



City of Ashtabula
Ashtabula City Council
Safety Forces Committee
Monday, August 28, 2023 at 8:45 AM
4717 Main Avenue, Ashtabula, OH 44004

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: Chair: Council Vice President Michael Speelman, Vice Chair: Ward 1 Councilor Kym Foglio, Member: Council President John Roskovics

Absent: none

Officers Present: City Manager James Timonere, Clerk of Council McKenzie Burgan

Ashtabula Department Heads Present: Police Chief Robert Stell, Fire Chief Shawn Gruber

Visitors: Captain Stephen Chase

Sunshine Law Certification

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

Welcome and Acknowledgement of Visitors

Chair Speelman welcomed guest Captain Stephen Chase of the Fire Department.

Police Department – Chief’s Report

July 2023 Stats

Chief Stell reported that nothing is unusual for this time of year. The 1,500-1,600 calls for service are normal for these months and will start to slow down around November.

Mr. Speelman asked how Safety Town went. Chief Stell stated it went really well. They were hoping for a bigger turnout for their first year. However, upon speaking with Jim Oatman, who ran Safety Town back in the day for 20 years, he said that for the first year, we had a good turnout. Within three to four years, they got up to 200+ kids. They had about 65 kids signed up this year and about 50-52 went through. The parents were happy and it went well.

Fire Department – Chief’s Report

Chief Gruber stated he ran the numbers this morning and they are pretty much on par with their calls for service. They are down a little bit for EMS calls. This is because Community Care added an additional squad to try and help alleviate some of the issues they were having with us needing them to do critical transport. There is nothing glaring in the numbers.

Proposed Update to The Fire Prevention Code - Codified Ordinance Section 1501

Captain Chase explained that when they put sprinkler systems in buildings where they are required, they are required by the Ohio Fire Code. The National Fire Protection Association standard 13 is what is typically used to install sprinkler systems and this covers how the system is installed. There is a small loophole in this that allows that sprinkler pipe to also supply other water supplies without taking into account that other water supply. He is trying to get this changed at the national level. To protect us and prevent this from being an issue in the city the proposal is that the sprinkler supply pipe be dedicated back to AQUA's main. This is pretty common in most places. Not a lot of people have tried to use this loophole. He wants to prevent this entirely in the future. Mr. Speelman asked if the concern was that there would not be enough water to run the sprinkler system and Captain Chase said yes. Chief Gruber stated that AQUA prefers to have a dedicated water supply right to the sprinkler system.

Motion: Vice Chair Kym Foglio moved to Update our Fire Prevention Code Section 1501 of our Codified Ordinance; Member John Roskovics seconded.

Discussion: City Manager Timonere asked what this would mean for buildings currently under construction that are using one line. Captain Chase stated there is not much they can do about it. Nothing is black and white. It is a giant gray area and he is trying to minimize the gray area and make it safe in the future for everyone. The ones that are in existence, at this point in time, he cannot change. He can try and encourage people to do the right thing. Mr. Timonere stated that when they determine the cost of the sewer tap-in fees, it is based on the size of your water line. He said that they tell people your fire sprinkler system does not count. However, if you use that in combination they go off the size of that line. This can take the fee from \$1,500 to potentially \$6,000 just for the tap-in fees. They try and tell people if they just run a line it could save money for them and it is safer. Mr. Speelman said, going forward, if this were to pass at a council meeting, it would leave anything existing as is and anything new would have to be based on this code.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Chair Michael Speelman, Vice Chair Kym Foglio, Member John Roskovics

Nays: None

Motion passed.

City Manager's Report

City Manager Timonere stated they have completed promotional exams in the Fire Department but they have not promoted anyone yet. They are trying to seek out another company to do the assessment portion of the promotional exam only because the cost has gone way up. They have found a couple of options and will speak with the Civil Service Commission about them. The Police Department has two people who have passed all areas of the promotional exams and need to be evaluated. They are looking at possibly having a different provider do this.

He stated he saw that golf carts were on the agenda to be discussed. He knows he mentioned they would internally start looking into this. He has not put this in front of the Chiefs but he found a few areas that do not allow golf carts on any roads that are 35 mph+. He thought this was a good place to start. He took the map of the city and outlined some roads that they thought golf carts should not be allowed on. This includes big, busy roads and roads where big factories are located. With that being said, these other ordinances in other areas do state that you are allowed to cross these 35 mph+ streets. You just cannot ride on them. He said this is an option if they really want to talk about this. Mrs. Foglio said it is not something she wants to talk about but people are riding golf carts around illegally. Mr. Timonere asked Chief Stell if he knew how many people they had stopped on golf carts and he said he was not sure off the top of his head. Mrs. Foglio stated she was thinking of even just limiting golf carts to the harbor area. Mr. Timonere said this could be done, but last time it was suggested, there was some pushback on this idea. Mr. Speelman stated people are doing this anyway. He asked if the definition of a golf cart could be specific enough that it would indeed be a golf cart and not a four-wheeler or side-by-side. How do we make this specific enough and safe? Mr. Timonere said in other places the Highway Patrol inspects and certifies golf carts and there is some type of license for them. He would not want to have them need a city license, but when certified they

have to have lights, horns, turn signals, seatbelts, and limited to 35 mph or less. He believes maybe this is a good starting point. He did not want to go too much unless they wanted to have more of a conversation. He believes there are a couple of different ways this can go. For example, only allowing them on 25 mph roads and restricting certain roads. Mr. Speelman stated he would bet a lot of the AirBnBs in the harbor have a golf cart available with the house and this is a draw for renters. Then, the renters do not know where they can and cannot drive the golf carts. Mr. Timonere stated they have had a company say that if legislation is passed, they would consider coming into town and renting golf carts. Mrs. Foglio asked if Sunset Taxi rents golf carts and Mr. Timonere said not in the city. Mr. Speelman said he understands the draw of golf carts. Mr. Timonere said it is becoming more prevalent now, especially down at the marinas. People just take the golf carts up the road to run to a nearby store. Mr. Speelman stated people are probably thinking they can drink and then drive golf carts. Chief Stell stated it is not legal to do that. You cannot even ride a bike while under the influence.

Mr. Speelman asked how we were to go forward. Mr. Roskovics stated he believes keeping people off of the main roads is a good place to start. This way, if we have the rules in place, we can regulate them. Mrs. Foglio said this would provide more safety also. Mr. Speelman said he believes this requires more discussion. Mr. Timonere said they could work with the Police Department and Solicitor's office to come up with legislation. He said he would go over the map with the Chief and then try and get the map scanned and sent to the council members. If there are other roads that the council feels should be limited, they can let him know. Mrs. Foglio said with the weather about to be changing they will have a little bit of time to finalize everything. Mr. Speelman said for now they will keep it at committee.

Member Roskovics asked if we have a replacement for the Civil Service Commission Chair yet. Mr. Timonere said no, but we need to keep on this.

City Solicitor's Report

N/A

Unfinished Business

None.

New Business

Golf Carts within the City of Ashtabula limits

Golf Carts were discussed during the City Manager's report.

Chief Gruber stated that the Fire Department was lucky enough to get another AFG grant. They are working on legislation for SCBA equipment purchases. The equipment has a lifetime of 15 years and they are at that timeframe with their old equipment. They are having an entrance exam on September 30th. Currently, there are three people signed up to take the test. Mr. Speelman asked where someone would sign up for this. Chief Gruber said they can stop at the City Manager's office, the Fire Station, or go to the City's employment tab on their website to download the application. Applications need to be turned in by Friday, September 22nd at 4:00 p.m.

Next Meeting

September 25, 2023, at 8:45 a.m.

Mr. Timonere asked Mr. Speelman if he would like Tim Settles to attend this next meeting to speak about the ready alert system. Mr. Speelman stated he was going to cancel the September 25th meeting and asked Mr. Timonere to invite Mr. Settles to the October 23rd meeting.

The next meeting will take place on Monday, October 23rd at 8:45 a.m. in the AAP Conference Room.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:09 AM by Chair Michael Speelman.

Attested By: McKenzie Burgan, Clerk of Council