

**CITY OF COLUMBIA
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING REPORT
JUNE 17, 2014 – 9:00 A.M.
CITY HALL SECOND CONFERENCE ROOM
1737 MAIN STREET**



Members of the Columbia City Council conducted a Public Safety Committee Meeting on Tuesday, June 17, 2014 at City Hall Second Floor Conference Room, Columbia, South Carolina. The Honorable Brian DeQuincey Newman (Chair) called the meeting to order at 9:16 a.m. The Honorable Sam Davis and The Honorable Cameron A. Runyan were present.

APPEARANCE OF THE PUBLIC

No one appeared at this time.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

1. Police Department Update

Mr. William “Skip” Holbrook, Police Chief gave an update on the ninety (90) day proposal, which is divided up into three (3) phases: the assessment phase, the planning phase and the implementation phase. He said the department is currently transitioning out of the assessment phase, which consisted of meetings with members of City Council, city staff, business stakeholders and the community. He pointed out concerns with staffing. Currently, the department has fourteen (14) officers in the field training program; nine (9) officers in the Criminal Justice Academy; and nine (9) officers on light duty in which these spots don’t allow the officers to be assigned into positions. There are twenty-six (vacancies) and the department is in the process of hiring five (5) new officers. He said the West Region has thirty-three (33) officers and ten (10) vacancies; the North Region has sixty-two (62) officers and four (4) vacancies; the Metro Region has fifty (52) officers and one (1) vacancy; the hospitality district’s South Region has fifty-eight (58) officers and five (5) vacancies; and the East Region has twenty-two (22) officers and one (1) vacancy. He gave a report on homeless statistics of incidents and arrests. The total homeless crime is down 128 offenses. The overall crime rate is down 10.5%

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager asked about the court’s process and the time frame for when people are released.

Mr. William “Skip” Holbrook, Police Chief said it’s important for the department to provide the correct information to the court for the right decision to be made when it comes to bond hearings.

Ms. Dana Turner, Chief Administrative Judge for the Municipal Court said the law doesn't require us to notify victims. She said the neighborhood is allowed to communicate their concerns at the bond hearing.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager confirmed that Council will be briefed in executive session on today about the release of detainees.

The committee received this report as information. No action was taken.

2. Municipal Court Update

Ms. Dana Turner, Chief Administrative Judge for the Municipal Court presented a recommendation for removing and de-criminalizing parking tickets at Municipal Court. She presented a proposal to change the court's hours of operation from 7:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and 7:30 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. on the weekends to include reducing the hours of operation to twice per month for the Quality of Life Court Sessions.

There was a consensus of the committee to have staff research other alternatives for accommodating the court's hours of operation and to bring a report back at the next meeting.

3. Review of the Noise Ordinance and Discharging Fireworks

Mr. Aubrey Jenkins, Fire Chief said the current City's noise ordinance doesn't mention fireworks; it's regulated by the state. He said the Fire Department completes inspections during the holidays that are known for fireworks and educates the public about safety. He said the department doesn't discourage the use of fireworks; it encourages adults to always accompany children when using fireworks.

Ms. Teresa A. Knox, Esq., City Attorney said if we alter the time; it will change for every event within the City, not just neighborhoods.

There was a consensus of the committee to have staff research changing the time in the City's noise ordinance as it relates to the use of fireworks and to bring a recommendation back at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:43 a.m.

Submitted by:

Niki Daniels, City Clerk's Assistant
Office of the City Clerk