

Missoula City Council Public Safety and Health Committee Minutes

February 12, 2020

10:30 AM

City Council Chambers

140 W. Pine Street, Missoula , MT

Members present: Stacie Anderson (chair), John P. Contos, Mirtha Becerra, Jordan Hess, Jesse Ramos, Amber Sherrill, Sandra Vasecka, Heidi West

Members absent: Heather Harp, Gwen Jones, Julie Merritt, Bryan von Lossberg

1. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

1.1 Roll Call

The minutes were approved as submitted.

1.2 Approval of the Minutes

The minutes were approved as submitted.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

None

3. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

3.3 Fire Department Update

Fire Chief Jeff Brandt gave an update on the overview of the Missoula Fire Department on where they are and a look into the future. The fire department's mission is to provide fire service needs to the community, and their priority is to ensure firefighter safety on scene. The department will be doing a budget update will be in a few weeks. The budget tailors to the Master Fire Plan and the road map they laid out in the Master Fire Plan. In the forefront in regard to forecasting is the Mullan Road Build Grant and to provide services to that area and being able to give the same level of service to that area. You can look simplistically in how we meet the level of service and looking to making sure we have trained personnel to arrive on scene in a timely manner and enough personnel on scene to stabilize and mitigate the situation. Those are the two measurements on how we provide service. They are always looking for growth and opportunities and capturing grants is a priority. They are continuing to stay engaged in the community making sure they have leadership meetings and being engaged at all city levels.

Assistant Chief Gordy Hughes talked about the Fire Prevention Bureau. The FPB consists of the Fire Marshall, Assistant Fire Marshall, and three inspectors. They are all firefighters and are expected to act as such. With the increased growth rate in the community, the bureau is in the same boat as Development Services with increased workload. The ISO survey is due this year which is an update to the PPC-Public

Protection Classification-how the department is ranked in the water system and 911 system. It is based on the industry standards and insurance around the country. We are currently a 3. It dictates how the fire insurance premiums are set. We are due this year for a review and a lot of the review is going to be pointed towards new annexation and how they provide services to that area. Another factor is the acquisition of the water system. The new 911 software system is beneficial and may help the ISO rating.

Stacie Anderson asked how often the ISO survey was due. Gordy stated It is every five years, but they can request an update at any time. The ISO falls in line with station location and how quickly we respond and get to areas within the city.

With the growth and with the growth policy the city has implemented they are seeing a lot of unique projects that are taxing the FPB as far as how they have to spend enormous amounts of time dealing with new strategies and policies based on the tightness of neighborhoods and streets being one of the aspects crucial on how we deliver emergency services. They now have the ability to dictate where to place hydrants in locations. There are challenges as far as housing being developed within alleyways and infill places. Another item front and center is the adoption of 2018 fire code this summer. They have added provisions within the code that we as a municipality look at outside of what the state adopts. It is a local option that we choose for the way we develop in our community.

Brad Davis, Assistant Fire Chief of Operations spoke on the Maintenance Division. He thanked everyone for another FTE for Maintenance division. It has been very successful. Pending repair requests are down 49%. They are down to 79 outstanding write-ups. Another great benefit is that they are cross-trained as firefighters. The Maintenance Division was able staff an engine to respond to calls in the city while all other apparatus was at a 2-alarm structure fire. This is an example how having cross-training folks is a benefit. Along with keeping apparatus in top working order, they are in charge of maintaining facilities and buildings at the fire department. They do all of the snow removal at the departments and deal with procuring new apparatus as well. Their projects include a strategic facilities plan for additional resources and a cold storage building to move some of the less frequently used equipment to give additional room. As they are working on procurement on equipment and the apparatus life cycles it is important to talk about core replacement schedule and keeping up with it. They are purchasing a new Type 1 apparatus this year, and another wildland type 2 apparatus. They are also slated for another type 1 engine and another type 6 wildland engine next fiscal year as well. Stacie asked Brad to talk about core replacement schedule. Brad said for them specifically this is about apparatus replacement and core apparatus and they built out the core replacement schedule and they have them on a life cycle and they pay close attention on when to retire apparatus. They have them set on mileage and hours and years of service and have them on a replacement cycle and have it laid out in the core replacement schedule. As they continue to replace apparatus, they can sell them and get some money back. Engines are coming in at 500,000. They have taken advantage of government surplus. They acquired an ambulance. The primary use is to contract out for wildland assignments. They acquired a UTV this year and it will be a great asset for river areas and remote areas.

Assistant Chief Davis briefed on the Operations Division. He talked about Peak Activity Unit (PAU). It was successful and he wants to look at staffing options in the future. It is a

great way to bridge the gap on increased volume and it has great potential. It increased station reliability and staff available to respond to calls to meet NFPA 1710 standards. Moving forward staffing the PAU is a good step in the right direction until we are able staff up another engine company and/or a new station. Stacie pointed out the staffing versus the increased call volume. The department has not hired another FTE since 2007 and are currently working on call volumes close to twice what the volume was in 2007.

AC Davis discussed the proposal for station 6. They have identified a deficiency and it is a great opportunity to look at a station out there. He spoke about three different options for a new station. As they look forward 3-5 years, a proposed station will fit into this build grant opportunity. Looking at the level of service indicators, as the population increases, the call volume increases and the station reliability decreases and they are struggling to keep times in NFPA standards. They need to make sure response times and station reliability stays consistent.

Assistant Chief Gordy Hughes gave an update on the Training Division. They have identified challenges with training folks and the continuity of training based on call volume. It is apparent that a change has to be made on training and how we handle it. They have purchased a new AV system but it does not include hands on training. They have identified the need for a south side training location. It will not hinder the calls that come in but it will address taking engine companies away from their districts and keeping those engines in place on the south side of the river. It makes sense to have a redundant site and keeping engines closer to their response district. They have city property adjacent to station 3. They are working on zoning on what they can facilitate as far as structures. They want to mimic Station 4's layout. They want to utilize conex boxes to mimic the structure at station 4 and provide for live burns and lower impact training. Stacie asked if there was a minimum amount of training hours. Gordy said there is in specific disciplines including rookie training. Gordy said as new technologies and new strategies come along they are in a constant strive to meet them. The teams are continue to train on the latest techniques. Jeff said it is broken up into level 1 training, regular training, EMS training which requires a two-year certification, and other type of specific training. They train with partners to include life flight to make sure everyone is qualified when they go into scenarios.

AC Davis discussed the paramedic program. Their goal is to have a paramedic on every engine in every district 24 hours a day. They need more medics on staff. They are looking at a two-part plan. The first is recruitment. They will be looking into hiring new firefighters who are already qualified as paramedics, and also providing current employees the opportunity to attend the paramedic program at Missoula College. They have partnered with Missoula College and MESI and they have 4 personnel scheduled to attend the training this year will continue to train their own employees from year to year to meet the goal of 34 qualified paramedics.

Chief Brandt discussed the department's yearly progress. A lot of the benchmarks they presented in the master fire plan were 1-3 year benchmarks, and in 18 months all of these have been accomplished. There was a solid plan in place, that the master plan worked together with the strategic plan and the growth plan. There has been an elevated level of communication this last year. They are continuing to find opportunities to provide service to the community to include the new training facility. They will be

looking at their facilities plan and master fire plan and meeting the goals and objectives set in the plan. 2019's annual report will be coming out soon and will encompass three years of data.

Assistant Chief Hughes thanked the three Administrative Services Staff, Cheryl, Cathy and Sarah for all their hard work and assistance.

Amber Sherrill asked about the increase in staffing and wondered about the lack of increase in staffing and the increase in call volume. Chief Brandt said that the forecasting and when the decisions were made 15 years ago, the stations properly placed. Currently, they are starting to see they are failing in a few areas, and the PAU is a bridge to handle the increased call volume so it can handle the lower acuity calls to take the workload off of other districts so they can respond to calls. They are doing it with forward thinking and open communication.

Sandra Vasecka asked about the different funding opportunities. Chief Brandt said they have applied for approximately 13 million dollars in grants in the last ten years and they have been successful in securing over 3 million of that funding. Assistant Chief Hughes said one of the hopes was to get grant funding to fund the south side training tower project but they just found out the AFG grant does not fund facilities construction. They have been successful securing grants for Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT) Team. Missoula hosts a regional HAZMAT team which they co-host with Missoula Rural Fire District. There is a very high requirements for training and continuing education drills within that discipline. They used to have state funding through DES but they have since taken away that funding and now they have to come up with their own. Through HMEP grant program they have been successful in securing the training and equipment for that program. They have been successful in the AFG grants getting extrication tools. They have a high ticket item next year with is their SCBAs-breathing apparatus. They will begin the grant application for the replacement of that next year. Industry standards are a 3-year projection for securing funds. Chief Brandt talked about the SAFER grant and securing funding for firefighters. They will be looking at applying for that when they secure the new station. They received the SAFER grant when they stood up Station 4 and 5.

Mirtha Becerra talked about increasing in staff. it is smart to be thinking about a new facility, but until that happens, do you intend on increasing your staff to handle the increased call volume and the annexed area. Chief Brandt stated as we look at workload metrics, how do we take care of those areas. The PAU trial was a great success. That is a bridge to deal with lower acuity calls.

Amber Sherrill asked about about the focus inward policy and what difficulties that is creating, how do we plan in the future as we go up? AC Hughes said what the FPB has been looking at as far as struggles are skirting fire codes and some building codes. The department is are required to provide an Aerial apparatus for structures of 30 feet or greater. One of the new building code challenges lowers the profile of the structure but does not address the occupancy of an attic. It lessens their requirement to provide an aerial apparatus to that structure. The aerals are large and navigating within alleyways is impossible. It is a challenge and takes man hours trying to teach architects how to develop and design.

Mirtha Becerra asked how wide an aerial apparatus is. AC Davis said it is 19 feet. The street width needs to accommodate the apparatus.

Stacie Anderson stated the ISO rating effects homeowner ratings and particular commercial rates. Gordy wondered if folks in the recent annexation were aware of the city's ISO rating.

Stacie Anderson stated they would be postponing all other items on the agenda and they would be rescheduled.

NA

4. ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned.