



City of Ashtabula
Ashtabula City Council
Safety Forces Committee
Monday, April 25, 2022 at 8:45 AM
Council Chambers
4717 Main Avenue

Minutes

Opening of Committee Meeting

Call to Order

The meeting of the Ashtabula City Council Safety Forces Committee was called to order at 8:45 a.m. by Committee Chair Speelman.

Roll Call

Members Present: Committee Chair Michael Speelman, Member John Roskovics

Absent: Vice Chair Kym Foglio

Officers Present: City Manager James Timonere, City Solicitor Cecilia Cooper, Chief of Police Robert Stell, Chief of Fire Shawn Gruber, Clerk of Council Stacy Senskey

Absent: none

Sunshine Law Certification

A quorum was established as defined by Ashtabula City Council Rules of Order. The meeting met the requirements of the Ohio Sunshine Laws Open Meetings Act.

Welcome and Acknowledgement of Visitors

Police Department – Chief’s Report

February Statistics

APD experienced an unusually low call volume in February.

March Statistics

March call volume was up slightly but still low. APD normally experiences 11-1200 calls per month at this time of year.

APD is fully staffed at this time, but if they enter into a contract with Ashtabula Metropolitan Housing Authority (AMHA), they will need to hire some officers. The twelve new police vehicles will arrive from mid to late May after they are outfitted with all the police accessories.

Chief Stell will distribute the 2021 Annual report soon.

Fire Department – Chief’s Report

Chief Gruber reported that AFD statistics are fairly normal except the number of overdoses rose. He attributes the overdoses to fentanyl use. Chief Stell agreed fentanyl is an issue and is also seeing increased overdose incidents.

City Manager's Report

Proposed Changes to Civil Service Rules and Regulations

Chief Gruber explained the changes to Civil Service rules reflect a restructuring of the pay grid. The rank of Engineer was removed through attrition. Previously, the only people permitted to test for the position of Lieutenant were Engineers. Union representatives presented the changes to the Civil Service Commission and made a request to update the Civil Service rules. The Civil Service Commission approved their request. The Council members received a copy of the changed language. Chief Gruber asked the Safety Forces Committee to present the amended Civil Service Rules at the next Regular Council meeting for Council adoption.

Motion: Member Roskovics moved to approve Chief Gruber's request; Chair Speelman seconded.

Discussion:

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Speelman, Roskovics

Nays: None

Motion Passed.

The Shelby Scholarship recipient is finishing the police academy training at the end of this month and passed the physical.

Unfinished Business

New Business

Golf carts on the roadway

According to the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles, golf carts are considered unconventional vehicles.

Unconventional vehicles include:

Under-Speed Vehicles (USV)

Low-Speed Vehicles (LSV)

Utility Vehicles (UV)

Mini Trucks (MT)

Most golf carts are a USV. The authorization to operate these vehicles on public roads is at the discretion of the local authority of the jurisdiction where the vehicle will be operated (see Ohio Revised Code 4511.215). Please contact local law enforcement in your city, township, village, or other jurisdiction for applicable laws. If you choose to operate your unconventional vehicle on authorized roads, you must first complete the following requirements:

- 1. Obtain a title. See our How to Title a Motor Vehicle page for information on titling these vehicles. Under-speed vehicles, utility vehicles, and mini-trucks must pass an equipment inspection conducted by your local law enforcement.**
- 2. See Ohio Administrative Code 4501-30 for more information on equipment requirements for road-use.**
- 3. Purchase license plates and vehicle registration.**

Committee Chair Speelman opened the discussion about the use of golf carts on City roads. Council members have received requests from City residents to explore the subject. City Solicitor Cooper informed Council members of the legal requirements of allowing golf carts on City roadways. Inspections are required and would be the responsibility of the APD. Several nearby communities have allowed golf carts with a speed limit of 25 miles per hour. Though they are

allowed on some cities' streets, golf carts are prohibited on county, state, and federal roadways. Chief Stell does not get many calls about golf carts but people have been cited for driving them on the roadway. He has no objections to using them during special events but feels they are generally unsafe and problematic for use on the roadways. Member Roskovics suggested allowing golf carts access to specific tourist areas. City Manager Timonere thinks allowing golf carts could offer parking solutions and business opportunities, but could become problematic. The Lift Bridge Community Association (LBCA) and the Ashtabula Downtown Development Association (ADDA) have expressed a desire to request golf cart legislation. Chief Gruber feels the use of the golf carts is seasonal but has increased by the growing use of the local marinas. He doesn't have an issue with them being driven in certain areas of the City, but they would not be appropriate throughout the entire City. Currently, a local mechanic's business services golf carts.

Motion: Chair Speelman moved to approve discussing golf cart legislation at the next Regular Council meeting; Member Roskovics seconded.

Discussion:

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Speelman, Roskovics

Nays: None

Motion Passed.

Chief Gruber presented commentary regarding the State of Ohio House Bill (HB) 172, which amended the Ohio Revised Code regarding fireworks and takes effect July 1, 2022. The bill allows larger fireworks to be launched, and increases the days fireworks can be launched, but also gives cities the ability to opt-out of the bill. Other sites in the area are choosing to opt-out of HB, which both Chief Gruber and Chief Stell recommend for Ashtabula. Chief Gruber asked City Solicitor Cooper to draft legislation for the City of Ashtabula to opt-out of HB 172 and continue to prohibit the use of fireworks, as an emergency measure, since the effective date is looming. Professional firework shows are still allowable. HB 172 added multiple holidays in which fireworks are allowable.

Motion: Chair Speelman moved to approve Chief Gruber's request; Member Roskovics seconded.

Discussion:

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Speelman, Roskovics

Nays: None

Motion Passed

Next Meeting

Monday, May 23, 2022 - 8:45 a.m.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 09:19 AM by Chair Speelman

Attested By:

Clerk of Council, Stacy H. Senskey