the ORC before making that determination.

Chief Turner went over the letter that he sent out to the Safety Committee meeting about some dispatchers who were thinking about leaving due to job stress and possible solutions to those and other staffing issues. He stated that the dispatch department has been getting busier and busier because there is no dedicated clerk position. Public records requests are increasing and it's almost gotten to the point where we need a separate position to handle them. Council approved the new Callworks 911 system so we have invested money into the department. The Chief is asking for a dedicated clerk position and two more dispatchers but he understands that this may not be totally feasible but at least the clerk position would help out.

Chairman Phares asked what the budget request would be for the clerk position and Chief Turner stated that it would be similar to the dispatcher position. He would want to check to see if the position is classified or defined differently contractually in the union. He feels that the clerk position would be part of the dispatch department because the clerk will be responsible for filling in for dispatchers. The Mayor commented that the same thing is happening in the Fire Department and Police Department and that is, not nearly as many people are applying for these jobs. Dispatching is a very stressful job and people just aren't applying anymore. Current dispatchers are working swing shifts and are on-call on their days off. We haven't had to hire a dispatcher in 8 years so the current group is doing great. Financially, we are in good shape but we won't get COVID money every year so we need to look long term. Not getting the records requests done can cost the city thousands of dollars. Melissa is doing the requests now and is very good at it.

Only one dispatcher has ever retired from the Willowick Police Department because of the stress of the job. Councilman Malta requested salary numbers for dispatchers from other cities

for reference. Chief stated that the Chief of Dispatch makes a \$1.50/hr premium but this would not be the case with the clerk. It would be a standard dispatch salary. The Mayor stated that it will be nice to have that person that can fill in. It will be less stress on all the dispatchers because their days off will be actual days off because they won't be on-call. The actual number of people needed to hire was discussed.

Councilwoman Koudela tried to clarify how many dispatchers needed to be hired. Would an 8 hour shift help the current situation? Chief Turner said no because of the nature of the job. Patrol is on 12 and it works out better that way. It's not the hours that are the problem. Councilwoman Antosh asked if the job needs to be posted outside the city and inside. Chief Turner said they have already posted back in January and a candidate that was a close second will be considered. The clerk's position needs to have dispatch and records experience so someone from inside the department would be ideal. The Mayor stated that this is usually spelled out in the department contract. Councilwoman Bisbee stated that the minimum would be hiring one dispatcher to replace the one that moves to the clerks position.

In 2023, there will be one dispatcher retiring so salary outlay changes will take place then.

Chairman Phares asked Assistant Law Director Abigail Bell what role the Safety Committee plays in this process. Do we make recommendations to the Council or something else? Mayor Regovich feels that we discuss this in committee then have the Chairman as well as the Police Chief present it to Council for more discussion. He was not comfortable coming to Council and saying that here is what we are doing. It needs to be discussed and the Finance Director needs to be in the process also. We can then meet again in committee or discuss it in Council again.

Councilwoman Koudela asked if the dispatchers would be taking a pay cut to move to the Building Department secretary position that is opening up and they would be. She mentioned that she understands what the dispatchers are going through from her own job experiences.

Some current scheduling issues with dispatching was discussed. How vacations are covered, trying to take bathroom breaks during a twelve hour shift alone etc. Councilwoman Antosh asked if anyone is interested in the clerk position but Chief Turner stated that he has not announced the clerk position yet.

Councilman Phares asked if Chief's letter should be part of the next Council meeting agenda and Mayor Regovich stated that it should be put with the committee meeting minutes.

Meeting adjourned at 7:31 pm.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Phares". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.