

Police Commission Meeting Minutes
March 21, 2024
At Glendale City Hall, Council Chambers and by Zoom

Present:

Paul Kranz, Chair

Nicole Ford

Maria Rosek

Tomika Vukovich, Vice Chair

Eric Zentner, Secretary

Chief Mark Ferguson, Glendale Police Chief

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved: Tomika moved to approve the minutes Eric seconded. Chief Ferguson said that he found that motor vehicle thefts didn't actually go down as much as we thought because thefts from Enterprise Rent-a-Car have been getting reported as a lease violation rather than a theft. Now that reporting error has been corrected. Actual motor-vehicle thefts were down by approximately 35 cases. Minutes were approved with this correction.

Chief Ferguson reported that from January 1st to March 20th, there were 3,170 calls for service, 1,056 traffic stops, 68 retail thefts, 144 accidents, 24 subject stops for field interviews, 11 motor-vehicle thefts, 3 robberies, 8 burglaries, and 31 FLOCK alerts. Also, the department purchased a portable speed trailer which has been put in 2 different locations so far. They put it in a location for a week and then move it. The department has started doing prep for RNC, July 14-17; some of the delegates will stay in our Glendale hotels. The department will be helping Milwaukee by sending officers down there.

Tomika said she went to the RNC; there's a soft perimeter where you can protest with a permit. They won't let people in the perimeter who have been arrested for protesting before, but Tomika believes it doesn't apply to groups like those involved in January 6, 2020. Community leaders don't like that non-MPD departments don't have to release body-cam footage quickly (like MPD does).

The chief reported that we have 3 officers on the mobile field force there plus 3 more officers each day, but MPD knows if something arises in Glendale, that's our priority.

We are at full staffing on paper (2 are on injury duty, one is at the academy). We are down 5 people, practically speaking.

We do have some upcoming command retirements. Chief in May, one Captain at end of 2024, 2 lieutenants in 2025. So we'll need to prepare for filling those positions.

Establish process to fill upcoming Police-Chief position:

We basically have two options: look internally (like we did last time) or use resources to make a wider search. The chief believes it fosters the organizational culture to look within; the only reasons to look outside is if there's a bad organizational culture or if there's no one qualified within. He said a disadvantage of hiring from outside is that there's no advancement to the chief position, and that perceived cap causes morale and retention issues; captains and lieutenants start leaving to go to other departments. Another disadvantage is that the new, outside person doesn't know the culture or the officers and there's a long time of adaptation and then the new chief tries to make a lot of changes, and then, by the time those changes are fully implemented, it's time to change everything again (with a new chief). There can be cultural conflicts between the outside chief and the department. Also, some chiefs go from agency to agency to agency without getting anything done.

Tomika asked if there's anyone else is qualified but isn't stepping forward because the chief has an "heir apparent". Chief Ferguson said there are qualified people, but most of them are retiring or thinking about retiring or saying they aren't ready for such a jump.

Nicole asked if we go with an outside agency, can we also look at internal candidates. The chief said, yes, we can.

Tomika said she has a lot of faith in Chief Ferguson's judgement, but she doesn't want people not to have an opportunity to do this role. Tomika thinks no one in-house will go up against someone Chief Ferguson is recommending. She said we have always done it internally since the 80's. She said she thinks Rhett Fugman is very good, but she wants him to be chief because he beat everyone else, not just because he's the heir apparent.

Maria said she understands both points and we will look at candidates carefully; knowing the culture and the city and the department will be factors we consider. Maria has known 8 chiefs in 8 years (at MPD); we need to look at the totality of each candidate.

Eric said he doesn't have hard and fast ideas about "we must hire from outside" or "we can't hire from outside" but that he has a bit of a bias for someone who knows the dept, knows the officers, knows the city, is committed to Glendale, and is a known entity.

Paul said he likes the idea of hiring from within because we won't have resources like the assessment centers or panels that we have with hiring officers. Tomika said we could bring in three retired chiefs to do a sort of assessment center, do interviews with the public, etc. She knows of a town where they narrowed the pack to 5 candidates then had a meet-and-greet with the community with questions,

then another interview with the commission, then a final decision. Tomika believes we should have community input. Tomika said she doesn't want people to be ticked off because Rhett was just "given" the job. Eric said that whoever gets the job, some people will be ticked off, maybe because they wanted it or because they thought someone else deserved it, etc.

Chief Ferguson said if we go to the outside, we'll probably get a good number from MPD. Tomika thinks we'll get some from the FBI.

Tomika asked if we have to decide today. Paul said we do not. The chief's last day is May 31st. He said one reason to hurry the process is the other command promotions coming up. Eric asked if anyone thinks they will have new information or insights or resources in a week or two weeks or if we'll still just be having the same discussion but delayed.

Paul said, and Eric agreed, that we don't want someone who wants to change everything. Tomika asked how we know Rhett Fugman won't want to change everything. We agreed that's a great question we should ask about.

Nicole asked, if it was internally posted, how many would apply if we stipulated the applicants must be lieutenant or higher. The chief said there might be three total, but he's not sure they would all be serious candidates (they may be just interested in a captain's position later).

Tomika said if we look externally, then other internal candidates are more likely to apply.

We discussed whether we should appoint an interim chief. Tomika said if Captain Fugman is interim chief and then doesn't get the job, he might not take it well. We talked about making someone other than Captain Fugman interim chief. This was controversial. We decided we don't need to decide yet if we need to hire an interim chief at all. We could decide that on May 15th.

Tomika wants to use a firm. Paul doesn't. Tomika talked about how a firm will do background checks and weed out bad candidates. Tomika has an issue with us not being experts; the firm has experts.

Eric, Paul, Tomika, and Nicole all agree that we should look at internal and external candidates. Maria said she isn't ready yet to decide on a process. We agreed that we will do internal and external but we need more information/time to figure out the process.

Chief Ferguson said we'd need to contact Jessica for a firm and that he's skeptical: they aren't always experts. He also said we could have a firm just vet the outside candidates.

Tomika suggested we do some research individually and come back to together to figure out if we're using a firm and what the process should be.

Tomika moved that we table the process of filling the Chief position.

Paul seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Paul moved to adjourn. Tomika seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Our next meeting will be on Thursday, April 4th, 2024 at 6:30pm, virtual only. We will decide if we're all on board with looking both internally and externally and perhaps Jessica can be there and talk to us about firms we could use.

Tomika moved that we adjourn and Paul seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 7:42pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Zentner,
Secretary
