



MINUTES
Committee on Ways and Means
Friday, June 18, 2021 @ 3:15 p.m.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81382997422>; ID 813 8299 7422 Dial In: (646) 876 9923

Held virtually in an effort to protect the health and safety of the public & to mitigate the spread of COVID 19

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 3:15 p.m.

Members Present via audio/video

Council Member Carol Wood, Chair, remotely from Lansing, Michigan

Council Member, Adam Hussain, Vice Chair, remotely from Lansing, Michigan

Council Member Peter Spadafore, remotely from Acme, Michigan

OTHERS PRESENT

Sherrie Boak, City Council Office Manager

Joe Abood, OCA

Eric Brewer, Internal Auditor

Mary Sabaj, Community Corrections

Chief Green, LPD

Interim Chief Sosebee, LPD

Joe McClure, LPD

Detective Thielen, LPD Cold Case Unit

Minutes

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER HUSSAIN TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM JUNE 4, 2021. AS PRESENTED. ROLL CALL VOTE, MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

Public Comment

No public comment at this time.

Discussion/Action:

RESOLUTION – Grant Application; Ingham County/City of Lansing Community Corrections Program Subcontracts for Fiscal Year 2021-2022

Ms. Sabaj spoke briefly about the annual application to the State of Michigan for the program of funding. This was the 31st year, and she briefly summarized the progress over the last year, and that the application is the same from the previous year. Ms. Sabaj referenced the pandemic and increases in domestic violence and they have been able to deal with that extra need. They also have in place an OPIOD program that enhances substance treatment, and were able to add a methamphetamines to their OPIOD program. Ms. Sabaj then spoke briefly on the 425,071 budget

for next year, and the breakdown is that the State provides 67% of that and the County covers 29.3% of administrative cost and the City covers the remaining 3.5% administrative cost.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER SPADAFORE TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION FOR THE CORRECTS PROGRAM SUBCONTRACTS FOR FY 2021/2022. ROLL CALL VOTE, MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

DISCUSSION – Lansing Police Department; Cold Case Unit Overview

Detective Thielen provided details on the Cold Case Unit, which is a single staffed department. Detective Thielen came into the department in 2019, and outlined her goal to make this sustainable at all times. Currently she said there are 79-85 cold cases, and what constitutes a cold case is an unsolved homicide in the City of Lansing that is older than one year old. Any case after 2017 to current are still assigned to those detectives, but they are counted. Also included are cases on missing persons, which are assumed to be murders. Some jurisdictions do not include anything in this department other than unsolved homicides. Council Member Spadafore asked how the cases are treated in the investigations. Detective Thielen stated that up until the fall of 2020, the cold case unit was also assigned current cases such as missing people, domestic assault, or cases that needed other assistance. Best practices say that if there is a cold case unit, then those detective should only be working on cold cases, so Captain Backus recognized that and changed the department to only work on cold cases. Council Member Hussain asked for the difference between 75-80. Det. Thielen stated when she came into the department she was provided 4 lists from 4 different parties, and they were different lists. After compiling the list, she found 10 cases where they have not determined where that case should go, such as missing in Lansing but their body was found deceased in another jurisdiction, so the question is where is that cold case. There were two (2) taken off the list, because those were listed as homicide, they were attempted murders, they survived and lived years and died of old age. Chief Green acknowledged Detective Thielen and noted that all resources have not been exhausted so it is a still cold case, and also in years past there was not a strong record system, and over time they have been able to catalog evidence, reports that have to be kept importantly. Detective Thielen added that each homicide has multiple boxes of evidence and duplicate files. There are 24 cases stored in cold storage off site, and not digitized yet, however from 2017 they have been digitized. Council Member Wood referenced a case where not they can use DNA access. Detective Thielen confirmed the process, however at this time it is not evident which cases have evidence that would have DNA in them, to submit for a DNA profile, and is currently time consuming. That is part of the sustainability she is working on to move forward. That would make all cases ready to go, reviewed and could be prioritized. Council Member Hussain noted in February in 2021 there was a partnership with the Detroit Crime Commission and the City and asked where that is going. Detective Thielen stated it has tapered off based on public discussions on funding police departments across the State. In this partnership they would act as the fiduciary, and would handle the support staff to transfer evidence, case review, and the goal was to raise \$200,000 to try that out. Currently there is a \$10,000 from AT&T and \$5,000 from Philip Morris and another \$5,000 commitment. Council Member Hussain asked if the size of Lansing, and the number of cases, is an appropriate staff unit look like. Detective Thielen stated to have another Detective for checks and balances, or two, and support staff would be greatly appreciated. She noted again how many items have to be digitized before it is lost due to photos degrading over time, and videos degrading over time. Chief Green agreed with the Detective and would appreciate a couple full time detectives, retired detectives for assistance and also a victim advocate so the families have someone to go to for information. There are current victim advocates but they are not embedded in the department. Council Member Spadafore asked Chief Green if the advocate is a sworn officer. Chief Green stated it is a community liaison, does not have to have any experience of police training, but would be trained on police procedures to help that family

navigate. Council Member Spadafore recapped it might not be necessary to invest of a detective at this time, but an administrative to go through the back log. Detective Thielen stated she could use both, but there are certain things another detective could do that a clerical staff could do, and she would not want to take a current detective away from another department when she needs back up. Again she reiterated it would be to have another investigative detective to help her go through the cases, and try other avenues to get the clerical staff help. Council Member Wood asked Mr. Brewer to report on the research on the funding he has done so far. Mr. Brewer reviewed the best practices of cold case, and it appears there is a lack of sustainable funding of cold case units. He confirmed he did look at federal fund grants, and a lot of those are around DNA testing, and the cases have to have the DNA and in the later steps of the cold case. The best practices did recommend 2 additional detectives and administrative staff, and the recommendation during the budget from Council Member Spitzley for \$200,000 would be for that. Some municipalities are utilizing assistance from community groups, corporations and local colleges such as LCC and Michigan State University. In summary, Mr. Brewer stated it is a very competitive process for the grant dollars based on the current structure, and reiterated looking at other funding sources. Council Member Wood asked Mr. Brewer to send all the information he sent to her to Council Member Spadafore and Council Hussain. Detective Thielen confirmed she also looks at the Department of Justice grants that Mr. Brewer stated he looked at, and from what she has seen the City does not have any cases they can move forward with. Chief Green stated they have tried to reach out to MSU, but moving forward Western Michigan University has a partnership with MSP on cold cases, so that practice has been done in the Michigan area.

Other

Council Member Wood added to the agenda a grant application for Community Oriented Police Services (COPS) Grant application (MI33519) in March 2020 to the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services for a three-year grant, which the Mayor presented in a press release on June 17th, 2021 and she asked this material be sent onto the Committee because of the critical nature. She asked the Committee to consider and move out of Committee today and to Council Monday night for final action.

RESOLUTION – Grant Acceptance; Community Oriented Police Services (COPS) Grant Application

Mr. McClure summarized that the grant would be a 3 year grant; \$125,000 per officer and requires the officer remain for four (4) years. The maximum amount of the grants is \$915,012 which started July 1, 2020 and ends June 30, 2023. The City does plan to get a no-cost extension which would have the 3 year grant begin on the first day they hire their first officer. These positions would all be entry level officers and the funds will cover fringe and salary. Council Member Spadafore stated that based on the information in the press release, the explanation by Mr. McClure and other sources of information it appears this would be helping to end to gun violence in community.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER SPADAFORE TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION FOR THE GRANT ACCEPTANCE FOR THE COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICE SERVICES (COPS) GRANT.

Council Member Hussain asked if this grant amount is spread out over 4 years, and Mr. McClure confirmed the total local aspect is \$915,012. Council Member Hussain asked will there be training time involved and so once they involved they are not immediately on the street. Mr. McClure first noted the grant starts once they are hired and then confirmed there would be training time involved before they are on the streets by themselves. Council Member Hussain then asked if these are to increase patrols in neighborhoods and be more proactive. Chief

Green confirmed that is the vision, and added that the Lansing Police Department has become one dimensional, and the vast majority of street officers go to answering the calls to service. So any extra bodies will help assist in being proactive. He concluded by stating that is where the LPD wants to get to, and there is a gap on getting training and getting them on the street out on their own. Chief Green noted that he would love to say once the grant is signed they would have an officer on the street, but that is not practical. Council Member Spadafore shared statistics he was given; 12 vacancies, 8 ready to be hired certifiable, and 10 in the academy.

ROLL CALL VOTE, MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

Council Member Wood spoke briefly on the need to proceed with the grant and hiring to have officers on the streets and address situations where they might be working along, and have to call an officer from another situation for assistance because there are not enough officers. They officers will be able to go back to patrolling the neighborhoods solving problems and moving forward.

ADJOURN

Adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Submitted by,

Sherrie Boak, Council Office Manager

Lansing City Council

Approved by the Committee July 2, 2021