

The Committee on Government Operations, Public Safety & Public Service met on Thursday, March 11, 2021 at 6pm at City Hall and remotely through the Zoom web application.

Members present at City Hall were Councilor Stephanie Martins, presiding and Councilors Michael McLaughlin, Richard Dell Isola and Jimmy Le.

The Committee considered a Resolution offered by Councilor Fred Capone: That the Fire Chief and Administration update the Council as to any progress being made to address the shortage of firefighter personnel.

Fire Chief Tony Carli, Firefighter Union Representatives Scott Hogan and Dana Sears, Mayor's Chief of Staff Erin Deveney and Councilor Fred Capone, the Sponsor were also present.

Councilor Capone referenced the previous Committee of Whole meeting on the subject matter and asked the Chief if he could provide an update. Chief Carli informed the Committee that 20 candidates were moving through the process and had completed their physicals and were currently undergoing physical ability testing with the expectation that they'd be on the job by April 1st. The Chief remarked that he was excited to be at this point. Councilor Capone asked how the selection process works and Chief Carli responded that the City was bound by Civil Service and that they would go down the line from #1 to #20 based on rankings of a sibling of a fallen firefighter, Veteran, etc.. The Chief noted that 2 candidates in top 20 did have a change of heart and were no longer interested in the position. Councilor Capone asked if anyone was bypassed and Chief Carli acknowledged that several were for reasons that could include background checks or medical reasons. The Chief explained that Civil Service would require a reason why someone was bypassed and that due to those bypassed they got down to around #28 to #30 on the Civil Service list for firefighters. Councilor Capone asked if there were any grants to increase the staffing levels past the 20 new hires. Chief Carli referenced a grant that would allow the City to bring on 8 new firefighters but that in order to do so the City would need to get back up to the full staffing levels for firefighters first. Councilor Capone mentioned that he was aware that the communities of Somerville and Worcester had completed an independent study on staffing levels and provided a strategic plan for their fire departments and asked Chief Carli if the City of Everett planned to do the same. The Chief announced that the City had already engaged with a consultant firm this past September to look at the fire department operations as a fresh set of eyes on how we operate, type of firefighting facilities and equipment we have as well as the proposed development within the City. Ms. Deveney informed the Committee that the consultant firm of MRI of New Hampshire conducted the study. Chief Carli remarked that he was looking forward to report. Mr. Hogan stated that he was happy to hear of the hiring of 20 new firefighters but believed the City needed more firefighters to protect the City with the City planning to provide ambulance services in addition to all the new developments within the City. Mr. Hogan believed that the new consultant study would help. Councilor McLaughlin asked how many of the new hires were EMT certified and the Chief responded 5 but noted that 30 of the current firefighters were EMT certified. Councilor McLaughlin said that he was looking forward to the study and suggested that the fire department be restructured based on the report findings before anymore additional hiring take place. Councilor McLaughlin proclaimed that Cataldo Ambulance was a top notch company and that he was happy to see the fire department integrate

the ambulance services and working together with Cataldo Ambulance. The Chief acknowledged that most of the service calls responded by the fire department for the past 25 years were medical calls and noted that service calls for the previous year were down by 1000 calls. Councilor Dell Isola asked if the new hires were Everett residents and the Chief explained that pursuant to Civil Service they needed to be a resident of the City one year prior to the test. Councilor Capone asked if the recent firefighter tests would have any impact on the current hiring process and the Chief responded that the current 20 already going through the process would be fine unless someone washes out before the current hiring requirements wraps up. Councilor McLaughlin suggested that the Committee wait for the results of the expert study and Mr. Hogan declared that the firefighters were looking forward to the study too. After much discussion on what to do with the subject matter it was agreed to recommend that the matter be referred back to Sponsor with the intent that the Sponsor and Committee members would introduce a resolution on the upcoming City Council agenda requesting that the Mayor provide the Committee of the Whole with a copy of the report in advance and that the Mayor, Consultants, Fire Chief and Fire Union representatives attend that meeting.

The Committee voted: To report back to the City Council with a recommendation to refer back to Sponsor.

Respectfully Submitted,

John W. Burley
Clerk of Committees

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Members present at City Hall were Councilor Stephanie Martins, presiding and Councilors Michael McLaughlin, Richard Dell Isola and Jimmy Le.

The Committee considered a Resolution offered by Councilor Stephanie Martins: That the Fire Department provide an update on the final status of the newly renovated Central Fire Station.

Fire Chief Tony Carli, Firefighter Union Representatives Scott Hogan and Dana Sears and Mayor's Chief of Staff Erin Deveney were also present.

Chief Carli referenced a previous letter that he had sent to members regarding the subject matter and noted that the punch list was essentially complete with warranty work occurring here and there. The Chief explained that some of the items mentioned by the Sponsor that needed attention were not on the scope of work for project, but confirmed that the City's Facilities staff were working on remediating some of the issues and that the Wire Department employees were installing new lighting. The Chief informed the members that there was a blocked sewer pipe today but announced that the Facilities team remedied that as well. Councilor Martins apologized for the misunderstanding on the full remediation and asked if the City would be obtaining a grant for gym equipment. The Chief mentioned that the fire department was currently using the equipment from the Wellness Center but explained that there was a local grant of \$20,000 for gym equipment which he remarked that the firefighters deserve to have. The Chief referenced equipment provided at the other fire stations but told the Committee that Central Fire Station was the primary place for the gym equipment. Councilor McLaughlin asked when the warranty commenced and the Chief state that it starts at the signoff of punch list. Councilor Le asked why the City wouldn't pay for cable TV at the station and the Chief responded that he felt strongly that it was not prudent that the residents of the City pay for the firefighters cable TV, but noted that they did have cable TV through their own efforts.

The Committee voted: To report back to the City Council with a recommendation to refer back to Sponsor.

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Members present at City Hall were Councilor Stephanie Martins, presiding and Councilors Michael McLaughlin, Richard Dell Isola and Jimmy Le.

The Committee considered a Resolution offered by Councilors Michael McLaughlin, Stephanie Martins, Fred Capone, Michael Marchese and John Hanlon: That the City Services Operation Manager, Mayor's Chief of Staff and ISD Attorney Keith Flattery appear at this meeting to discuss cleaning of sidewalks on city-owned property after snow storms.

Mayor's Chief of Staff Erin Deveney and ISD Attorney Keith Flattery were also present.

Committee was in receipt of a communication from Jerry Navarra, Director of Public Works informed the Committee that he would be unable to attend but provided an overview of the Department's responsibilities during and after a snow storm. Councilor McLaughlin noted that he had spoken to the Mayor and Mayor's Chief of Staff and expressed his concerns about city-owned sidewalks not being cleared a week after snow storm and that it wasn't fair for homeowners to be ticketed when the City couldn't meet its own obligation for snow removal. Attorney Slattery acknowledged that he had also spoken with Councilor McLaughlin and discussed the task at hand and the work that the DPW does after a storm that now includes shoveling out all bus stops due to the passage of a recent Ordinance. He declared that the City of Everett had the cleanest streets around and suggested that the members compare with surrounding communities. Attorney Slattery confirmed that the ISD inspectors are out after a snow storm but stated that they would rather educate residents about snow removal than ticketing. He told the members that he appreciates calls that something needs to be done and has it addressed as quickly as possible. Councilor Le suggested that the city use bobcats to do sidewalks and Attorney Slattery stated that they are only used to remove snow piles but suggested that those that needed help shoveling could have high school kids perform the task. He explained the outreach to the residents that the city provides as it relates to snow removal. Councilor McLaughlin remarked that he wants to see the City deliver better results.

The Committee voted: To report back to the City Council with a recommendation to refer to the Mayor.

Respectfully Submitted,

John W. Burley
Clerk of Committees