

Meeting Summary

Q1 Council Listening Session on Public Safety

Monday, March 18, 2019

6:30-8:00 p.m.

Council Chambers - 1331 NW Eastman Parkway, Gresham, OR 97030

City of Gresham Representatives:

Karylinn Echols, City Councilor
Eddy Morales, City Councilor
Mario Palmero, City Councilor
Janine Gladfelter, City Councilor
Robin Sells, Police Chief
Mitch Snyder, Fire Chief

Scott Lewis, Fire Division Chief
Teresa Hall, Council & Executive Analyst
Rosalie Diaz, Administrative Assistant III
Alex Logue, Community Engagement Specialist
Elizabeth Coffey, Communications Manager

Welcome & Introductions 6:32 p.m.

Councilor Karylinn Echols called the meeting to order and welcomed attendees. She is serving her 4th term on the Gresham City Council.

The following Councilors and Staff introduced themselves:

- Councilor Eddy Morales - serving his 1st term on the Gresham City Council
- Police Chief Robin Sells
- Fire Chief Mitch Snyder
- Fire Division Chief Scott Lewis
- Councilor Mario Palmero
- Councilor Janine Gladfelter

The following documents were provided for tonight's attendees:

- Fact Sheet Handout – (Attachment A)
- 2019 Council Work Plan (Attachment B)

Councilor Karylinn Echols highlighted the Council Work Plan items specifically related to Public Safety and introduced staff to elaborate on the related topics;

Fire Chief Mitch Snyder – CARES Program (Community Assistance Response)

The Gresham CARES program is a partnership between the Gresham Fire Department and the OHSU School of Nursing. Currently 32 nursing students, along with one shared OHSU and Gresham Fire administrative staff person, coordinate care and respond to patients with complex and chronic rather than emergent needs. The effort connects patients with more appropriate medical and social services and resources to help reduce the impact on non-emergency calls to the 9-1-1 system.

Fire Division Chief Scott Lewis – QRV (Quick Response Vehicle)

The QRVs are a smaller-faster response vehicle (Ford F-150 trucks). They are staffed with 2 medically trained personnel who respond to 9-1-1 emergency calls not requiring fire suppression. The big red engines are difficult to maneuver in neighborhoods and traffic and are expensive both to purchase and operate, while the smaller QRVs are significantly cheaper and maneuver more easily. The City owns one- & one-third QRVs sharing one vehicle with Portland. Gresham and Portland alternately staff a shared station with Portland covering 2 of 3 days and Gresham staffs the other day. The QRV pilot program started 3-years ago and operated Tues-Fri, 10 hrs. per day. After deeming it a success, operations were increased to full-time 24/7.

Q&A Gresham Fire:

Q: Does the MAX train interfere with Fire Dispatch from City Hall?

A: Yes, daily. It is a problem faced in all cities with train crossings. The delay is typically 45 seconds to a minute and the drivers have protocols to get across the crossings quickly as soon as the trains are clear.

Q: A young male resident of Rockwood with a very low income is alcohol dependent and recently had a medical issue. He was transported to the hospital and stayed several days. Would CARES be able to assist him?

A: Yes, this is exactly what CARES is designed to do. They work in partnership with medical and social service organizations to provide treatment options. CARES staff continues to search for additional partners. (The citizen was asked to provide the person's contact information to CARES program coordinators.)

Q: What is the City doing by way of prevention before interventions of this kind are needed?

A: By advertising the CARES program, the City is working to address issues before they become crisis situations thus minimizing utilization of the 9-1-1 system. PD also deals with similar situations and works to get mental health referrals to those in need before situations become critical. If someone unfortunately gets arrested, there are stop-gap measures to help them. 1st time offenders are referred to treatment programs vs. being incarcerated. In addition, the City works with organizations to provide greater opportunities for youth such as the Boys & Girls Club, Friends of Children, Family of Friends Mentoring and other programs to keep kids from going down this path.

Q: Besides Police and Fire, who can provide referrals to the CARES program?

A: Referrals can come from any source. Anyone that recognizes an issue - including a doctor or clinician, a neighbor or a family member can contact the program. The more the CARES program becomes known to the public, the more likely it is that referrals will come from other sources.

Q: Are we reaching out to providers like Urgent Care to let them know about this program?

A: The CARES program is a partnership and will work with any organization (medical or social services) for referrals. In return, patients contacted by Police or Fire may be taken to Urgent Care or other organizations for treatment that is non-emergent or chronic in nature.

Q: Are the nurses from OHSU Gresham residents?

A: They are students and likely come from a variety of places.

Staff Comment: Fire Chief Mitch Snyder was asked to comment on his former organization's CARES program. The program (just south of Seattle) is similar to Gresham's program. It works with nurses who provide care on chronic issues, but they build more long-term relationships. They deal with addiction, mental health and other chronic problems to get people well and stabilized by providing follow-up contact and ongoing support. The City is reviewing this model to see if it can be implemented here.

Q: Has the City noticed an increase in the number of mental health and homelessness people in Gresham? And How does the City triage mentally ill patients?

A: Emergency Services has generally been a reactive vs. a proactive system for many years. CARES, in partnership with Police and Fire, is designed to be more proactive to get ahead of crises. Police deal primarily with behavioral vs. medical issues and officers are being trained specifically to recognize and deal with mental health issues and get people the appropriate resources.

Q: Regarding the 2-1-1 Social Services Hotline – Do we know if it is effective?

A: We refer people to this service which is a good resource for non-emergent services, but we don't have any information on the follow-up once someone is referred.

Councilor Karylenn Echols – Homelessness & Mental Health Services

Council held the first Listening Session on Homelessness 3 years ago. A Task Force was formed and made recommendations to Council to address homelessness in Gresham which included those suffering mental health and addiction issues. Through our primary partnership with Multnomah County, we have brought a lot of resources to Gresham. The City has hired 2 Homeless Services Specialists who make daily contacts and build relationships. They work closely with service organizations to find support as well as housing. We are seeing great results and a reduction of illegal camps.

Police Chief Robin Sells – PD & Homelessness along the Springwater Trail

Gresham PD recognizes the importance of the trail system to the Gresham Community. They have off-road vehicles called Gators that patrol daily from May-October working to keep the Springwater trail safe. Because of their efforts a definitive line is evident between Gresham and Portland related to illegal camping issues. The homeless also know the line and where we patrol. Gresham PD agrees, there is nothing good about people sleeping on the sidewalk, and they work in partnership to make sure people have a safe place to go.

Councilor Eddy Morales – City Mental Health and Homeless Resources

The State (Mental) Hospital closed in 1995, and admittedly a lot of the resources that were promised to go to our communities never made it where they were supposed to. The County Commission just directed staff to purchase a warehouse in Portland for these needs which should open in 2020. The City will need to have conversations with our Chiefs (Police & Fire) on how we can integrate into that program. In addition, Homeless Services Specialists Aaron and Kevin not only guarantee housing for people the day they are contacted, but they also help them with jobs and other resources to get them back on their feet with a great success rate.

Police Chief Robin Sells – PD & Mental Health Issues

One problem in Gresham is getting resources where we need them. 4 years ago, approximately 15% of police calls dealt with mental health related calls - now it's close to 50%. Homelessness and mental health issues are connected. To improve our efforts, we started a Mental Health team consisting of a Sergeant and an officer. These positions no longer respond to regular patrol calls but are strictly dedicated to mental health issues. They are doing great work and we hope to add members. The team is currently visiting a jurisdiction out of state with a successful mental health program to learn from them. The Gresham team works with two Behavioral Health clinicians from Cascadia Mental Health services as part of this grant funded program.

Police Chief Robin Sells - Body Worn Cameras

Chief Sells emphasized the department's desire for and the importance of Police transparency, accountability and building trust in the community. As part of these efforts, the Body Worn Camera project began a few years ago but was put on hold due to funding. The City received a grant for 50% of the project which was matched by the City at the direction of the City Council. The program is in the testing phase with 4 different vendors. 15 officers (some that were not necessarily in favor of cameras) were selected to participate and they are all believers and see the importance now. Testing will last another month after which they will select a vendor. Last year, the City had 40 complaints from 74,000 calls which is only .05%. With this program, they should see a greater reduction in complaints and in the use of force because when people know they are being filmed, they typically act very differently. In a recent case an officer was having problems with an arrestee and a Sergeant with a body worn camera came to assist. Once the Sergeant announced he was wearing a camera (as required),

the arrestee's demeanor changed immediately. Unintended negative impacts for the project include data retention. Because the City's IT structure can't handle the large data files, the PD had to contract for CLOUD storage at an additional cost. Also increasing staff time and costs are public records requests. If someone requests the data from a recording, we are required to produce it. For every minute recorded, it takes a staff person between 6 & 12 minutes to recover, prepare and produce the data which required hiring an additional staff person. The cameras should be in effect for all officers by August 2019.

Q&A Gresham PD

Q: Did the City develop protocols and research best practices?

A: Yes. Law Enforcement Unions and the District Attorney all had to be on board. Protocols around the country regarding the use of cameras are all over the map. Certain procedures, including "should the officers be allowed to view the video of events involving shootings?" had to be determined. In Gresham, officers will be allowed to watch the footage. The Multnomah County District Attorney that serves Gresham helped write the Body Worn Camera Laws in Oregon. He served on Gresham's committee and assisted with valuable input.

Q: Are the officers allowed to turn-off their cameras while responding to a call?

A: Yes, in certain circumstances depending on the sensitivity of the situation. Cameras should be turned on every time they make contact, however, there are sensitive situations that call for or require privacy - such as responding to a hospital call where communications about a person's medical care is being discussed, or when they enter a locker room or when taking a report from a victim of a sex crime. If someone asks them not to film, depending on the situation, they may turn-off the camera. Finally, body-worn cameras are not the end-all as they don't show situations from every angle but all-in-all it is a fabulous tool.

Q: If the footage is stopped intentionally or accidentally, are there protocols?

A: Yes. If the equipment malfunctions, there isn't much that can be done, but if an officer doesn't follow proper procedures or intentionally turns off the recording, they are responsible and accountable.

Citizen Comment: The Chief spoke at a recent meeting in Gresham about the PD. People would truly be amazed at what the Police Department encounters. Criticism often comes from people not understanding what they deal with. The citizen encouraged everyone to invite the Chief to come out and speak at their neighborhood associations and community groups to help them learn and understand what our officers do.

Police Chief Robin Sells - Coffee with a Cop

Gresham PD takes community engagement seriously. Coffee with a Cop is an opportunity where the officers sit down with community members and engage in an informal conversation. The next event is March 26 from 1-3 p.m. at Stomping Grounds in Fairview. Attendees buy their own beverage. Gresham officers also participate with Special Olympics and the Trauma Intervention Program (TIPs). TIPs are trained volunteers who are called to assist after difficult or tragic events to provide continued support after the officers leave to go back on duty. If you're interested in participating, please contact Gresham PD for more information.

Q: Semi-trucks make deliveries downtown during business hours and block traffic creating a safety issue. Is there an ordinance dealing with this?

A: This is a difficult issue and has been brought to Council's attention before. There is no workable solution because limiting deliveries to after-hours increases costs and puts difficult constraints on businesses – including those that are land-locked and have no delivery zones around their properties. Visitors are encouraged to use caution when navigating around delivery trucks blocking lanes of traffic.

Q: Tell us about AEDs (Automatic External Defibrillators)

A: A generous local donor, Alyson Huntting (in attendance), provided funding to equip all Gresham Police vehicles with these devices. The first week the devices were operational they saved a young man's life.

Fire Division Chief Scott Lewis – Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response Grant (SAFER)

In 2012 we received our first SAFER grant. Due to attrition we had low staffing levels and the City was able to leverage federal tax dollars to hire 6 new firefighters. The grant paid their full salaries for 2 years at the cost of \$70,000 per person. In 2016 we applied for another SAFER grant and hired 6 more firefighters. The 2016 grant paid 75% of their salaries the first two years and 35% for the third year which helped us provide staffing for the new QRV program as well. The Fire Dept. is currently applying for the 2019 SAFER grant. The past 16 years, the Fire Dept. has received \$8 million in grants and the police have received even more.

Councilor Karylenn Echols – City Grants

All City Departments work hard to apply for grant funds, and we accomplish a lot of things we otherwise wouldn't be able to because we are successful. In Gresham, property taxes go into the general fund to pay for police, fire and parks. What the City receives back in property taxes doesn't even cover the police general fund.

Q: Do Police and Fire use Narcan or Naloxone to treat opioid overdoses?

A: Yes, they use it a lot. It used to cost \$18 per dose and now it costs \$88. The effect of the dose is very quick and often patients come up swinging. Because of the opioid crisis these drugs are now available at pharmacies, college dorms, and even public libraries in Portland. (It is unknown if the Gresham library carries them). Note: EMS should still be called immediately after the drugs are administered due to potential serious side effects.

Q: Does Gresham or our region have a handle on the opioid crisis? or what are we doing to fight this problem? Also, is crime going up due to the legalization of Marijuana?

A: The very first day Marijuana was legalized in Oregon there was a fatal accident here in Gresham from someone smoking a joint in their car, so it definitely has had an effect. With Marijuana, it is hard to prove the impairment vs. with alcohol which it's easy to test for. Prosecutors are unwilling therefore to prosecute these crimes – it's just not a high priority. Regarding the opioid problem, no we don't have a handle on it. We have limited resources, but it is a bigger, more serious issue and as such, many resources are going to this.

Q: 11-12 years ago, the City created and trained the Citizens Emergency Response Team (CERT) in Gresham that was funded by Homeland Security money. Due to the increased risk of "the big one" striking our area, is there discussion about reactivating this program?

A: The CERT teams were re-evaluated and the City decided they would focus on a new, more effective program called Neighborhood Ready. It's a system where we evaluate neighbors needs and skillsets and identify resources in your immediate neighborhoods where you are more likely to provide help and service. As originally designed and trained, CERT members were to convene at local fire stations and take supplies out to other locations. If the really "big-one" hits, we don't think this would be realistic. There may be the opportunity to do more training, although grant funds for these types of programs have really dried up lately.

Citizen Comment: City Council previously discussed having their Council meetings in locations throughout the community.

Response: Due to logistics with recording the meetings for broadcast this has not happened. This year there are 4 Council Listening Sessions which will be held out in the community at different and varied locations.

Citizen Comment: A Salem Representative was recently discussing a partial activation of the National Guard. Members skilled in construction would be dispatched to “hot-spots” with higher concentrations of homeless camps and build small homes. This is being discussed with hopes the Governor will engage as the decision to activate the Oregon National Guard falls under her prerogative.

Wrap-up:

Staff and Council members thanked everyone for attending and encouraged people to contact them with comments or recommendations. They further asked attendees to connect them with people needing their services so the City can assist with the appropriate care. The City is working diligently to research and identify best practices to tackle other local issues that also have huge impacts on Public Safety including; mental health and rehabilitation services, housing stability, and parks and recreation. A major key to solving Public Safety issues is community engagement and involvement. Getting more people involved in their Neighborhood Associations and in events like this are critical to our success.

Announcements:

- The next Council Listening Session will be May 16th and is on Homelessness. The City’s Communications department will publicize the event. The final two Listening Sessions are: 1) Housing (in July) dealing with all housing issues - not just homelessness) and 2) Emergency Preparedness (in September).
- There is a TIPs program fundraiser (A Fire Truck Pull Contest) on June 22 in downtown Troutdale. The TIPs program is funded solely on donations and all proceeds from the contest will go to the program. Gresham PD won the contest last year and is encouraging Gresham Fire to participate in the challenge.
- There is a Metro Parks and Recreation bond coming up on the November ballot. It is a renewal of the previous bond and will not increase the current cost to citizens.
- Gresham Barlow School District has a strong program to improve school safety. Contact GBSD Superintendent Dr. Perera and invite them to speak to your community group about their program.

The meeting adjourned at 8 p.m.

Submitted by:

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