

May 5, 2023

TO: SMITHFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

FROM: LESLEY G. KING
TOWN CLERK

SUBJECT: INFORMATIONAL REPORT FOR THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, APRIL 24th, 2023

The Public Safety Committee met Monday, April 24th, 2023 at 4:02 p.m. at the Smithfield Center located at 220 North Church Street, Smithfield Virginia. Committee members attending were Mr. Wayne Hall, Chair, Mrs. Renee Rountree and Mr. Jeff Brooks. Other Council members present were Mr. Michael Smith and Mr. Steve Bowman, Mayor. Staff members present were Mr. Michael Smith, Mr. Jeffrey Brooks, Mrs. Renee Rountree and Mr. Steve Bowman, Mayor. Staff members present were Mr. Michael Stallings, Town Manager; Mr. William H. Riddick, III, Town Attorney; Ms. Lesley King, Town Clerk; Mr. Jay Hunemuller, Interim Treasurer; Ms. Ashley Rogers, Director of Human Resources; Mr. Jack Reed, Director of Engineering and Public Works; Mr. Wayne Griffin, Town Engineer; Mrs. Tammie Clary, Director of Community Development and Planning; Ms. Amy Novak, Director of Parks and Recreation; Mr. Alonzo Howell, Chief of Police; Mr. Jessie Snead; Superintendent of Public Works; and Mr. Steve Clark, Parks and Rec Department. Also in Attendance were Mr. Jeffrey Smithfield of the Smithfield Volunteer Fire Department; Mr. Randolph Barlow, Mr. and Mrs. Buddy Jones, Mr. Roger Ealy, Mr. Rick Rowland of IOW Christian Outreach; Mr. David Hundley and Tim Kline of the 1750 Courthouse; Ms. Shelia Gwaltney of Isle of Wight Arts League; Mr. Jim Phillips of the Friends of the Smithfield Library, Ms. Hall of The Genieve Shelter; Mr. and Mrs. Bill Harris, Mr. Tim Dean of TRC (formerly Draper Aden Associates). There was no media represented.

Public Safety Committee Chair, Mr. Wayne Hall called the meeting to order.

A. MATTERS DISCUSSED BY COMMITTEE WHICH WILL BE ON THE COUNCIL'S AGENDA

1. Street Closure Request for Arts Festival, Saturday, May 20th, 2023 – Ms. Novak reported that this is now a regular street closure for the annual arts festival. The Arts Festival is from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; however, the road will be closed a little longer for setup and cleanup. Councilwoman Rountree thought it was interesting that vendor fees go to Isle of Wight County to cover event and logistical expenses. If the event is held in the Town and Smithfield Police Officers as well as the Smithfield Public Works Department are the ones working the event why does the money go to Isle of Wight County. Ms. Novak explained that the Arts Festival is an event within Isle of Wight's Department and the fees are used to support the festival. Councilwoman Rountree stated that she is in favor of closing the street; however, she would like to understand the fees a little better. Mayor Bowman asked for Mrs. Winslow to be in attendance at next month's Parks and Recreation Committee for further discussions on the vendor fees that are collected to cover event and logistical expenses and then sent to Isle of Wight County. This item will be moved to Town Council's agenda for consideration at their May 8th, 2023 meeting.

B. MATTERS DISCUSSED BY COMMITTEE WHICH WILL NOT BE ON THE COUNCIL'S AGENDA

1. Operational Update for the Smithfield Police Department – March Activity Report – Chief Howell reported that in the form of operational updates the March activity report was included in your packet, and he would be glad to answer any questions or concerns. Chief Howell stated that the last time he was before Town Council the department was interviewing for the Administrative Assistant position. An offer for employment has been made and they are awaiting whether they will accept the offer at this time. They currently have 18 full time employees with one set to retire this Friday, April 28th, 2023. He would like to invite all of Town Council to attend Lieutenant Patrick Araujo's retirement send off on Friday @ 3:00 p.m. Chief Howell explained that regarding Grace Street some of the things that they are trying to do is evaluate the traffic, educate the general public and if there is a problem take enforcement action. In the past their survey indicates that there is a volume issue along Grace Street and not necessarily a speed issue; however, he is not saying there isn't an occasional speeder. The department would be more than happy to conduct another survey to see if there has been an increase in the number of cars speeding. Councilwoman Rountree asked if there is ever a time when your speed monitoring apparatus is not deployed somewhere or is it always somewhere. Chief Howell stated that the only time the speed monitoring device is down is when the battery is being charged. They have one that you cannot tell what it is and that is what they use primarily to do the analysis. The one that displays the approaching vehicles speed is used to educate the public. If the monitoring devices indicate a speed problem that is when they take enforcement action. Councilwoman Rountree asked how many police officer vacancies remain open. Chief Howell stated that they currently have four vacancies and when Lieutenant Araujo retires on Friday that will bring them to a total of 5 vacancies. Councilwoman Rountree expressed concern that reading the

proposed Town Council Vision statement it says Smithfield is a safe community and a crime prevention community; however, then she reads citizen comments, and it says more citizens are coming and crime is up. She asked if it was possible to provide Town Council with a percentage based on the number of citizens. Chief Howell stated that he would pull those numbers and get the information to Council. Councilman Brooks expressed concern that 11 days out of the month of March the Police Department and/or the Medics responded to a call for service at the same house. A couple of days there were more than one call for assistance made. He asked if this is a mental health issue? Chief Howell explained that it is a substance abuse issue and when the medics were called, they would request that an officer respond first to make sure the scene is safe for the medics. Chief Howell stated that he has reached out to family members to gain individual help as well as professional organizations to get him some help; however, the individual must want the help that has been offered.

2. Operational Update from the Isle of Wight Volunteer Rescue Squad – Councilman Hall stated that unfortunately Chief Carroll could not make it today due to a funeral and the Deputy Chief is out of town. He stated that going forward if they are not available, they will get him the information and he will give the report to Council. Councilman Hall mentioned that for those that do not know he is the current president for the Isle of Wight Volunteer Rescue Squad.

3. Operational Update from the Smithfield Volunteer Fire Department – Assistant Chief Smith reported that the department had 51 calls for service in February and 56 calls for service in March. The department will be putting their new ladder truck into service tonight. Currently, the Department is working on putting together a program to commission the new ladder truck to include past and present firefighters. This is the very first new ladder truck that the Smithfield Volunteer Fire Department has owned. Assistant Chief Smith welcomed all of Town Council to attend their training drills the first Monday of every month and the training for their new members and their probationary junior members the third Friday of every month. Councilman Hall asked what type of training class they just had. Assistant Chief Smith replied it was a Truck Class that had instructors from Chicago to New York City and firefighters from as far as Tennessee, North Carolina, Kentucky, Maryland, as well as Hampton Roads participating in the training. Other Fire Department send their officers to this intensive fire training because they do not get this type of training in their localities. Their training is typically held for medic calls rather than fire calls because 90% of their calls for service are medic calls. Committee thanked Assistant Chief Smith for the update.

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.