

CLOQUET CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Tuesday November 3, 2015, 5:30 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Present: Bjerkness, Kolodge, Langley, Maki, Rock, Wilkinson, Mayor Hallback

Absent: None

Staff: S. Stracek, N. Klassen

Other: Jamie Lund, Pine Journal

Police Department Update/Study Update

Review and discussion of Steve Stracek's first year as Police Chief. Brian used this time to provide an update on where the Police Department is at this point. A variety of areas were addressed in the Law Enforcement Analysis that was completed prior to Steve taking the Chief position. Steve reviewed the areas of the final report and highlighted the department's status on several of the recommendations made in the report.

Vision/Mission Statement

- Work in progress and are continuing to identify items to strive for and identify goals. Shifts in leadership have introduced significant changes to the department. There is discussion of the development of a new vision and mission with plans to introduce during 2016.

Organizational Structure

- Reorganizational of the command structure has established a clear chain of command and rank structure within the department. Steve stated the Sergeants have stepped up to this new structure allowing him to step away from the everyday roles and focus on more management issues.
- Also introduced in 2015 was the rotation of a police officer into the investigative unit working with a Detective allowing for career development and professional growth.
- Non-sworn staff have been trained as evidence technicians and crime analysis.
- The Council requested an explanation of the Power Shift Officer. That position focuses on the time frames of high call volume or areas where more resources are needed, used as supplemental help, filling the gaps as needed. This position will help to provide some services that aren't able to be provided now. Discussion on which officer fills that position. The process is written into the contract with criteria outlined. Steve feels this is a good experience for any officer.
- The K9 handler is now back with the Patrol Division as recommended in the study

Work Schedule and Accounting for Discretionary Time

- The study recommends 9.5 hour schedule which Steve is not in agreement with, but the department has changed back to a “Dupont” schedule which allows the scheduling of work hours and benefit time with sole approval and review of Patrol Commander. The software used allows the monitoring of daily scheduling and efficiently produces payroll, work hours and benefit use reports. This system allows for a 11.5 hour/day rotation with 14 days worked/mo. Mayor Hallback stated he has received negative feedback from officers on this system. Steve responded that the staff has been told he is open to other ideas but has never had any feedback. With no feedback or ideas, he feels this is the best solution.
- The study recommends that the Sergeants work out of the role of officer responsibilities and focus more on supervisory tasks so resources are in place to address problems in the community.
- K. Kolodge stated the abuse of sick leave is a concern. Overtime costs the City and the City has responsibility to run efficiently. Trying to plan for absences is impossible.
- Tools such as ATACRAIDS online allow the department to assess emerging crime trends and assign patrol staff to hotspot areas.
- A new records management system is in place which assigns every call to a number. This allows for better tracking on case progress.

Evidence Handling

- There is now limited access to the property room allowing minimal entrance.
- Evidence intake locker put into place which allows for seamless submittal of evidence and maintains the chain of custody.
- A full assessment and reorganization of the evidence room has taken place. Software is now used to track evidence.
- D. Bjerckness questioned who is responsible for auditing this? The Police Chief is the responsible party. It is the expectation of best practice and policy to ensure things are done properly. They are also taking more pictures of evidence instead of confiscating and retaining evidence. Locks have also been changed with minimal access.

Accountability and Training

- The department has undergone timekeeping and training accountability and now has a way to track training time and account for FLSA standards. Nicole tracks all training hours and provides monthly training reports to the Sergeants to ensure all are up to date.
- There are now electronic daily bulletins and briefings to pass along information to all staff.
- Officers will be assigned geographic patrol areas in 2016 to build long term accountability/relationships with neighborhoods and issues.
- Staff collaboration with other agencies is ongoing and is already in place.

Council comments:

- D. Bjerckness – Under the new leadership there has been noted a decreased number of press releases. Steve’s response is that he doesn’t do as many press releases as were done in the past because his philosophy is to comment on “big” events, but is hesitant to release much until there is more specific/detailed information. When he is asked, he tells the press what they need to know.

- D. Bjerkness – With filling a vacancy on the CAB, and soon going through the hiring process of new police officers, is there work the Council needs to pay attention to before going through another hiring process? Brian responded that there are components that need to be addressed before the hiring process. Time needs to be spent getting the new CAB person up to speed, basic things to get into place as well as the process of hiring. There are 3 guiding documents with the CAB with a lot of differences between them. We need to find common ground with contract.
- S. Langley – Is there an issue of location of a police officer's residence? Steve responded that the policy redraft eliminated that issue. Discussion of officers taking home the police vehicles. To date, nothing has been changed. Brian responded this is an item that has not yet been addressed. Currently the commanders, detectives and chief take cars. There are multiple things to be looked at with this issue and has evolved over time. The question is if it reasonable to allow taking them home. The State Auditor only address whether they are taken home or not, not where the residence is or how far out.

Other Discussion:

- S. Langley was contacted by a resident regarding the ER being closed due to lack of doctors. The fire district was advised to reroute runs to Duluth this same occasion. This issue has no linkage to the City, however there may need to be a conversation in the future with the hospital on how to help recruit.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brian Fritsinger
City Administrator