

**CITY OF WIXOM
49045 PONTIAC TRAIL
SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JUNE 9, 2020**

Mayor Beagle called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Present:

Mayor: P. Beagle
Deputy Mayor: T. Rzeznik
Councilmembers: P. Behrmann
K. Gottschall
T. Gronlund-Fox
P. Sharpe
R. Smiley

AGENDA CHANGES: (None)

CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

Mayor Beagle read the rules and procedures for speaking at the Call to the Public. There were no public comments at this time.

NEW BUSINESS:

1.) Discussion of Fiscal Action Plan for FY 2020-2021

A. Fire Department

Mr. Brown indicated that he prepared a memo addressing the gaps in staffing within the Fire Department. He commented that its been established the Fire Department Budget to be approved for Fiscal Year 2020-2021 would be remain the same, and any budgetary concerns could be addressed later on.

Ms. Stamper presented the Council with a summary of various budgetary items. She said the current fiscal year budget revenue over expenditures was just over \$200,000. She noted the figures within this presentation also reflected the dollar amounts should the millage not pass in November. She said the current tax revenue for the City of Wixom as of FY 20/21 was \$7,964,725 and \$5,689,869 should the millage drop. Ms. Stamper presented Council with a figure of \$807,742 revenue over expenditure dollar amount of FY 21/22 after a calculation of a full 3.5 mills should the millage become renewed in November. She gave the Council a visual of what the current Fire Department Budget of \$1,214,781.

Ms. Stamper presented a slide that offered a scenario of an additional three full-time firefighters and adding additional part-time coverage in order to cover the gaps. The cost for this approach in the next fiscal year would be \$258,000. She mentioned they would receive 75% in year one and two, then 25% in year three from the SAFER Grant; however, that could not start until FY 21/22. To note, the SAFER Grant could only be used if they hired new personnel so hiring would be delayed until FY 21/22.

Ms. Stamper presented Council with another model. This model was hire full time and part-time personnel. She said during the weekdays they would be staffed with four full-time from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m., five full-time members from 10 a.m. to 2

p.m., three full-time members from 2:00 p.m. to 6 p.m. and two part-time personnel from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. She said on the weekends, they would have two full-time members from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. and two part-time personnel covering the shift from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. They looked at possible additional staffing required to cover the shifts and would need a minimum of four personnel (three full-time and one part-time) and a maximum of seven (three full-time and four part-time). Mr. Brown mentioned with this model, the part-time personnel was scheduled for a twelve-hour shift.

Ms. Stamper presented another scenario with a model of staffing. This model included additional time blocks with existing employees and/or additional part-time employees (could be from other communities) covering the current gaps in coverage. The model reflected two people covering 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. during the weekend. She said the weekday gap coverage would result in two people working from 6 a.m. to 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. For this model they added a two person shift from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. during the weekday. She indicated this model would cost around \$158,000 in FY 20/21.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik asked if the SAFER Grant was applicable for part-time employees. Ms. Stamper said it was not.

Councilmember Gronlund-Fox wondered why they reduced the shifts to eight hours from twelve hours with the second scenario. Chief Roberts said the first model reflected twelve hour shifts for both full and part-time personnel. The full-time personnel worked from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. and the part-time worked from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. He stated they never proposed part-time staffing for twenty-four hour shifts. They recognized that part-time personnel were not available from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. She asked if any thought had been given to having the full-time firefighter and inspector both work and perform inspections during their free time during their shift. Chief Roberts said that would be fine, but they could not expect both individuals work seven days a week. Councilmember Gronlund-Fox supposed they would work twelve hour shifts and the other two members would work twelve-hour shifts. She understood there would still be a need to supplement time with part-time staff for vacations and sick days. She added the weekends could be utilized by part-time personnel. Chief Roberts said there would be a conflict with that because the part-time personnel could only work so many hours legally without the City having to pay benefits to them. He stated they had more hours to cover than they had people which was why they were in this predicament. Councilmember Gronlund-Fox wondered if they had any data the average amount of calls and busiest time of the day. Chief Roberts said they presented that data in January to Council. Councilmember Gronlund-Fox wondered if the proposed staffing would take care of the average calls of service. Chief Roberts said it would and noted that typically they received a higher call volume from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Councilmember Behrmann reviewed the packet they received during the fire presentation in January and understood the part-time proposal was \$110,000 and now the part-time proposal was \$158,000. In looking at the proposal, why couldn't they use part-time firefighters from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. just like they were schedule to work from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. as it would save on the overlap and reduce the cost back to \$110,000. He questioned why there was a need for the overlap from 2 p.m.

to 5 p.m. for \$58,000. Chief Roberts assumed it would be unlikely to obtain personnel that would want to work for the department part-time, let alone extending the shift to twelve hours. Councilmember Behrmann felt confused. He wondered if the twelve-hour shifts would be covered by full-time and the eight-hour shifts would be covered by part-time. Chief Roberts said one model demonstrated full-time members worked 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. and used part-time personnel to work from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. The other model was four eight-hour shifts utilizing the current full time and/or additional part-time employees.

Mr. Brown indicated they could advertise a regularly scheduled eight-hour shift and that could be appealing to people that lived out of the area. This would be a change in the order of business and implore a greater number of people to pull from. Mr. Brown thought it would be harder to get part-time people to work twelve-hour shifts because they usually worked another job.

Councilmember Behrmann wondered if the current members of the department wanted this model. Chief Roberts indicated they had not endorsed any model. They just wanted the station covered 24/7.

Mayor Beagle thought the part-time employees were not endorsing a scenario but as residents of the City they wanted the station covered 24 hours. He did not believe that anybody wanted a full-time fire department, but they needed 24-hour coverage.

Ms. Stamper specified the overlapping provided more individuals in the station during the busier times of the day.

Councilmember Gronlund-Fox wondered how many hours the full-time firefighters worked and if the hours met the criteria of the SAFER Grant. Chief Roberts believed they met the requirement for the SAFER Grant as they worked 37.5 hour per week.

Ms. Stamper said if they implemented one of the new models, they would no longer work 37.5 hours per week. The new model meant they would work three twelve-hour shifts during week one and four twelve-hour shifts week two.

Councilmember Smiley stated that Mr. Brown made clear the \$110,000 version of the model was un-realistic. He wondered if the \$158,000 model would work. Chief Roberts said the \$158,000 model would work, but you had to assume they could find personnel to work. Councilmember Smiley asked what Chief Roberts wanted. Chief Roberts believed a full-time staffing model with twelve-hour shift was what they needed. He believed this model would fail at some point as well because the part-time employees would not be able to commit. He indicated the City passed on several opportunities to plan for the future when they failed to pursue a SAFER Grant. He stated the City used to be very proactive and now they had become very reactive.

Mr. Brown said they would need to attract an additional four to five part time employees to make the shift model work.

Councilmember Behrmann recalled they had the ability to employ firefighters from other departments to cover these shifts. Chief Roberts said they did and they would be fully trained. He was aware they would only work until they obtained full-time employment somewhere else.

Ms. Stamper noted the Fire Department received \$19,500 in revenue from ambulance transports from July 1, 2018 and May 31, 2020. She noted that one mill equaled \$758,000.

Deputy Mayor Rzeknik said the fact was there were gaps in coverage and God forbid they received a house fire during one of those gaps. He believed if they were to get part time personnel to work, they needed to implement a regular schedule. He was in favor of the complete staffing of the Fire Station to fill in those gaps. He believed people would vote in favor of the millage because it included public safety.

Councilmember Gottschall said if they assumed they were to hire existing firefighters from other departments, why would they need to spend \$30,000 to train existing firefighters. Chief Roberts said the cost was associated with training them on the equipment and fortes pertaining to Wixom Fire. Councilmember Gottschall believed it depended on how many people would be hired that made one model more efficient than the other. He said the models made the numbers look similar but if you added training, it appeared less comparable. He wondered how many new people would be hired and if the \$30,000 was really accurate. He said if they were to go with the full-time model, the projections would take them out to cost in upwards of \$300,000. As of right now, he leaned more toward the shift-work model, but hoped they would pay attention to how many people they hired and how much they would cost to train.

Councilmember Sharpe understood Wixom was growing and needed to have a fire department that was covered twenty-four hours. He was unsure if it was clear on what the recommendation was from the City Manager and Fire Department. He thought they could do a better job buttoning up the presentation, recommendation and costs associated with their recommendation. He felt a better presentation would give Council the information they needed to work from. As of right now, it felt this was being tossed to the Council to sort out. It sounded like there was support for full-time coverage but they needed to know the best plan before making any decision.

Councilmember Behrmann echoed Councilmember Sharpe's comments. He would rather they moved with \$110,000 or \$150,000 whatever they needed to get the gaps covered now and then if they were unsuccessful in obtaining firefighters, they could look into the SAFER Grant to help offset the cost.

Mayor Beagle thought they were one event away from finding out if they had an efficient Fire Department. He would like the gaps covered but feared the part-time model would be kicking the can down the road.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

Mike Smith, 1692 Norton Creek, said he was a member of the Wixom Firefighter Union. He said they were ready to work with the City in order to fill the gaps in coverage.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 6:57 pm.

Catherine Buck
City Clerk

Approved 6-23-2020
