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# **CITY OF CONCORD**

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**Public Safety Board  
May 16, 2024 (3:00 PM) – City Council Chambers  
Meeting Minutes**

**In Attendance**

**Members:** Donald Carter, Jessica Eskeland, Councilor & Chair Amanda Grady Sexton, Councilor Jim Schlosser, Natch Greyes, Ana McKenna, Steve Edwards, Lisa Brown

**Staff:** Deputy Chief Elisa Folsom, Deputy Chief Mark Hebert, Chief John Chisholm, Deputy Chief Barrett Moulton, Deputy Chief John Thomas, Chief Bradley Osgood, Deputy Chief Steven Smagula, Nicole Petrin, Serina Chase

**Minute Taker:** Serina Chase, Councilor & Chair Amanda Grady Sexton

**Welcome from the Chair**

The meeting was called to order at 3:00pm by Councilor & Chair Amanda Grady Sexton

**Introductions**

Introductions were made by attending councilors, members, and guests.

**Approval of April 18, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

Motion made by Councilor Schlosser to approve the April 18, 2024 meeting minutes. Deputy Chief Moulton seconded. Motion Passed unanimously.

**Annual report presentations from Concord Fire Department and Concord Police Department**

**Fire Department (Chief John Chisholm)**

Chief Chisholm began by acknowledging various Department accomplishments, events, and pertinent observations of both 2022 and 2023.

Topics included:

- **2022** - Unprecedented turnover within Fire Administration



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- **2022** - The contracted Station Location Study by Emergency Services Consulting International (ESCI) presented to City Council on February 14, 2022.

Councilor Schlosser asked about the status of the station location study. Chief Chisholm replied that if the CIP passes and continues to proceed as mapped, funds will be made available in FY26 to facilitate a study for determining needs and property assessments. At this time, property assessments will take place in FY29. 2030 is slated as the year of project construction.

- **2023** – Vacancies within the Department
- **2023** – The paradigm shift of new employees' staffing profiles
- **2023** – On October 31, 2023 the Department launched the First Due Size-Up platform for fire inspections, incident reporting, and scheduling.
- **2023** – On October 31, 2023 the Fire Communications Center deployed a new CAD system by Tyler Technologies.
- **2023** - A two-year collective bargaining agreement was signed with the Professional Firefighters of Concord, NH - IAFF Local 1045.
- **2023** - The Department experienced an 5.1% increase in structure fires from 2022 to 2023.
- **2023** – The Department's Swiftwater Rescue team was recognized in New Hampshire's Fire Mobilization plan
- **2023** – The EMS division has been conducting outreach with local nursing homes, as there has been an increase in non-emergent transport requests from nursing homes to hospitals, due to short staffing within private ambulance services.

Councilor Grady Sexton asked which nursing homes have been requesting these types of transports. Chief Chisholm replied that it is typically Pleasant View and Presidential Oaks. Councilor Grady Sexton then asked if the Department could bill the nursing homes for transports. Chief Chisholm explained that the Department currently bills patients for transports – Currently, there is no billing mechanism to directly bill the facility responsible for initiating these calls.



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- **2023** – In July, Department employees took place in a voluntary cancer screening program organized by the Professional Firefighters of Concord, NH – IAFF Local 1045. The program was expanded to allow all City employees and their families to participate.

Councilor Schlosser asked if it was a one-time event or if it was a recurring yearly screening event. Chief Chisholm explained that the funding for the initial screening event was out of pocket by the employees. Subsequently, a two-year collective bargaining agreement was signed with IAFF Local 1045 which established funds for additional screenings. He clarified that an internal group is currently researching which screenings should be made available in the future and thus how often those should occur.

- **2023** – Changes to the hiring model which have increased the time and cost associated with filling positions

Natch Greyes asked if the Department was previously experiencing lateral transfers from in-state or out-of-state departments. Chief Chisholm responded that in order for the transfer to be truly lateral, the individual must have already been part of the NH Retirement System. He continued that paramedics have been very difficult to find however, the Department has since hired several individuals who were previously from out of state.

- **2023** – Expanding the use of the training facility to host recruit schools for new hires and training with Mutual Aid partners
- **2023** – Several new Department vehicles/apparatuses were either placed into service or were ordered.
- **2023** – Promotional processes for Fire Captain and Lieutenant positions
- **2023** – Additional turnover within the Department
- **2023** - The Department continued efforts to shift to radio fire alarm boxes.



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Chief Chisholm then moved onto recommendations.

Topics included:

- PFAS-free gear, which has already been ordered and should arrive within the next few months.
- Adding an additional Fire Marshal position in the Fire Prevention Bureau.

Currently the Bureau consists of only two staff members, both of whom are responsible for: Inspections, fire investigations, public outreach, plans reviews, and permitting, among other duties.

Chief Chisholm noted that fire investigations have increased due to the 5.1% surge in structure fires from 2022 to 2023. This has exacerbated the Bureau's already heavy workload. Additionally, due to this heavy workload, the Bureau has been very limited with their ability to perform public outreach within the community. Chief Chisholm remarked that he would like to increase public outreach however, the Department does not have the ability to do so at this time.

Chief Chisholm also informed the Board that, due to the retirement of the previous Assistant Fire Marshal, the Department no longer offers a car seat safety technician available to the public. There are currently no plans to replace that position, due to current staffing. Deputy Chief Moulton mentioned that the Police Department has at least two car seat safety technicians available, if the Fire Department needs referrals for members of the public.

Chief Chisholm also mentioned that staffing increases in the Fire Prevention Bureau did not make it into the upcoming budget cycle, which was his biggest concern for this upcoming year's budget.

- Supporting off-duty training.
- Developing City of Concord service level standards and measurement metrics.
- Planning for current and future service demands
- Adding an additional Dispatcher to the Communications Center.
- Investigating alternate means to purchase apparatus



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Chief Chisholm opened for questions or comments.

Councilor Schlosser noted that he would welcome input from members of the public, as some of the Fire Departments recommendations come with additional costs. He asked: How can we best make the decisions for what to fund, that then goes to City Council? Then, how do we make the case to the citizens review that these are important expenditures, should we choose to add them to the budget?

Natch Greyes noted that training is critical for Police and Fire, as lack of training can lead to increased liability costs and morale issues. He believes training should be prioritized.

Lisa Brown mentioned that she remembered a similar situation regarding funding for off-duty training, last year. She recalled being against supporting off-duty training, due to the overtime funds necessary to complete them. She remains against the use of any additional funds to support off-duty training and believes that these trainings must instead take place with good management and good scheduling in mind.

Lisa Brown asked if there is a different pay grade for Firefighters who are qualified to drive a ladder truck. Chief Chisholm responded that there is no difference in pay grade, and that all Concord Firefighters are expected to be able to step into that role.

Ms. Brown noted that the safety education of New Americans should be prioritized, and not brushed off. Chief Chisholm responded that the Fire Department is not brushing off New Americans. He explained that as soon as the Department has adequate staffing, educational outreach will become a high priority.

Ms. Brown then asked what the Fire Department is doing to support New Americans right now. Chief Chisholm responded that the Department does not currently have the bandwidth to perform educational outreach to New Americans. He reiterated that the Department's focus is currently on life safety. This is why he was disappointed to learn that an additional staff member for the Fire Prevention Bureau was not incorporated into the FY25 budget. This additional staff member could help facilitate increased educational outreach.



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Ms. Brown asked: Would you agree that most New Americans are living in multi-family units? Chief Chisholm responded that he knows that there are areas of multi-family units which are heavily populated by New Americans. Ms. Brown asked if safely evacuating New Americans from these buildings during emergencies is important. Chief Chisholm agreed, and reiterated that as soon as the Department has additional staffing, educational outreach pertaining to fire safety will become a priority.

Councilor Grady Sexton asked Ms. Brown if she had any ideas or programs in mind that may be help to facilitate the educational outreach to New Americans. She continued that the purpose of the PSAB is to specifically look at policy issues – The Fiscal Policy Advisory Committee and the full Council then figures out how to implement what the PSAB determines to be in the best interest of public safety.

Ms. Brown said that she is currently working at an elementary school and rarely sees the Fire Department at the school for public outreach. Chief Chisholm confirmed that every year, the trucks are scheduled to be at the schools for public outreach and education. However, due to limited staffing, sometimes the trucks can't make it or need to leave early on calls.

Councilor Grady Sexton asked if the state offers any educational fire prevention documents or materials and suggested utilizing the City's PIO, Stefanie Breton, to help create and post educational content for the public.

Natch Greyes made a motion to accept the Fire Department's Annual Report with the following amendments:

- Remove the 2022 data and updates
- Denote that City Council already adopted the PFAS gear acquisition. Add that the Department expects the gear to arrive within the next few months.
- Create a new category called "Upcoming Priorities" or "Future Priorities". Move "Addition of a Dispatch Supervisor in the Communications Center" to the new category.

Councilor Schlosser seconded. Motion passed unanimously.



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## **Police Department (Chief Bradley Osgood)**

Chief Osgood began by informing the Board that he will give his presentation in 4 parts with supporting documents.

## **2023 Annual Crime Report**

Statistics were provided on the following:

- Calls for service
- Mental health calls for service
- Traffic enforcement and traffic accidents
- Offenses reported
- Overdose calls for service
- Arrests

## **Notes from the Chief**

Chief Osgood notified the Board that staffing remains a challenge going into FY25. Approaching FY25, the Department currently has:

- 14 police officer vacancies.
- 1 social worker vacancy, which will hopefully be advertised for later this month.
- 2 parking enforcement officer vacancies.
- 1 part time civilian position in evidence, which is currently listed as a labor grade 9.

Chief Osgood believes that this position should be elevated to a higher labor grade due to the sensitive nature of the items which are handled, as well as exposure to dangerous substances and firearms. Employees in this position are exposed to dangerous substances such as fentanyl, blood evidence, and methamphetamine, among others. This position also requires the employee to maintain a working knowledge of weapons systems. Additionally, this position is crucial to the chain of custody when it comes to evidence, specifically its use in legal cases.



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- The Department's dispatch center currently has no vacancies and two new hires will start in May and June 2024.
- In the past five years, the Department has only replaced and retained 56% of those who have resigned or retired.
- The Department currently has eight sworn officers who are eligible for retirement this year.
- The Department's current vacancy rate is 22%.
- The patrol division is currently staffed at 73%.

Chief Osgood explained that the Department is in the early stages of reviewing existing policies for the accreditation process. The Department has already revised and reissued a number of them. Chief Osgood believes that the City should consider hiring a full time or part time accreditation manager, as he has been primarily handling these duties, which has significantly increased his workload.

The accreditation process also requires the Department to have an early intervention system, which helps track officer complaints, excessive use of force, foot pursuits, excessive use of sick time, etc. Currently the Department does not utilize this software. However, Chief Osgood explained that the Department will be seeking funding for this software within one of the upcoming budget cycles. Chief Osgood then explained that the Department's RMS/CAD system is currently 20 years old and the current vendor will no longer provide upgrades to the system. He noted that the current vendor will continue to provide technical support, short-term. The Department would like to explore replacement options this year, starting this summer. \$250,000 is currently set aside in CIP 645 to cover the cost however, Chief Osgood believes that this may not be enough funding.

The Department is also considering purchasing a software that will help them manage the documents and files associated with their FTO program. Currently, the Department is utilizing paper and pen to manage these files and documents.

The Department is also considering purchasing a time-keeping software for their very complex scheduling system. Currently the Department utilizes an Excel spreadsheet for all of their scheduling.



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Chief Osgood suspects that all of the aforementioned software, with the exception of the RMS/CAD software, comes with a cost of about \$7,500 – \$10,000.

Other software that the Department has considered purchasing is some sort of streamlined reporting software, and software for handling complaints and internal affairs.

Finally, Chief Osgood spoke about the challenges of maintaining the Department's vehicle fleet. He believes that the City should consider increasing the number of cruisers ordered per year, so that the vehicles are only on patrol for 3 years. Currently, the Department keeps vehicles on patrol for 4 years. The 3-year patrol model will help reduce wear-and-tear on the vehicles and allow them to be reliably used in the Department's unmarked fleet afterwards.

Mr. Greyes asked when the Department transitioned from the previous patrol model to the 4-year patrol model. Chief Osgood believes that the model was changed sometime between 7-10 years.

## **FY25 Program Change Request Summary**

Councilor Schlosser asked for clarification regarding what a program change request (PCR) is. Chief Osgood explained that PCR is used to help a Department acquire additional funding for things that are not already built into the Department's budget. Every City Department submits PCRs for review, and the City Manager essentially selects which items should then be considered by City Council.

Chief Osgood then summarized the Police Department's FY25 Program Change Requests, which included:

- Police officer retention program
- Police social worker labor grade upgrade
- Adverse Childhood Experience Response Team (ACERT)
- Training Overtime
- Peer support team
- Less lethal munitions



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- Utility upgrades
- Power DMS accreditation Module

## **FY25 Capital Improvement Program Project Summary**

Chief Osgood then summarized the Police Department's FY25 Capital Improvement Program Project Summary, which included but is not limited to:

- PD communications equipment
- BVP ballistic vest replacement
- Police station improvements
- Police firearms range improvement
- Patrol rifle replacements
- Handgun replacements
- Police vehicle and equipment replacements
- Police computer crimes hardware and equipment
- New police headquarters

Chief Osgood opened for questions and comments.

Steve Edwards asked if there are any trends in the types of crimes that the Department has noticed over the years. Deputy Chief Thomas explained that gift card fraud has been rampant lately.

Minute taker, Serina Chase, left the meeting at 4:25pm. Councilor & Chair Amanda Grady Sexton resumed the meeting minutes.

The Concord Police Department is seeing an increase in numerous types of scams. One scam involves a call from someone purporting to be from the CPD. These types of scams involve asks for gift cards or money, or demands for unpaid fines or fees. People do fall victim to these scams, including a recent case where a 35-year-old wired a scammer \$8,000 that she was told she owed for court fines. The CPD



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notifies the media when they are alerted to these scams.

In addition, the CPD uncovered a massive scheme involving gift cards and iPhones.

Councilor Grady Sexton noted that this case was the result of their excellent detective work, and commended the CPD. Councilor Grady Sexton and Ms. McKenna stated that they hope the PD will consider finding ways to tell the public about all of the work they're doing.

### **Future Agenda Planning**

The next meeting of the PSAB will be held on June 20th at 3:00 PM in Council Chambers.

PSAB members determined that their June meeting will include a presentation from Councilor Schlosser and Roseanne Haggerty from the Committee for Concord's Plan to End Homelessness and from Nicole Pertrin, the Concord Police Department's social worker. The July meeting will include a presentation from SOAR. Councilor Schlosser will coordinate the meeting with the Committee for Concord's Plan to End Homelessness which will focus on an update on the Committee's new plan.

It was not determined who will extend the invite to SOAR.

### **Adjournment**

Action: At 4:32 PM, there being no additional PSAB business, Mr. Greys moved approval to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilor Schlosser and passed with no dissenting votes.