



BUDGET WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, May 12, 2004, for the purpose of reviewing the Public Safety sections of the proposed FY 2005 budget.

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order at 8:05 p.m. It was held in the Council Room of the Municipal Building.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Konrad E. Herling, Leta M. Mach, Edward V. J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts, and Mayor Judith F. Davis.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael McLaughlin, City Manager; Jeff Williams, City Treasurer; David E. Moran, Assistant to the City Manager; Deirdre Allen, City Accountant; Chief Jim Craze, Lt. Dan O'Neil, Lt. Mike Craddock, Lt. Tom Kemp, Sgt. Jim Parker, Cpl. Maria Parker, and Sgt. Carl Schinner, Police Department; Chief Brian Rudy and Vice President Chris Fleshman, Greenbelt Volunteer Fire Department; and Kathleen Gallagher, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Craig Rich, Greenbelt F.O.P.; Sheldon Goldberg, GEAC; Jim Giese, Greenbelt News Review; and Silke Pope, Bill Holland, Ed Hickey, and Mary Crawford, Public Safety Advisory Committee.

Following introductions, Mr. McLaughlin announced a letter had been received from the State Highway Administration saying their most recent survey confirmed the need for a new traffic signal to be located at Greenbelt Road and Lakecrest Drive. He added that County Councilmember Doug Peters had been instrumental in getting this result.

Fire and Rescue

Chief Rudy provided a document on projected apparatus replacement. The Mayor asked him if the county was now providing adequate support for equipment maintenance, since this had been an issue at one point. He said that was now being taken care of.

Chief Rudy went on to say that the new wrinkle with the county is that they have notified Greenbelt they will be withdrawing career staff from the 3-5 p.m. time slot, despite the fact that most volunteers are at their regular jobs at that hour. He said he is planning to document the impact of this change for 30 days in order to have hard data to back up a complaint. He added the situation will be worse than it otherwise would have been since career staff were eliminated at Branchville last year.

Mr. Roberts said he would like to see more analysis of the problem the county is facing: is it that they cannot recruit the staff or that they do not have the funding to keep the staff on the payroll?

Mr. Holland asked about staggered start times for career staff. Chief Rudy said the county no longer does that at all.

Council asked staff to make available the letters sent to the county about career staffing a year ago, alert County Councilmember Peters to the problem, and prepare a letter expressing Council's serious concern to be sent now.

Police Department

A slide presentation was given on the department's plans and accomplishments. Chief Craze thanked Cpl. Parker for her work in preparing the presentation.

Accident and Parking Ticket Data: Mr. Herling asked for a list of locations of traffic accidents for the year. Council also asked for combined statistics with Code Enforcement for parking citations.

Accreditation: At the Chief's request, Mr. Schinner gave an overview of the CALEA accreditation process. In response to a question from Mr. Herling, he said the main advantages to having accreditation are that less litigation is directed against the department, there is a 10% reduction in liability insurance, and a high level of status and recognition is achieved for the department.

Crosswalk Bollards: Mr. Herling asked staff to look into whether east and west Greenbelt have been studied for pedestrian crosswalks and bollards to the extent that Center City has.

Springhill Lake Police Officer Position: Council asked to put the City's \$40,000 for sharing a police officer with AIMCO, which was not funded by the federal COPS program, back on the list.

Establishment of Title of Captain: Regarding the trickle-down effect of re-titling the current lieutenant positions as captains, Chief Craze said he had recommended simply eliminating the lieutenant title. Mr. McLaughlin said his preference was to bring in eventual replacements for the incumbents at a level 15 and a lieutenant title, with the possibility of promotion after at least three years. He said he believed the ranking at level 16 in the Hendricks study in part reflected the maturity and experience of the individuals currently in the positions and that "twinning" the positions would allow for others to grow into the job at a higher level.

Registration Sting Operation: The Mayor asked if there had been one recently at Greenbriar and, upon being told "no," suggested it might be time.

Report from Public Safety Advisory Committee: Council asked for information regarding the status of the improvements to the cable that were to allow enhanced performance of the surveillance cameras at Roosevelt Center. Regarding call boxes, Lt. Craddock said there was no grant funding available for these. In response to a question from Mr. Roberts, he added that Springhill Lake, the Metro Station, and the Spellman overpass were areas that had been targeted. There was discussion of incorporating them into the design of Springhill Lake when it was rebuilt. There was mention of reported drug dealing at Roosevelt Center and outside the Youth Center.

Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs) in Cruisers: This topic having been raised at the recent meeting with the F.O.P., Council asked for an update. Chief Craze said the department and the City Treasurer were working on a report. He said he thought things had begun to go awry when the department lost its internal Information Technology (IT) person. He said everyone had made a good faith effort to get this project completed but that the City IT staff had broader responsibilities and that their limited numbers meant they were spread too thin throughout the City. In response to a question from the Mayor about whether this compromised officer safety, the Chief said although the MDTs would make communication faster and better, the department had always had dispatch communication without them.

Mr. Putens said it was apparent that it would soon be time to bite the bullet since the City was confronting being stretched too thin in personnel in many departments.

Mayor Davis asked if this was a job that could be contracted out to finish. Mr. Williams said one problem was that the IT Director needs to rely on Police Department staff for specialized information. Chief Craze said he could assign someone full-time temporarily basis to work with IT.

There was discussion of why this problem had not either been resolved or brought back to Council. Mr. McLaughlin said although it was known that the project was considerably behind schedule, it had never been presented to him as a matter of safety.

Mr. Roberts asked how other Police Departments deal with this. Chief Craze said generally they have a full-time IT person. He said getting the system installed was just the first step and that keeping it up and functioning was a full-time job in his opinion.

Mr. Putens said he did not understand why, if the Chief had someone he could temporarily assign to assist IT with this on a full-time basis, he had not simply done so. He said this should be an internal administrative decision. Mr. Roberts added a qualification that it might depend on what work the person was being taken away from.

Red Light Cameras: Mr. Roberts said he was not happy to see removal of the one camera proposed by staff for the third time. He said statewide, the concern is with the program's ability to make money rather than to promote safety. Mayor Davis responded that what is proposed this year is moving the camera to a place where it could do more good. Chief Craze said from his perspective it was a matter of moving it from a place where there is no problem to a place where there is a problem. While previously there was no other viable location to which to move it, new technology now permits use of the cameras in left-turn lanes. Mayor Davis said she would prefer to identify the new location prior to removing the camera from the old location. Mr. McLaughlin said the cost of keeping it up until that study could be complete had already been removed from the budget. Council asked to have the cost identified of keeping it up until it could be determined where to move it.

Mr. Putens said he was not convinced that the new digital system would be better. He said he was concerned with the inability to assign points so that people could just keep paying fines indefinitely. He asked that it be put on the agenda for the legislative dinner to find a way to allow points to be awarded.

Capital Projects: Mr. McLaughlin noted there is \$25,000 under Capital Projects to study enlarging the police building, a possibility that had been allowed for when the building was constructed.

Other Business: Mr. McLaughlin announced the Four Cities meeting would be held tomorrow night at 7:30 p.m. in Berwyn Heights.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 p.m. Because of the lateness of the hour, it was agreed that Mr. McLaughlin would send Council a copy of his quarterly update.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathleen Gallagher