

City of Creswell
Public Safety Forum
March 9, 2015

Council Present:

Dave Stram
Omar Bowles
Richard Heyman
Adam Pelatt

Jane Vincent
Holly Campbell
Ted Romoser

Staff Present:

Michelle Amberg
Roberta Tharp
Christy Wurster
Cliff Bellew
Madeline Phillips
Sgt. Billy Halvorson

City Administrator
City Recorder
Budget Director
Public Works Director
Planning Technician
Lane County Sheriff's
Office

Council Absent: 0

Press: 1 – Creswell Chronicle – Scott Olson

Audience: 9

The Public Forum on Public Safety was called to order by Mayor Stram at 6:07 pm.

City Administrator Michelle Amberg provided a brief background on the history of Public Safety in Creswell.

- A third deputy was added in response to a spree of crimes a couple of years ago
- The Lane County Sheriff's contract was renegotiated at that time to include 3 Deputies and a 1/3 time sergeant
- The changes made were supported by contingency funds in the general fund – Ms. Amberg noted it is not a good plan to continue paying for an ongoing expense out of contingency as it spends down your ending fund balance and is prohibited by Oregon Budget Law
- Last year, RARE (Resource Assistance for Rural Environments) Intern, Madeline Phillips developed a survey collecting citizens thoughts in establishing a Public Safety Fee
- Based on the input received, the Council determined the third deputy was valuable and the Council wanted to continue this level of service another year, funded by imposing a \$6 Public Safety Fee
- The Council enacted an Ordinance and adopted the fee
- The Ordinance that was adopted is scheduled to sunset on June 30, 2015

While working on the 15/16 Fiscal Year Budget, the question arose as to whether the Council wants to continue to staff the third deputy or look at other configurations of staffing levels for Public Safety. Ms. Amberg reported that we have contracted with Portland State University to complete a Policing Study which is scheduled to be completed by the end of this fiscal year. The Council must now determine how we are going to represent Public Safety in the budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

As it currently stands, the general fund contribution to Public Safety is \$443,794; the \$6 Public Safety fee generates \$13,896 monthly or \$166,752 annually to cover the total contract cost for Public Safety of \$610,546. Ms. Amberg noted the estimated increase to the Lane County Sheriff's contract for the next fiscal year; for the same amount of coverage is an increase of \$772 bringing the contract cost to \$611,318.

Ms. Amberg distributed a spreadsheet that outlined five different levels of service along with the proposed annual contract cost. It included a chart showing what amount would need to be charged for the Public Safety Fee (if the Council adopts a new ordinance and chooses to extend the fee) for each level of service with the general fund contributing \$443,794; the same amount as this fiscal year. (Public Safety Fee options are shown below in parenthesis)

1. 3 Deputies and a 0.5 time Sergeant at an annual cost of \$641,579 - (\$7.44)
2. 3 Deputies and a 0.33 time Sergeant at an annual cost of \$611,318 - (6.36)
3. 2.5 Deputies and a 0.5 time Sergeant at an annual cost of \$563,038 - (\$4.61)
4. 2 Deputies and a 0.5 time Sergeant at an annual cost of \$484,497 - (\$1.77)
5. 2 Deputies and a 0.33 time Sergeant at an annual cost of \$454,236 - (\$0.69)

The level of service Creswell currently carries is option #2.

Sergeant Halvorson addressed the Council and presented a brief overview of Creswell and surrounding cities policing staff levels.

- In 2013 a third deputy was added to the Creswell contract as a result of a large upswing in property crime
- He compared the numbers of service calls during the months of May through August 2013 (two deputies) and the same timeframe in 2014 (three deputies). He reported property crime decreased thirty-three percent
- Response times have been significantly reduced with the addition of the third deputy – generally calls are now answered the same day
- With the third deputy on the contract, Creswell is requiring less backup from the main office
- Junction City, population 5,400 has ten officers
- City of Veneta, population 4,600 has four officers and a 0.33 Sergeant
- City of Philomath, population 4,600 has nine officers
- City of Sutherlin, population 7,900 has fifteen officers
- The Bureau of Justice studies in 2008 and 2012 reflect a need for a minimum of two officers per one thousand population for effective community policing
- Community Policing is what Creswell citizens have asked for in prior Council meetings

Sgt. Halvorson noted he is currently engaged in developing a Community Policing model for Creswell. He explained that by working 0.33 time, most of his time is spent in Administrative duties only, and by increasing his time to 0.50 it will afford him the time to develop a Community Policing model for Creswell.

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Larry Duncan, Creswell resident addressed the Council to speak in support of a Public Safety Fee. He and his wife live on Social Security and don't have a lot of money but urged the Council to adopt option number 1; Three deputies and a half time sergeant and a \$7.44 per month Public Safety Fee. He asked the Council to take into account the legalization of marijuana and how much of an impact that may have on our community. He also noted he has seen a decrease in vandalism since the addition of the extra officer.

Richard Zettervall, Creswell resident addressed the Council noting that the increase of policing level has greatly impacted Creswell. He is very concerned about public perception when implementing fees. The Council is facing some very difficult decisions in the very near future and is worried about a mass public display of anger and discontent if both the water rates and the public safety fee are increased. He is in support of option number three: Two and a half deputies and a half time sergeant.

Councilor Pelatt asked Sgt. Halvorson if he has seen a decrease of violent, family or sexual crimes since the addition of the extra officer and to explain the roles of Deputy vs Sergeant.

Sgt. Halvorson explained violent crimes would be basically assault crimes, and he doesn't have the numbers readily available but is willing to conduct the research and get back with the Council. He noted that the main office, general patrol would be the ones to respond to those crimes and they are reporting that with the addition of the third deputy, they have been responding less. The difference between a deputy and a sergeant is deputies have call responses as well as school contacts; a sergeant has administrative duties: supervision, scheduling, time cards, office type work and he is also working towards being the facilitator to establish a relationship within the community.

Councilor Romoser asked Sgt. Halvorson for his definition of Community Policing and what would he implement if he was afforded more time. He also asked if the businesses were the focus of most of the property crimes.

Sgt. Halvorson explained he is trying to do a monthly meeting for the community, it would provide the time and ability work towards developing a relationship with local businesses, and it would increase his overall availability. Sgt. Halvorson noted the point of community policing is looking at the residents as well as the businesses and in order to be effective, it all has to be coordinated.

Councilor Vincent asked Sgt. Halvorson if he will be helping out with the Emergency Response Plan.

Sgt. Halvorson explained that is what he would envision but it ultimately depends on how the City chooses to peruse that. A lot of plans are coordinated with the Emergency Services Coordinator but it is natural to have the sergeant involved as well.

Councilor Campbell asked Sgt. Halvorson about any predictions he may have in regards to marijuana facilities/growers in Creswell.

Sgt. Halvorson explained this is new territory for everyone. He noted that every home invasion robbery that the Sheriff's office has responded to since medical marijuana was legalized and home site growers were authorized, involved a marijuana grow site.

Councilor Heyman asked for information on the amount of calls for service generated per month.

Sgt. Halvorson noted that February had fifty-four case numbers drawn. The time spent on reports per case varies on the type of call: A neighborhood dispute can take up to three hours where a small burglary will take an hour. The deputies have laptops in their cars so they can write reports while still being out on the street which helps reduce time spent in the office. Officers also have to transport folks who are arrested and they also have to attend trials.

Mayor Stram asked Sgt. Halvorson about time spent on investigations, "With the addition of the third deputy does this allow time to spend investigating domestic cases?"

Sgt. Halvorson noted that by having the third deputy it provides the flexibility to shift his staff to adjust schedules when an officer is tied up in a large investigation. With the additional deputy, it helps them take the time they need to complete their investigations/reports rather than having to rush through them to get to the next call.

Mayor Stram also asked if the city dropped back to two deputies, does the word get out to the criminals. Sgt. Halvorson noted that he believes the word does get out and Creswell will see an increase in crime with a decrease in patrol. He explained that the criminals figure this out and it is evident by looking at the statistics.

Councilor Bowles provided input he has received from the public on his Creswell Neighborhood Watch Facebook page.

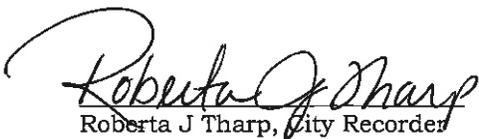
- He had over 1500 views to his announcements of this meeting
- Twelve people provided input
- Option 1 – received eight votes
- Option 2 – received two votes
- Option 5 – received one vote (this person did not live in Creswell)
- One person noted they would like to keep the policing levels where they are or increase to a half time sergeant position
- He had fourteen citizens that the Council speaks to on a regular basis not included in the above numbers that they would like to increase to a half time sergeant
- Of thirty others who he hasn't ever spoken to (not sure if they live in the City) twenty seven chose to go to three deputies and half time sergeant and the remaining three opted to stay at the levels we are currently.
- The majority are wanting to stay at the levels we are at or increase and they are willing to increase the Public Safety Fee to \$7

Councilor Vincent noted the citizens she has spoken with want to stay at the current levels or want to increase the Sergeant's time to half time but never go less.

Councilor Pelatt asked if it was possible to establish a fund for public safety like the H2O fund for water to help those who are struggling to pay the additional fees. Ms. Amberg explained that the H2O fund is tied to the utility bill for water.

Adjournment

There being no further discussion, Mayor Stram adjourned the Public Forum at 6:55 pm.


Roberta J Tharp, City Recorder


Dave Stram, Mayor