

MILFORD CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING
March 28, 2012

A Meeting of the Police Committee of Milford City Council was held in the Joseph Ronnie Rogers Council Chambers of Milford City Hall, 201 South Walnut Street, Milford, Delaware on Wednesday, March 28, 2012.

PRESIDING: Chairman Douglas Morrow, Sr.

IN ATTENDANCE: Committee Member Councilman S. Allen Pikus

Police Chief Keith Hudson and Recorder/City Clerk Terri Hudson

Called to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:32 p.m. by Chairman Morrow.

It was noted that Committee Member Wilson was unable to attend.

COPS Hiring Grant

Chief Hudson recalled that last year the police department submitted an application for the 2011 COPS Hiring Grant but were not selected to receive an officer through that program. The only department awarded was New Castle County who was awarded six officers.

A new COPS grant was recently announced with those departments denied last year being given priority. This year's grant only covers up to 75% of the entry-level salary and benefits for the three-year period. A minimum 25% match is required. There is also a maximum federal contribution of \$125,000 per position over the three-year grant period.

Another change is that the applicant selected must be a military veteran who served on active duty for at least 180 days on or after September 11, 2001.

The chief received some estimated salary and benefit costs for the three-year period. He advised that 75% of one officer's salary and benefits is \$181,804.98. The city's 25% match would be \$60,601.66. He emphasized the \$181,804 is over the \$125,000 maximum and the city would also be required to pick up the balance of \$56,804.98. Overall, the city would be pay \$117,406.64 for the officer during the three-year period.

Mr. Pikus then referenced the new assessment and his previous discussion with the city manager that the tax rate needs to be adjusted. If the tax rate remains unchanged, it would bring in an additional \$1 million or a total of almost \$4 million.

Noting the recent activities and the increase in serious complaints, Mr. Pikus agrees that we will need to consider hiring some additional police officers. He feels that one is easily justified but at a minimum, we really need two. However, financing will be key. With the increase in the assessments, he feels this may be a good time to address this.

Mr. Pikus and Mr. Morrow agree a joint meeting of the police and finance committees needs to be arranged. It was agreed the city clerk would arrange a date with Finance Director Jeff Portmann and City Manager Richard Carmean. Mr. Grier and Ms. Wilson need to be advised as well.

When asked if Chief Hudson feels he can find a police officer under those conditions, the chief said he hopes the federal government is promoting this program to their veterans. With Dover Air Base so close, he does not believe it would be a problem.

He stated that because of the short deadline, they had to submit the grant as was done in the past. However, that was done with the understanding that should it be approved, it would require funding and full council approval.

Mr. Morrow expressed concern about the condition of the police department and the urgency to find funding for that project. Mr. Pikus advised that he spoke with Mr. Portmann a couple months ago about the possibility of funding the project in house though it would be an added expense over a long term.

Mr. Morrow emphasized the need to consider all options. He has asked for a meeting and that the city manager and finance director provide him with any and all funding possibilities.

Mr. Morrow then moved that permission is granted for the police department to apply for the current COPS grant, seconded by Mr. Pikus.

Mr. Morrow and Mr. Pikus agreed the COPS grant application will not need to be approved by council at this point. Should Chief Hudson receive confirmation the grant was approved, it would then be presented for council action.

Motion carried.

State Police Fatal Accident Investigations

Chief Hudson then advised that currently the department does not have the personnel to handle fatal accident investigations. He is asking for permission to contact Delaware State Police to ask their assistance should we have a traffic fatality.

The chief does not believe there is a charge noting that the majority of police departments currently bring in the state police to handle these type investigations.

Chief Hudson then noted some of the speciality training required for the personnel needed to investigate these accidents:

- On-Scene Accident Investigations Training
- Certification in Advanced Accident Investigation
- Certification in Traffic Homicide Investigations
- Certification in Commercial Vehicle Accidents
- Certification in Tire and Forensics and Failure Analysis
- Certification in Vehicle Damage and Energy Relationship in Collision Reconstruction
- Applied Physics for Accident Reconstruction
- Certification in Crash Data Retrieval

He noted that on average, these classes are two weeks. He emphasized that this type training can no longer be obtained at the state police academy in a couple of days. Besides the training costs, there are incidental costs including travel, lodging and food over the two-week period. In addition, it takes these officers out of the department for that period of time.

Chief Hudson said that fortunately, Milford has not had a lot of serious or fatal accidents. He does recall two in one year a few years ago.

He explained that most recently, he sent two officers to Florida for two weeks for the first of a series of these classes. Upon return, one of the officers was hired by the state police.

Mr. Morrow moved they concur with Chief Hudson's recommendation to contact the Delaware State Police for their assistance with fatal accident investigations and eliminate the use of Milford officers for this purpose due to educational requirements and financial matters, seconded by Mr. Pikus. Motion carried.

Chief Hudson noted that bringing in these officers will also protect the city in civil litigation matters.

With no further business, Mr. Pikus moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Morrow. Motion carried.

The Police Committee meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Terri K. Hudson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Terri K. Hudson, MMC
City Clerk