

City of Hastings Public Safety Advisory Commission

November 18, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Volunteer Room-City Hall

**Present:** Commissioners Chair Dolores Pemble, Gary Stevens, Melissa Blackstad, Theresa Auge`, and Victoria Baukol. Auge` was appointed as acting secretary.

**City Staff:** Chiefs: Bryan Schafer and John Townsend.

- Chair Pemble called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm.
- Auge` moved and Blackstad seconded to approve the agenda. Motion adopted unanimously.
- Stevens moved and Blackstad seconded to approve the minutes of September 16<sup>th</sup>. Motion adopted unanimously.
- Welcome and Introductions: Commission members introduced themselves. The group welcomed new commission member: Victoria (Vicky) Baukol. The commission is at full capacity.
- Chief Schafer gave the following police department update.
  - Using a revised hiring process. While a challenge to coordinate, the outcome seems promising. Looking for 2 new officers and a receptionist.
  - Department morale is high.
  - Great citizen support.
  - December 7<sup>th</sup> will be the annual department meeting. Dakota county sheriff's office will provide coverage to allow staff to participate.
  - 2022 Budget approved the following: 10-year-old police handguns, squad car radios, several new solar powered speed signs, public safety cameras, and 3 new squad cars.
  - Our local department will see additional mental health support. County is funding new positions. This enhancement supports staff.
  - Additional conversation included; the civil unrest in other areas of the metro. Reference to the Minneapolis situation including recent vote. The chief assured the commission that Hastings has great citizen support for police.

Chief Townsend gave the following fire department update.

- The city council had a workshop with the fire department. It went very well. A second meeting is being planned.
- Chief reminded the commission of current staffing concerns. Currently 8 full time and 18 paid on call staff. Openings for 4 paid on call positions. 2022 will also see an opening for a fire inspector position. They too are using a revised hiring process.
- The EMT and Fire classes are outsourced. This has had dual benefits. It has helped to relieve the current staff and the students have shown excellent readiness upon course(s) completion.
- Reassessing current job descriptions to allow promotions for staff.
- Station alert system is nearly finished. Among the many benefits of this system is the heart safe features, including new sounds/tones, alerting lights and more.
- The department is working on improving fitness, diet, overall health and sleep. Some exciting apps to help change culture!

- 2022 is our annual mental health check. Each firefighter has up to 5 visits and more are available
- The current fire/EMS fleet was reviewed. The 2022 budget will see a new fire engine and ambulance.
- Chief reviewed the 911 Dakota County dispatching process. The department has and will continue to decline some forms of transport requests due to staffing.
- A vender; City Gate was selected to perform the department fire study. Last one was done in 2014.
- Old Business:
  - Mission Statement. Chair Pemble provided the minutes of a planning meeting. The following Mission statement was suggested: ***Enhancing awareness of public safety through community programs, educational opportunities, and public engagement. Our work is to advise our elected officials.*** The statement will be reviewed at the next meeting. There was additional conversation about a commission handbook. The group supported the suggestions from the planning meeting. A draft will be drawn for consideration at the December meeting. The need to define the route of communication between the commission and the council is needed.
  - Term Limits: Chief Schafer provided a list of commission member terms. The group thanked and supported the document. (see insert). Per the document; Stevens, Pemble, Baukol, and Auge` would need to seek reappointment in January 2022. All 4 members have agreed to another term if reappointed. Chief Schafer will take to the council.
  - 2021 Goals. Chair Pemble reviewed the 2021 goals. The December meeting will include reviewing those goals as part of the annual report. In addition, 2022 goals will be discussed.

7. New Business:

- Level 3: Chief Schafer provided the following information. The predator identified at the recent level 3 meeting has moved out of Hastings. The notification process is dependent on coordination of several departments often with little notice. Chief shared the process used in notifying the citizens.
- Danger Dog Declarations: Chief Schafer asked this topic to be tabled until next month.
- Police Policy and POST Model Policy. The topic surrounds the use of pursuit or chasing a suspect. Chief Schafer describes the procedure officers use in making a decision on whether to chase someone. It must involve a “crime of violence”. Chief provided specific examples. Our department uses officer discretion.
- Tours of departments: As a result of the robust conversations; members would like to have a tours of the Fire/EMS, Police, and Dakota Call Center. Both chiefs will assess calendars and the 2022 commission meeting schedule for coordinating.
- Ride-alongs: Both chiefs have suspended the use of ride-alongs for citizens due to the Covid Pandemic. Once things settle; they may be reconsidered.

8. Next Meeting: December 16, 2021

9. Auge` moved and Blackstad seconded to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously.  
Meeting adjourned at 8: 50 pm.