

**Minutes of the
Public Safety Committee Meeting
Troy City Council
Thursday, March 31, 2016 - 6:00pm**

Called to Order at 6:00 p.m.

Committee Members Present: Chairperson Kim Ashe-McPherson, Councilman Dean Bodnar, Councilmember Erin Sullivan-Teta, Councilman John Donohue, Councilman Mark McGrath, Chief Tedesco, and Chief Garrett. Other Council Members Present: Jim Gulli, Lynn Kopka.

Also Present: Fire Chief Garrett, Police Chief Tedesco, Captain Matt Dudek, firefighter and UFA presenter, Battalion Chief Eric McMahon, Bryan Goldberger, Labor Attorney for the City and Frank Razzano, UFA President and Deputy Mayor Monica Kurzejeski.

Chairman Ashe-McPherson noted that the purpose of the meeting was for the UFA to make a presentation to the committee regarding what they do as uniformed firefighters in the City of Troy and why they do it. Captain Matt Dudek's presentation included a slide presentation as well as a handout.

Captain Dudek gave an overview of the operations of the fire department, including an explanation of the staffing, training and response procedures. The Engine companies have a basic three man crew. The Truck Company utilizes the 100' ladder truck for high rise or out of control fires.

He also gave a detailed explanation of the ambulance service that the department provides. There are three ambulance units within the department who respond to medical calls. They are located at the Lansingburgh, downtown and Bouton Road stations. The Rescue Squad is located at the downtown (6th Avenue) station and responds to emergencies requiring rescue efforts. Also the RIT (Rapid Intervention Team) is on standby at a fire to rescue firefighters trapped or injured inside a burning structure.

The firefighting equipment is old and needs replacing. Two new ambulances were purchased last year. Discussion followed regarding the various "Still Districts" and the different needs of each area of the city.

Station #1 Lansingburgh Station 115th & 5th Ave: This station has seen an increase in calls in recent months. This district has an aging population, with several senior housing sites. There is also more poverty and closely spaced wood-frame dwellings in this district. Discussion followed regarding reporting the addresses of repetitive calls to social services for possible intervention by that agency.

Station #2 Bouton Road Station (Bouton Road & 15th Street): This district has more single family homes, which means less calls. However, this station responds to a lot of calls from the RPI campus between the student housing, the hazardous materials in labs and the numerous confined spaces calls. Councilwoman Ashe-McPherson asked how many calls in a six month period. Deputy Mayor Kurzejeski noted that she could get that data for the Council. Also, every year this district performs rescues of amateur rock climbers from the Poestenkill Gorge. The Hoosick Street Traffic Corridor presents hazardous conditions and requires many calls to this district.

Station #3 Campbell Avenue Station (30 Campbell Avenue): This is the most remote, hard to access district, which includes a portion of the HVCC Campus. This accounts for numerous calls for fires, HAZMAT response and housing issues.

North Street Station (North St. & River St.): This district has a dense population, a high crime rate and drug overdoses resulting in a high volume of medical calls. Also there are many old buildings being rehabilitated into housing units, which will increase the call volume. There was discussion regarding the possibility of closing North Street station again, as it had been in the past. Given the mandatory staffing rate for the entire city, the only cost savings realized by closing this station would be the utilities expenses.

There is also the issue of Mutual Aid, which works both ways with Watervliet, Green Island, Cohoes and Albany when needed. Closing a station would make responding to mutual aid calls more difficult also.

Central Station (2175 6th Ave. Downtown): The Central Station houses the HAZMAT Squad and the boats used in water rescues as well as firefighting equipment.

Station #6 Canal Ave Station (Canal Ave. & 3rd St.): This station is an old building that serves a fairly densely populated area of South Troy with the typical issues.

The districts overlap to provide coverage when one unit is out of its station responding to a call. The call volume is increasing daily but the stations are running at peak efficiency.

Discussion followed regarding the **RED X** that has been put on various abandoned buildings throughout the city. This sign indicates the building is unsafe for inside firefighting. If a call comes in for such a building, the responding stations will fight the fire from the exterior only. The Fire Department gets a list of abandoned buildings from Code Enforcement. Battalion Chief Eric McMahon performs a site inspection to determine if the building is safe for inside firefighting. A structural inspection is done by the City Engineer.

Discussion followed regarding the system by which repetitive calls to 911 can be referred to available Mental Health programs. The state mandated local agencies are usually overwhelmed with requests for assistance and it may be difficult for them to embrace this issue. When the Troy Police Department gets a "941" call, Samaritan Hospital Mental Health Unit is used if needed.

Discussion followed regarding Fawn Ridge on Tibbitts Avenue contracting their ambulance services with Mohawk Ambulance.

Discussion followed regarding the logistics of the standard "work week" for firefighters. They work two twenty-four hour shifts per pay period at straight time. They get a "Kelly Day" once per quarter to offset the overtime not paid for 8 hours each pay period. This is done via a preset schedule and is not available as a random day off.

Discussion followed regarding the "Backboard detail". In the past, it involved sending a firefighter to the hospitals to collect equipment (such as backboards). But today it involves a member going to the various hospitals to collect equipment AND getting insurance information for billing purposes. They often transport people and are unable to get complete demographic info before they leave. This helps them to get the proper information to send to the billing company. It is currently performed by an off duty member on OT for a few hours a week.

Chief Garrett noted that "a fire doubles every minute it burns.....1 room becomes 2 rooms after a minute and 2 rooms becomes 4 rooms after 2 minutes".

Discussion followed regarding the deteriorated condition of the Lansingburgh Station. The Canal Street Station has no heat; money to replace the boilers has been budgeted in 2016.

The Fire Department has recently contracted with a new billing company with the hopes of improving collections.

Chairwoman Ashe-McPherson asked Chief Tedesco if he would like to comment on any aspect of his department and he declined, stating everything was good.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:08pm.