

**City of Troutdale**  
**Public Safety Advisory Committee**  
**May 7, 2009 7:00 pm**

**ATTENDING:** Mike Goss, Jon Brown, Tina Tebbens, Jason Gates, Jerry Stitzel, Joe Carlson and Chief Scott Anderson. **ABSENT:** Jorgan Shaw. **GUESTS:** Justin McCauley.

**I. Roll Call** Chief Anderson went through the roll call of the committee.

**II. Minutes of April 5, 2009** Tina said that the minutes should be amended to read that the second of the motion to approve was made by Jon and moved to approve the minutes of April 5, 2009 as amended. The Chief seconded the motion, all were in favor and the motion passed.

**II. Public Comment** There was none.

**IV. Update on 2009 Goals** Committee members reviewed the 2009 Goals, recorded in a separate document titled, PSAC 2009 Goals and attached to these minutes.

**V. 2009/2010 Budget Process** – Chief Anderson explained that going into this year’s process, the proposed Lieutenant position had been removed from the City Administrator’s budget, followed by elimination of the code enforcement position and a vacant police officer position. There was a robust Code Enforcement discussion and in the end the budget committee restored the half time position. In addition, the vacant officer position was restored which would be needed in the event the EMGET grant didn’t materialize in this year. Finally, two promotions occurred within the existing staff to “close the gap” on street supervision (the largest being night relief), bringing the total number of sergeants to six. The initial cost is minor impact, and there was consensus that the investment was timely and necessary. A third promotional opportunity will come up in October when a supervisor retirement occurs.

Mike noted that a PowerPoint presentation was very effective in relaying the Chief’s points. Jerry asked about how the staffing model would work, and the Chief responded that schedule proposals from existing staff and future discussions would shape how supervision schedules evolve. An Administrative sergeant may be an option to accommodate that administrative load.

**VI. PSAC Analysis of TPD Survey** – Jerry referred to the summary he had prepared outlining specific points about the perception of the department in the community. He noted that the Outlook newspaper press reporting of the agency’s crime activity, for example, is very limited. This is an example of communication that isn’t necessarily accurate or clear about what the department does.

Jerry added that survey comments about visibility of the department and personnel needs to be better communicated in a way that is unfiltered; for example, the department proactively determining what gets out as opposed to the newspaper self selecting information and news.

Jason agreed noting, it's common knowledge that in order to get your message out, a department needs to be the one disseminating that message. The press' focus is often on creative writing and a story, and sometimes even the facts are inaccurate. Jason noted their newsletter, "The Green Hornet" has had good success and once they're set up, they are pretty easy to maintain.

There was a discussion about how to soliciting articles: Gang enforcement officers and SROs could write pertinent articles, or they could be about problems in neighborhoods or parks. It was suggested volunteers or students could be engaged.

Justin added that the district would be very interested in such an approach because communication for them is always a challenge. In September, Reynolds High School will have a dramatic rise in expulsions and will be listed as an "endangered school" per state reporting. He explained the "catch 22" because it's based on expulsions and if there is a dramatic increase, or it exceeds beyond the acceptable number. In reality, the expulsions are a good response to behavior like fighting, drug and alcohol use. He agreed that such a message could be communicated through the SROs.

Joe suggested this might be a goal to replace one of those already completed, to include the goal, the scope, deliverable and due date. It could be a public safety communications strategy and include the use of social media (LinkedIn, Facebook), blogs, or newsletters, but added we should prioritize which we do first based upon the ease and then explore other communications forms as we get up and running.

Joe also indicated a concern with social media advising that before we use it, ground rules and be set up. After discussion, the committee agreed upon a new goal:

#### **Develop and implement a Public Safety Communications**

1. E-Newsletter 9/3/2009
2. Blog
3. Selected Social Media

Chief Anderson designated Melody as the liaison to this goal because she is responsible for updating the website.

**VII. Critique Troutdale Police Department Awards Ceremony** – Committee members provided the following comments and input in regarding the last awards ceremony:

- People seemed engaged and that they had a good time.
- The location was great – an excellent venue and the manager were extremely helpful. It will depend on whether money can be secured for the event to have it there next year. If not Jerry Stitzel's church is available and has a kid's activity area also.
- The General Store donation was great and we could have used more coffee. Both companies deserve recognition and something public would be nice. It was very personalized and the individuals who were recognized were appropriate.
- Marc did a good job of lightening it up, keeping it fun yet the awards portion was meaningful.

- The goal was that no police department civilian or sworn staff had to do any of the work and that goal was met.
- People appreciated being greeted by the individual members.
- Sgt. Bevens did so much of the planning, details and work and should be recognized.
- A better headcount is needed next time. The earlier number was 50 and we ran out of plates at 80. More than 90 people were there. Still there were ample food and drinks, simple fare but well received by the guests.
- Next year's event is not in the budget so funding is a concern.
- Thursday February 11<sup>th</sup> 2010 was selected as next year's award ceremony date.

**VIII. Appearance Standards** – The Chief briefly explained the existing grooming and appearance standards for the department and why he was seeing the committee's input. When considering them, we should consider:

- What is the purpose of the standard and what do we want to accomplish with it?
- What is our goal of officer public interaction and how does appearance help or hinder the interaction?
- How can we have a shared vision of standard, given the changes we've had in society over the years (tattoos, piercings, etc.)? What is our culture going to accept in the appearance of a police officer?

Jon responded that tattoos as a rule don't bother him, but perhaps if visible, it should be required that the design be approved by a supervisor, indicating this was how it was done in the military. Additionally, piercings usually are fine but he did not favor an appearance standard allowing studs.

Jerry noted that with regulations, as soon as you start to allow something you almost have to make the accompanying rule for it. He discussed the need to "grandfather" existing tattoos or piercings, perhaps define hair color within a range and maybe add the caveat, if you want to make a drastic change, you're advised to check with supervisor. If one defines the regulation too tightly, it becomes its own nightmare to keep up with.

Justin added that union input would probably be needed, and noted that the school spends allot of time on appearance standards (dress code) and are always enforcing it. He added that it's easy to define them around safety within the work environment using OSHA standards. Something else to consider, many of the best youth officers are those who come from a specific background and now in law enforcement and can relate to these individuals because of their appearance. He favored a policy where the employee talks to management instead of a hard and fast black and white approach.

Joe offered that from the department standpoint, whether you make the standard explicit or general, it should represent the city. He agreed with the safety issue and public image issue, but added we should investigate the human resource aspect to ensure the approach is incompatible with employees' rights. Regardless, a guideline for supervisors to deal with line staff is critical because without it, there will be inconsistencies in the answer between one shift and another. Joe stated it is perfectly within the rights of the city to say tattoos that convey sexually explicit or vulgar statements are not allowed and if questionable, to require they cover

them up with a long sleeved shirt. Joe wasn't certain how piercings could be authorized from a health and sanitary perspective. In conclusion, he added that if a standard is too general, it provides no information or guidance. He favored a standard somewhere in between being too general and too specific.

Jason stated that a plain and simple policy, easy to follow, easy to enforce in which the end result is consultation between management and employee regarding a drastic personal appearance change seemed to be the consensus. He added that if an employee consults with a supervisor prior to making these types of appearance decisions, management is involved in the decision making process. We can't cover all the circumstances, but the expectation is that employees present a professional appearance and a trustworthy appearance. The most important thing is that the people they serve trust them.

Mike concluded that the experience between officer and public is important and that often, the reception of the image and effectiveness of the communication depends on the customer. He believed the approach should be to create the general principle of the standards and state what they are designed to do (the outcome).

**XI. Foundation** – The committee reviewed information Tina had found regarding foundations generally. Mike offered to do a feasibility assessment of how a Troutdale Police department foundation might work and bring it to the next meeting.

**X. Closing Comments** there was consensus to adjourn the meeting. The next meeting will be held on Thursday June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

Prepared by Melody Thompson on May 20, 2009 and approved by the PSAC June 4, 2009.