

CITY OF SANTA BARBARA
FIRE & POLICE COMMISSION MINUTES

Thursday, **March 23, 2017 @ 4:00**
Administrative Conference Room
Fire Department

REGULAR MEETING

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL:

Present: Commissioners: Christensen, Daniel, Laponis, Torell, and Zeitsoff

Staff Present: Fire Chief Pat McElroy, Police Captain Alex Altavilla, City Attorney John Doimas,
Secretary Carol Lupo

2. Changes to the Agenda:

None.

3. Approval of Minutes of February 23, 2017

MOTION: Torell to approve minutes of February 23, 2017. Daniel seconded.

VOTE: Unanimous voice vote.

4. Public Comment (Total Time 10 minutes)

None.

5. Subcommittee Reports

Daniel announced information regarding the Firefighters Alliance fundraising event, The Fire Ball, to be held May 7th, at Dos Pueblos Ranch.

Daniel also encouraged commissioners to participate in the Police Dept. Ride Along Program with Sergeant Katsapsis, who interacts with the homeless population during the morning shift. To schedule, contact assistant Thalia Chaltas at 897-2392. The application is on the Police Dept. website.

Zeitsoff attended an event where Chief Luhnnow was quoted as saying almost half of the Police service calls are related to homeless issues. Capt. Altavilla stated he would have to check on those statistics.

6. Old Business: Commissioners may ask questions for clarification, refer to staff for factual information or make brief reports or announcements.

Laponis related work he did assisting in mediating a dance permit and noise issue at a local business. Several incidents had been reported to Police Department. All parties were cooperative. Some difficulty communicating as one of the business owners was Spanish-speaking. There is potential for this business to still come before the fire and police commission if matter does not get resolved. Daniel is bilingual and could have assisted.

7. **New Business:**

Zeitsoff asked that the April agenda include an item to review the final versions of the Fire and Police Department's budget submissions before the City Council presentations in May.

Daniel inquired whether there was a motion last month regarding Liliana Encinas' position. There was not a motion. McElroy informed the commission that Encinas has now been offered a full time job with the City of Goleta.

McElroy stated the City is proposing budget cuts primarily due to lower sales tax revenue.

8. **Discuss and adopt the Commission's priorities for 2017:**

Commissioners were asked to suggest priorities for 2017.

Torell proposal: Homelessness. He conceded that the issue could be unsolvable, mostly due to the costs related to potential solutions or assistance. Zeitsoff commented she believes Santa Barbara is a receptive community and the City of Los Angeles has done a good job which could be modeled after. She agrees the solution would require funding, but is concerned about the impact on our police and fire departments. Feels the commissioners could look into what other communities are doing that works.

Christensen proposal: Budget changes/impacts to the Fire and Police Departments in light of federal and state budget funding priorities (i.e., CPG, Homeland Security), and also the ramifications if the California is declared a sanctuary state.

Zeitsoff proposal: How to promote and obtain funding to remodel Fire Station 7 and build a new Police Station.

McElroy gave an update on the progress of the Fire Station 7 remodel. Initial designs have been received. They are considering a new location at the Sheffield Reservoir property. Current building was built in 1952, is in the high fire area and the building is not fire resistant. Looking at a year-round combined Forest Service / City Station to offer greater fire protection.

This led to discussion of the proposed City proposition to raise the sales tax to fund City infrastructure projects, and the Commission offering to support that campaign.

Christensen stated the annual calendar that she developed and shared with the Commission previously should remain a core agenda item list.

Torell suggested that even if any of the proposed priorities are not selected as a priority for 2017, that the commission should still stay informed on that particular topic.

MOTION: Zeitsoff to set a priority for the commission to study and assist in developing a recommendation to fund a new Central Police Station and Fire Station Number 7. Laponis seconded.

DISCUSSION:

Torell: Questioned whether the Commission's recommendation could make a difference.

Daniel: Suggested that this could be part of the sub committee's responsibilities.

Christensen: Police Department cost is the biggest obstacle. Agrees and does support the idea, but feels challenged that it could be hard to get progress on this as a commission priority.

Torell: Does not see how the commission's recommendation to Council would change anything. Funding thru a sales tax increase will be based on a vote of residents.

Zeitsoff: The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) plan to be discussed later, Fire Station 7 is listed as a top a priority and remains a top priority.

Christensen: Refer the funding of a new Fire Station 7 to the Fire Subcommittee and the funding of a new Police Headquarters to the Police Subcommittee for work and study.

Laponis: The issue is mostly directly related to each department. Second, it is already on the CIP and a proposed sales tax increase could help fund.

VOTE: Unanimous voice vote.

Daniel asked for clarification of the motion. Laponis stated that the Commission would do everything to promote the building of a new Fire Station 7 and Police Headquarters. Practically, it may be done thru the sub-committees.

MOTION: Christensen to set as a priority for the commission the challenges and funding impacts to the Fire and Police Departments related to Federal and State budgets. Daniel seconded.

DISCUSSION:

Torell: Confirm the wording of the motion.

VOTE: Unanimous voice vote; Laponis abstained.

MOTION: Torell to set as a priority for the commission to educate ourselves on homeless issues and related budget and operational impacts to the Fire and Police departments and any potential solutions. Zeitsoff seconded.

DISCUSSION:

Christensen: Could this be a sub-group matter? She also stated she is entertaining the daytime ride along suggestion.

Torell: Suggested attending meetings related to the homeless issue. He also stated it would take a coordinated, multi-agency effort to be effective.

Laponis: Commented that homelessness is a challenge for community and an issue that will go beyond 2017.

VOTE: Torell NO, Daniel NO, Zeitsoff YES, Laponis Abstained, Christensen NO. Motion denied.

9. Receive reports on the Fire and Police Departments Capital Improvement Projects.

a. Fire items in consideration for this year's budget:

- Fire Academy: Reduced to \$300,000 and pushed out to 2019. Also in consideration is whether this should be an item in the CIP, as it is not building anything but costs related to hiring employees.
- Fire Station 7: \$180,000 preliminary funding for 2017–18, has also been pushed out to 2018-19. City is leaning toward a 1-cent sales tax increase that could potentially make this irrelevant.
- Station 6 ventilation upgrade - Pushed out.
- Fire station alerting system: Computer-generated voice for dispatch. Will cut response time.
- Communication Equipment relocation from Franceschi Park.
- Total about \$3.5 million dollars.

Zeitsoff remarked that Fire Station 7 was at the top of funding priorities on the City Council presentation graphic of the CIP pyramid.

b. Police Department: Field Operations Commander Alex Altavilla

- Police Department building about \$80 million; would be built at same site.
- Upgrade Furniture \$300,000 total.

10. Monthly Fire Chief's Report

- 833 incidents over the last month; Medical calls remain the dominant call type.
- Vegetation fire and 3 structure fires. Responded to Ward Drive structure fire via automatic aid with Santa Barbara County.
- 2 promotions expected this week: Fire Captain impending retirement. Interviewing today for replacement. Also interviewed 5 Engineers for 1 vacancy.
- Heavy on training this time of year.
- Recovering January and February storms costs along with other departments due to emergency disaster declaration by state.
- Santa Barbara Fire Chiefs Association working on County ambulance contract which ends December 2019. Proposing a new EMS model for Santa Barbara County. Huge project for next two years. Fire Chiefs Association will be an advisory role. City and County leaders would make the decisions. Currently ALS (Advanced Life Support) is provided by Montecito and Santa Barbara County. BLS (Basic Life Support) is provided by Santa Maria and Santa Barbara, because an ambulance with paramedics can respond to locations faster.

11. Monthly Police Chief's Report

Police Department Staffing:

- 142 authorized; 137 current staffing. City Council approved over-hire by four officers.
- April 21 open recruitment testing.
- Hiring for non-sworn positions as well.
- Public Engagement Officer starts March 27. Funded partially through vacant Deputy Chief position. Will oversee alcohol related areas and marijuana. A non-sworn position.
- Field Operations Division 48 team strength, which is good. 10 officers are currently in "Other" category (not able to do their full duties).
- Tactical Patrol staffed at 5; full strength is 6.

- Swearing-in of 10 new officers. Wednesday April 5th at 4 p.m. at Cabrillo Arts Pavilion. Thursday April 6th Academy graduation at 1 p.m. at Oxnard Performing Arts Center.
- 48th annual Thomas Guerry Awards. May 10th at 4:30 PM at Board of Supervisors Room in the County Administration Building.
- Stats similar to last month. New system being developed. Daniel would like to see Minor vs. Adult statistics.

12. Adjourned 6:00 p.m.