

SPECIAL ARLINGTON CITY COUNCIL &  
POLICE COMMITTEE WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES  
JANUARY 29, 2007

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Mayor Kreft and Police Committee Member Lensing.

Council Members Present: Mayor Kreft, Borchert, Griep (arrived late), Reetz, Vrklan, Wills

Council Members Absent: None

Police Committee Members Present: Bill Lensing, Mike Scharping, Sibley County Sheriff (Ex-Officio) Bruce Ponath

Police Committee Members Absent: None

Also Present: Administrator Krueger, Attorney Arneson, Police Chief Rovinsky, Cheryl Rovinsky, Scott & DeDe Bennett, Charles Selchow

Mayor Kreft started out by saying he had comprised the agenda himself, the Police Chief and/or City Staff did not help in any way. He commented that he hoped this meeting would answer a lot of questions (possibly raise more) and open the doors of communication that may have been closed or interrupted in the past few months. He encouraged those present to feel free to speak up at anytime (voice their opinions), as this was the time to get things out in the open.

Mayor Kreft stated that he had taken the lists of questions/concerns that each Councilmember had made and compiled them into a list of responsibilities, which was reviewed in detail, section by section as follows:

*Mayor:* Kreft questioned if the Police Chief answers solely to the Mayor. Attorney Arneson spoke on the interpretation of the city charter where it reads "the Mayor shall have command and control of its police force". He stated that the Mayor is the Chief Executive Officer ("leader") of the city in a number of different aspects and has the authority to appoint/remove the Police Chief and appoint individuals to the Police Committee, but with the advice and consent of the City Council, the 2 work as a team (essentially one cannot work without the other-there is a sharing of power). Some concern was expressed about the Mayor not communicating the Council's concerns about the Police Department to the Police Committee and following up on said concerns. It was noted that city staff would now be taking minutes of each Police Committee meeting, plus there is now a representative from the Council on the Committee to ensure that matters are addressed and followed up on. It was also commented that the Employee Relations Committee could address this and bypass the Mayor. Mayor Kreft commented on the evaluation process for the Police Chief and questioned who was all involved in it. It was agreed that the Mayor would do quarterly evaluations of the Police Chief; these evaluations would be presented to the Police Committee at the end of the year for review and then presented to the Council annually.

*Police Committee:* Mayor Kreft questioned what exactly the itemized monthly police activity log was. Chief Rovinsky explained that it was a listing of the types and numbers of calls the officers responded to. It was understood that city staff would be providing monthly expense reports to the Chief and Police Committee.

*City Administrator/Staff:* Mayor Kreft explained that city staff would now be the Secretary for the Police Committee meetings, which included preparing agenda packets and official minute keeper.

*Chief of Police:* The job description for the Police Chief was reviewed. It was pointed out that the Chief is not considered a member of the Police Committee currently and should be (whether by Ex-Officio or voting member). It was also pointed out that the job description should include guidelines for being a patrolman and Code Enforcement Officer. Some discussion was held on the Code Enforcement Officer portion. Chief Rovinsky explained that both he and Harry Jenness (P&Z Adm./Bldg. Official/Code Enforcement Officer) have been working as a team with regard to the enforcement of the ordinances (where applicable), at least when the

department was at full staff, but have not been able to do so recently. It was agreed to have the Employee Relations Committee draft a revised job description and present it to both the Police Committee and City Council for approval.

Discussion was held on various ordinances and enforcement thereof. Attorney Arneson explained that it is impossible to draft the perfect law (ordinance); something always manages to appear after approval has taken place. He stated that ordinances are drafted in such a way that they cover the general situation and are still clear enough to be enforceable and understood by a reasonable person (citizen). He stated that some ordinances cover more sensitive areas than others, but still manage to balance things out overall (they are clear and enforceable as written). He commented that the parking around the school is a problem and will continue to be a problem because there is always a new “crop” of kids who get their licenses and need to learn the rules. He suggested that the Police Department should hold a yearly assembly with the senior high students about driving/parking around the school (essentially explain the rules to the whole group once as a warning and let them know what the consequences will be if they don’t adhere to the rules). Mayor Kreft asked Chief Rovinsky to work with P&Z Adm. Jenness on putting a policy together regarding disorderly yards and buildings (protocol of how complaints are to be handled and who will enforce what, etc.).

Discussion was held on Ordinance No. 199 – Establishment of Police Committee and governing rules for said Committee. Mayor Kreft commented that there has been some discussion in recent meetings to either discontinue the Committee and/or to increase the number of members on it (residents and 1 additional Councilmember). Vrklan liked the idea of more members on the Committee, as it brings more community involvement to the table. Kreft commented that community input is very important. Reetz questioned how the meeting agendas would be put together in order to ensure that the meetings would be productive (worth people’s time, especially if the number involved increases). Rovinsky explained that the City Staff would now be in charge of collecting information from the Chief, Council, Police Committee and the general public and then putting the agenda together. It was agreed that Attorney Arneson would revise the ordinance and present it at the next regular Council meeting for the Council to review.

Chief Rovinsky presented information on the status of the squad cars. He stated that ideally 3 cars are needed due to number of events on weekends, overall coverage and backup if 1 vehicle breaks down. Some discussion was held on whether or not to keep 3 squads in the rotation or not. It was agreed to that the Police Committee should review the information on the squads more closely and make a recommendation to the Council as to which vehicle should be gotten rid, so that a new squad can be purchased. Brief discussion was held on squad maintenance. Chief Rovinsky explained that to his knowledge there was not a policy regarding maintenance.

Sheriff Ponath spoke on the mutual aid policy and how it works. Some concern was expressed about how much mutual aid the Arlington PD has to provide because the County Officers are too far away.

Some concern was expressed about personal purchases (such as weaponry) being made on city accounts just to get a better deal (presumably to be reimbursed) and that a policy should be on place that covers this (allowable or not).

Considerable discussion was held on department performance (parking of squads out front of the station, telephone coverage-making sure the phones are getting answered and residents are gotten back to in a timely manner, etc.). Considerable discussion was held on on-call time and regular work time and what is considered to be overtime pay. Concern was expressed that the city may not be getting the full coverage it is supposed to be and the officers may not be getting paid the overtime they have coming to them. It was agreed that the Chief, City Administrator and Deputy Clerk will look into the overtime pay issue. Chief Rovinsky presented a breakdown of how the number of officers and the hours they work affect the budget. Some concern was expressed that the City Office is not given a copy of the schedule of when the officers work to know who is on

duty.

Discussion was held on what should be the next step: hire a 3<sup>rd</sup> officer, contract with the County for patrol time coverage with the provision that it is cost effective for the City, and/or dismiss the entire department and contract all services with the County. Mayor Kreft stated that the Police Committee had made the recommendation to the Council to proceed with the hiring process for the third officer and that the deadline for applications had closed. He expressed his feelings that a 3<sup>rd</sup> officer should be hired as soon as possible, with the understanding that performance will continue to be monitored and the City can still pursue a possible contract with the County if it deems necessary. Chief Rovinsky stated that 43 applications had come in and reviewed the hiring process. Sheriff Ponath explained how the contracts with Green Isle and Winthrop work (cost) and stated that he feels they are doing well and have not been a strain on the Sheriff's Department. Lensing commented that it is the Council's decision on what kind of police service/protection it wants to provide to its citizens; Ponath agreed. Borchert commented that he does not want to lose the police department, but was opposed to hiring a third officer at this time. He suggested holding a public meeting in order to get input from the residents to find out what they would like to see happen. Some feelings were expressed about the possibility of hiring another bad officer. Mayor Kreft stated that the City should not be "gun shy" about hiring an additional officer based on a recent bad experience as it could happen within any department (not just the police department), but hopefully the next employee hired whether it be an officer or for another department would be a good employee. Attorney Arneson clarified the difference between the probationary mode and the disciplinary mode (possible officer misconduct, police officers have special protection). Krueger commented that the last officer resigned on his own accord; it was not a performance issue and was not let go by the City. Chief Rovinsky commented that mini evaluations (by other officers/Chief) can be done per pay period on the new officer and given to the Police Committee and Council for review throughout the year of probation. Reetz commented that he was in favor of hiring a third officer to bring the department up to full staff. He didn't think that contracting with the County would appease the residents. He just wants the overall performance standards of the department to improve; Vrklan agreed.

Vrklan commented that the City needs to re-evaluate its budget in order to get the inside of the police department's remodeling project completed.

Borchert commented on an advertisement that he had heard on KNUJ radio promoting the Arlington-Green Isle Police Department. Chief Rovinsky would get the ad corrected.

Motion by Scharping, seconded by Vrklan, and passed by unanimous vote to adjourn the Police Committee portion of the meeting at 9:58 p.m.

Motion by Wills, seconded by Reetz, and passed by unanimous vote to adjourn the meeting at 9:59 p.m.

POLICE COMMITTEE:

COUNCIL:

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Bill Lensing

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Mayor James R. Kreft

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Mike Scharping

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Administrator David L. Krueger