

**CITY OF EAGLE LAKE
CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
JUNE 21, 2022**

CALL TO ORDER

- Mayor Auringer called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

- Council Members present: Garrett Steinberg, Beth Rohrich, Anthony White, John Whittington, and Mayor Tim Auringer.
- Staff present: City Administrator Jennifer Bromeland, Police Chief John Kopp, and Deputy Clerk Kerry Rausch.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Work Session to Review Police Department Staffing Needs

- Administrator Bromeland explained that due to ongoing challenges with retaining part-time officers, the schedule for police officer coverage is predominantly filled by full-time officers. This can be problematic in that full-time officers need to be able to take time off and often there is no other option for coverage other than to put an officer on call while another officer is out using vacation or sick leave which can result in inconsistent coverage. The current roster comprises of the chief of police, two full-time officers, and two part-time officers. At the present time, both part-time officers are in the process of completing the training necessary to be able to work independently.
- Administrator Bromeland also explained that Chief Koh Kopp was tasked with compiling and analyzing call data to determine peak call times and to help determine appropriate hours of coverage. Under the current schedule, there is on average 21 hours of coverage on most days except those in which an officer is on-call. Weekend day shifts are typically covered by an on-call officer due to lack of staff available to cover the shifts. With the addition of a 4th full-time officer, the overall daily hours of coverage would remain relatively the same with some overlap to ensure that full-time officers work the number of hours required each pay period to be benefit eligible. A key difference would be that weekend day shirts would be covered by an on-duty officer. Part-time officers would be eliminated under this scenario.
- Based on current costs, the estimated cost for a 4th full-time officer would be approximately \$85,000. This figure includes wages and benefits.
- Chief John Kopp presented the pros and cons to hiring a 4th full-time officer. Some of the benefits to hiring an additional full-time officer include less turnover, a more stable schedule, decreased on-boarding costs, the community will better know the officers, and full-time officers are more invested in the community. Draw backs would include increased benefit costs, harder to keep part-time staff, and lower annual training costs.
- Chief Kopp presented the following data for the time period of March 2021 through March 2022: call outs (officers called in while on on-call status), traffic stops by time of day, directed patrol by time of day, and police calls by time of day.
- Chief Kopp then presented five scheduling strategies which included the current schedule with three full-time officers, 3 officers with 10-hour shifts (two scenarios), 3 officers with 9-hour shifts, and a schedule with 4 full-time officers. Also presented were the pros and cons for each schedule.
- Administrator Bromeland stated that with bear bone staffing, the police department could easily find themselves down to one available officer while another officer is on vacation. She also explained that Eagle

Lake is a growing community, close to Mankato, and sees a lot of activity and that sometimes the City may be much with low staffing levels.

- Administrator Bromeland and Chief Kopp explained they have met with Blue Earth County Captain Paul Barta to learn if the county could assist in providing coverage, what that would look like and the anticipated cost of this service. It was explained that Blue Earth County is short staffed as well and that some officers are pulled from patrol to help cover the jail. This would make it difficult to predict call response time in Eagle Lake.
- Council discussion included staffing levels of other communities, which Administrator Bromeland presented, then number of shifts scheduled as on-call coverage only in June, the majority of council members indicated the desire to try to make the hiring of a 4th full-time officer work, while needing to be mindful of budgetary constraints.
- Mayor Auringer stated that all departments will need to look at ways to trim their budgets to make this hiring happen and that he is sure there is unnecessary spending that could be identified. Council Member Rohrich cautioned that asking other departments to cut back could send the message that the Council wants staff to continue current work, or more, with less resources and that all departments and staff members need to know they are appreciated.
- Council consensus was to determine during the 2023 budget process if there is a way to make hiring a 4th full-time police officer possible.

ADJOURN

- Council Member Steinberg moved, seconded by Council Member White, to adjourn the meeting at 7:21 p.m. The motion carried with Council Members Steinberg, Rohrich, White, Whittington, and Mayor Auringer voting in favor.

Tim Auringer, Mayor

Kerry Rausch, Deputy Clerk