

Missoula City Council Public Safety and Health Committee Minutes

December 11, 2019

2:25 PM

City Council Chambers

140 W. Pine Street, Missoula , MT

Members present: Mirtha Becerra, Michelle Cares, Heather Harp, Jordan Hess, Gwen Jones, Julie Merritt, Jesse Ramos, Bryan von Lossberg, Heidi West

Members absent: Stacie Anderson

1. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

Called to order 2:33pm

1.1 Roll Call

1.2 Approval of the Minutes

The minutes were approved as submitted.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

3. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

3.1 Fire Department Update

Brad Davis, Asst. Chief of Operations of the Missoula Fire Department (MFD) was introduced. He was interested in sitting in front of the council to discuss an update on the Peak Activity Unit (PAU) and the Active Attack Incident Response (AAIR) training.

MFD was granted funding to be able to staff a PAU during certain months over the summer, where June, July and August were identified as their peak months of service. The PAU would be staffed on Fridays and Saturdays, the peak days of the week, between 1:00 pm and 11:00 pm with one officer and one firefighter each shift.

The overall goal was to address the increased call volume had decreased station reliability. Their analyzed data also showed that in 2018, 33% of MFD's call volume (over 9000 total calls) involved multiple incidents at the same time - this includes duplicate calls in the same district where that district's engine cannot respond because it is already busy on another call. Therefore another engine has to respond outside of it's district, which increases our call response time, and takes that engine out of it's own district for response. Brad noted that this instance is referred to this as "concurrent calls". The Peak Activity Unit is a way to address the increased call volume and keeping our engines in place in their district for higher acuity calls and addressing concurrent calls by staffing the PAU during our times of peak call volume.

PAU is a way to, during times of increased call volume, increase station reliability and assist with keeping engines in their own district.

Other fire departments utilize multiple different types of apparatus for their PAU. MFD just so happened to have a new ambulance that had the available equipment and was readily available to be plugged right into this purpose.

The PAU was staffed for 33 total shifts, as Brad noted earlier. It was staffed on Fridays and Saturdays from 1:00 pm-11:00 pm from June through September, as well as one Sunday shift in August where multiple events were occurring in the city.

It ran 208 total responses, which is about 1 incident every hour and a half, so this was a very busy unit. MFD had an idea that it would run primarily lower-acuity calls when they first implemented the unit, but they came to find that it served more aid than just that role as they got into the test run. It ran 48 code 1 responses (non-emergent) and 92 emergent responses both where they were the first due apparatus on scene. The difference of the total calls it ran being incidents of higher acuity where it was not the first unit to respond to the scene - such as fire incidents or motor vehicle responses.

MFD compiled data from the responses and one of the most promising statistics was the response time. It met the 90th percentile of 5 minutes and 39 seconds. For code 1 responses (less emergent), it still met the 90th percentile at 8 minutes and 40 seconds; the time indicated here (see slide 9) encompasses from time of dispatch, to units responding on scene. All other engines had improved response times while the PAU was staffed. If you refer back to the Master Fire Plan, you'll see response times of our primary engines decreased - so they improved during the times the PAU was staffed.

Brad explained what the NFPA standard is, what they look for, and how it sets a standard for station reliability. MFD identified that they were below the NFPA's 90th percentile, instead sitting at the high 80th percentile. A table on slide 10 indicates the increased response times that were compiled by the department. With the

MFD determined the primary response area for the PAU would be districts 1, 4 & 2 because they were identified as the stations with the lowest station reliability in their Master Fire Plan. Brad also noted that 1 unit would have a difficult time covering the entire city, though it did occasionally venture into district 3 when it was needed there.

The other thing that came to light with the data was, if there was an ALS (advanced life support) call - say in district 4 - this unit would move to district 4 so it could cover that area while the primary unit was busy. This put firefighters on scene to concurrent calls in that district at the 90th percentile response time and played a large factor on while the response time was so low while this was running.

Brad noted that any improvement in response time is a benefit and he'd like to see it in the higher 90's, but any improvement is a benefit - especially where it's meeting the standard.

Brad wrapped up the PAU discussion noting that it was "worth its weight in gold" as a creative way to decrease the gap in mobility and improve station reliability and the general ability to get crews on scene in a minimum amount of time.

Brad noted the he does not see this as a replacement for a 3 person fire engine company and based on the NFPA 1710 standards, MFD currently falls short by 2 personnel, so adding this additional crew also allows us to meet the minimum staffing set by that standard.

As we continue to grow as a City and seek to meet our goals and standards, this is not a final answer for MFD, but it does serve as a valuable asset for the City. Brad marked the resource disparity of bringing a ladder truck out to certain areas has a dispatch time of 25 minutes in some areas - particularly the newly annexed Industrial Park and airport areas. In those areas, station 4 responds with a type 1 fire engine to optimize response time on-scene. The next nearest ladder truck comes from Station 3 (on 39th Street) and it has to come across town to respond to those northern and western-most areas of the city. MFD most recently saw this at the Greyback fire incident in that area. Thus, this is not a solution to all their problems and there is still a lot of room for improvement. Still the areas the PAU is meant to address, it does so exceedingly well. He looks forward to staffing this up in the future. The annual fire report is attached to this referral for the council's review.

MFD is looking at our goals moving forward and what we need to continue to grow and move forward. With that, they are looking to wrap up 2019 soon and creating their strategic plan moving forward to cover the next 3-5 years.

Brad reiterated the PAU is a huge benefit and a great option moving forward. He suggests this as a great option to staff this up continuously during peak hours or possibly 24/7 moving forward.

Brad also discussed the active attack integrated response (AAIR) training progress -there has been great progress and success in training the department. MFD has built a great relationship with Missoula Police Department (MPD) and other local response agencies throughout the training. There was some communication improvements identified that could be made and they will work to improve those going forward. Training included tabletops with the mall and other large-scale affiliates. Brad also informed the council that AAIR protective equipment and gear has been added to most of their apparatus at this time - ballistic vests and helmets. MFD has been working with MPD on collaborative training for this type of response. Additional gear has been ordered to get the engines up to 100% stocked - that has not yet arrived, but should be here soon.

Brad wrapped up his discussion and opened it up to questions and comments for the council.

Michelle Cares noted that the other item on the agenda is administrative only and should be quick, so there should be 8 minutes for questions.

Bryan von Lossberg noted that this was clear that the PAU was going to be a good thing and going forward he asked MFD to think about "what are the trigger points where it makes sense to staff 24/7, an additional unit, or when is it best to make the next good investment to staff this". Brad replied that MFD has every intention of compiling that data in detail to do what we need to do. The strategic plan they intend to build will look at numerous variables to define what and when additional units are needed and when would be the best time to implement it will be.

Michelle asked Brad to clarify where the budget for the unit came from. Brad asked for an increase in the overtime budget and they ended up staffing it starting July 1 of this year and ran it on overtime during that time.

Michelle asked Brad to clarify the last column on the table of slide #10. Brad spoke to how that takes the overall station reliability that the unit was staffed. What it is the

overall station reliability for the 3 months that the PAU was staffed. Those numbers went down and Brad noted that he didn't know why, but his best estimation is because it only focuses on a small sample size of the whole year and also reflects 7 days a week, not just the 2 days a week that the PAU ran. Michelle suggested a 2018 snapshot of that same time period.

Michelle also asked about slide 6 - there were 68 calls that are not accounted for in the numbers of calls and she wanted to clarify that difference. Would a different unit have been called as secondary? Brad stated no; not on those remaining calls. This unit was never attached to a run card and was never dispatched through CAD/911. Its dispatch, per it's protocol, is at the discretion of the PAU officer and the Battalion Chief. Michelle asked why that is best practice - could it be construed as over staffing. Brad stated this absolutely does not lead to over staffing because MFD is already below the national standard for staffing, so adding the 2 personnel responding with the PAU brings them to the national standard. This unit also allows them to release other units - including MESI - as needed so they are free to respond to other calls and allows them to address their increasing call volume and frequent concurrent call issues. As an additional piece of apparatus, we try not to over-commit them to respond while we are out of place. Michelle thanked Brad for clarifying and underscoring that important factor. She offered time for one more question.

Bryan had one more comment about the 3rd column that was previously shown and suggested that he just removing it from the table. "It's not part of the message at this point and it actually detracts from the message at this point." Brad agreed and thanked Bryan for that comment.

Michelle noted that there is no public in the room to ask for public comment unless Fire Chief would like to add anything. Nothing to add. She thanked Brad for his time and presentation.

N/A

3.2 Health Board

Michelle Cares stated the other item on the agenda is to suspend the rules to appoint the only applicant for a position for which they have actually held in the past. So Bryan von Lossberg motioned to suspend the rules.

Debbie Johnson's position expires at the end of the year and it was put out for public applications and the only applicant had already held the position in the past. So the motion on the referral needed to be updated to include 2 votes - one to suspend the Council Rule #33 and the second to appoint Debbie Johnson as a regular member to the Health Board.

Voting commenced as noted. Motion to Suspend Council Rule #33 to waive the interview passed without opposition.

Julie Merritt moved to make the second recommended motion and also thanked Michelle Cares for her service and her work on this committee. Michelle thanked her for that.

No public comment on the motion. Voting commenced as noted. Motion to appoint Debbie Johnson as a regular member to the Health Board for the term commencing January 1, 2020 and ending December 31, 2022 passed without opposition.

Moved by: Bryan von Lossberg

Suspend Council Rule #33 to waive the interview.

AYES: (9): Mirtha Becerra, Michelle Cares, Heather Harp, Jordan Hess, Gwen Jones, Julie Merritt, Jesse Ramos, Bryan von Lossberg, and Heidi West

ABSENT: (1): Stacie Anderson

Vote results: Approved (9 to 0)

Moved by: Julie Merritt

Appoint Debbie Johnson as a regular member to the Health Board for the term commencing January 1, 2020 and ending December 31, 2022.

AYES: (9): Mirtha Becerra, Michelle Cares, Heather Harp, Jordan Hess, Gwen Jones, Julie Merritt, Jesse Ramos, Bryan von Lossberg, and Heidi West

ABSENT: (1): Stacie Anderson

Vote results: Approved (9 to 0)

4. ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned