



## **PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

January 20, 2021 - 4:00 p.m.  
Via Zoom Meets

### **CALL TO ORDER:**

A meeting of the City of Clarksville Public Safety Committee was called to order by Chairperson Richard Garrett on Wednesday, January 20, 2021, at 4:00 pm. This meeting was conducted via Zoom Meets.

### **ATTENDANCE:**

The following members responded to roll call and were connected to the meeting. It was noted there was a quorum.

Councilperson Richard Garrett, Chairperson; Councilperson Vondell Richmond; Councilperson DaJuan Little; Councilperson Karen Reynolds; Councilperson Ashlee Evans

Others Participating: Mayor Joe Pitts, Building & Codes Director David Smith, Fire & Rescue Chief Freddie Montgomery, Chief of Police David Crockarell, Deputy Chief Rick Stalder, Deputy Director Justin Crosby, City Attorney Lance Baker, Judge Charles Smith, Ernie Griffith, Internal Auditor Stephanie Fox, Valerie Ogle, Angela Downey

### **APPROVAL OF ELECTRONIC MEETING:**

*In order to comply with the technical aspects of the Governor's Executive Order regarding holding open meetings in a forum other than in the open and in public, the Public Safety Committee determines that meeting electronically is necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of its citizens due to the COVID-19 outbreak.*

Councilperson Richmond made a motion to approve the electronic meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Reynolds. The vote for the motion to conduct this meeting by electronic means was approved unanimously by the Committee.

## **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

The committee approved minutes from November 18, 2020 meeting, November 30, 2020, special meeting, and from December 16, 2020, after a motion was made by Councilperson Richmond and seconded by Councilperson Reynolds.

### **BUILDING & CODES DEPARTMENT:**

David Smith gave an overview of the department. He said we are not only in construction, but we have several divisions—code enforcement, administrative, and an abatement division. The administration division handles permits for new construction, subcontractor permits, and issuing all commercial permits for new construction; our commercial division handles zoning. The Board of Zoning Appeals is entertained by this office as well as in our commercial division. We employ roughly 13 construction inspectors to review the process of construction inspected for health and safety compliance. The code enforcement division looks at things like tall grass and junk cars. We have a number of employees that work in that capacity.

Mr. Smith talked about the fiscal calendar year 2020; we issued around 1200 new single-family permits calendar year 2020. That's a 30% increase over 2019 and a 90% increase over the calendar year 2018 to demonstrate single-family dwellings. This is to illustrate the growth that we're seeing. Note that our employee footprint has not grown in that time we've shuffled some personnel, we've diversified the skill sets of the employees we have. We haven't added any new employees to tackle that load of multifamily permits. We did 200 multifamily permits that are 30% over 2019 and a 250% increase over 2018. The commercial permits were down a little bit. They came down just a few percent over the previous two years, but the commercial is a tremendous driving factor. The code enforcement division does many cases month to month. Mr. Smith said if you have any questions, concerns about our practices, or what we do, please let him know.

### **FIRE & RESCUE DEPARTMENT:**

Chief Montgomery gave an overview of the department. I have provided you with a packet that explains our numbers. For the year, we ended up with just over 14,000 runs; 467 of those were fires, with 93 being house or structure fires. We estimate that loss at about \$5 million. We had about 11,000 rescue related calls, which made up about 75% of our run volume. CFR also has a fire prevention division that tasks with fire investigations, cause determination, and public education. They average about 1200 inspections per year. We have 235 personnel right now, and at the beginning of March will have 250 personnel. We successfully secured a grant for that 15 additional personnel, which is 100% funded for three years. With that additional personnel, it will help us catch up to the city growth. We have 12 stations and three administrative facilities. At this time, we're building a maintenance facility. We have five divisions: administrative division, training division, fire prevention, vehicle maintenance, and fire suppression. And now we have a Swiftwater team that operates out of one of our stations, and also, we are setting up a tactical rescue team. All of these things will help us deploy faster and get resources where they need to be.

Chief Montgomery went on to say that they are restructuring their ranking system. We're doing that to get us in line with other emergency agencies. Still, we're going with a more district set up to help with our span of control and our response model, and we are successful in getting grant money to get the vehicles. In doing that, we will stand up a tactical rescue division, and that division will help us do the things that we hadn't been able to do in the past. Our goal is to meet the National Response standard, hopefully, move the city to an ISO one rating, and ensure that we remain an all-hazard mitigation Fire Department.

Councilperson Evans asked the question, what is ISO? Chief Montgomery said that it is an Insurance Service Rating, like a scoreboard for fire departments where they rate our performance and infrastructure.

### **POLICE DEPARTMENT:**

Chief Crockarell gave an overview of the department. Clarksville Police Department is an accredited agency, and that is, as it stands, that's one of only 5% in the nation. It was 7%, and this summer, we were reaccredited for the fourth time in 2020. We are one of those agencies of only 5% nationwide. We're also state-accredited and have been since 2014, a lot fewer standards required, so this year we received our fourth award. We will immediately be preparing for our annual assessment that will come up this August. We are a full service police department. We also have dispatchers currently in the communication center. We are approaching with this fiscal year, allocated resources nearly 400 employees. Almost 70 of them are non sworn. So, with this allocation, 332 sworn police officers in this department. We have three policing districts. District one is the north side, and the downtown district is district two, and our third district is the St. B area. We are currently building a new precinct on International Boulevard right beside the fire station.

Chief Crockarell said that we compare our agency to the population by looking at a ratio of so many officers per 1000. We also need to take that a little further and bring a ratio into how many nonofficers we have in our department as support staff for those officers. For years, we've hovered around 1.9 to 2.0 officers per 1000. In this part of the country, I believe it's 2.7 officers per 1000 on average. We want to get to 2.2; the national average is 2.2 per 1000, so our hiring plan is robust to get to that 2.2/1000. We had a great 2020. For example, we hired 20% African Americans with a population, I think in the city is around 24%. So, you know, it will take us a long time to get to that number, but our goal is to mirror our population. We're a lot stronger than we used to be with our female officers, I guess a combination of challenges and goals. So when you're, filling your responsibilities, you'll spend a lot of time in the council meetings looking at rezoning cases. Please stop and remember that as you see this growth and you're approving these opportunities. As department heads, we need to keep up with that growth, so we provide a service. We're customer-based, and the citizens are our customers.

Councilperson Richmond thanked Chief Crockarell for his report and asked are the department heads present during the Regional Planning Commission meetings? Chief Crockarell said we have an officer there that attends those meetings. Councilperson Richmond also wondered if there is a council action to help resolve any concerns regarding rezoning. Chief Crockarell said I wasn't making a statement as if anything I said has anything to do with your choice on the rezoning approval. As our territories grow, there are more people within those territories that we serve. When I look at a ratio like 2.2 per 1000, it's just essential that we maintain that, and to maintain that ratio has a lot to do with the population itself, so if 1000 more residents move into town. We've got to make sure that our response time is where it needs to be, and the only way to impact the response time is to have more officers that can respond. Councilperson Richmond responded, thank you for that chief; that gives me a better insight into all areas' overall growing needs.

Chairperson Garrett said that as a follow-up, you mentioned the need for more officers and the shortage that we have, on average, we are looking at per officer entry level. Is it the set salary package that they get regardless of experience, or does it potentially vary in those considerations? Chief Crockarell said we will now start a cadet with no experience at \$40,000. They will receive training for twelve weeks in the academy. Then we require another 14 weeks of training with a training officer before they ever hit the streets solo, so before they go to their first call, they have to go through all that training. But once they finish our training, they go to \$42,049. So if you came from Nashville PD, we give you credit for five years of experience. So five years of experience and the adequate amount of training that we require you for the new pay study would start at \$48,000. So we're grateful for the step you all made for public safety.

**CITY COURT:**

Mr. Griffith gave an overview of how the City Court works; our job is to keep the court's records. We keep records of all the tickets for the Police Department, Fire Department for Buildings and Codes. And, the court's job is to disposition those charges whatever they might be. We also do many pretty important state reports. We have four clerks, actually five clerks, including myself, and we've been able to do that and maintain that number simply because we automate many things. And so we try to keep our costs down and keep our efficiency as high as possible. And so far, it's worked. The Tennessee Supreme Court has now stated that we can't have any in-person court until after March 31, which makes it a juggling act for us to maintain dockets at a level where they're just not uncontrollable. And we're trying a few different things, including zoom meetings. It's a process we are required by law to maintain records of all the citations, and we have to keep them for quite a long time. Mr. Griffith said if you have any questions or need any help with the court, we're always there. And always willing to help.

Judge Smith wanted to say hello, and as you're aware, Ernie Griffith and his folks do all the heavy lifting with court, and I'm honored to have the privilege to serve as City Judge. The number of citations is down, which is fortunate during this COVID epidemic. I don't know many of you new council members, and I hope we'll have a chance to meet each other, other than in the courtroom. So drive safely and avoid City Court.

**COMMITTEE ACTION REQUIRED:**

In a discussion of our regular committee dates and times, Chairperson Garrett said his understanding is that the meeting date for public safety is typically held on the third Wednesday of every month at 4 pm. All council members agreed to keep the dates and times the same. The next meeting will be on March 17 at 4:00 pm.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion to adjourn was made by Councilperson Evans, seconded by Councilperson Richmond, and approved by all at 4:36 pm.

Submitted by:  
Angela Downey  
Clarksville Police Department