

**OSSEO CITY COUNCIL
WORK SESSION MINUTES
May 17, 2023**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Duane Poppe called the work session of the Osseo City Council to order at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, May 17, 2023.

2. ROLL CALL

Members present: Councilmembers Juliana Hultstrom, Mark Schulz, Alicia Vickerman, and Mayor Duane Poppe.

Members absent: None.

Staff present: City Administrator Riley Grams, Police Chief Shane Mikkelson, and Police Lieutenant Kintzi.

3. AGENDA

Council agreed to discuss the work session items.

4. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. CLOSED SESSION – DISCUSS POLICE CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

Grams reported per State Statute 13D.03, “The governing body of a public employer may by a majority vote in a public meeting decide to hold a closed meeting to consider strategy for labor negotiations, including negotiation strategies or developments or discussion and review of labor negotiation proposals...”. He reported the Council Risk Management Committee recommends that the Council move into closed session discussions regarding the negotiations with LELS #182 for the purpose of discussing negotiation strategies.

A motion was made by Hultstrom, seconded by Schulz, to close the meeting pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 13D.03, subd. 1(b), convene to a closed meeting at 6:02 p.m. to discuss contract negotiations with LELS #182. The motion carried 4-0.

A motion was made by Hultstrom, seconded by Schulz, to reconvene the City Council Worksession meeting at 7:17 p.m. The motion carried 4-0.

B. DISCUSS FUTURE POLICE STAFFING NEEDS

Grams stated the Police Department currently consists of a full-time Police Chief, a full-time Police Lieutenant, and six full-time Police Officers. In the last few years, we have seen a tremendous amount of turnover within the ranks for a number of reasons. This has put a massive strain on the Department to provide the level of public safety that residents and businesses have come to expect. In years past, the Department has been

aided by the healthy list of part-time Police Officers who were willing and able to cover many full-time Officer shifts. However, recently part-time help has become very scarce (which we have witnessed in almost every employment industry since the COVID pandemic). Most part-time Officers have full-time Officer positions at other agencies. The entire Police world has seen a dramatic loss in the number of available Officers, which requires many to work more and more shifts in order to cover the streets. This allows for less time to be able to work additional part-time shifts at other agencies, such as the Police Department.

Police Chief Mikkelson further described how the policing environment has changed over the past five years. He reported officers were no longer interested in serving part time due to the risks. He commented on the exit interviews he had conducted with the officers that have left the Police Department in order to better learn about the needs of the department. It was his understanding that officers did not like working alone.

Police Chief Mikkelson explained there are only so many options available to the Department to handle this crisis. One option would be to move towards a more “all-full-time” model, which involves increasing the number of full-time Officer positions to eliminate the need for any part-time Officer positions. This option has been discussed at the Council Risk Management Committee level, with a recommendation made to the full Council to consider moving towards an all-full-time style Department. Adding additional full-time Officer positions would reduce the need for part-time help and allow for the Department to cover all available shifts while simultaneously accounting for Officer leaves (whether that is sickness, injury, vacation or other). This also means that no Officers would be working shifts alone, which is typically the most dangerous shift type for Officers.

Police Chief Mikkelson reported to become a true full-time Department, the City would have to add an additional four full-time Police Officers. The Risk Management Committee has recommended adding two new full time Officers beginning in 2024, and another two in 2025. This allows the City to spread out the increase in budget over a two year period of time. Obviously, there are some budget concerns when adding two additional full-time Police Officer positions in each of the next two years. As best calculation, adding two “at start” Police Officers in 2024 would increase the budget by approximately \$265,000 when you factor in wages and benefits. This doesn’t include equipment and other budgetary costs (such as additional equipment, squad vehicles, computers, etc.) that come with additional Officer positions. There would be a similar budget increase in 2025 as well. This is also assuming that the City would be hiring new “at start” Officers. If more experienced Officers are hired, that number would increase.

Police Chief Mikkelson stated not only that, but the Council will need to further examine the City Hall and Police Department building itself. Currently, the Police Department is maxed out on space with the size of the current force. Adding full-time Officers would require additional office space, meeting room space, lockers, and squad garage space. This would be the catalyst for a larger holistic view of the existing City Hall, Police Department and Fire Department building and how the needs of the community have changed over the years and outpaced the existing building. The City Council should consider the staffing situation within the Police Department and direct Staff accordingly. The major direction that needs to be provided is whether or not to budget for an

increase in the number of full-time Police Officer positions for 2024 and for 2025. Budget season is right around the corner, so this discussion is timely in that manner.

Schulz stated he was glad the Police Chief brought this concern forward. He explained he was not fond of spending money, but he understood the world changed and the residents deserved to feel safe in their home. He appreciated the tremendous services the Police Department provides to its residents. He understood that the new staffing model would come at a cost. He indicated the alternative would be to outsource police services, but noted the only savings would be on facilities costs. He reported he was not willing to throw in the towel. He believed it was best for Osseo to have its own police department. He thanked Chief Mikkelson and Lieutenant Kintzi for their efforts to fully evaluate this staffing model shift.

Vickerman commented on how the County was having the same staffing concerns, which meant if the City were to outsource its police services, there may be little to no coverage for Osseo. Police Chief Mikkelson explained he has tried to get help from Hennepin County on several different occasions and he was told no because they are short staffed. He stated all departments were struggling at this time with staffing. He further discussed how he and Lieutenant Kintzi have made themselves available to the public in order to be partners with the community.

Vickerman stated she appreciated all of the efforts of the Police Department. She was so thankful the residents were able to see an officer when they called 911. She thanked Police Chief Mikkelson and Lieutenant Kintzi for all of their efforts on behalf of the City and for coming up with a workable staffing model. She explained she supported the new proposed staffing model.

Hultstrom thanked the Risk Management and Public Safety for their efforts to address this matter. She was of the opinion the new staffing model was necessary in order to keep Osseo the same. She supported the City having a police department that has officers who respond to 911 calls. She explained she did not want officers working alone at night, rather she wanted the City to be taking care of its officers. She discussed how she appreciated the fact she felt safe in the community. She encouraged the public to contact her with their concerns if they were against the new staffing plan for the Police Department.

Poppe explained he was in agreement with the Council and he supported the new staffing model. He discussed how the community has made it loud and clear the public safety was important. He appreciated the department's community policing model and how Osseo has maintained a safe and small town feel. He stated this was possible because Osseo was a safe community due to its strong police presence.

Schulz reported as the Council commits to this, this means Staff has to determine how to house the new police staff, both short and long term. He asked that the Council commit to this as well. He anticipated this would mean a redesign of City Hall.

Hultstrom concurred with this and noted she was committed to redesigning City Hall in order to make room for the necessary police staff.

Vickerman agreed.

Schulz explained he had a tremendous amount of respect for the police department and he wanted to build a community his grandkids could grow up in.

Hultstrom stated she appreciated how well the Council was working together to address this matter.

Vickerman indicated she appreciated how the Council was being future focused.

Schulz reported he understood residents were concerned about safety. He explained he was looking not just considering the safety of residents today, but rather he was considering residents safety tomorrow, as well as five and ten years in the future. He stated has not willing to give up on the Osseo way of life.

Police Chief Mikkelson asked if there was anything else the Council needed from him.

Schulz encouraged the Police Chief to go and do what he does well. He stated the Council would have to work on the financing of the new plan.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The Work Session adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Guenther
Minute Maker Secretarial