

February 3, 2023

TO: SMITHFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

FROM: LESLEY G. KING
TOWN CLERK

SUBJECT: INFORMATIONAL REPORT FOR THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, JANUARY 23RD, 2023

The Public Safety Committee met Monday, January 23rd, at 3:00 p.m. at the Smithfield Center located at 220 North Church Street, Smithfield Virginia. Committee members attending were Mr. Wayne Hall, Chair, Mr. Jeff Brooks and Mrs. Rountree. Other Council members present were Mr. Randy Pack, Mr. Michael Smith, Ms. Valerie Butler, Vice Mayor and Mr. Steve Bowman, Mayor. Staff members present were Mr. Michael R. Stallings, Town Manager; Mrs. Lesley King, Town Clerk; Mr. William Riddick, III, Town Attorney; Mr. Alonzo Howell, Chief of Police; Mr. Chris Meier, Deputy Chief of Police; Ms. Ellen Minga, Town Street; 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; Mr. Eric Phillips, Smithfield Police Lieutenant; Ms. Amy Novak, Director of Parks and Recreation; and Ms. Judy, Director of Tourism. Also in Attendance was Mr. Bill Davidson, Mr. Henry McBurney, Mrs. Martha Russ, and Mr. Rick Bodson. 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. Cypress Creek Streetlight Request – The Town of Smithfield received a written request for the installation of ten (10) new streetlights located throughout the Cypress Creek Subdivision. Mr. Jim Parks has acquired the required number of signatures, provided in his request package, accompanying this staff report. For clarification, the proposed streetlights are illustrated with purple dots on the map attached, and the green

dots represent the approximate location of existing streetlights. Town staff does support this request for additional streetlights; however, we do recommend during installation, that no streetlight is installed closer than 200 feet from an established streetlight, in accordance with the Town Design Standards. Mayor Bowman stated that years ago former Lt. Rogers would go out and do a Luminaire Light Study before the installation of streetlights and asked if that is still done. Mrs. Rountree stated that we covered a big portion of installing new streetlights when we amended the Town's Design Standards approximately a year ago. Mrs. Rountree asked if staff knew if the developer would be paying for the streetlights and/or the installation of the streetlights. Mrs. Clary stated that she was not sure and would follow-up with who is responsible. Mrs. Rountree stated that regardless the areas identified are dark and do meet the Town Code to have streetlights installed. This item will be on Town Council's agenda for consideration at their February 7th, 2023 meeting.

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

1. Operational Update – December Activity Report – The Police Department's December Activity Report was included in the committee packet. Chief Howell stated that if there are any questions, he would be glad to answer them. Last month there was discussion held on some criminal activity that was going on in the Cypress Creek neighborhood in the form of mail tampering. This continues to be an active investigation. They have reached out to five other jurisdictions that have similar activity to include the U.S. Postal Service Inspector General. Another investigation that is still active is the robbery of the 7-Eleven along South Church Street. Chief Howell also mentioned that there was an incident this past weekend in Windsor Castle Park near the kayak launch. It was a citizen assist rescue call of a woman in the water. The Police Department along with the Fire Department and Rescue Squad responded to assist in the rescue. They are happy to report that the woman was pulled to safety and was getting proper care. Mrs. Rountree expressed concern that the calls for police service through December 2022 was 8,005 compared to 4,079 on December 2021 and asked if there was a change in the way they are showing statistics because this is a huge difference in calls for service. Chief Howell stated that he would go back and look at the breakdown of calls to determine the reason for the significant increase. Mrs. Rountree stated that it is hard to talk about crime in Town being down when the report shows that calls for service has doubled over the last year. Mayor Bowman explained that the calls for service can be somewhat misleading. Calls for service includes someone calling for service when in fact some of these calls are actually an officer doing what they are doing without being called but still executing a service-related event. Chief Howell stated that is correct. It was also mentioned that COVID and/or the increase and decrease in manpower can have a significant impact on the numbers. Mayor Bowman suggested separating the self-initiated calls from the actual calls for service.

2. Additional item Discussed: Mr. Smith mentioned that Wednesday, January 18th @ approximately 3:00 p.m. he was at the old Hearn's store across the street from Westside Elementary when he heard sirens coming from the direction of the Isle of Wight Courthouse. It was not long when two (2) Town police cars came flying by at a high rate of speed. Shortly after they came through a couple of Sheriff's vehicles came through at the same high rate of speed. At this time school was getting ready to let out and people were already stacking up to pick up their children. It was frightening to see the officers come through that area at such a high rate of speed and asked if the call they were responding to warranted the speed that they were going especially through a school zone. Chief Howell stated that he would go back and look to determine what was going on that day around the 3 o'clock hour and if the type of call warranted that type of driving behavior. He explained that the Virginia Code section indicates that when an officer or deputy are responding they must take all factors in consideration for safety reasons.

The meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.