

MILFORD CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING
August 16, 2016

A Meeting of the City of Milford Police Committee was held in the Joseph Ronnie Rogers Council Chambers at Milford City Hall, 201 South Walnut Street, Milford, Delaware on Tuesday, August 16, 2016.

PRESIDING: Chairman James Burk

IN ATTENDANCE: Committee Members:
Councilmembers Katrina Wilson and Owen Brooks Jr.

Mayor Bryan Shupe (participated via telephone)

Police Chief Kenneth Brown & City Clerk Terri Hudson

Chairman Burk called the Committee Meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

Because he was unable to attend in person, Mayor Bryan Shupe participated via telephone.

Police Department Study

As was discussed at the August 8th Council Meeting, Chairman Burk reported that he received the quote back from Dan Redstone/Redstone Architects who handled the last police study and preliminary design for the proposed police station. Mr. Redstone is willing to come out, along with one of his staff members, to meet Chief Brown and his officers to obtain more recent information, including current statistics, to update the report he completed in 2011. The proposal is an estimated \$7,500.

Chairman Burk recalled that Council was presented a \$95,000 figure at the June budget hearing for a new study to be done which was included in the approved FY 2016-2017 budget.

The Chairman advised that he had forwarded the related documents from Mr. Redstone to the committee for their review.

In the meantime, City Manager Norenberg requested a copy of the complete analysis which was forwarded to Mayor Shupe and Chief Brown today. The 35-page analysis includes numbers on current and projected staffing.

Chairman Burk then pointed out that City Manager Norenberg had included in the packet various samples of police staffing and operational studies.

He then asked Mayor Shupe to comment about the concept of the \$95,000 study though he believes Mr. Norenberg confirmed it was staffing and police facilities only. Mayor Shupe believes it was for both though the main focus was on staffing though the City Manager would need to clarify that.

Chairman Burk recalled the meeting with Mayor Shupe, Chief Brown, Retired Chief Hudson and himself at which time the plans and study were reviewed as they discussed the previous process and needs of the department.

He then asked the Police Committee and Chief Brown to confirm if the Redstone contract will meet our needs; Mayor Shupe agreed adding that he thinks it is very important for Chief Brown to verify it is adequate because it will ultimately impact his department.

Chief Brown recalled that in 2011, the Redstone group came in and interviewed the entire department. He provided a summary of those interviews which he feels were instrumental in the completed analysis. It appeared to Chief Brown this was a very fair and adequate plan due to the number of people involved, which included Council Member input. Chief Hudson kept Council aware of the progress to ensure everyone understood the department's needs at the time.

Chief Brown is unsure what else is being sought due to the comprehensive study that was completed. He agrees the obvious choice should be to update the plan based on current needs and continued growth of the City. In his opinion we are being

fiscally responsible versus starting all over and in particular, paying \$7,500 versus the proposed \$95,000 cost.

Councilmember Wilson remembered when every staff member was interviewed at the police department. Redstone had a true consensus of what was needed. They followed up with a workshop and meetings. City Council also had input on what they wanted at the new police department.

She recalled at that point, Council, along with the police department staff, were very happy and excited about the prospective vision for the police department. Councilmember Wilson recalled several safety features that were being added that the current building was incapable of accommodating due to its size and location. .

She is extremely pleased that Dan Redstone is willing to come back and update this plan for the City. .

Chairman Burk agreed adding that a lot of those items that the City Manager has submitted were accomplished in the first analysis. He did not tell Mr. Redstone that \$95,000 had already been approved and instead simply asked what he would charge for the update. Mr. Redstone came back with the \$7,500 figure and Chairman Burk was very pleased.

Chairman Burk feels there is some room for some additional work if needed though he is very conscious of being efficient when spending city funds.

Mayor Shupe suggested that before this is voted on by Council, that Chief Brown and Chairman Burk sit down with the City Manager to discuss the committee recommendations in order to show solidarity and encourage the team mentality effort.

It was confirmed the item would be placed on Monday's agenda. Chairman Burk encouraged the committee members to participate as was done in the previous study, interviews and analysis.

Councilmember Brooks stated for the record that \$95,000 is way too much money to spend on another study. He said he has lived here all of his life and has watched the City and police department grow and it is not a matter of having too many police officers. In his opinion, we need more. Several years ago, he asked for four new officers and though it was a fight, he finally got them. He feels those officers were needed and the City has grown a lot more since. He does not believe the City needs to spend \$95,000 to prove there is a need for additional police officers.

Chairman Burk agreed and asked if there are similar studies being done in the other City departments that are comparable to what was proposed for the police department; Councilmember Brooks' personal opinion is that the City spends way too much money on studies. He referenced the \$22,000 being spent on an electric rate study and recalls that no vote was taken. This is the first time he remembers a study being ordered without the approval of City Council.

He added that he respects the new City Manager but believes it is very important that City Council approve any study before it is done. Councilwoman Wilson and Chairman Burk both agreed.

When asked for any further questions, Councilmember Brooks reiterated that this City needs a new police station and there should be no question about it. Like he stated at the last meeting, only about five-percent of the people that live in the City have ever been inside the police department though that is a good thing. He pointed out it has been too small for a number of years and that whenever we have a rain event, the officers have to sandbag around the building to prevent water from seeping in.

Chairman Burk stated that Mr. Norenberg informed him that he was attending a FEMA meeting and there may be some grant money for construction at the current site because it was built in a flood zone. However, any new site would not qualify for the funding unless it was in another flood zone though he hopes that is not the case.

He did state that the City would qualify for funding to have the building demolished to ensure no other structure would be built at that site. That would prevent the site from being a hazzard and future structures not qualifying for flood insurance.

In speaking with Mr. Redstone, he informed Chairman Burk that a number of things have changed in the last few years and the square footage for the officer/desk ratio has actually been reduced. He was throwing out different ways to save money so Mr. Burk is anxious to work with him. Though the construction costs have increased since 2011, there are possible

methods that can be used to offset those costs.

The Chairman was very impressed with his knowledge and feels it is extremely beneficial to take advantage of Mr. Redstone's experience to build on what already exists.

Chairman Burk stated that his main concern is that this study does not focus on the staffing issue; he is more interested in community value, satisfaction and the number of incidents compared to the number of officers.

Councilmember Wilson asked Redstone's projection on the number of officers; Chief Brown stated that it went from 42 to 56 officers.

Chairman Burk agreed their projection was approximately 56 officers and Mr. Redstone had very specific questions about dispatchers, support staff, etc. He felt those questions needed to be answered by Chief Brown who could provide more the most accurate information and answers.

Councilmember Brooks then talked about the speeding problem in the City of Milford; Chairman Burk added that the speeding sign was placed on Lakeview Avenue since the last council meeting and that an officer has been stationed at the old middle school. In addition, radar is being run on Kings Highway.

Councilmember Brooks said on Friday to Sunday nights, he and his wife sit on their front porch watching the racetrack on Northeast Tenth Street. His neighbor yelled to his wife the previous night that she saw five tractor trailers on that street even though there is a 'No Truck Sign' on Route 1 though they continue to use his street.

Chief Brown pointed out that radar has always been run on a consistent basis on Northeast Tenth Street.

When asked if more officers are needed, Chief Brown stated that considering the continued growth especially with the commercial development being proposed east of Route 1, in addition to the new hospital, now is the time to start thinking about that. He pointed out it is not easy to add new officers and that beginning on the date of their employment, it takes at least a year before an untrained officer is released on their own.

Councilmember Brooks reiterated that he lives by the high school and that Tenth Street is a racetrack and there is a need for more officers. Chief Brown said that he only has so many officers and they are often on foot patrol in the downtown area. Mr. Brooks said his neighbors always ask him where the police officers are and Councilmember Brooks tells them they are busy.

Councilmember Brooks said he almost got run over going to the store the other morning. He heard a car coming behind him and turned around and had to jump the curb by the American Legion to get out of the way. The driver stopped and asked him if he was ok and said he was slowing down. Councilman Brooks said his wife told him that from now on, he needed to drive to the store.

Chief Brown said he had a complaint from one of the downtown merchants yesterday who sent Mayor Shupe an e-mail stating they are not seeing officers anymore. He said that was not true because they were just there two hours earlier.

Councilmember Wilson moved to present to Council the recommendation to authorize the \$7,500 for the Redstone update, seconded Mr. Brooks. Motion carried.

Chairman Burk said he will present the recommendation to approve the \$7,500 to update the study. If acceptable to City Council, Dan Redstone will be informed to contact Chief Brown.

Implementation & Purchase/Body Camera Program

Chief Brown then talked about a body camera program which Chief Brown thinks is desperately needed. Councilmember Brooks said there is money available from the State of Delaware and recalls Governor Markell discussing this.

The Chief explained that the state police were defunded on their body camera program. When Councilmember Brooks

referred to money that was made available for each department, Chief Brown explained he believes that is grant though that involves an application process and is not a given.

When asked if the Department of Justice/Attorney General Office ever decided how to implement that program, which has been the holdup for the past couple of years, Chief Brown explained that a few agencies had pilot program that were based on the AG's model policy. At the end of that program, the AG's Office intended to make a recommendation on the vendor. New Castle County and the State Police were two of the pilot agencies and before they completed the Taser product testing, New Castle County had already agreed to purchase it and are already using it.

Chief Brown explained that in addition to the \$3,000 annual maintenance agreement, the cost of the camera in each vehicle is \$5,000. Currently the recordings are stored on the police departments' servers. Anytime there is an incident, each recording has to be downloaded and copies of any associated recordings (from other cameras) are put on a disk for the AG's Office and the defendant. The server archival requirements vary based on the type of crime was involved.

The Taser system would integrate all recordings associated with the incident. He explained the integration system consists of a two-camera system (windshield and prisoner compartment), body camera and device that attaches to the lightbar. The body camera is activated whenever the vehicle lights are turned on. The existing in-car cameras are also activated by the lightbar.

Chief Brown reported that an updated battery/mechanism would be needed for the Taser electrical weapon that would allow the body camera to be activated whenever the Taser is turned on.

Chief Brown feels the biggest benefit of the Taser is the ability for data storage on secure cloud-based servers at Evidence.com, which eliminates that storage on the department's current servers. The system is exceptional when comparing evidence management and searching capabilities to other systems.

According to the Chief, it would also provide the AG's office the ability to tap into the data storage system where they would acquire the recordings for any upcoming court cases.

He added his long term goal is to purchase an interview camera from Taser that can be linked to the system when the new police department is built.

Councilmember Brooks recalled Former City Manager Carmean telling him that the police department was accredited and that Milford was one of only a couple downstate departments with that designation and asked if that is still the case; Chief Brown explained that the department has never been able to apply for accreditation because their building does not qualify. They meet accreditation standards in every other category though their building always prevented it.

Chief Brown reported that he received a proposal from Taser International that includes the updated vehicle cameras, body cameras, storage capability, licensing, training program and installation. They broke it down into a five-year plan which includes the replacement cameras and docking station every two and a half years needed because of technology changes.

He also noted this system can be linked to the department's CAD (computer-aided dispatch data) system and will automatically tag videos to any related incident. Otherwise, additional time will be needed after a shift for each officer to manually review and tag incidents during their 12-hour shift.

The cost of the entire system is \$145,603 with an initial cost in year one of \$44,683. Subsequent annual costs will be \$25,230 from year two through year five.

Chief Brown stated that he has a \$41,000 Violent Crimes Grant that can be used to help fund this project the first year. However, any recurring expenses are ineligible which is the case with most grants.

The department also has the ability to use their Sussex County grant, Kent County grant, SALLE and EIDE funds toward the project as well. Should that funding not be approved, he would need \$25,230 to be paid by the department.

Both Councilmember Brooks and Chairman Burk agreed it is essential to find the money to pay for the project. He feels

this has become standardized equipment for police departments nationwide.

Chief Brown added that this system could possibly pay for itself with one incident.

Councilmember Brooks said we need to find the \$25,230 needed each year.

It was agreed that Chief Brown would apply for the grants and the committee will recommend funding the \$25,230 for years two to five.

Councilwoman Wilson said there is no better reason to spend this money than for safety of our police officers and our citizens.

Mayor Shupe stated that this was a very productive meeting and agrees the equipment is necessary. He said that we are all aware that we need to look at a new police station and body cameras. As a council, there is a need to be fiscally responsible when looking at future budgets adding that convincing residents for a new police station is going to take a lot of work though he feels it can be accomplished. He said that when asking for the new police station, he thinks people will vote yes because we have a very good case. However, he is cautious about convincing residents that their taxes will be increased another five cents after the recent increase through the county.

However, the mayor does agree this is needed and a reasonable request and should be an area where City money is best spent. However, he also wants to remind City Council that he has a concern that many residents will be unable to afford two tax increases, in addition to City electric increase that is being proposed.

Councilmember Brooks feels that City Council can talk to our residents so that they understand the security problems at the current police department and believe the referendum will sell itself.

Chairman Burk moved to make the recommendation that Chief Brown proceed by presenting the camera system to City Council and designate the funding as discussed, seconded by Councilwoman Wilson. Motion carried.

The Chairman summarized the meeting by stating that the police committee will be making two recommendations to City Council at the next meeting on August 22nd.

There being no further business, Councilmember Wilson moved to adjourn the committee meeting, seconded by Councilmember Brooks. Motion carried.

The Council Meeting adjourned at 6:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Terri K. Hudson, MMC
City Clerk/Recorder