



## Planning and Public Safety Committee Meeting

January 21, 2020

### Summary and Motions

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Chair Mossotti called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m. Committee Members Chuck Ellinger, James Brown, Josh McCurn, Jake Gibbs, Susan Lamb, Preston Worley, Amanda Bledsoe, Jennifer Reynolds, and Kathy Plomin were present. Vice-Mayor Steve Kay and Council Members Richard Moloney, Bill Farmer, Jr., and Angela Evans were also present as non-voting members.

#### I. **Approval of November 12, 2019 Committee Summary**

A motion was made by Plomin to approve the November 12, 2019 Planning and Public Safety Committee Summary, seconded by Bledsoe, the motion passed without dissent.

#### II. **Community Corrections / Jail Concerns**

Nicholas Oleson, attorney with Mattmiller Crosbie, PLLC and counsel to Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) lodge #83, provided a presentation outlining some concerns with Community Corrections and the jail. Oleson explained that the facility is understaffed and there are issues with overtime. He provided a sample of comments related to this issue and said these were obtained in an Open Records Request. He said rank and file staff members are forced to work an average of 2 double shifts per week and the overtime for this fiscal year has already been exhausted. He spoke about how the understaffed facility results in dangerous working conditions and provided a video of an officer being attacked by inmates that were considered safe. He said the inmate to officer ratio is 90 to 1 and 80% of officers polled said the facility operations and working conditions do not keep them safe from physical injury or harm. He described the concerns regarding harassment and discrimination and provided a chart to illustrate the levels of those, the review process and the outcome of each. He spoke about retaliation in response to complaints; the over-zealous discipline; and poor employee morale. He said FOP has won the last 6 arbitrations and there are 15 arbitrations set to be heard in 2020. He explained the court case that has been filed regarding unfair labor practices. Oleson concluded the presentation by requesting a response to the Public Safety Transition Team's report.

Commissioner Ken Armstrong presented an update on Community Corrections. He reviewed the inmate population and the change in population from 2018 to 2019, explaining that over 600 inmates had been transferred to state custody to date. He spoke about a request for an infirmary and how that could save on hospital trips. He provided a general overview of staffing which included vacancies, recruitment, and attrition. He said authorized strength is 278 with 24 vacancies and 22 recruits in training. He spoke about the leave issues and how this contributes to low personnel. He reviewed the recruitment efforts which include job fairs, establishing a recruitment web site, and additional funds to be used for advertising positions. He also spoke about efforts to streamline the lengthy hiring process. He identified one of those efforts as being boomerang recruiting which means that if someone resigned under good terms, they can be contacted to rejoin the team. He reviewed the attrition rates for 2019 which was significantly lower than 2018. He concluded by explaining the ongoing efforts in place for improvement and said the area of expertise missing from some individuals is pertaining to discipline.

Steven Parker, Vice President of FOP Lodge #83, provided comments on behalf of the FOP. He expressed appreciation to the committee for the invitation to present. He emphasized that although they may not always be seen, officers are at the facility to ensure the safety of 1,500 inmates. He referenced the October 2018 Council meeting during which he spoke about concerns and the mayor appointed a

committee to investigate and report on these concerns, but nothing has been reported from that committee. He also spoke about a presentation on the study conducted by Dr. Wells with ECU, expressing concern that recommendations from that study have not moved forward. He explained that multiple meetings have occurred with the current and previous administration, but the issues continue. He spoke about vacancies, overcrowding and overtime. When speaking about overtime, he said there are only a few who want the overtime and those officers are young or single with no family at home to take care of. He concluded by expressing concern with losing officers to other counties that pay less than Fayette County.

Council was advised by the Law Department that they should not make comments or ask questions as this item is related to ongoing litigation.

No further comment or action was taken on this item.

### **III. Items Referred to Committee**

A motion was made by Bledsoe to adjourn, seconded by Plomin, the motion passed without dissent.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:34 p.m.

KT 1.31.2019