

City of Tyler
Special Remote City Council Meeting 6:00 pm
Monday, November 21, 2022
Tyler Fire Hall 101 E. Lincoln St. Tyler, MN 56178

Members present: Tim Sanderson, Scott Dressen, and Cricket Raschke.

Members attending remotely via Zoom: Joan Jagt and Kenneth Jensen.

Others present: Stephanie LaBrune - City Administrator, Glen Petersen – City Attorney, AJ Anderson – Acting-Police Chief, Mark Wilmes- Tyler Tribute, Darren Lutterman, Monica Lutterman, Dale Shak, Jeff Hansen, David Marlette, Craig Hess, Troy Tommerassen, Curt Daas, Diane Borresen, Richard Borresen, Al Barber, Brenda Sichmeller, Bob Sichmeller, David Haroldson, Oscar Hansen, and Ron Persoon.

A. Acting Mayor Sanderson called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

C. Approval of Agenda

Acting Mayor Sanderson called for a motion to approve the agenda with the addition of public comment following the conflict-of-interest agenda item. Dressen made a motion to approve the agenda with the addition of public comment and Raschke seconded the motion. Approved by: Dressen, Raschke, and Sanderson; Opposed: none. Motion granted.

D. Declare Conflict of Interest – No conflicts declared.

E. Public Comment

1. Jeff Hansen announced to the council that he would like to see an officer hired who lives in the community and have an officer who has full control over that officer where if the city contracts coverage with the county they would not have control over county officers.
2. David Marlette told the council that the school is in need of help for a couple hours in the morning and then again after school with traffic. He said it is important for the school district to have coverage. He stated that he does not think AJ (Acting Police Chief) is on duty in the mornings. David said that he has talked with the Stephanie (City Administrator) about the need for police coverage at the school 2-3 hours per day and said that if the school could get grant funding to help pay for those hours, they would surely do so to help get additional coverage. He also said that one of the strong points of why the new school was built in Tyler was because of the police coverage.
3. Joan Jagt stated that she thinks we have a great police department now and said that school safety is important and the city does want to work together with everyone. She also said that she wrote a note and will have Stephanie read that in a little bit.
4. Al Barber said that if everyone adds \$10 per month to their utility bill with 400 utility bills it would create about \$46,000 per year to pay for the coverage that is needed. He said with the city having part time police officers now AJ is going to get burnt out and does not want to see him walk away.
5. Oscar Hansen said that he can testify that the experience an officer gets coming out of school will far exceed what Tyler needs because it is not Minneapolis. He said \$10 - \$15 per month would be worth it. He also said burnout happens all the time and it is going to be difficult to get someone to apply for the job because of the small community and the lower wage rates.
6. Scott Dressen as a public citizen said that he feels that the school had to be built in Tyler for several other reasons such as having a hospital in Tyler versus Ruthton or Russell. Scott said that it is his feeling that the school should also be considering hiring their own resource officer. He then said that the personnel committee did sit down and talk about hiring a second

officer, and no one was against it but did talk about other options that could be better. He said that the committee does not want to just hire anyone, they want to hire the best person to fit the city's needs. He also said that burnout is something that everyone experiences from time to time and the city is trying to do their best.

7. Troy Tommerassen is this meeting to get a final decision on where the city is going with the police department? Attorney Petersen replied by saying that the purpose of the meeting is to be able to give the applicant a yes or a no as he has been on the line for quite a while with the council trying to make a decision as to whether they feel he is the right candidate and had the experience and skills needed to do what Tyler needs. Petersen went on to say that Tyler may be small but the city faces all of the same issues that larger cities have. He said that just the other day the county deputies came in contact with some drugs and they had to stop because there was fear that the drugs were laced with fentanyl which could be deadly to an officer and it is serious business so it has to be the right fit, so the question for the council is do you want to hire this candidate and do you want to keep the position open while operating as is or try and contract with the County for some additional hours of coverage.
8. Craig Hess said that is what his question was, he said that it would be awesome if the city contracts with the county while they still look for an officer.
9. Stephanie LaBrune then read Joan Jagt's article referencing a personnel meeting with the city and county. The article said that the county is willing to work with the city and both parties would like to have the Police Chief and Sheriff involved in future discussions so that everyone is on the same page. Joan then said that the personnel committee does want to support AJ and would like to continue working with the County as they have stated that they are willing, and the plan is to get AJ some help while the city continues to look for an officer.
10. Troy Tommerassen stated that he would like to see more detailed information in the paper or on Facebook keeping the public informed as to where the council is at in the hiring process so the public knows what is going on.
11. Dave Haroldson asked if AJ has been involved with the hiring process and if he has had any input on the discussion. Joan Jagt replied by saying that AJ has been involved and if the council agrees to move forward in getting some help from the County AJ and Chad (Sheriff) will be involved in the process. She also said AJ has been involved with the interviews and she does not plan to keep him out of the loop.
12. Mark Wilmes said he sits through all of the meetings and asked AJ if he sat in on the interviews. AJ replied and said that he has sat in on the interviews but his opinions do not mean anything and he is impacted by the decision the most. AJ said that he and Stephanie were the only ones to interview this candidate and he does not understand why the committee does not want to hire him. Mark then said that he would love to pay more taxes in order to hire a second officer. He went on to say that he also is in favor of raising taxes to keep sewage out of people's basement.
13. Monica Lutterman said that AJ's job is dangerous and she does not want to see him get burnt out. She said that the law enforcement community is small.
14. Dale Shak said that it is crazy for the school to hire their own police because the city has it. He said that Highway 14 traffic is horrible with the traffic from the school, one school officer could not do it alone. Dale then said that he could easily find areas to cut in the budget.
15. Dave Marlette commented again that if the city could contract with the county for roughly the same cost as hiring an officer it would make more sense to do that to alleviate those liability concerns and extra operating costs that come along with hiring someone new.
16. Dave Haroldson then asked if anyone talked to AJ to see if he was willing to work with the County. Joan Jagt replied by saying that the first meeting with the County was to see if they were at all interested, then the committee was going to bring it back to the city council and see if they were ok with moving forward in that direction and then following the council's approval the committee was going to bring AJ and Chad into future conversations. Dave said that he thinks the committee should have talked to AJ before going to the County. Attorney

Petersen stated that the City Council is the authority that sets policies and the direction they want the city to go. Sanderson and Jagt agreed with Petersen.

17. Bob Sichmeller then read the article from the paper that stated that the council was going to act on the personnel committee's recommendation to not hire a second officer. Scott Dressen replied by saying that the committee did not say that they were not going to hire a second person, they only said that they did not recommend hiring an individual.
18. Cricket Raschke stated that the city does not want to abolish the police department. She said they are working with the budget and trying to find the right candidate.
19. Ken Jensen then addressed the crowd saying that he is a nice guy and would like people to come see him if they have concerns or want to know what has been going on at the council meetings. He also said that he wants to get AJ some help and the council is trying to make that happen.

F. Tabled Business

1. **Police Department Personnel-** Following public comment, Acting Mayor Sanderson suggested that the personnel committee, Anderson, and LaBrune conduct a second interview with the candidate in question. Raschke agreed with the recommendation and made a motion to conduct a second interview with the candidate in question. Dressen seconded the motion. Approved by: Dressen, Raschke, and Sanderson; Opposed: none. Motion granted. LaBrune then commented that she would like to give the individual an answer as soon as possible.
*Following the police department discussion, all members of the public left the meeting with the exception of Mark Wilmes and Craig Hess.
2. **2023 Budget Discussion-** Administrator LaBrune presented a draft budget. She stated that she did not hear any comments back from the council so the new draft was based off of past discussions and includes \$80,000 that could go toward contracting hours of police coverage or hiring an individual. She said \$80,000 is short of what is needed for a full-time person; however, it would cover a large portion of the cost. LaBrune also explained that the funds for future streets department equipment was removed and reserve dollars were brought in to help assist with the cost to start the new housing development. LaBrune said that high dollar equipment purchases and current and future infrastructure needs continues to be a high priority. She said that the council needs to take those future obligations into consideration when approving the final budget and future levy increases. Raschke said that years of zero percent levy increases has put the city in a tough place. Following discussion, the council agreed to keep additional funds in the 2023 police department budget for the purpose of contracting or hiring a new employee.

G. Adjourn

With there being no further items before the Council, at 7:54p.m. Acting Mayor Sanderson declared the meeting adjourned. Approved by: Sanderson, Jensen, and Raschke; Opposed: None. Motion granted.



Tim Sanderson, Acting Mayor

ATTEST:


Stephanie LaBrune, City Administrator / Clerk