

**COMMON COUNCIL
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
MAY 15, 2024**

The City of Noblesville Public Safety Council Committee met pursuant to public notice on Wednesday, May 15, 2024 at 11:02 a.m. in the Council conference room at City Hall. Mike Davis, Evan Elliott, and Darren Peterson were present. Aaron Smith arrived at 11:07 a.m.

Also present were City Clerk Evelyn Lees, Public Safety Director Chad Knecht, Fire Chief Matt Mitchell, Assistant Fire Chief Uriah Eddingfield, Police Chief John Mann, Deputy Police Chief Eric Cunningham, NobleAct Paramedic Dennis Parker, and NobleAct Crisis Intervention Specialist Myechia Hudson.

1. Weekend Plans/Peony Festival (new closure of 10th St., impact of road construction)

Mr. Knecht stated the Indiana Peony Festival grows larger every year. He stated this year, 10th Street at Seminary Park will be closed, in addition to the other adjacent streets. He stated the City continues to work with the Peony Festival to develop the site. He stated current construction projects in the City will make transportation to and from the festival more difficult, but there has been an intensive messaging effort with maps for routes and parking. He stated Community Engagement Manager Aaron Head has worked hard at cross-messaging for the event. Mr. Knecht stated the festival is a Downtown event, and not just at Seminary Park. He stated the Farmers Market will also be open that morning. Mr. Peterson asked if an ambulance would be nearby if needed. Chief Mitchell replied coverage would be in place. Deputy Chief Cunningham stated police coverage would be increased to seven officers: two at the Farmers Market, plus officers to direct traffic where needed. He stated 10th Street will be closed from Mulberry Street to Cherry Street. He stated the barricades on Maple Avenue and Cherry Street at 16th Street will be removed that morning so the vendors will have access. Mr. Davis asked where pedestrians will be able to cross Conner Street. Mr. Knecht stated there are crossings at 8th, 9th, and 16th Streets, but the sidewalks are open on Conner Street between crossings. He stated there is a chance of rain, but as long as there is no lightning, the festival will be open.

Mr. Smith joined the meeting.

Mr. Knecht stated the Peony Festival organizers let Public Safety personnel decide whether the event needs to end due to weather conditions. Chief Mitchell stated Division Chief Todd Estes closely monitors the weather.

2. Traffic Enforcement and results in road construction zone

Mr. Knecht stated both residents and drivers have complained. Deputy Chief Cunningham stated traffic in congested areas has been managed with on-duty officers as they are available. He stated the heaviest traffic is from 6:00 to 9:00 a.m. He stated there have been 350 traffic stops in the area from Clinton Street to Hannibal Street and from 16th Street to 8th Street. He stated most of the local stops have been on Maple Avenue and Cherry Street. Chief Mann stated to residents, the traffic on their streets appears worse than it is. Mr. Knecht stated a bigger problem has been

property damage caused by the construction trucks. Chief Mann stated the Police Department is deploying additional officers to help. Mr. Knecht stated the needed staffing may result in a request for additional funding to pay for overtime. Deputy Chief Cunningham stated most truck drivers are unaware of any damage they cause. There was a brief discussion concerning the damage. Mr. Knecht stated repairs to City assets will be completed after the construction is completed.

3. Brief update on trench rescue incident

Mr. Knecht stated on the morning of the trench collapse at 146th Street near River Road, the fire crews had already responded to someone trapped under a car and a pedestrian that had been struck by a vehicle. He stated when crews arrived at the trench collapse, nothing could be done other than recovering the body of the deceased man. He stated care was focused on the family and friends who were present. He commended those at the scene for their work and professionalism in responding to the incident. Chief Mitchell stated the last trench rescue was a few years ago at 156th Street and Deer Creek Elementary School. He stated that victim survived, but the situation was very different. Assistant Chief Eddingfield displayed a PowerPoint presentation. He stated crews responded in eight minutes and spent nearly four hours at the scene. Chief Mitchell stated the nearest station was unable to respond in time because of the construction at Allisonville Road and 146th Street, so another station responded, which took longer than usual. He stated the later response time had no impact on the result. He stated Indianapolis and Noblesville have the only trench rescue teams in the area. He thanked the Council for funding training and equipment for the team. He stated Station 73 was the first to be called, but Station 76 responded. He stated the City's first ambulance went into service the day before the incident. Assistant Chief Eddingfield reviewed the personnel who responded. He explained the conditions they encountered and the hazards involved. He reviewed the operations plan and execution. Chief Mitchell thanked the Westfield Fire Department for their support in the operation. He stated the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is investigating the incident, and the Fire Department is assisting. There was a brief discussion about the cause of death. Mr. Knecht stated support is critical for equipment and training for the unit. He stated without support, the work is extremely dangerous. Chief Mitchell stated since the incident, two construction contractors have contacted the Fire Department to ask for training. He stated the department is unable to provide training, but they will provide information.

4. Addition/impact of 5th ambulance in service

Chief Mitchell stated the ambulance had been in service for two days when it was called to the trench rescue. He stated the department has been working to obtain a fifth ambulance since 2019. He stated the addition coincided with the Little Chicago Road Bridge closure, so the timing is good. He stated Carmel Fire Department is glad for the ambulance as well, since their runs to the area will decrease. Mr. Peterson asked how long it takes to obtain a new ambulance. Chief Mitchell replied an ambulance was ordered in 2021 or 2022, and it still has not been delivered. He stated the newest ambulance was a remount, and it was obtained by unconventional means. He stated Deputy Chief Murry Dixon has shown great creativity in finding equipment quickly for the department. Mr. Knecht commended Chief Mitchell for obtaining the fifth ambulance. He stated this is the first time in the department's history that there is ambulance coverage for all of

Noblesville's territory. Chief Mitchell stated the whole fleet has turned over since 2017. He credited former Councilman Greg O'Connor as the driving force behind funding for the equipment.

5. New Ladder apparatus in service

Chief Mitchell stated there is a new ladder truck at Station 72, and it is staffed because of the extra firefighters funded by the SAFER grant. Mr. Peterson asked if there is room for all the expansion. Chief Mitchell replied the stations are very full, and space may need to be leased. Mr. Knecht stated the Administration is working to acquire land for Station 78.

6. Farmers Market/Activation Lot opening at Village at Federal Hill

Mr. Knecht stated the Federal Hill parking garage is now fully open, and the activation lot on the south side of the garage is fully open. He stated they will both be closed to traffic from 10:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. He stated the City's traffic code will be updated to reflect the additions. He stated there are large crowds at the Farmers Market, and many people are walking to the east side of White River. Mr. Smith stated opening Nixon Street north of the garage made a big difference in more people using it. Mr. Knecht stated parking is no longer allowed on Nixon Street. Mr. Peterson asked if people going to the Farmers Market are still parking at Kroger. Mr. Knecht replied most people are parking in the garage or in the old Kahlo lot on the south side of Westfield Road, south of the Farmers Market. Mr. Smith stated when the trail connecting Federal Hill to Forest Park is built, there will be even more options.

7. NobleAct team update/Myechia intro and impact

Chief Mann introduced Ms. Hudson, who is the social worker that has joined Mr. Parker and Sgt. Ben Lugar in NobleAct. Chief Mann stated Ms. Hudson was needed and has been a great addition to the program. He stated both NobleAct therapy dogs have been sent to the Indianapolis dispatch center today to help the employees after the unexpected death of one of the veteran dispatchers.


Ms. Hudson stated she enjoys helping the program. She stated her prior experience is in hospitals and schools. She stated she believes in the program. She stated her work is to facilitate connection to needed services and to follow up. She stated she can fill gaps between the patients and the service providers. Mr. Knecht stated the addition of a social worker has fulfilled the envisioned purpose of the program. He stated they use a team approach to public safety and provide problem solving. He stated he anticipates that in a year or two, funding will be needed for a second team to staff the program. He stated three people cannot meet all needs 24/7. Mr. Peterson stated the program fills a need and saves the City money in the long term. Chief Mitchell stated EMS runs have decreased because of the program.

Mr. Parker stated the NobleAct website will be updated to include a quick response (QR) code and decals. He stated there will be 16 boxes listing different needs, where people can click to find links to resources. He stated the goal is to provide a site where people can help themselves. He explained a new possible opportunity working with the Department of Homeland Security

that could provide extra revenue. Mr. Knecht stated the revenue could be similar to the SAFER grant, where it would help fund additional personnel for a period of time, and then the budget would be adjusted to fund them going forward. He stated currently Mr. Parker's position is funded by the Fire Department, while Sgt. Lugar and Ms. Hudson are funded by the Police Department. He stated in time it may make sense to have a Public Safety budget, in order to be more flexible across departments as needs arise.

Mr. Peterson asked for an update on a new police station. Mr. Knecht replied leadership is providing answers to questions from the Fraternal Order of Police regarding the proposed site for the station. He stated once all questions have been answered, the Administration plans to move forward with a Build-Operate-Transfer model to construct the station.

The meeting adjourned at 11:59 a.m.



DARREN PETERSON, COMMITTEE CHAIR



EVELYN L. LEES, CITY CLERK