

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE  
May 13, 2009  
Fort Bragg Police Department Conference Room

The Public Safety Committee met on the above date at the hour of 3:05 p.m. in the Fort Bragg Police Department Conference Room, 250 Cypress Street, Fort Bragg and the following items were discussed in the order presented.

**ROLL CALL**

Members present: Committee Member Jere Melo and Council Member Dan Gjerde (standing in for Committee Member Dave Turner).  
Staff present: Linda Ruffing, City Manager; Mark Puthuff, Police Chief; Steve Orsi, Fire Chief; Brandon Lee, Police Sergeant; and Debbie Desmond, Police Services Technician.  
Staff absent: Dave Goble, Public Works Director.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Minutes were not approved due to Committee Member Dave Turner's absence

**PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

- Roy Falk commented that the new smoking ordinance is working well. He is working with the youth who frequent the alley where his business is located and rarely has to call law enforcement. Chief Puthuff added that the Officers are doing extra foot patrol in that area to support his efforts.
- Falk had a suggestion that the City consider naming the alleys, possibly local tribal names. He felt this would enhance public safety as it is difficult to describe the alley locations to Dispatch. This matter will be placed on the June Public Safety Committee Meeting Agenda.
- David Youssoupoff mentioned that the Coast Community Center will be moving to 350 Cypress Street as of the first of June. This will be a better space for the center as they will be closer to the Police Department and the services their clients need. The housing they offer will remain on McPherson Street.

**CONDUCT OF BUSINESS:**

**1. Discuss "Code of Conduct" for Persons Accessing Social Services from Non-Profit Organizations Within the City**

The City Council, at the request of Councilmember Gjerde, referred this item to the Public Safety Committee at the April 27, 2009 meeting.

Public comment on this item was received from: David Youssoupoff, Sheri Sanchez, Roy Falk, Deborah Moody and Debbie Allen.

Discussion: The following items were mentioned during discussion by the public and Committee:

- There seems to be an increase in the homeless in Fort Bragg. There are many reports of vandalism, inappropriate behavior and acting out. Many of the homeless are disregarding society and yet they are receiving free meals and services.
- It was suggested that if a homeless person commits a crime, the services they receive could be suspended for six months. It was also suggested that they be required to show identification in order to receive free meals.
- The Committee was reminded that the updated City camping ordinance is a tool that can be actively enforced.
- It was noted that the Coast Community Center and the Hospitality House have codes of conduct that they impose on those receiving services. The Lighthouse Church also has policies regulating the behavior of their clients and turn away those who don't abide.
- The Coast Community Center reviews booking sheets, checks Megan's Law, contacts Parole and Probation Departments and are concerned about who they are providing services to, especially for housing.
- The homeless responsible for a majority of the City's problems are a small percentage; many of which usually do not seek out services. There was some debate about whether a City-wide code of conduct

would amount to "collective punishment" when only a few are committing violations. Many offenders are preying on other homeless and the mentally ill.

- It was suggested that discussion begin with the Homeless Services Planning Group which already addresses these issues in a variety of ways.
- When repeat offenders are arrested, the process seems to fall short when it reaches the judicial system. The offenders are released to re-offend with minor penalties. There are currently no services offered when released from jail, usually in the very early hours of the morning.
- The Police Department is gathering statistics on the top offenders in the City. Staff will be researching the problem, breaking the data down and using a restorative policing approach to help address the problem. The Officers will be enforcing the letter of the law with repeat offenders from littering to unlicensed dogs.
- Stronger sentences could be a deterrent for offenders. Community service to the City may be an effective component of their punishment. It was suggested they work in a soup kitchen, paint over graffiti, clean gutters, pick up trash and work with volunteers.

**Committee Member Melo suggested this item be continued to the next Public Safety Committee Meeting and judicial system representatives such as Judge Lehan and Meredith Lintott be invited to join the discussion. A representative from the Sheriff's Department will also be invited.**

## **2. Receive Update on Status of Main Street Fire Station Seismic Upgrade Study**

At the April Public Safety Committee Meeting Committee Member Melo asked for an update and discussion on the Main Street Fire Station Seismic Upgrade Study.

- There was a facilities review done two or three years ago that included recommendations for the Main Street Fire Station to be repaired and retrofitted rather than demolished as that would be much less expensive. The City applied for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) in the amount of \$25,000 which was supplemented by the Fire Department in the amount of \$27,000.
- The City needs the engineer's cost estimates and conceptual plans so that it will have enough information on the project and associated cost to get grant funding; then a clear recommendation can be brought forward to the Fort Bragg Fire Protection Authority (JPA).
- Lee Welty's report is complete and the City is ready for him to make a presentation to the JPA, which has been tentatively scheduled for the June Meeting. Melo suggested a workshop at the beginning of the meeting as he has a number of questions concerning the report. A follow up on recommendations from the workshop will be discussed at the meeting.

**Melo reiterated that the City is in good shape as far as fire equipment and now it is time to concentrate on the facilities.**

## **MATTERS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS/STAFF**

- Fire Chief Orsi commended the Police Officers who showed up at the ball field recently with stickers and badges for the children who greatly enjoyed them.
- Chief Puthuff informed the Committee that the Police Department will soon be transitioning from the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office to the Ukiah Police Department for dispatch services. The Ukiah dispatchers have been participating in ride-a-longs with Fort Bragg Officers to become familiar with the City.
- Chief Puthuff gave an update on the Cedar Street issues discussed at the April Public Safety Committee Meeting. Enforcement in the area has been increased. The radar trailer is placed on Cedar Street often and our motorcycle officer, weather permitting, has been patrolling the area. The Chief will be looking into a type of traffic trailer that will actually capture data and not just display speed. The Department is at full officer staffing and there has been a great deal of traffic activity. The citizens in the Cedar Street area appear to be happy with the results of the increased attention to their neighborhood.

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

May 13, 2009

Page 3

- There are two officers attending a Bicycle Patrol Course and they will be patrolling on police outfitted bicycles soon. Ruffing suggested a picture in the Advocate of the officers on their bikes and those who ride their bikes to work at City Hall for Bicycle Awareness Month.

**The meeting was adjourned at 4:40pm.**