

MINUTES
MEETING POLICE & FIRE COMMISSION
BERLIN, WISCONSIN
BERLIN CITY HALL – 2ND FLOOR COUNCIL CHAMBERS
February 02, 2022 -6:30pm

President Dan Johnson called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. Present: Commissioners Dan Johnson, Ed Marks, Joanne Guden, Curt Olson, and Chad Martin. Absent: None. Also present: Police Chief Engel, Fire Chief Paugels, Emergency manager Gary Podoll, Liaison Alderman James Lehr, City Administrator Sara Rutkowski, Fire fighters Jason Hernandez, and Brian Bending and Berlin Journal Paul Wiegel. Public appearance: Katrina Burges.

Under general public comments, Katrina Burges spoke about the schools and had some questions. She asked questions pertaining to the truancy aspect of school. She would like to know who issues those tickets and what the actual fines are.

Under approval of minutes, Guden moved to approve the open P&F Commission minutes of January 05, 2022. Marks seconded the motion which carried by voice vote.

Fire Chief Paugels presented service pins to two of the three fire department personnel.

Guden moved to approve the fire department expenses. Marks seconded the motion which carried by voice vote.

Under Fire department annual report, Emergency manager Podoll stated there were 134 calls to service within the year of 2021. The average call volume is around 120 calls. Of those calls most frequent day for service was Wednesday. The most call type for the year was that of investigative to determine what happened. The department was able to put forth prevention information to the community. It was harder to get done due to the pandemic but the schools allowed for information to be distributed. Guden stated that the overall report was very nice and well put together.

Fire Chief Paugels stated that there were 11 fire calls last month. There were no maintenance issues last month. Upcoming events, there are none. Upcoming meetings and training will be put on USB for those who are unable to attend. This gives the members the ability to still review and stay up to date with what is going on within the department.

Marks moved to approve the Police Department expenses as presented. Guden seconded the motion which carried by voice vote.

Chief Engel stated that the chart provided to the commission shows last month's calls. The chart shows that there were nine drug investigations last month and theft investigations fell. There are a few significant and complex investigations going on within the department. These investigations are taking up more time which contributes to the lower amounts of traffic stops.

Under police activity updates, Engel explained, the 2021 budget has been reconciled with the city and we have been working closely with the city administrator to shore up all of the year end expenses. In the last meeting it was asked if restitution is being received from the blood draws we take for OWI and they are. We just received a check from Lakeside Municipal Court for two of those blood draws. There was a burglary at a local business and that investigation is still

ongoing. An official offer for employment for patrol position has been made to Alexander Schmidt. He is going to consider the offer and get back to the department by the end of the week. The ammunition that was ordered in 2020 has officially come in. All outstanding ammunition purchased has come in aside from the most recent order from 2021. The roll-call training has started and is going well. All the new rifles have been placed in service and the officers seem to like the new addition.

Under Police department annual report, Chief Engel stated the call for services have gone up in 2021. Traffic stops are also up, while theft cases have gone down. Since the pandemic has started the calls for welfare checks and EDI (emergency detention) have gone up. Within the last year there has been 912 hours of training done with all members within the department. It is the hope to continue to gain more training for the young officers and build on their knowledge. Olson stated that he would like a better break down of the numbers such as how many arrests were made and how many were charged. Guden stated that the report was very nice and laid out well.

Under school resource officer report, Officer Bennett made an overview of what happens on a normal basis during his shifts at the schools. He stated that he does work closely with Green Lake Social Services and documents the threat assessments for the schools. He also does a daily crime report for CRDC. He has gone over the safety plans for the schools and helped to make them better for the students and schools. He is involved with the medical/crisis response and truancy teams. The total arrests have gone up to 5 for the year so far. He hopes this will stay for the average or go down. There has been more DPA (deferred prosecution action) for the students than tickets or charges. The hope is to help them establish better actions and ways to handle situations than charging them or citing them with tickets. He likes to be visible to all the students and attends lunches for all schools. He stated that he makes his presence known to all students from kindergarten to seniors. This helps to establish a rapport with the kids and lets them know he is there for them. He does mentor about 150 students. Olson asked if he had access to Spillmen at the schools and if he enters the DPA into Spillmen. Bennett stated that he does have access to Spillmen but does not enter the DPA into it. Olson stated that if he did enter those into Spillmen than it will show what is going on and is available to others within the department. Martin asked what can be done in respect to the other private schools within the city for the students. These kids end their private schools at 8th grade and then come to the High school for education. So do they know who you are? Bennett stated that he does go to the private schools but it is not as often. We do like to make a presence there as well and help to bridge that gap so they know the officers are here to help.

Under ICrimefighter, Chief Engel presented the current time study being conducted within the department. It outlines the time spent downloading and uploading video/audio to disc or USB for court. This study will continue for the next 60 days and will present that information again at that time. Olson stated that there is no difference in price and again the continue worry as to where the money will come from.

Under Residency requirement, Chief Engel stated that the Common Counsel wanted the Commission to look at the 50 mile radius for the department and make their suggestion back to them before approving it. Engel stated the intent to expand the residency is to help with recruitment and retention for the department. The housing here has been very tight and is hard to come by within the current mile radius. Most houses if they are bought would cost too much money for the officers and they would not be able to afford them in this current market. Another issue that has come to light is safety for the officers and their families. One officer had to put up surveillance cameras due to threats coming in to his family. Most recruits look at what an agency can give them as well as residency. They have the ability to go anywhere for work and will

choose to work in places that give them more flexibility. Johnson stated that he would like to hear from each member on their position for the radius. Guden stated that the 50 mile radius is too much and would be okay with a 30 mile radius. Marks stated that he is against a radius and would rather see it in miles. This would give a better picture of how long it would take to get to the department rather than radius. Martin stated to keep the radius as driving can be different in many aspects such as city driving verse highway driving. Olson stated that he is okay with a 25 mile radius and the commissioners should take into effect what this will do for the city and not just the department. Johnson stated 25 miles seems to be the middle ground here and is okay with the 25 mile radius. Guden then stated that there should be a grandfather option for the Assistant Chief. This is due to the unknown issues upon hiring and it was not communicated with all parties involved. He shouldn't be punished for that. Engel stated that instead of granting a grandfather for one member to just extend the radius to the 35 miles and that would be good for the entire department. Olson stated that 35 are too much and he doesn't care about the issues raised about the safety of the officers. He had people pounding on his door when he was an officer and that is just the way it is. They knew this when they signed up for the job and to extend it that far doesn't make sense. He stated that the officers knew there was a residency requirement when they signed the handbook and they should be held accountable for not living within that radius. Engel stated that all officers are putting forth the effort to gain residency within the market but it is hard to do with the way it is currently. Sara stated that a motion will need to be made for the residency issue as it stands so that it may go to Common Counsel for a vote. Martin motioned to recommend to Common Counsel a 25 mile radius using the current policy as is. Olson seconds the motion which carries by voice vote. Guden then stated that we should discuss and motion for the grandfathering of Assistant Chief on his residency. It was unknown to the counsel the promises that were made during hire and it is not his fault. Olson stated that it was told at the time not to worry about this issue when the past administration was on counsel. Marks stated that we should give leniency. James Lehr stated this issue is for the Common Counsel and it should be addressed there. If the Assistant Chief would like to bring up the grievance he should do so to them. He does have a case but it should be him to bring it forward. Martin asked about the optional powers and stated that wouldn't this give us the ability to allow the change for him. Olson stated that it does not and that it is a city issue.

Under new business: None.

Under old business: None.

Public appearances: Katrina Burges.

At 8:30pm Guden moved to convene into closed session pursuant to Wis. Stat §19.85(1)(d) 19.85(c) Considering employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises (1) *Evaluation of police chief and 2) Staffing and personnel issues*).

Discussion was held in closed session.

At 8:57 pm a motion was made to move into open session by Guden, seconded by Marks. Motion carried by voice vote.

Motion made to adjourn by Olson, with a second by Marks. Motion carried with a voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 8:58 pm.

*Submitted by Stephanie Skivers
Administrative Assistant*

Next scheduled meeting will be Wednesday, March 02, 2022 at 6:30 pm at the Berlin City Hall