



City of Jonesboro

Municipal Center
300 S. Church Street
Jonesboro, AR 72401

Meeting Minutes Public Safety Council Committee

Thursday, May 5, 2016

6:00 PM

Municipal Center

Special Called Meeting

1. Call To Order

2. Roll Call by City Clerk Donna Jackson

Present 4 - Gene Vance; Chris Moore; Mitch Johnson and Todd Burton

Absent 1 - Chris Gibson

3. New Business

[COM-16:032](#)

Discussion Regarding Police Officer Pay

Chairman Mitch Johnson said there was a lot of stuff in the media concerning police pay. He said there was a letter left at the time frame of this date and time and as chair of the Public Safety Committee, he decided to honor that time and call this meeting at this point and time for a representative that wanted to speak on the behalf of the police officers or discuss as a committee. He said that he will yield the floor first and with that being said, he said that he wants to keep this as positive as possible and on a professional level. He reiterated that there will be no personal attacks by anyone because he wants this to be a positive meeting that we can move forward with. Chairman Johnson stated that in his opinion and several others, the city and police department is at a stalemate. He said we need to move this pay issue forward. Chairman Johnson stated that he will open the floor to any rep from the police department that would like to speak. He asked that any speaker to state their name and address for the record.

Nathan Coleman, 1301 Hidden Valley, Jonesboro, asked if there was a time limit. Chairman Johnson said no, there was no time limit. An issue with pay has come up. In Spring/Summer 2014, the FOP came to the city council to discuss pay. We were told that pay was something that would have to be looked at throughout the whole city and not just one department. Holiday pay became an issue. He said they had FOI'd base salaries without holiday pay. They were told they would form a committee that would figure it out. Eventually, we got a mathematical equation we could plug into our pay to figure out the holiday pay. In 2015, a committee was formed to look at the main issues of compression, longevity, and raises. There was a council member over this committee and he did not understand the pay scale for compression. Mr. Coleman was concerned about officers leaving. The Johansen Group did a study in 2007 for the City of Jonesboro. A scale was brought in for every position for the city from the Johansen Group with the impression that employees will reach the midpoint in 10 years and the maximum in 20 years. The Johansen Group survey showed that officers are 15% below the salary range compared to North Little Rock. Most people would be happy with a means to progress to a higher salary. An

open dialogue needs to be opened. We don't understand why the police car take home policy is a benefit and is always being brought up. This is a collective action to show that this is a problem. There is money to fix it, but we are spending money to train people to go elsewhere. A study was done in Cordell, Georgia that shows how expensive it is for officer turnover. It was adopted by the International Chiefs of Police.

Chairman Johnson asked Mr. Coleman where the salary survey came from that he has. Mr. Coleman said that it is not the Johansen Salary Survey. He said the Johansen Survey only has a minimum, midpoint, and maximum salary. His question is how to move from a minimum to a midpoint to a max. Mr. Coleman said he figured the survey himself based on officer's pay in Jonesboro in 2015. He said the numbers are based off the FOI and what the city gave him. Chairman Johnson said he wanted a copy of Mr. Coleman's survey. He said he wants to gather more data for this purpose and is no way trying to take away from the salary and longevity committee. He said the Public Safety Committee needed to hear this so they could come up with a plan for this issue.

Jamie Easley, 6090 CR 745, Jonesboro, said the handout comes from the City of Jonesboro 2016 City Budget and it discusses what he has been talking about regarding the Holiday pay. She said she made a table that goes by the department, the budget, and the number of employees. She is concerned why the values are different for different departments for Holiday pay. She stated that retention is a big issue and pay compensation could help with this. She said longevity does matter and there is poor morale within the department. Ms. Easley said the Police Department is one of the lowest paid with holiday pay.

Jo Carol Carter, 2125 Sheffield Drive, Jonesboro, came to the podium to speak. She did quit the Jonesboro Police Department after 10 years of service. She said it wasn't worth \$30,000 a year to go through what she went through having numerous injuries and the effect on her family. She wants the committee to consider what all these men and women go through.

John Wood, 2712 Spring Valley, Jonesboro, came to the podium to speak. He stated he has been a Police officer for almost 15 years. Mr. Wood said the pay has always been a concern. He said it is always talked about, small increases given, and nothing really changed. Mr. Wood stated the police want a plan in place for the future.

Tony Zaffarano, 309 Tommy Drive, Bono, came to the podium to speak. He has been with the Police Department for 13 years. He said he addressed the council in 2014 in reference to this issue. He stated at that time, the council was given a salary survey with the same five cities. Mr. Zaffarano said there is no plan in place to show any retention or show any officer when they come in what they will be making in the future. He said at the current rate they are going, no officer will be making what an officer who retires today is making. He said when he chooses to retire in 15 years, he will not be able to make what an officer with 28 years of services makes. He said they used to get raises, but the current pay scale does not allow for that. Mr. Zaffarano said that he doesn't know how they recruit or have retention to show potential officers. He said they appreciate the raise that was given, but it is not enough to change the scale or make a difference. He asked how the Police Department can move forward and what plan can be put in place.

Chief Rick Elliot came to the podium and said he agreed with the officers that spoke. He has been with the department for 24 years. He has also been addressing this issue throughout his career with the department. He stated that some officers may think he is against them, but he is behind them with this issue. He said he supports

what they are trying to accomplish, but he does not support the way they went about handling it. Chief Elliot said the city used to have a plan in place that took care of the issue, but the City took away the step schedule several years ago. He said this is a problem and hopefully the Police Department can get this plan back into place. He said not everyone will make rank because the department is too big, but having a plan in place for salary increases helps officers plan their career with the department. Chief Elliot said the Police Department has a dedicated group of people and he is proud of them.

Chairman Johnson asked about hiring officers and advancement of officers. Chief Elliot explained there is no increase in pay, but after you get to your five year mark, you get a PFC stripe. He stated that it is a recognition of service, but no pay increase. At the 10 year mark, you become a corporal and you get two stripes on your sleeve. It is a recognition of service, but does not come with a pay increase. There are no steps to increase pay. At other police departments, there are scales to move officers up in pay. Chairman Johnson asked Chief Elliot if he thought if everyone was brought up to the current midpoint on the Johansen Scale, that it would be enough to retain the officers we have now. Chief Elliot said Johansen does a salary survey for every city in Arkansas. If you raise everyone to the midpoint, the bottom line is where are we comparing to everyone else. If I want to recruit and retain employees, I have to have a plan in place. We are one of the top five cities in Arkansas and we want to stay competitive. We don't want to be in the middle, personally, we want to be on top. I want officers to leave other cities to come to Jonesboro because our pay is better. My goal is to be ahead, not even. Have a plan in place to retain and recruit.

Chairman Johnson wanted to know how to come up with a dollar figure for those who are in a dangerous line of duty and how the city would fund it that increase. He said that he personally feels the city reserves are well above where they need to be. Chairman Johnson said the city needs to find out what it will take to make officers want to stay with the city and recruit new officers. He said the council controls the budget and needs to start looking at what they can do to get this issue resolved. Chief Elliot said he agreed.

Councilman Chris Moore asked Chief Elliot about all of the issues involved with the officers concerns. He asked if Chief Elliot had put together a plan and submitted it to the Finance Committee to address the issues. Chief Elliot replied no. Councilman Moore stated Chief Elliot is the chief police officer for the city. He asked if Chief Elliot if during the Finance Committee discussions, had Chief Elliot submitted a plan to address the issues of the pay scale, holiday pay or the cars. He asked if they are just concerning the base salary. Chief Elliot responded that the Salary Survey Committee employee representative is Assistant Chief Eads. The goals of compression and longevity were the first to be addressed. The committee is still together and knows that this step raise would be in place at some time. This is not a new goal and it has been a long existing goal for many years for the step plan to be put back in place. Chief Elliot stated the police department never wanted it taken away years ago.

Chairman Moore said that the Finance Committee has come to a stalemate and hasn't made any progress. He asked Chief Elliot if there has been a plan submitted by the police department to the Finance Committee that has not been approved. Chief Elliot stated there is not a plan right now. Council man Moore asked what the Finance Committee is considering if there is not plan. Chief Elliot said he didn't know what the Finance Committee was considering. He said it goes back to the Salary Survey Committee that addressing these issues that is to take a final product back to the Finance Committee. Councilman Moore asked if there was anything before the

Finance Committee after a year. Chief Elliot said there is nothing before them that I know of. Councilman Todd Burton directed his statement to Councilman Moore and stated that what came in front of the Finance Committee was the outcome of the Salary Committee and that what was considered for all city employees. Chairman Johnson stated the outcome of that was that the city is 6% below the average and the city only went 3%. He stated that we will never catch up at that point. Councilman Moore asked if there was no plan. Chief Elliot said the plan was that this was the first step but not the final product. Councilman Moore asked if the first step was for longevity and compression and asked where we were on that. Chief Elliot said it took \$1.2 million to get to that point. Councilman Moore asked if the \$1.2 million was in order to address those two items of compression and longevity. He asked about the other two items of the pay scale and the holiday pay. Chief Elliot said the holiday pay came before the council back in the fall. He stated that it was concluded that the holiday pay was in the base salary. He added that if it's included in the base salary, then the base salary numbers are wrong. Chief Elliot said that several years ago, the employee handbook stated that holiday pay is part of the base salary. He said this was back in 2008. At one point in time, there was a separate check issued for holiday pay, but has since been rolled into the base salary.

Councilman Moore asked if the issue of holiday pay had been addressed. Chief Elliot said yes. Councilman Moore asked if the Jonesboro Police Department used some other pay scale or funding mechanism that is not standardized. Chief Elliot said that other departments use step raises. He said we had this in place, but it was taken out several years ago. Councilman Johnson asked Chief Elliot if he remembered what the average pay was per step was on that scale. He asked what it was based on. Chief Elliot said that it was probably 20 years ago when the step scale was removed so there is a misalignment with that scale now. He said he does not remember the numbers from that time. He said with the Johansen Salary Study, there is no path to go from the low to the medium to the high and the question is how do you get to the next level.

Councilman Johnson said we need to find a goal to get the scale up to know where we are going. We need a plan to get the scale situated to accurately compensate based on job responsibilities. Rank also needs to be looked at. Councilman Moore said he is concerned about the actual process of how to get this done. He said the process is flawed. Chief Elliot explained how you go from getting started to the next level with getting incentive pay. He said there are some mechanisms in place that allow an officer to go from the base salary and up the scale. Councilman Moore asked if you were hired in as an officer in North Little Rock if you would know what you would make in 5 years. He also asked if you were hired in as an officer in Jonesboro if you would know what you would make in 5 years. Chief Elliot said you would know your salary with North Little Rock, but not with Jonesboro. Councilman Moore asked why not. He asked Chief Elliot to explain what is so different about our structure in the City of Jonesboro as opposed to other cities within the state. Chief Elliot said there is no structure.

Chief Elliot said this is what we are trying to address with the Salary Survey Committee. Councilman Moore asked Chief Elliot if there was a plan submitted by the police department to the Salary Survey Committee on how to address those items. Chief Elliot replied that the plan is to have a step put into place. He said how you want to structure it is up to the Committee and Finance. He said they know there has to be some mechanism put into place. Councilman Moore said the Finance Committee should be considering a step incentive but it is open ended. He asked Chief Elliot if there was a copy of the document that the committee could look at. Chief Elliot replied that the council needs to go back to the salary survey committee. He said they should get the plan together and submit it to Finance. Chairman

Johnson said he thought that this is where the issue is being mired down. He said the Salary Survey Committee is looking at the city as a whole and they have one set of scales they are working off of for each and every department. He said that is not adequate for the Public Safety Department. He said this has come full circle and this committee needs to decide what we can do to help this thing along and then present it by saying that this is what we recommend. He said the number one necessity right now is to focus on keeping the police officers and pay them accordingly. He said we need to look at what we can do to resolve this.

Councilman Moore stated he agreed but he said that the committee was not qualified to come up with the plan. He said the Chief or someone else is going to have to present a plan to the Public Safety Committee on how to address the items of concern. Councilman Johnson stated that his goal was to hear what was needed from the police department and members of the community. He said that the Public Safety Committee needs to meet with the Chief, the Finance Officer, the Human Resources Director, and some police officers to come up with a plan to bring back to this committee and ok and forward onto the longevity or finance committee. Councilman Moore stated that we need experts in law enforcement to come up with a plan. Chairman Johnson stated he would like to be a part of that committee. Councilman Moore made a motion to appoint Chairman Johnson to that committee. Councilman Todd Burton seconded the motion. Chairman Johnson said there needs to be a committee in place that includes himself, the Chief, the Finance Officer, the Human Resources Director, and two to four police officers to serve and take these comparisons and come up with a plan to address the issues. All said aye.

Ronnie McDaniel, Jonesboro, came to the podium. He said he was retired from the Jonesboro Police Department. He stated the issue of pay incentive was not a new issue and it comes up repeatedly. He expressed his concerns about the pay issue and how police officer's concerns are handled. He stated that police officer pay needs to be increased. He said intimidation needs to be stopped and the officer's need to be heard.

Phillip Cook, 5216 Richardson Drive, came to the podium to speak. He wanted to commend the Committee for having this meeting and addressing the issues at hand. He said he appreciates the Police Department and agrees that something needs to be done now to continue the service we have.

4. Adjournment

A motion was made by Councilman Chris Moore, seconded by Councilman Todd Burton, that this meeting be Adjourned . The motion PASSED with the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Gene Vance;Chris Moore and Todd Burton

Absent: 1 - Chris Gibson