



Ravenna City Council
Public Health and Safety Committee Meeting Minutes
May 17, 2021

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=yOauzpMGOPg&t=3339s>

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; 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 6:02 P.M. by Chairperson, Amy Michael.

The first discussion item was to create 3 part-time police dispatch positions.

Ms. Michael stated that she spoke to Chief Wallis and in 2019 the Police Department decided to eliminate the part-time dispatcher positions in lieu of full-time dispatchers because that is what worked best at that time. There are some current and foreseeable changes within the dispatch department that have been requiring overtime and will also require shifts to be covered due to vacation time and sick time. The City of Ravenna dispatches for 10 fire departments and one police department. They are kept very busy and there has been a struggle covering shifts which has led to a lot of overtime. Chief Wallis is hoping to get 3 part-time dispatchers to be able to fill in for vacations, sick days and upcoming retirements in the next year or so. The cost of the part-timers will alleviate the cost of the overtime that is being required to ensure each shift is property covered.

In response to Mr. Harpers question, the positions will be as needed and not a set schedule. In reference to the elimination of part-time dispatchers for full-time, Ms. Michael stated that changes to what a department needs will vary from year to year and said that it would not be uncommon for another change to occur in a few years.

Ms. Wood suggested that it was worth considering hiring one full-time and one part-time dispatcher instead of 3 part-time dispatchers.

Chief Wallis stated that an additional feature that he would like to implement would be the position of Dispatch Coordinator that could be hired from within to help manage the dispatch center, adding that it is the largest one in the County. He will get in touch with Mr. Huff to discuss the financial aspect of adding 3 part-time dispatchers and how much overtime there usually is.

Ms. Michael stated that the item will move forward, and more information will be put together regarding dispatcher options.

- The item was moved forward

The second item was to create a full-time Fire Marshal position.

Ms. Michael stated that she visited the Fire Department for a few hours, spoke with a few firefighters and was impressed with the information that they compiled and kept track of. She was surprised to find out that they are responsible for multiple jobs, unlike other Fire Departments in the area, which includes inspections and the corresponding paperwork.

Ms. Michael stated that the Fire Marshal position would be appointed by the Chief and their sole responsibility would be fire inspections unless there is an emergency. The position would be a 40 hour per week union position.

Acting Chief Chapple stated that there used to be a Fire Marshal position in the early 1980's but that it eventually was eliminated. He said that there are approximately 500-600 businesses in Ravenna that should be inspected twice a year, adding that in the past 10 years only 25-60 per year have been able to have inspections. He stated that many times inspections are interrupted because of Fire Department calls and there are not enough people to do inspections and not everyone is qualified.

Ms. Michael stated that the liability is high for the City and that having a Fire Marshal would be proactive to ensure the safety of residents and businesses.

In response to Mr. Calfee's question, Acting Chief Chapple stated that the fire code requires inspections twice a year, but the law does not. The Fire Marshal would prioritize inspections and fire fighters would still help with smaller inspections.

There is not a full job description yet or how much it would cost, but Acting Chief Chapple estimates that the salary would be between \$90,000-\$100,000 per year. Included in the job description would be education and public safety speaking in schools.

The Committee members requested more information on the position and wage for the next meeting.

- The item was moved forward

Management Update

Mayor Seman stated that at the next Committee of the Whole meeting he will be asking for an executive session to discuss personnel. He said that things were presented that are expensive and the city needs to make sure it can sustain it, adding that the need for a Fire Marshal is obvious but other details need to be worked out and discussed. The goal is to keep the community and businesses safe, and he stated that an ideal candidate for the position would be someone who can communicate well with the businesses.

There being no further business for discussion, the meeting adjourned at 7:00 P.M.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Council

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