

ARLINGTON POLICE COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
JANUARY 10, 2007

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m., Bill Lensing presiding.

Members present: Bill Lensing, Mike Scharping, Councilmember Mike Vrklan

Members absent: Ex-Officio member Sibley County Sheriff Bruce Ponath

Also Present: City Administrator David Krueger, Mayor James Kreft, Police Chief Rovinsky, Veterinarian Lyle Rud

Lensing welcomed Mayor Kreft and Councilmember Vrklan as new members of the Committee.

The Committee reviewed the flow chart that had been put together showing "chain of command". Lensing expressed his thoughts about how things used to be and how they are now. He commented that the Council has taken away some of their authority, has become very controlling (micromanaging) and does not consider recommendations from the Police Committee anymore. Kreft and Vrklan both expressed their feelings that the role of the Police Committee does need to be more clearly defined and the communication between the Council and Police Committee needs significant improvement, which they are hopeful to get changed. Considerable discussion was held on the roles of the Mayor/Council, Police Committee and Employee Relations Committee. Krueger explained what issues are to be brought and/or handled by the Police Committee and Employee Relations Committee/Council. Lensing commented that when an individual comes to him with a complaint he directs that person to go to the police chief first and then if they are not satisfied after that, to contact him and he will bring it to the Police Committee. Vrklan agreed that all general complaints should be directed the police chief first, but suggested to the members to keep a record of it and bring it to the next regular meeting as a follow up and also to keep the others informed; that way if the other members are confronted by the public they can say that they aware of it and it is being taken care of. The Police Committee reviewed Ordinance No. 199. Lensing commented that having the ordinance is good because it clearly defines what the Police Committee is supposed to do, but the Council is not letting them.

Mayor Kreft commented that he wants to see this group move forward (forget the past) and start with a clean slate. He explained that in order to do so, the meetings will be recorded and minutes will be taken by city staff, just as they do for other committee meetings. The city staff will also be the contact for putting items on the agenda and will be responsible for getting packets out.

Chief Rovinsky explained the process involved in hiring a new full-time officer. Kreft questioned if the process was in writing. Rovinsky did not believe that it was. Kreft suggested getting it in writing. Discussion continued on the hiring process. Chief Rovinsky explained that the Council had authorized him to advertise and put an eligibility listing together only (no testing). Rovinsky stated that the deadline for applications was January 26<sup>th</sup>. Administrator Krueger stated that the next Council meeting would be February 5<sup>th</sup> at which time, Chief Rovinsky could ask for permission to start the testing phase.

Arlington Animal Clinic owner/Veterinarian Lyle Rud addressed the Committee about the stray situation in town. He stated that his clinic is also the County impound for strays, but when he quit the large animal portion of his clinic, the hours the clinic was open changed and there is not always someone around to take care of strays if they get impounded. He stated that Vicki Pomplun, one of his employees (also City Staff) had approached him about allowing the Arlington PD to impound strays when the clinic is closed (when he is gone/out of town) and volunteered to come in a couple of times a day and take care of them (provided she would be notified by the PD). Rud commented that he was ok with this and would provide a calendar to the PD (already has a key for the back door to the clinic) of dates he would be gone and then they could notify Pomplun. Rud also addressed the concern Pomplun had about getting more residents to license their pets. He stated that he would be willing to collect the license fee (plus late fee) for the City if a stray comes in that has

not been licensed. He would then release the stray and the City would mail the owner the tag. He requested that the pet ordinance be changed to reflect the Council giving him/his clinic this authority. He suggested putting an article in the newspaper that talks about 1) impoundment of strays-where they are taken and for how long, and 2) licensing pets and what is included such as the pet's protection, it is a form of identification and ensures the safe return of pet without impoundment (money savings), etc. He stated that in order to get more residents to license their pets, enforcement and follow through is needed.

Motion by Scharping, seconded by Vrklan, and passed by unanimous vote to recommend to the City Council to change the pet ordinance to include language about strays and impoundment at the Arlington Animal Clinic (authorize to collect license fee + late fee for strays).

Motion by Scharping, seconded by Vrklan, and passed by unanimous vote to recommend to the City Council (at their February 5<sup>th</sup> meeting) to proceed with the hiring process for a third officer from the point of testing to the end of the process.

Chief Rovinsky presented the schedule for February, which included himself and Officer Bennett as the 2 full-time officers. He also presented the same schedule if a third officer were on staff. He explained that there are times it looks like shifts are overlapping, which probably is the case due to what is going on in town (number of different functions) and need to have officer coverage at same. Discussion was held on the number/types of calls currently being handled by the Police Department and these were compared to previous eras. It was noted that the growth of the town, along with how society has changed, play a major role in the difference. Rovinsky had put a breakdown of wages together that showed actual hours and overtime hours (why there was overtime, example given a full-time officer calls in sick and can't find any part-time officers to help on short notice, so other full-time officer must work at time and half). Rovinsky commented that being short staffed is hurting the community overall as the phones can't be answered, there is no one in the office as much and the interaction within the community has diminished to almost nothing-no time available. He started a program years back for Fourth graders to be able to have lunch with an officer, a positive experience for the kids, which helped years later, less confrontations with the younger people. It was questioned why the city office could not take over answering the police department phones. It was noted that city staff has not been trained in what is or is not an emergency, plus they are fairly busy on their own without taking on more.

Chief Rovinsky presented information (make, model, mileage, etc.) on the squad cars. It was agreed to table the discussion regarding a new squad car until the situation with staffing (hire third officer) has been taken care of.

Brief discussion was held on the placement of a signs for 55 mph and 30 mph zones along County Road 9 (9<sup>th</sup> Avenue). It was the consensus that the Police Committee should address this issue and then have the Streets Department put the signs up.

Motion by Vrklan, seconded by Scharping, and passed by default (Lensing unable to vote) to appoint Bill Lensing as the Chairman of the Police Committee for one year.

Mayor Kreft commented that the city staff would be the secretary as they are for all the other committees. He commented that he would like to increase the number of members on the Police Committee.

Motion by Vrklan, seconded by Scharping, and passed by unanimous vote to adjourn the meeting.

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Chairman, Bill Lensing

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Secretary, Vicki L. Pomplun