



MINUTES

April 3, 2024

7:00 p.m.

Community Room, Albany Police Department/VIRTUAL

Approved: 6/5/2024

Call to Order

Erik Anderson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Members present: Pat Kidd, Erik Rau, Evan Church, Kevin Kreitman, Erik Anderson,

Members absent: Cynthia Greene, Nicholas Fowler, Adam Brenneman

Staff present: Marcia Harnden, Police Chief; Shane Wooton, Fire Chief;
Rochelle James, Administrative Assistant I

February 7, 2024, Minutes were approved as submitted.

Staff Updates

Police Update – Chief Marcia Harnden

Chief Harnden discussed the current crime statistics, noting that person crimes increased slightly and auto thefts and car break-ins remain elevated. The police department is trying to troubleshoot several areas, such as Eads Park, Simpson Park, and Talking Water Gardens. Growth and new construction areas are suffering some ongoing criminal activity. The department is attempting to address those with current available resources. APD noted no significant changes in statistics. Calls for service are up slightly. Overdoses are trending where expected, indicating this year will be another challenging year for overdose deaths in the city, beginning with the first death recorded on New Year's Day in 2024. The department is trying to increase the availability of Narcan to prevent overdose deaths.

HB402 was signed by the Governor yesterday. The law enforcement aspects of the bill do not become laws until September 1, 2024, to allow courts, jails, parole and probation, and departments to prepare. Chief Harnden discussed the number of officers without experience arresting someone for drug possession. She also discussed the difficulties associated with the enforcement of these drug crimes, such as a lack of resources, the drain on the criminal justice system, facilities to deal with drug dependency, and mental health issues. These much-needed resources will not be available by September 1, 2024. Chief Harnden discussed the possibility of implementing a deflection program. Currently, there is no deflection program in Linn County. Linn County does have a drug court with a diversion program in place. APD will discuss what enforcement will look like with the DA and Linn County. Benton County does not have any deflection program or diversion program available. Chief Harnden said she did not expect an immediate change in livability issues.

Due to retirements and a couple of unexpected departures, APD is hiring for several positions. Efforts to fill those positions are ramping up. Two to three other retirements are expected towards the end of the year. Chief Harnden discussed upcoming promotions and promotional processes, vacancies to be filled, hiring, testing, and background checks for potential candidates.

The East side substation is up and running. Chief Harnden discussed the impact of having that facility available and its proximity to major retailers, the number one users of APD services. Officers have been utilizing the locations. Having a regular presence on that side of the city is very important.

Chief Harnden discussed the current overdose trend and her expectation that overdose deaths will continue and potentially rise. She discussed the Narcan Leave Behind program and its potential impact on saving lives from overdose deaths. She also discusses community organizations handing out clean needles to reduce harm; however, the department cannot condone drug activity on public property. She also discussed participating in a sequential intercept mapping exercise in Benton County, bringing together law enforcement, courts, jail, probation, care providers, and mental health to examine what a person dealing with drug addiction and or mental health issues navigating the criminal justice system experience. The exercise examines what avenues are available to a person in those circumstances to get them into services, what is available, and where there are gaps. There was also discussion regarding the roles other organizations play in helping with addiction and mental health issues and the need for treatment facilities in the area.

Chief Harnden also noted the Albany Police Department annual report for 2023 is completed and available on the Albany Police Department page of the city website.

Chief Harnden also explained the assessment process for candidates in the promotional process. The process consists of peer surveys, a written assignment, an inbox exercise, a role-playing exercise, and an oral interview panel. Chief Wooton compared this process to the process for apparatus operators with the fire department, noting that the process is very similar. Also, it includes a driving test overseen by an APD officer.

Fire Update – Chief Shane Wooton

Chief Wooton provided a copy of the monthly report and the Albany Fire Department Annual Report for 2023. Chief Wooton highlighted several items in both reports. Calls for service have slowed. All the other categories have remained constant.

Chief Wooton discussed AFD's response to two fatal fires within ten days, which is atypical for Albany. Albany Fire Department and Albany Police Department are investigating both fires. The details will not be known until all the reports are complete. In both cases, there were no active smoke detectors in either home. Chief Wooton emphasized the importance of an active working smoke detector. Both fires were smaller, put out with less than 100 gallons of water, and isolated to a small area, but if you are sleeping, you need to be alerted to the fire. Smoke detectors save lives. AFD has been partnering with The Red Cross in the Stop the Smoke campaign. Volunteers canvassed some manufactured homes parks, and 70 residences signed up for smoke detectors to be installed on April 13, 2024. Also, on April 13, 2024, AFD will be having a "Burn to Learn" event to train in real fire scenarios. The location is behind the Boys and Girls Club. AFD will announce the event on social media.

Chief Wooton discussed clearing brush behind the fence lines of the 53rd Avenue neighborhood through a community partnership and grant funding from the Oregon State Fire Marshall Office for wildfire

fighting projects. The project is complicated because it must address the many concerns of interested parties in the area, such as the ecological impact or the impact on wildlife. Chief Wooton advised that there is a lot of support from the community.

Chief Wooton advised that Battalion Chief Jamie Smith has retired. He also discussed recognizing community and department members at the March 13, 2024, City Council meeting for their efforts at the fire on Green Acres Avenue. AA Towing and AFD members were recognized for their assistance in a technical rescue effort in which a car was upside down in the canal on Vine Street. AA Towing employees practice with AFD on technical rescues.

Albany Fire Department received a grant to purchase a new fire truck. The truck should be in service by July 2024.

Hiring is ongoing and there are multiple processes in varying stages occurring. Many new employees will be coming on board due to retirements and separations.

Chief Wooton discussed the possibility of building a training facility behind Station 12 on 34th Avenue. It will have a training structure but not a full four-story tower. AFD is considering upgrading the way dispatching tones are received to more current technology with a computerized voice that dispatches members. The stations will receive the information and then use escalating tones and lights to alert members to an incoming call for service. Bids are being accepted for these investments, and those decisions will be made shortly. Chief Wooton discussed the capital outlay at the dispatch center as a shared cost between Albany, Lebanon, and Corvallis. He discussed the changes and how the implementation will affect the Linn County Sheriff's Office dispatch center. He also discussed the changes to the five fire department stations.

Chief Wooton briefly reviewed the annual report and highlighted the work of various individuals and programs. He noted work done by Hillary Kosmicki with the Housing Empowerment Action League and the work of Deputy Fire Marshal Alfredo Mendez as a liaison to the Latino community. Last year, AFD hosted its first all-Spanish CPR class. AFD will receive a tactical water tender through a State Fire Marshals office grant. The truck can go off-road in more rural areas. New turnouts for all firefighters were purchased in June 2023. Payments can now be accepted online for ambulance billing. The Albany Fire Fighters Community Assistance Fund Gold Tournament has been raising money and has \$46,000.00 in available funds. AFD received a new medic unit in July 2023. AFD received a \$500,000.00 grant from Samaritan Health to expand the community paramedic program, and the AED loaner program was launched in September 2023.

Chief Wooton advised that this would be his last Public Safety Commission meeting. He will be retiring on June 28, 2024. June will be a transition month as Chief Labelle takes over the duties of Fire Chief. Chief Wooton thanked all those who had participated in the commission, participated in an essential function of local government, and provided guidance.

There was additional discussion regarding possible guest speakers for upcoming Public Safety Commission meetings.

Next Meeting Date

The next regularly scheduled meeting is on Wednesday, June 5, 2024, at the Albany Fire Department Station 11.

Adjournment

Hearing no further business, Erik Anderson adjourned the meeting at 7:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Reviewed by,

Rochelle James
Administrative Assistant I

Reviewer's Name
Reviewer's Title

**Documents discussed at the meeting that are not in the agenda packet are archived in the record. The documents are available by emailing cityclerk@cityofalbany.net.*