



Social Services and Public Safety Committee

June 13, 2023

Summary and Motions

Chair Reynolds called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. Committee Members Ellinger, Gray, F. Brown, Baxter, Sevigny, and were in attendance. Committee Members J. Brown, Fogle, Monarrez, and Plomin were absent. Council Member Lynch was present as a non-voting member.

I. Approval of May 2, 2023 Committee Summary

Motion by Baxter to Approve the May 2, 2023 Committee Summary. Seconded by Gray. Motion passed without dissent.

II. Recruitment, Retirement, and Retention for Public Safety

Ken Armstrong, Commissioner of Public Safety, spoke about recruitment, retirement, and retention for divisions within the Department of Public Safety. He pointed out that the presentation provided today is not centered on pay. He reviewed staffing, attrition, seniority, and pay statistics for the Divisions of E-911, Fire & Emergency Services, Police, and Corrections. He spoke about other pay considerations which include hiring incentives, COVID-19 payments, retention pay, and overtime incentives. He addressed some of the current questions coming from Council which were directed to each division in the Department of Public Safety. These questions concerned recruitment, retention, and post-COVID changes. A representative from each division was present to address questions and concerns. Armstrong concluded the presentation by reviewing the status of each of the collective bargaining agreements for the Divisions of Police and Fire & Emergency Services.

Armstrong confirmed the present class is included in these figures, but he pointed out they will never have 100% staffing due to a variety of factors. Speaking about the percentage of candidates that finish training, Armstrong said it is about 25-30% in Police and 15-17% in Fire with an 83% retention. Armstrong mentioned they do over-hires to account for candidates that drop out. Speaking about seniority and if those that "buy" time are included as eligible to retire, Armstrong clarified that it only includes those with 20 or more years of service and this does not include the purchase of service time. When asked about the increase in sick time for Division of Fire & Emergency Services, Assistant Chief Robert Larkin said it could be from COVID-19, burn-out, etc. He pointed out that anytime someone calls in, there will be overtime. When asked if we have one specific person for recruitment efforts and if there are enough resources currently, Armstrong said they have made changes and are on track to improve recruitment efforts. He mentioned that recognizing achievements and expressing thanks to employees goes a long way. When asked about minority recruitment, Armstrong said he does not have these statistics, but he sees an increased interest so there seems to be some rebounding. Assistant Chief Eric Lowe said Division of Police has a diversity recruitment committee. Jonelle Patton, Director of E-911 said her division has not experienced a decline in recruitment, but they have had difficulty in finding Latino individuals. Larkin mentioned recruitment efforts and he spoke about visiting schools to recruit younger candidates. Scott Colvin, Director of Community Corrections, said there are diverse recruiting teams that go into the community. When asked for clarification on authorized strength, Armstrong said this is the number of positions Council has approved. When asked about incentives for retention, Armstrong mentioned this is an individual decision and circumstances for departure are different for each person. When asked if we

have researched why people do not want to apply to Public Safety jobs and why recruits leave, Armstrong said reasons are varied (shift, obligations, emergency, etc.). Armstrong pointed out that it has been difficult to compete with pay. No action was taken on this item.

III. Code Enforcement Update

Alex Olszowy, Director of Code Enforcement, began the presentation with a review of the authority and scope of the Division of Code Enforcement, highlighting related chapters of the Code of Ordinances. He mentioned problem types including housing, nuisance, sidewalks, snow, and unsolicited materials. He presented a chart to illustrate how repair notices go through the housing complaint process. Similarly, he showed how the process for a nuisance complaint or a sidewalk complaint. He reviewed significant facts pertaining to Code Enforcement which includes a 311 web interface for Code Enforcement cases and there is an accreditation with Building Inspection underway. He spoke about qualifications and training for Code Enforcement Officers and Nuisance Control Officers. He reviewed attrition rates for 2020-2023 which shows that 7 employees have moved on, 6 took pay increases within LFUCG, and currently there are two vacant funded positions and 3 trainees. He pointed out cases and citations by council district and highlighted the appeals process that is currently in place. Finally, he displayed maps to illustrate where complaint cases are across the city.

When asked about complaints for different problem types (sidewalk, nuisance, etc.) and if they handle one complaint at a time, Olszowy mentioned they would be violations of separate ordinances. He said they might have numerous neighbors issuing the same complaint for one address but it is logged as one complaint. When asked if someone is notified of their complaint being recorded, Olszowy said they are not notified because complaints are anonymous so they do not track these. When asked about graffiti on sidewalks, Olszowy said they have no jurisdiction over graffiti on sidewalks because sidewalk graffiti is a criminal offense. He clarified that code enforcement enforces graffiti on walls, fences and building structures. Speaking about those who can't afford to pay for repeated citations and if we can track repetitive calls at one location, Olszowy said they could look at cases on any individual property back to 2018 when software was installed. With owner-occupied properties, there is a program that can help. Addressing fees associated, Olszowy clarified that the debt is owed to the city so it is a lien or a citation for the outstanding balance. To pay it off, you go to Division of Revenue and a payment plan would typically go through the Law Department with compliance being one of the conditions. You have to show you are working on getting it fixed to stay in good standing. No action was taken on this item.

IV. Items Referred to Committee

No action was taken on this item.

The meeting adjourned at 2:40 p.m.