



Des Peres Public Safety Department  
12325 Manchester Road  
Des Peres, MO. 63131  
August 16, 2021

The meeting of the Board of Public Safety Commission was held at 6:00 p.m. on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of August 2021 in the Aldermanic Chambers for the transaction of such business that may come before the Commission.

Present: Commissioner Chair .....Larry Beermann  
Commissioner .....Robert Ashcraft  
Commissioner.....Caitie Zimmerman  
Commissioner.....Matt McGrath  
Chief.....Eric Hall  
Captain.....Sean Quinn  
Captain.....Dale Fiala  
Support Lieutenant.....Vicki Severs  
Administrative Assistant.....Monica Llorian

Not Present: Alderman.....Sean Concagh

**ROLL CALL**

Commissioner Chair Beermann opened the meeting. Administrative Asst. Llorian commenced with the roll call. There was a quorum with Alderman Concagh was absent with excuse.

**HEAR CITIZENS**

David Huemann of 281 Greenbriar Estates Drive addressed the commission. He stated he does not feel safe in Des Peres with the recent murder and shooting at the mall as well as a domestic incident in the Schnucks parking. He stated he is worried about the tax base the mall generates will drop with all the recent crime in the area. He asked what is the plan the city has for the future. Chief Hall addressed the incident Mr. Huemann referenced and advised those in attendance that this was domestic assault where witnesses called 911 to report that a male struck a female on the parking lot Schnucks. Our officers arrived quickly and took the subject into custody which is when Mr. Huemann had pulled on the lot.

Chief Hall stated that while the shootings are tragic incidents the characterization that crime has drastically increased is misleading. Chief Hall reviewed the year to date crime statistics and in comparison to 2020, and added that the main issue that the department has been dealing with, which is a regional issue, is the stealing of vehicles and the stealing from vehicles.

Mr. Huemann asked if the department would look at a substation on or near center property and he was advised by Chief Hall that the department currently has a substation near the food court which has been in place since the mall was redeveloped in 2002. Chief Hall added that the department has four (4) officers assigned to the center and that the minimum is two (2) officers per day. In addition, the mall is supplemented by any extra officers assigned that day and our Detective Bureau.

Jim Lewis of 101 Greenbriar Estates Drive stated that he hates to see West County Center becoming unsafe like the Galleria. He asked if the department is getting support from the elected official, city hall and the prosecutor. Chief Hall stated that the department does have the support of the City Administrator, Mayor and Board of Aldermen.

Rick Wall of 304 Greenbriar Estates Drive stated that he is disappointed at how low the turnout is for this meeting. He stated that the city should broadcast upcoming meetings. Commissioner McGrath explained that one can sign-up on the city website to receive notifications of meetings. Mr. Wall asked what can residents do to deter crime. Chief Hall answered for residents to be more active and to call the department whenever they feel or see anything suspicious. He concluded to not leave valuables in vehicles, to lock vehicles, do not leave garage door openers in vehicles, and turn on outside lights at night. Commissioner Ashcraft added to know your neighbors, neighborhood and lookout for each other. Commissioner McGrath stated those that have RING cameras can register them with the department. Capt. Quinn concluded that those that wish to register their cameras to email him.

John Tubbesing of 280 Greenbriar Estates Drive thanked Public Safety for their service. He asked what the department learned from meeting with other departments, like Richmond Heights and their response to the Galleria. Chief Hall stated that the department has met with the Richmond Heights Police Department and that they have similar issues to Des Peres. The Galleria has installed license plate readers to assist the department in tracking suspect and wanted vehicles when they enter the parking lot. In addition, the Galleria deploys a gun detection K-9 program in a private partnership with their security.

Kirk Flury of 268 Greenbriar Estates Drive asked where does the city buy a license plate reader. Chief Hall stated it's a private security company that sell such cameras and he is recommending the city purchase three (3) to assist with our response to West County Center. Also, Chief Hall added that the department has been conducting saturation patrols at the center which coincide with the peak calls for service and incidents of breaking into vehicles.

Janet Tubbesing of 280 Greenbriar Estates Drive asked if it's safe to go to West County Center at night and where would it be the safest place to park. Chief Hall stated the mall has an extensive camera program and that he believes the mall is safe to shop. He suggested that if someone is concerned about parking at the mall, parking near the food court entrance would be a good option as it is near police parking and the department's substation.

Commission McGrath asked if traffic could be restricted when an incident occurs, essentially to stop or slow outbound center traffic. Chief Hall said he would research that option and consult with West County Center.

Resident Dave Huemann asked if the stores at the mall have panic buttons for when an incident of violence occurs. Chief Hall stated that other than alarm panels with a panic button the means of contacting the department or security is 911, the direct dispatch line, or direct line to security. Commissioner Beermann stated that the mall is doing everything possible to insure shoppers' safety.

He added to not be afraid to report a possible incident and to stay around to speak with the police when an incident does occur. Chief Hall added that officers were able to track the suspect of the shooting incident in April, near the Apple Store, because eyewitnesses stayed around to provide information to the officers. This information was then used in conjunction with the mall camera system to track the suspects movement through the mall.

Commissioner McGrath asked what is working at the Galleria to prevent gun violence. Chief Hall stated that Richmond Heights police implemented license plate reader cameras at entrances to the Galleria and the private partnership with their security and the gun detection K9 program. Commissioner McGrath asked who funds such K9 units. Chief Hall stated in the Galleria's case it is funded by the Galleria but for most department K9 units the applicable city/department fund it with potential donations to supplement the costs.

Resident Tubbesing concluded that he encourages the community to know that they can to donate or help fund safety procedures.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner Ashcraft made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 21, 2021, meeting. Commissioner McGrath seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously

### **AMENDMENT TO THE AGENDA**

None

### **ALDERMANIC REPORT**

Chief Hall stated that a new restaurant, Tres Kings, a Three Kings concept will be going in where Rib City used to be. He concluded that the city is still looking into purchasing the Jansen farm property at the corner of Barrett Station and Manchester Rd.

### **BUDGET**

#### **2021 Budget Update**

Chief Hall stated at this time the overall budget should be at 33.6% remaining and is currently at 35.06% remaining. Chief Hall reviewed the accounts that were under the 33.6% threshold which included gas & oil, professional services, building maintenance, vehicle maintenance, and overtime are the main accounts to track for the remainder of the year. Chief Hall added that the city conducted a midyear budget adjustment and he will review the overtime expenses with the City Administrator.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Appointment of Commission Chair**

Commissioner Ashcraft made a motion to nominate Commissioner Beermann as the Chairperson of the Public Safety Commission. Commissioner McGrath second the motion, and it passed unanimously.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Hiring Process Update**

Lt. Severs stated that the department received 41 applications combined for both police officers and paramedics for this recruitment. She stated that eleven (11) were chosen to do preliminary interviews and that three withdrew their applications. Lt Severs added that eight (8) will be taking the written test next week. She concluded that the department hopes to have the new hires starting in by October. Lt. Severs credited department staff for marketing the department and referring new prospective employees.

Chief Hall stated that one current officer might be completing paramedic school sooner than expected and that he wanted to thank the City Administrator for approving for the city to fund Paramedic school for employees. In the past the employee had to pay the nearly \$10,000 tuition and were reimbursed at the successful conclusion of the program. Moving forward the city will pay tuition as the employee attends the program.

Chief Hall added that moving forward the department is keeping the application open on the city website and that interested applicants can apply ahead of the next process.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Department Update from Command Staff**

Chief Hall presented the commission with a preliminary list of items on the 2022 Capital Improvement budget. He stated that one of the primary items for consideration is an architectural study of the current building. He stated that the building is over thirty (30) years old and initially built for a smaller staff. He also added the other items for consideration are replacing rifles and shotguns, new mattresses, three (3) new vehicles, and new Taser lease agreement.

Capt. Fiala stated there was a bid opening for a new ambulance on Friday and the department received two bids from Osage and AEV. The department is currently reviewing the bids, and preliminarily Osage is the low bid. He concluded that it will probably take a year for delivery of the ambulance.

### **Des Peres Night Out**

Chief Hall stated that with COVID resurgence that it might be best to do a meet –n- greet style event at each of the city parks rather than one large event. Chief Hall added that he will continue to monitor the COVID cases and potentially plan for early October.

Commissioner McGrath asked if there has ever been a fundraiser for the department where residents could donate. Chief Hall stated that he was not aware of any fundraisers in the past.

### **License Plate Reader Cameras**

As mentioned during the discussion with the residents in attendance, Chief Hall stated that the department is recommending to purchase three (3) license plate reader cameras for West County Center. He explained how the license plate readers work and that the department typically will receive a message on a vehicle or suspect within 20 to 30 seconds of the vehicle passing the camera. This

would allow the department to locate suspect vehicles and wanted subjects more quickly and before a crime is committed.

Commissioner Ashcraft made a motion to authorize the Chief to go forward with the purchase of the license plate readers. Commissioner Zimmerman second the motion, and it passed unanimously.

### **July 2021 Crime Summary Report**

Chief Hall presented the commission with the July 2021 crime statistics. He reviewed the crime categories and any increase in decrease related to a certain category and added that auto accidents and injuries continue to show an increase over previous years. He concluded that the department is working on updated the crime information monthly to the city website.

### **Staffing Memo Discussion**

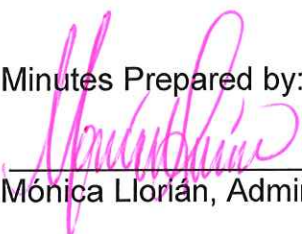
Chief Hall stated that he has been authorized to hire to fill the vacant position, long term injury, and vacancy created by the a military deployment. Chief Hall indicated that he will potentially hire up to three (3) from this current recruitment.

Capt. Fiala presented the commission with a Fire & EMS calls for service report. He stated that the month of July has been the second busiest of any July over the last five years and the first seven months of 2021 has been the busiest in the last five years. He stated that 90% of the COVID related calls are from the retirement facilities and overall that the calls related to COVID are a fraction of the overall calls.

### **ADJOURNEMENT**

Commissioner McGrath made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Ashcraft seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:26 p.m.

Minutes Prepared by:

  
Mónica Llorián, Administrative Asst.

ATTEST:

  
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**Caitie Zimmerman, Commissioner**