CITY OF APOPKA

Minutes of the City Council budget workshop meeting held on July 19, 2021, at 5:00 p.m., in the City of Apopka Council Chambers.

PRESENT: Mayor Bryan Nelson
Commissioner Doug Bankson
Commissioner Kyle Becker
Commissioner Alexander Smith
Commissioner Diane Velazquez
City Administrator Edward Bass

PRESS PRESENT: Teresa Sargent - The Apopka Chief

INVOCATION - PLEDGE – Mayor Nelson called on Commissioner Bankson to provide the invocation and lead in the pledge of allegiance.

BUDGET MEETING

1. Public Works – All Departments

Mayor Nelson called upon Chief Wylam to present first.

Fire Department

Sean Wylam, Fire Chief, said he will be presenting the 2021-2022 budget for the Fire Department for this year. He said he'll start by going over some of the stats we've been working on throughout the year. He said our Vision statement is to provide the best all hazards, all risk, emergency response within the community and establish a standard of care for the citizens, visitors and stakeholders. He said the Departments Mission statement is a little lengthier but it basically states that we exist to care for, protect and to serve our community and said this is something we hold very dearly.

Emergency Response Calls

Chief Wylam stated that last year, you can see that our call volume for 2020 went down a little bit and said this was pretty typical for this being a Covid year. He said the nationwide average actually jumped about 20%, however, we saw about an 8% reduction in call volume and said that as you can see, based on the break down, per station, Station One is still on top. He showed a graphic of the percentages per station and said Station One is running 8.04 calls per shift; Station 2 is running 3.8 calls per shift; Station 3 is running 3.4 calls per shift; Station 4 is running 3.01 calls per shift; Station 5 is running 3.04 calls per shift; and Station 6 is running .77 calls per shift, including fire and ems calls throughout the year. He said based upon our trend for this year is at 4500 calls in about 6 months so we're trending to go back to about where we should be for our normal growth rate so about 9,000 calls per year.

He said the they ran 8,876 calls total and said the trend is going up. He said one of the biggest things he looked at was how the statistics were measured and said he realized in going through all of this is that we weren't reporting our numbers correctly to the National Fire Incident reporting system. He said the NFI is a big database that we pull various data from which we use to apply for grants. He stated that on the fire side, we were reporting the correct numbers so the numbers are true and accurate. He said that on the EMS side, it shows that we only ran 750 calls, which is a big red flag as we ran well over 8,000 calls so this has been updated. He said when you look at this, instead of being number 153, we should be number 30 in the State, which is a big difference, especially when we're looking for funding sources and things like that. He said that effective January 1st of this year, we began reporting all of our incidents to the National Fire Incident reporting system. He stated that this has really helped in terms of what we're reporting and how we're reporting so we have better information so what we did for this year is pull the stats from January 1, 2020 until last Thursday in order to provide the most accurate numbers and reported that so far, this year, we've run 3,585 calls. He said of those calls, 78% of them were EMS based, which is about normal for fire emergency services. He said 22% of them were fire related calls. He provided a slide with a break-down of each station and said that Station 1 ran 1,342 of the calls, where Station 6 only ran 117 calls. He said response times are also something we measure and said that Station 1 has an average response time of 3 minutes, 23 seconds. He said that Station 4 is a little bit higher at 5 minutes, 33 seconds and said the reason is that Station 4 runs our transfers out of Winter Garden so that response time is a little skewed so our response times are phenomenal and said that the average Citywide response time is 4 minutes and 34 seconds. He stated that the fun fact of the day is that Wednesday is our busiest day, who knows why. He said the busiest times of the day are between 8:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m. He also said that the call volumes have dropped a bit due to Covid. He stated that there have been an increase in high speed wrecks as less people are on the road and people are driving faster.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Mike McKinley, Police Chief provided a brief overview and said for the past 5 years, the Apopka Police Department has looked at how to best police the City and tweak our budget. He said we've looked at technology to help us work smarter with the resources that we have. He said they've also reorganized the agency to try and work more efficient in the services that we provide to the community. He said based on the changes and measurements we monitor, we have submitted our budget and prepared a presentation to document our accomplishments, along with providing our needs and concerns as we move forward. He said for the last several years, we've tried to prepare our budget requests that were fiscally responsible and that addressed our needs to ensure the Apopka Police Department was well trained and continued to provide a high level of service to our community. He said we have also managed our adopted budgets to ensure that we stayed within allocated funding. He said this year, we've submitted a budget request that we believe meets the safety requirements of our community, the operational needs of the Police Department to ensure our community is safe, while also ensuring we are fiscally responsible. He said our budget proposal for this year may be a little different than it was when I did my notes and we're going to go through some of our grant opportunities, we've applied for. He said the primary reason for the increase in this year's proposed budget is due to the need to add additional personnel in order to continue to provide the level of service to our community that they have come to expect. He said our City has continued to grow over the past 4 years while the Police Department has not kept up with that growth.

Making Safety a Priority

He said that as the City continues to see rapid and increased growth, the safety of our community will always be a top concern of our residents. He said an investment in Public Safety, fosters trust, gets people engaged in their communities and supports economic activity. He said Public Safety perceptions are used by community members to determine how safe they feel and in quality of life rankings. He said places with lower crime rates are perceived as more desirable and attract visitors, businesses, new residents and an increased talent pool. He said when people feel safe, they conduct business in their community and they participate in local business, dining and entertainment offerings. He said Public Safety is a location factor for individuals looking to move into our community and for companies looking to invest in our community.

Police Department Accomplishments

Chief McKinley said this past year, as you know, was an extremely challenging year for the Apopka Police Department, due to Covid-19 and events that occurred around the Country. He said unfortunately, those events, although they didn't reflect us, they did affect us. He said Covid-19 changed the way our communications center received and dispatched calls for service. He said it changed how our Police Officers responded to calls for service and interacted with victims, witnesses and suspects. He stated that due to the events around the Country, law enforcement faced challenges like we've never seen before. He said Law Enforcement ties to their communities were strained significantly over the past year. He said we faced Presidential Proclamations and Legislative changes to the way we conduct business. He said we conducted RIT Training (racial intelligence Training); De-escalation Training and Fair and Impartial Training to ensure our personnel were trained and aware of the issues, facing the Police profession over the past year. He said last year we were awarded approximately $163,000 in grant funds and have applied for 10 officers in the 2021 Cops Hiring Grant which is worth approximately $700,000.

Covid-19 Challenges

Chief stated that Covid-19 significantly impacted our community policing efforts this past year and said that even with the impact Covid-19 had on the agency and our community, we were still able to complete our annual Shop-With-A-Cop event. He said once again, it was very successful and we were able to provide a Christmas to 130 children over a 5-day period. He said as you all know, we changed it from a 1-day period to a 5-day period. He said with that, he wanted to make sure that the men and women of the Apopka Police Department know that he is proud and honored. He said he's proud of all of the members of the Apopka Police Department, the way they dealt with the adversities they faced last year. He said it has truly been an honor to work with each and every one of them.

Apopka Population

Chief said this chart shows the consistent growth of the City, over the past 16 years. He said the City continues to grow at a steady and fast rate and said for example from 2019-2022 the City grew by approximately 1,228 residents. He said this growth alone would've required adding an additional 2.56 officers, just to maintain our current per capita, however, during this period, the Police Department did not receive any new authorized positions. He said the addition of those officers would've maintained our per capita rate at 2.14 which would have still left us below that local agency per capita average of 2.39 officers per 1,000 residents. He said without adding new officers to account for this growth, per capita, in just 1 year, dropped from 2.14 officers per 1,000 residents to 2.09 officers per 1,000. He said Apopka continues to grow and said that in 2010, there were 15,707 households in Apopka. He said in 2020, the number of households had increased to 19,920 and said this represents a 26.8% increase in the number of households. He said the 2010 Census showed a population in Apopka of 41,542 residences. He said in April of 2020, the City of Apopka's Community Development Department, estimated the population of Apopka at 53,632 residents and said this is an increase of 12,090 residents, from 2010. He said this represents a 29.1% increase in our residential population in 10 years. He said this does not include commercial or industrial growth during the same period. He said based upon the increase in residence over this 10-year period, the Apopka Police Department should've hired approximately 26 officers, just to maintain the 2.19 per capita we had in 2010. He said during this 10-year period, the Apopka Police Department was authorized an additional 21 sworn positions, which has caused the per-capita to drop to below the 2010 level. He said currently, there are 7,270 dwelling units planned or under construction in the City of Apopka. He said this is up from 5,777 dwelling units planned or under construction last year. He said based upon Census estimates, there are now an average of 3 persons per household and said this residential growth will add an estimated 21,810 residents to the City of Apopka over the next few years. He stated this is up from an estimated 15,484, last year. He said in addition to the residential growth, planned or under construction. He said this is up from an estimated 3 Million from last year. Over the past couple of years, the City has modified the Future Land Use (FLU) in several areas of the City to allow for denser growth. He said as a result, we're experiencing increase in apartment complexes and townhomes. He said all of this growth is going to continue to tax the already limited resources of the Apopka Police Department, if not planned for appropriately and addressed soon.

Authorized Positions

Chief provided a slide showing the Departments authorized positions since FY-2007 and said as you can see, the growth of the Police Department, has been nominal compared to the population and square miles of the City. He said since FY-2016, we've only added 4 officers to the Police Department and said with growth and this same time, we should have added at least 9 to maintain our current per capita. He said if you recall, the 4 that we did add, were due to the Marjorie Stoneman Douglas Act and the fact that we had to put 4 SRO's in the schools so therefore the CID units did not change at all and these are primarily the ones providing service to our community. He showed the chart of officers per 1,000 for local agencies and said the State average for Police Departments continued to be 2.43 officers per 1,000 and said the local average is about the same as the State. He provided a chart showing the APD's officers per 1,000 residents over the last 14 years and said as you can see, this is lower than it was in 2007 and will fall even lower with the planned growth if no officers are added in the next fiscal year. He said in fact, we have reached the lowest per capita other than 2018 in the last 14 year. He said this does not seem significant until you look at the actual officers needed to just reach the State average. He said to reach the State average of 2.43 officers per 1,000 residents, the APD should have 130 authorized sworn law enforcement positions. He said last year, it was 126 and due to growth, that has changed. He said we currently have 112 authorized sworn positions. He said to reach the state average, we now need to hire an additional 18 Police Officers. He said to reach the municipality average of 2.39 officers per 1,000 residents, the APD would need 128 authorized sworn positions. He said to reach the local agency average we need to hire an additional 16 Police Officers. He said this puts the APD behind in the number of personnel needed to continue to provide at least the current level of service we provide to our community. He said if we do not add any Police Officers, this fiscal year, we will fall even further behind and the service we provide to our community will suffer.

He said when looking at the need for additional sworn positions, we can't just look at the per capita numbers and said it's also important that we look at the error of responsibility of the Police Department. He said the City of Apopka spans over 35 square miles now and provided a chart for the square miles. He said in addition to one of the lowest per capita in the area, we also have the 2nd lowest officer per square mile ratio for the agencies listed. He said this is a significant officer safety issue for the men and women of the Apopka Police Department. He said they cover a lot of square miles and are in a car by themselves and it takes a while for their back up to get there to assist them.

Sprawling Growth

He said the challenge facing the APD is not just the population growth but the sprawling growth of the City. He said the APD has an average of 3.15 officers per square mile, which is down from last year at 3.2, while the average officers per square mile in the local law enforcement agencies is 5.16. He said the average area covered by these agencies is 21.87 square miles and they have an average of 109.9 officers to cover tat amount. He said the APD is required to cover 35.5 square miles with 112 Police Officers. He said this lack of efficient is affecting our response time to some parts of the City and as the City continues to expand, our response time and level of service will continue to be affected. He said when looking at our manpower needs, it is important that we take into consideration what our City looks like and how big it is becoming, not just our per capita numbers.

Response times

He said our response times, as you can see, compares response times from 2019-2020 for each priority call for service. He said if you're not familiar with it, Priority 1 calls are emergency calls for service and said Priority 2 calls are low as they're usually wrapped up in Priority 1 numbers and Priority 3 is no lights and sirens and we get there as we can get there. He said due to Covid, our dispatch calls service last year, went down by approximately 12%. He said one reason for the decrease is in the dispatch calls due to Covid and the shift in the way we did business. He said due to Covid, we began handling some of the calls over the phone instead of dispatching a Police Officer. He said as you can see, response times for Priority 1 & 2 increased, even though our calls for service decreased. He said our Priority 3 response times were down slightly from the previous year. He said unfortunately, due to the continued low staffing levels and the increase in the size of our City, our response times for emergency and priority calls for service continued to increase. He said to address this problem in the short term, we're in the process of increasing our minimum staffing for each shift and we've already changed our policy requiring more people on shift. He said this is only a short time fix however. He said our response times for Priority calls for service increased again last year in 4 of our 5 patrol zones. He said the CRA covers approximately 1 square mile in the City and said violent crime in the CRA is slightly down and said this marks the 2nd year in a row that this has been down. He said although the CRA accounts for a very small part of the City,

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT

Rob Hippler, IT Director, said this budget is approximately $200,000 more than last year. He said he'll be presenting at a high-level tonight and won't go into any major detail, unless one of you needs additional information. He said if there are any questions, please let me know and he would clarify. He said the employee staffing level remains at 7, same as last year. He said technically, the average in the industry is about 1 full time employee per 55 City Employees but we're making due of it. He said we also maintain the radio system and said while this is not a full-time position, it is a specialized position that we've undertaken in the last year and a half. He said we're up about 12 employees based upon the information he received from the HR Director, including 459 full-time and 45 part-time. He reviewed some of the things they maintain for the City including: 295 tablets; cell phones; iPads. He said IP based phones; analogs, soft phones, we're sitting around 291. Portables, and mobile radios for all of the Public Safety personnel as well as Public Services, we're at 485. There are 100 Body Cameras for the PD and 12 dash cams in their vehicles. He said laptops, throughout the City are sitting at 165. We have approximately 150 security cameras that we maintain. He said we've increased the physical over virtual desktops and said we're moving away from the virtual machines for specific users to provide a better experience. He said our servers are about the same as last year which is approximately 49 virtual and 40 physical machines.

He said some of their accomplishments we've had this year, we're able to replace our VDI servers and build all new machines for those end users. He said the VDI servers are what actually house all of our computers for our end users out there. He said the virtual end users are getting new desk tops out of that upgrade. He said we completed the second Public Safety Tower at the end of last year and said that was a long effort that was started at the end of 2016 when it was first commissioned and brought in. He said the tower wasn't sitting in a warehouse was a deal that was closed and purchased and said once we had a site that would work, they brought the equipment in and erected it. He said CAD machines and dispatch are good to go for another 4 – 5 years. He said we replaced 15 or their CAD machines in there for both Police and Fire dispatching systems. We replaced our firewall as it was at end of life so we replaced it with a NextGen firewall and said this is a very robust firewall and trying to protect us from all of the evil doers. He said we've upgraded to a NextGen anti-virus solution as well and said this a traditional anti-virus is a signature-based solution and said if it detects a particular machine running a specific application at an elevated command prompt, he said it can segregate that machine, shut it off and take it off the network. He said this is a little more expensive than our previous solution but is well worth the money.

Laserfiche implementation, our document management was completed for HR so they now have a solution to get everything in digital form.

Commissioner Becker asked if we're going to leverage Laserfiche across other departments to which Roc stated yes.

Rob said yes and explained that that's the second part of the implementation to get Public Services as well as the rest of the Community Development in there. He said we're currently using a Legacy document management solution that we're no longer paying maintenance on. He said we're trying to get everything into Laserfiche for a more seamless implementation.

Commissioner Becker asked if we still have the data in the old software to which Rob stated yes.

Rob said Kelly has worked really hard to increase our engagement across all of our social media platforms. He said another big thing that the Media sees are the SCADA Networks for our Water Treatment Facilities. He said as you know, we had a huge upgrade here a few years back with the $65 million-dollar expansion down at Public Services. He said at the end, we got called in at the very end and were told they just needed 2 switches and said it didn't work out like that as there were a lot of holes in the technology side that we weren't included in at that time, unfortunately. He said that shored those up and ensured that there is no public internet access to it in order to keep people out of it. He said SCADA is what controls the lift stations; the water plants and said there's a log of damage you can do if you get in those systems. He said there's PLC's that you can control and either open up chlorine or shut stuff off and said it's a target that's sought after quite a bit by hackers. He said we have it at very limited access.

He said our major increases on this are Motorola for the P-25 wireless maintenance is up about 4.5%. He said our endpoint detection response has a higher ticket than last year and said it was $25,000 last year and he expects it to come in right at $37,000 this year. He said firewall maintenance is up because of the firewalls we're replaced. He said we've put VPN's up for all our Fire Departments coming into us, as well as, the WRF Network and said we'll have NextGen Firewalls at those locations so that cost will be up as well.

Rob said under line 6400, for the P.D., it's time for laptops again and said last year, we replaced just at 40 of them and said we're going to try and get another 40, which equates to 33% as they have about 120 laptops. He said they're semi-ruggedized laptops and said he anticipates that they'll last approximately 5 years.

He said the Fire Department, currently uses iPads for all of their calls for service when they're running around; the medics in the back of the ambulances use them as well and they connect up to ESO for their reporting purposes. He said if they ever hit a spot where they loose cellular connectivity, the app shuts down and they lose all the data so he's looking to put laptops in the back of the vehicles for the medics so they can do their reports while they're transporting a patient to or from.

Rob said he's asking for an IT vehicle and said we've always had hand-me downs and they're fine but said a lot of the equipment we have, we can no longer fit in the back of the SUV or sedan so he's looking to get a small van. He said we have a small public address system and we have to use our personal vehicles to transport the equipment as it's too big for anything we have.

He said we have a Motorola call logger system, which records radio traffic for them and said that is end of service and will go out of service the middle of next year and said that's a higher price ticket item.

Wish List Capital Improvements

He said we're currently working with the integrator at getting the Council Chambers updated and brought into the 20th Century. He said that cost will be approximately $2 million and are hoping it won't be that much however, that doesn't include upgrades to power or lighting. He said camera data storage, we're looking at getting additional storage as we're running on an old legacy system with no maintenance contract. He said from a Cyber Security posture, he's looking at doing a network penetration testing for this year which will let us know where we're week and what we can improve as far as our outside visibility to the world.

Commissioner Becker asked about the Cyber Security and asked if this is on the wish list but in budget or is it in budget to which Rob said this is on a wish list and hopeful that this gets approved. He said this is a critical item so we need to have this done.

Rob said the biggest issue is Social Engineering is a much easier way to get to someone and said our biggest threat is personnel internally letting someone in. He said we've had a couple of people fall into this and we were able to get ahead of it and stop it.

Rob said we're looking to add additional storage to our larger volume flash storage. Harmon Tower replacement, we're looking at $2,750,000 for that and then we'd have to put a new building on that as well as comparators. He said on FB we have approximately 17,931 followers; Fire has 4,159; Police is sitting at 3,719 and our U-Tube subscribers are at 462; a little over 24.5 thousand views; Instagram is just over 3,000 followers and Twitter at 341. He said we added Commissioners Seat FB sites to own the seats for to assist with the archiving and NextDoor was brought in as well. He said we're getting ready to launch Apopka.gov to take over for Apopka.net for increased security and said that only government entities and municipalities can have a .gov website and we'll switch that when we go live on our new website. He said some of the task duties include anything and everything and said Police and Fire are the two biggest users and they keep us really busy.

ADJOURNMENT – There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

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Bryan Nelson, Mayor

ATTEST;

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Susan M. Bone, City Clerk