

MINUTES
MEETING POLICE & FIRE COMMISSION
BERLIN, WISCONSIN
BERLIN CITY HALL – 2ND FLOOR COUNCIL CHAMBERS
February 07, 2024 -6:30pm

President Joanne Guden called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. Present: Commissioners Joanne Guden, Gary Knoke, Denise Krentz, Ron Ross, and Keith Hess. Seated virtually: None. Absent: None. Also present: Police Chief Brian Pulvermacher, Fire Chief Paugels, Emergency Manager Gary Podoll, Fire Dept members: Aaron Hilgart, LT Stacy Zietlow, AC Doug Dewhurst, family members of Fire Dept members, and Berlin Journal: none. Public appearance: None.

Under approval of minutes, Hess moved to approve the open and closed P&F Commission minutes of January 03, 2024. Knoke seconded the motion which carried by voice vote.

Fire Chief Paugels presented years of service awards to Aaron Hilgart for 5 years, LT Stacy Zietlow for 20 years, AC Doug Dewhurst for 35 years. Another award will go to Capt. Bill Brooks for 35 years of service.

Fire Department annual report was presented by Chief Paugels, he explained there were 153 fire calls for last year. That is the most calls for service they have ever had. The most calls seemed to land on Saturdays. Podoll stated the graph within the report indicates the type of calls they received. A large portion of their calls were property/other calls, which could be cancelled calls. The end of the report shows the fire prevention side. Photos were provided of LT. Zietlow's involvement. Guden asked where do the records go for training. Podoll stated that all the training records are located on the software they purchased last year. The software can provide each person's training. Krentz asked to see a spreadsheet of the types of trainings for next years annual report. Podoll indicated that the next Fire Chief could certainly be able to do that with it being digitized.

Knoke moved to approve the fire department expenses as presented. Krentz seconded the motion which carried by voice vote.

Under Fire Department Policy Manual, Krentz asked for the descriptions of the fire department roles and she felt they may be a bit incomplete. Asked if there are updates that may need to be done or certain qualifications for any position. Podoll indicated that the Chief can appoint anyone to a specific roll. There really are no certain qualifications for the positions as they are volunteer fire fighters and it is determined by the Fire Chief. Knoke asked under the general rules why are they not allowed more than 36 fire fighters. Paugels stated that was determined by the city. Guden stated the leave of absence form is very outdated as the date indicated 1900s and not 2000s. Podoll stated that the manual has not been updated in some time due to the amount of work it would take and the cost effectiveness of it. Each manual would need to be retrieved from all the members and each section then pulled out for updating to then given back to the members. It would be so much easier if this were digitized. All the information that is constantly changing could be updated within minutes and each member could then review those updates. The form itself is not used and was just provided within the manual a long time ago but I can update it if you would like. The new Chief that is appointed could certainly update the manual and perhaps even get it to be online for easier updates. Hess indicated that there is no reason to update a form that is not used and the manual would only need to be updated for policy changes. Guden stated that the new Chief will need to make that a priority to update the manual and get it online.

Fire Chief Paugels stated there were 14 calls for the month. The worst was the sprinkler break that happened at Brown Wilcox. Maintenance issues Engine 69 is back, there are still some issues with bell rods but the parts are ordered. Engine 64 has an exhaust flex pipe issue and a new part is ordered for that as well. Upcoming events, there are no upcoming events. A past event was the department's Christmas party. Truck Committee, had a meeting on January 3 and is meeting again on the 10th. They are continuing to go over details. Podoll stated that he and the Chief have created a new committee for recruitment and activities. This committee will consist of one fire officer and six firefighters. The committee will be responsible for putting together a recruitment program and setting up attendance for each year's activities. The goal is to add new firefighters to the department and make sure everyone helps in activities.

Police department annual report was presented by Chief Pulvermacher, he explained the overall call volume was lower last year than years previous. The department has run short and the lower call volume was welcomed to not overwhelm staff. Traffic enforcement was still up. With enforcement being up those traffic contacts may result in more arrests due to violations. The overall training for the department was still able to be managed at 741 hours of specialized training for the officers. This is in addition to the state mandatory training. As indicated the department has had many personnel changes. The SRO also provided an update on the year-to-year comparison. Knoke asked why the school municipal tickets have gone up. Chief indicated that it is based on the school and how they would like to handle issues for that year. It would seem that this year they wanted to really handle truancy differently than last year. There are far more truancy tickets this year which resulted in the higher citation counts for the school.

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

Chief Pulvermacher stated that the chart provided to the commission shows last month's calls. The chart shows that there were 146 traffic stops, 2 drug investigations, 11 welfare checks, 6 emergency detentions, and 7 property damage crashes. The chart indicates, emergency detentions were higher than average. The duration of these events could vary from a few hours to 24 hours or longer. Specifically, two of these events occurred at the same time which compounded staffing complications.

Under police activity updates, Chief Pulvermacher explained Zacharias and Fox are doing well and appear to be on schedule to be on their own by early March. If they reach that point and feel they are not ready or we don't then we can certainly extend their training. We still have two open patrol positions. Myself and some staff went to Mid-state Police Academy last week to boost our profile and hopefully recruit some potential officers. One staff member is scheduled for marijuana related training. Two other staff members are scheduled for rescue tactics for patrol. We had our first county wide defense and arrest tactics training. There will be a second DAAT session in February. I just got back from the Chief's conference. There were about 500 Chiefs from all over WI in attendance. They touched base on suicide prevention for officers. Based on statistics last year there were more suicides than there was accidental or on duty deaths. Another topic they touched on was school shootings and the after math.

Under old business: None.

Under new business: None.

Public appearances: None.

Guden adjourned the meeting at 7:50pm.

*Submitted by Stephanie Skivers
Administrative Assistant*

Next scheduled meeting will be Wednesday, March 06, 2024 at 6:30 pm at the Berlin City Hall