

City of Whitewater Police and Fire Commission
Quarterly Meeting Minutes
February 18, 2009

**ABSTRACT / SYNOPSIS OF THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE OFFICIAL ACTIONS OF
THE POLICE AND FIRE COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WHITEWATER, WALWORTH AND
JEFFERSON COUNTIES, WISCONSIN**

Vice President Shears called the meeting of the Whitewater Police and Fire Commission to order at 7:04p.m. Members present: Steve Shears, Jerry Wendt, and Rosa Verduzco. Jan Bilgen-Craggs was late due to the weather. Members absent: Mindy Triebold. Also present Chief James Coan, Common Council President Patrick Singer and Support Services Manager Kathy Boyd

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Minutes from the November 19, 2008 meeting were approved on a Wendt/Verduzco motion. AYES: Shears, Wendt, Verduzco and Bilgen-Craggs. NOES: None. ABSENT: Triebold

CITIZEN'S COMMENTS: None

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

A. OATH OF OFFICE – Signed by Commission Members

B. DRUG INVESTIGATION

Chief Coan gave an overview of the joint drug investigation between the Whitewater Police Department and the Walworth County Drug Unit. There were 20 people arrested in a one day sweep. The arrests were for distribution of marijuana, cocaine and prescription medications. Eighteen people were taken into custody that day and warrants were issued for two additional individuals, who were arrested on a later date. In 2007 there was a similar investigation with 11 people arrested. The undercover operations are time consuming, but the arrests bring further information. There are further arrests still unfolding. Wendt asked if the twenty people were from Whitewater and if they were students, how many? Chief Coan said that all were from Whitewater and there were approximately four to five students, but more non-students. Chief Coan mention that Whitewater is not immune, but doesn't have the same problems as Beloit does, such as crack and open air sales. Here there are more covert sales of marijuana, coke and heroin. The Drug Unit supplies the Department with help. Shears asked if names were released. Chief Coan said yes. Shears said he noticed that the oldest person was 51 years old.

C. CHIEF'S REPORT:

1. 2009 MANAGEMENT PLAN:

The 2009 Management Plan was sent to all Police and Fire Commissioners for their review. Included in the plan is to complete a Citizens Academy. The upgrade to the Communications Center and upgrade to the equipment. The upgrade should be completed by April. During the next PFC meeting there

will be a tour of the facility. A new patrol accountability system is in the developmental stage. The City will be divided into sectors. The Department will work with neighborhood groups. Traffic safety – the City is installing a traffic light at Whiton and Main which will help with pedestrian safety by slowing traffic on Main between Prairie and Whiton. Public Works Director Dean Fischer says that the installation should be completed by August of this year. Team Goals – Officers come up with their own goals, one problem solving, one crime prevention, and one community policing.

2. Citizen Academy:

Jerry Wendt and Patrick Singer are now attending the Citizen Academy and Jan Bilgen-Craggs and Rosa Verduzco both went through the academy. It is going well. There are 14 members. Tonight is the fire and EMS component. Graduation is set for March 18th. It's a way to keep people informed and they share with friends and family. The next process would be to have them join the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). Bilgen-Craggs asked if there was anything needed from the PFC, like a letter. Chief Coan asked if one of the members could be there to read the letter. Bilgen-Craggs said she would write the letter. Shears asked if Wendt could read the letter and Wendt agreed. Wendt stated that he was impressed with the Academy and that there is a lot to learn and know. Of the 24 sworn 12 to 15 have presented information and they are good at speaking. Singer appreciates meeting the officers. Singer mentioned that the officers teach well and impart knowledge. Chief Coan is very proud of the officers.

3. FINALIZATION OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY REPORT:

Chief Coan said the Public Safety Report is published every year to communicate issues and the things the Department does. It should be out in the weeks to come. The City Manager asked the Chief to put together a brief overview list of calls for service (CFS), self initiated activities, arrests, medical calls and emergency detentions, which Chief Coan distributed. At a glance things continue to be busy with CFS and self initiated activities.

4. PERSONNEL:

- a. Chief Coan mentioned that Officer Josh Adams resigned. He was surprised, but Josh's heart was with the Walworth County Sheriff's Department which hired him. He is a very good officer, the Department lost a good person and we wish him well. The Department is one less officer now.

Chief Coan said that the Department is going forward with the hiring process which will take two to three months. Chief Coan wanted to alert the PFC that they will be called on for an interview. There is concern, but nothing definitive, about eliminating or freezing positions. There is concern among the people of the Department. Last year the council approved one position. The late 80's was the last time an officer was added. (Officer) Jim Elder went to the academy and started in August of 2008. Singer said he pushed to hire an officer due to calls for service with one officer when two were needed. Singer says there is not a good sample size with the new position. He has spoken to Kevin (Brunner), who is

announcing a City wide hiring freeze. The police department is already taking applications. The Governor's budget suggests a 1% cut to shared revenue and a 3% levy cap. Bilgen-Craggs said to possibly hire a part-time employee because the hire is already budgeted. Chief Coan said he would like to find somebody quick as long as they are certified. Singer said that the position won't be filled until June and there will be savings. Possibly the PFC can send a letter. Wendt asked if they can do something now. Singer said that Kevin (Brunner) mentioned applying for a COPS (Community Oriented Policing Services) grant. It would be for an existing position, which can't be deleted and then put it back. Chief Coan said the Department of Justice says that there is money coming and to watch their Web site, which will list restrictions. Chief Coan read excerpts of the Governor's Budget Address. Chief Coan said that there was a zero percent increase in the City's 2009 budget. If 2010 is the same then possibly department directors can recommend cuts. Bilgen-Craggs said she could call Kevin (Brunner) to suggest letting the people closest to the issue make the decision. She appreciates his position, but there needs to be more info and data to submit, part-time hires? No benefits? Singer mentioned that the City Planner position is on hold. Bilgen-Craggs thought each PFC member could contact Kevin (Brunner). Wendt asked if the PFC should make a motion, but Bilgen-Craggs thought it might be too premature, possibly they could schedule a meeting a week out, stay in contact, and be a presence at the Council meetings. Singer said he was asking for numbers and a fiscal forecast. Bilgen-Craggs asked if there was a deficit budget and Singer stated no. Bilgen-Craggs asked what things the PFC could do. Singer stated that he would like to see the impact of the resignation and he wants to see the position filled. He said possibly a part-time hire in June. Wendt said that he would like to affirm the hiring process because the commission is not scheduled to meet for a few months. Bilgen-Craggs moved the PFC to direct Chief Coan to move forward with the hiring process. When the offer is ready to be made then defer to the City Manager's position on hiring. Wendt thought the last sentence referencing deferring to the City Manager should be scratched. Wendt mentioned possibly pulling from the Community Service Officers (CSO) to fill the position. Chief Coan said that the department would need to go through the process to get the best person. The Department has sent others through the academy, but if they already have the academy training then they are ready to go. The Department won't rule out a CSO. Bilgen-Craggs mentioned hiring a part-time officer from another municipality. Wendt said that he's not happy with a part-time hire. Bilgen-Craggs would like to see a hire now through June and how it impacts work flow. Chief Coan said that everything is already funded and it's not an impact now, but he's not sure about 2010. He's not sure if we will be eligible for the COPS grant, but would like to keep the hiring process going. Bilgen-Craggs said that she does not want to step on Kevin's toes. Wendt second Bilgen-Craggs previous motion. Boyd reread the motion for the commissioners. AYES: Shears, Wendt, Verduzco and Bilgen-Craggs. NOES: None. ABSENT: Triebold.

Bilgen-Craggs asked Chief Coan what he thought Kevin would want to not freeze the position, stats, public outcry, PFC input. Shears mentioned that due to the economic issues that the Department workload should increase.

The next regular meeting of the Police and Fire Commission will be Wednesday, May 20, 2009 at 7:00p.m.

ADJOURNMENT: A Wendt/Bilgen-Craggs motion to adjourn was passed by unanimous voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kathy Boyd".

Kathy Boyd
Support Services Manager