



**Ravenna City Council
Public Health and Safety Committee Meeting Minutes
October 13th, 2020**

The public meeting was held via Zoom and live streamed via YouTube. A video recording of the meeting can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=78o06gbQNhQ&t=4064s>

Council present via Zoom: Council President Andrew Kluge, Amy Michael, Rob Kairis, Paul Moskun, Cheryl Wood, Tim Calfee, Christina West, and Matt Harper.

Also attending the meeting via Zoom: Mayor Frank Seman; Police Chief, Jeff Wallis; Acting Fire Chief, Mark Chapple; Finance Director, Brian Huff; City Engineer, Bob Finney; Service Director, Kay Dubinsky; and Council Clerk, Chelsea Gregor

The Public Health and Safety Committee Meeting was called to order at 6:32 P.M. by Chairperson, Amy Michael.

The first discussion item was to change MOU between the City and the Patrolmen & Sergeants Union.

The Mayor corrected the agenda item by stating that the Sergeants have already been employees and will not be affected. The MOU will be for the Patrolmen and the Dispatch/Clerks. The item is a request, and it was discussed how the necessity of purchasing new uniforms upon hiring can create a hardship when the uniform allowance is cut based upon the time of year the employee is hired. Full uniform allowances are given out in January and then pro-rated throughout the year. The MOU is asking that all new hires will receive the full clothing amount at the time of hire for the year in which they are hired, which will allow them to be properly outfitted when they start the job. There are two MOU's, one for the Patrolmen and one for the Dispatch/Clerks.

Mr. Kairis inquired about the possibility of an employee that is hired in December and receives the full uniform compensation, then receives the amount again in January.

Ms. West stated that even if a person were to receive the full amount late in the year and then again at the first of the year, based on her immediate knowledge, uniforms are expensive and there are additional items to spend money on aside from just the basic uniform. There are many costs with purchasing uniforms and accessories and a lot are paid for out of pocket.

Mr. Kairis was appreciative of the explanation and is for the item.

- The item was moved forward

The second item was nuisance and loitering.

Ms. Michael stated that she was looking at the City's nuisance ordinance and said that she felt loitering is a form of nuisance. She said that there is a gray area, but that it can be cut and dry explaining that if somebody is hanging around and is becoming a nuisance because they are hanging around, she felt that would be considered a nuisance.

When the weather has been nice, she stated that some businesses and restaurants have had issues with people loitering and some of the customers being affected by it. Her goal is to help define the issue for an ordinance.

Ms. Wood stated that anyone sitting for hours at a time around businesses and they aren't benefiting them, if they have piles of personal belongings, or if they start intimidating or harassing people in town, then that is a nuisance. She said that the issue needs to be addressed and that there have been many complaints that she has heard regarding the downtown area.

Mr. Moskun stated that he has noticed people sleeping on a bench or in the grass at the library.

Ms. Michael stated that it is a public space which creates a gray area.

Ms. Wood stated that it can be intimidating for people, and Mr. Moskun agreed stating that it could dissuade people from patronizing a business.

Ms. Michael stated that Council is not in any shape to create anything, but she wanted to start a discussion on the topic.

The Mayor stated that for the last three weeks the courthouse has been pretty good and said that he had to confront two individuals at separated times and told them that tents are not permitted.

The Police's position on the issue is that it is not a crime to be homeless or to ask for money. He stated that the City is trying to get permission to tear down a building on Chestnut St. that has become a serious problem where people have broken in. The Mayor said that when he confronted the gentlemen on the courthouse lawn, he told them that if they behaved themselves and needed help that the City would be glad to help them. His philosophy is that they belong to Ravenna and the City tries to get them hooked up with the help they need. There have been some homeless encampments that have been cleaned up, for example one behind McDonald's. The Mayor said that they are not ignoring the problem but have to say within the law.

Ms. Wood stated that she is sympathetic and that Portage County has resources for people who want help, but her concern is for the people who refuse to get help or go to a shelter, adding that she was concerned about drug use and the possibility of it creating unsafe situations for citizens. The Mayor stated to make things clear, City Council and the Mayor are not the people to enforce the law, but Council are the people to write the law.

Mr. Kairis stated that it is hard to characterize people, some have mental illnesses, physical illnesses, and those that are dependent on drugs have an illness, adding that it can be problematic to create an ordinance around loitering and nuisances.

Ms. Wood suggested that the Police take an hour per shift to walk Main St. to let people see the City's Patrolmen, adding that it will deter undesirable activity and allow visitors to feel safer.

- The item was for discussion

The third item was all-terrain vehicles.

Ms. Michael stated that the Mayor received another phone call about a resident at the east end of town having problems with 4-wheelers in the area.

The Mayor stated that the Police Dept. is working with that and he is communicating with the homeowner regularly.

Ms. Michael stated that the people creating the issues with ATV's have been renters and not homeowners. She has been talking with Mr. Cimino and Mr. Finney on the matter.

Mr. Kluge said that he has spoken to Chief Wallis and that he did see the Police escorting a 4-wheeler home, adding that when they see them, they will give them a ticket on the roads. He stated that if people see something, they need to say something when they see ATV's on the sidewalks or the roads, or else the Police complaints do not add up to the number of complaints that Council and the Mayor receive.

Mr. Kairis stated that for people riding on the roads there is an ordinance in place, but for people riding on private property that is different.

Ms. Michael stated that riding on private property does go back to being a nuisance and a noise ordinance. She is hoping to get something together to draft an ordinance that would cover personal property and what the limitations should be.

- The item was for discussion

Ms. Michael stated that she was notified from a local attorney that they have been getting phone calls from people in Ravenna that have been scammed by home builders.

There being no further business for discussion, the meeting adjourned at 7:11 P.M.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Council

**Amy Michael, Chairperson
Public Health and Safety Committee**