

**North Oaks City Council
Special Meeting Minutes
North Oaks City Council Chambers
February 8, 2024**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Wolter called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Krista Wolter, Councilor Sara Shah, Tom Watson, John Shuman (remote),
Joined at 5:15 p.m. Mark Azman (running late)

Staff Present: Administrator Kevin Kress

A quorum was declared present.

3. Discussion Item(s)

3a. Discussion on Ramsey County Sheriff's Office (RCSO) Contract

- Mayor Wolter introduced the topic for the meeting, seeing where we are at and open discussion. Would like to hear how the community service officer worked.
- Councilor Watson reviewed a PowerPoint presentation on the contract. Ramsey County Sheriff Agreement expires 2024. They are 3-year agreements therefore the next review would be 2027. He notes it has been similar contract format for 25 years.
- Shah mentioned that Falcon Heights renegotiated and has different terms while rate went up. They got a separate 1-year contract with rate increase.
- Watson stated the objectives are:
 - Sustain a safe secure private community
 - Deter non-residents from entering community
 - Secure a law enforcement presence as a deterrent
 - Expected that criminal activity will be low or zero
 - Maintain an understanding of security options
- Having a North Oaks Community Service Officer (CSO) went into effect in 2001, the idea was to have a seen presence 40 hours a week. During first ½ dozen years the individuals were college students doing undergrad law enforcement degrees at River Falls. Worked well with variable schedules.
- He feels we are currently okay, but could strengthen the objectives.
- Historical overview calls for service (not crimes under investigation): 28% medical, 6% Assist Fire, 10% alarm calls, 18% traffic. During 2023, Waverly Gardens has been 22% of our calls for service. Others have been adjudicated (refer to the chart).
- Budget / Costs: The Ramsey County Sheriff 2024 budget was \$1,025,140 (increase of \$103,140)
- Services – Patrol allocation is 3.34 FTE. Issues around crime prevention, animal control, traffic, etc. North Oaks Deputy extra cost is 1.00 FTE. Original budget in 2021 was \$838,796, in 2024 it will be \$1,025,140.

- Variables how cost allocation work: He feels the calls for service handled by North Oaks Deputy should not be included in the 7 City cost allocation. Need to confirm if that is the case.
- Budget Components:
 - Patrol for North Oaks should be 3.34 FTE + 1.00 FTE
 - Incidents requiring investigation on 3-year avenue = 3.7%; we are charged 5.2%
 - We don't have as many incidents requiring investigation as other cities
 - Crime Prevention – North Oaks = 6.2%. What is the measure for us? North Oaks allocated \$17,244 for 2024. Is there anything else we can be doing in this area?
 - Would like to see as much focus on Traffic as Crime prevention.
 - Property & Evidence – We are charged it, but there is not much evidence to support based on our crime.
- Conclusions:
 - Important to review the allocation of each “service unit” with consideration of new “demand factors” such as: 1) new senior multi-unit senior housing, 2) allocation based on severity of calls for service; (felonies, gross misdemeanors, misdemeanors, traffic, gun violence, DWIs).
 - Actions:
 - Can RCSO provide accountability of hours and service in North Oaks
 - Is it correct cost allocation to account for North Oaks Deputy – are we paying for incidents twice? (coming out of the general contract hours and again from assigned Deputy).
 - Consider separate agreement for North Oaks Deputy (RCSO has just made a separate contract for Falcon Heights, so those resources may still get dispatched from our cities to theirs).
 - Request a RCSO meeting to negotiate 2024 budget
 - Review the demand at Waverly compared to the rest of community; 42% calls for service:
 - Re-visit costs to City compared; benefit to cost; main bldg. \$62,000. Director of Presbyterian Homes states they may need more public safety during early and day hours, than evenings than rest of community requires. Waverly pays \$62,000 in taxes to the City. Should City review needs with Dan Erickson at Waverly.
- Councilor would like confirmation if Police is required at all medical calls. Who responds - just 1 squad, and fire department?
- Watson thought that NOHOA could hire private security at anytime they want. They can take pictures, and call for on patrol deputy to address more serious issues. RCSO still needs reason to stop someone for trespassing.
- It was thought that when Bob retired as CSO, unable to find a replacement. Council decided to go with regular patrol with more authority. RCSO was not fond of idea of using private security instead of their contracted Deputies. Private Community Service officer was known to the Community and regular patrol. Shah noted that Council has to determine if the value was there for the money.
- Current contract is 40 hours per week for Deputy Lassegard as part of \$156,000 line item.

- Shah noted that even if we didn't have an individual CSO, that they are legally obligated to respond. Kress stated if there was not a 6 City agreement, then funds for support would be folded into Ramsey County taxes.
- If a City drops out of the contract, other Cities would be charged more or reduction in their staff. If North Oaks keeps their 1.0 Deputy, and kept their 1.0 CSO – the cost of funds coming out of the pool might be less as they are deterring some calls or addressing minor items on own.
- On Friday / Saturday nights there are 3 cities that require a majority of the calls: Little Canada, Shoreview and Vadnais Heights. Since May 1, 2022, reports reflect: Arden Hills has 12.3% of calls, Little Canada 23.6, North Oaks 5.9%, Shoreview 30.7%, Vadnais Heights 21.1%, White Bear Township 6.5%.
- Wolter noted a resident from the Waverly area was concerned that only looking at cameras at the 6 entrances. Those in the Waverly area are older and would feel more secure having the License Plate Reader cameras in place.
- North Oaks pays 8.95% of the overall contract, but fields 6% of the overall calls. It seems that Shoreview gets 30% of calls, but a lesser portion of the contract costs.
- Administrator Kress looking into how Bear Path handles their security, a similar size private community.
- We get a good presence from our CSO at community events, but perhaps we just need to press for police presence. Speed reduction carts are placed around on occasion, and there is currently a RCSO camera at Spring Farm area.
- Bear Path has Security, gates, and license plate readers for 300 homes and comes from Homeowners Association dues.
- Mayor Wolter noted that the CSO Bob, as well as Deputy Lassegard take Security seriously.
- Watson noted that we could perhaps use the Ramsey County Sherriff's office CSO program. They are on same radio frequency as licensed Deputy and could be working on the same day. Deputy Matt is \$156,000. There are job openings through Ramsey County listed for CSO is \$44,000 – 65,000. They would also need patrol car and benefits so perhaps \$100,000.
- Shah noted that it might be good to separate the Ramsey County Sherriff's contract, however Sherriff's office may not be open to that.
- Watson would like to take some of the items and arrange a time to visit with RCSO Undersheriff Jeff Ramacher, and just make sure all the areas still fit for our community. Perhaps include Sherriff Fletcher and County Commissioner in the discussion if need be.
- Could also reach out to New Brighton for CSO function if need cost options.
- Investigations and having access to Sherriff resources is important resource – it's the daily costs and resources that we should discuss to ensure value.
- Moving forward: would like to set up a workshop with Ramsey County Sherriff's office to have a conversation, and see if any flexibility on arrangements. Watson prefers an initial visit with just a few members of Council. Then invite to a conversation with the whole Council. Also look at Crime Prevention piece for possible new ideas.
- Azman inquired what the current arrangement is like for Chippewa Middle School and why there are not more calls for service. Council was unsure if CSO program is back in place.

- Administrator Kress to inquire with Dan Erickson about Waverly needs, and if calls for service are different for Condo's. How do other cities handle multi-unit buildings?
- Next steps include Watson and Shuman to set meeting with Ramsey County Sherriff's office to discuss general topics:
 - What / if any is the impact of having multi-unit condo building on needs and costs
 - Kress to talk with Dan Erickson at Waverly about the drafted MSU agreement
 - Determine status of CSO response at Schools and incident tracking
 - What services get for Crime prevention
 - Traffic Patrol is 4.7% of charge, what services get / do we need more of.
 - How are incidents logged when Deputy Matt responds? Is there a double charge for the contract pool hours and also his CSO hours?

4. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Watson, seconded by Shah to adjourn the meeting 6:30 p.m. Motion carried unanimously by roll call.

Kevin Kress

Kevin Kress, City Administrator

Krista Wolter

Krista Wolter, Mayor

Date approved 4.11.2024