



## Police and Fire Commission

City of Stevens Point  
1515 Strongs Avenue  
Stevens Point WI 54481

April 6, 2010  
4:31 p.m.

- 1. Roll Call:** Commissioners Nuck, Rice, Schleihs, and Wescott  
Commissioner Taylor, excused.

**Also**

**Present:** Administrative Director Jeff Morris; Fire Chief John Zinda, Police Chief Kevin Ruder; Mayor Andrew Halverson; City Attorney Louis Molepske; Assistant Chief Tracey Kujawa; Reid Rocheleau; Fire Department personnel: Vic Kedrowski, Trevor Howard, Art Dahms, Jodi Baganz, Justin Thomson, Mark Kitowski, Todd Becken, Kerry Taylor, Ron Heibler, Dennis Zvara

- 2. People to be heard and announcements**

Reid Rocheleau commended the Commission for its professionalism and the efficient manner in which it responds to inquiries. Reid has always received a prompt response to any question he has ever asked of the commission. There are two things that Reid feels should be brought to the Commission's attention. The first is he feels the Police Department should use cordless phones while they are patrolling their areas. He also feels the number of officers that attend meetings could be reduced so officers' presence could be seen more in the community.

- 3. Adjourn into closed session (approximately 4:35 p.m.) pursuant to Wis. Statutes section 19.85 (1) (c) for a Firefighter/Paramedic applicant interview**

Commissioner Wescott moved, seconded by Commissioner Nuck, to adjourn into closed session.

Ayes: Nuck, Rice, Schleihs, Wescott

Nayes: None. Motion carried.

- 4. Reconvene into open session (approximately 4:50 p.m.) for possible action.**

Commissioner Rice moved, seconded by Commissioner Nuck, to reconvene into open session for possible action.

Commissioner Rice moved, seconded by Commissioner Nuck, to approve the hiring of Trevor Howard as probationary Firefighter/Paramedic contingent upon the successful completion of all remaining hiring protocol and testing.

Ayes, all; nays, none. Motion carried.

**5. Discussion, with possible action, Michael Wheeler's employment status**

City Attorney Louis Molepske summarized the procedure followed to serve Michael Wheeler with *The Notice of Hearing* scheduled for March 8, 2010 and *Charges pursuant to Wis. Stats. Section 62.13(5)(b)*. A transcript of the hearing of March 8<sup>th</sup> was forwarded to Mr. Wheeler on March 16<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>, along with a transmittal letter, which stated that Mr. Wheeler had until April 6, 2010 at 4:30 p.m. to submit a defense, any remarks or any other information to the Police and Fire Commission in rebuttal to the chief's recommendation for his dismissal from the City of Stevens Point Fire Department. As of the start of the meeting, the Commission had not received any communication from Mr. Wheeler and therefore the attorney recommended to the commission moving forward with the termination of Michael B. Wheeler's employment with the City of Stevens Point.

Following a brief discussion Commissioner Rice moved, seconded by Commissioner Wescott, that Michael B. Wheeler be dismissed from the Fire Department for reasons set forth by Chief Zinda in his testimony at the March 8 hearing, to include:

- That Michael B. Wheeler was indicted by a federal grand jury in the State of New Jersey on February 7, 2007 for certain alleged criminal activity.
- That after a trial, Michael B. Wheeler was convicted by a jury of conspiracy to commit bribery, honest services wire fraud, the interstate transport of stolen property and the possession of unregistered firearms for which he was subsequently sentenced by Federal District Court Judge Mary Cooper on January 21, 2010 to forty-two months in prison.
- That Michael B. Wheeler is now in the custody of the federal government and is currently incarcerated in a federal correctional institution for service of his sentence.
- That Michael B. Wheeler's conduct was detrimental to the good order of the Fire Department and unbecoming to a Firefighter employed by the City of Stevens Point.

Ayes, all; nays, none. Motion carried.

**6. Approval of Minutes**

Commissioner Wescott moved, seconded by Commissioner Nuck, to approve the minutes of the March 2<sup>nd</sup> and March 8<sup>th</sup> meetings.

Ayes, all; nays, none. Motion carried.

**7. Confirmation of Bills**

Commissioner Nuck moved, seconded by Commissioner Rice to accept the confirmation of the Police Department bills for March, 2010.

Ayes, all; nays, none. Motion carried.

Commissioner Wescott moved, seconded by Commissioner Rice, to accept the confirmation of the Fire Department bills for March, 2010.

Ayes, all; nays, none. Motion carried.

**8. Presentation by Administrative Director Morris, Police Chief Ruder and Fire Chief Zinda: Response to community safety survey and strategic direction.**

Public Safety Responses to Community Safety Survey:

- Overall score of perception of citizens for public safety was 4.2.
- Safety median scores for daytime were 4.6 and for night were 4.1.
- All respondents answered they felt safest at home and work day or night and somewhat less safe when downtown.
- Less than one-third of respondents had anyone in their family have direct contact with any of the public safety services in the past two years.
- Half of all respondents have, during their lifetime, been victimized or witnessed criminal activity or nuisance behavior in Stevens Point.
- Auxiliary services and locations of public safety stations had uneven recognition.
- There were significant differences in how people gained their personal information based on age.
- Persons age 44 and younger are less satisfied with public safety services than are older respondents.
- Respondents were grouped into age ranges of (18-24), (25-34), (35-44), (45-54), (55-64) and (65+).
- The 18 – 24 age group are most likely to contact police for public safety service; less satisfied with contact, and less likely to rate service as professional and courteous.
- Males felt generally safer in Stevens Point, especially at the University, and are less likely to contact a public safety service and are less satisfied with service as professional and courteous.
- The City was divided into five geographic regions: Central City, North of Central City, East of Central City, South of Central City and West of Central City.
- If home owner, less likely to have been there 0-2 years or age 18-24.
- Renter more likely to have police contact, to be victim or witness, having parking violation, using 9-1-1, get information from the internet, live at address for shorter periods and to live in Center City.
- Less likely to know of blood pressure screening, web based safety information, location of Fire Station 1 or the Dispatch center, and get information from newspaper.

The Police Department has identified four issues to address utilizing the long-term objectives within the Stevens Point Police Department Strategic direction plan:

- Police presence in the neighborhood
- Community Awareness via print media
- Safety concerns in the downtown area
- Professional image with the younger population

The Fire Department has reviewed the community safety survey results and would like to address results pertaining to the Fire Department:

- Auxiliary Public Safety Services
- Knowledge of Public Safety
- Citizen's Police Academy.

**9. Update on Fire Chief Recruitment process**

To date, eight applications have been received for the position of Fire Chief. The application deadline process ends on April 23, 2010.

**10. Request to joint Plover Whiting in metro fire system**

Administrative Director Morris sent a letter to Plover's Village President and Town of Whiting Chairman to ask their consideration and action to expand the current Metro Fire service agreement between the Village of Park Ridge and the Town of Whiting by including the City of Stevens Point. The Director would like to begin discussions so there is ample time to fully discuss any issues that arise and allow for full and complete input on the possible arrangement.

Commissioner Schleihs moved, seconded by Commissioner Wescott, to allow Administrative Director Morris and Fire Chief John Zinda to enter into preliminary discussions with the Village of Plover and the Village of Whiting to include the City of Stevens Point in the metro fire system agreement.

Commissioner Rice moved, seconded by Commissioner Nuck, to amend the motion to state that the Director and Fire Chief may hold exploratory discussions with the Village of Plover and the Village of Whiting to include the City of Stevens Point in the metro fire system agreement.

Ayes, all; nays, none. Motion carried.

**11. Portage County Emergency Medical Services Annual Report**

The Commission commended Assistant Chief Kujawa for her part in the completion of the 2009 EMS Annual Report.

Assistant Chief Kujawa reported one of the most important initiatives undertaken this year was implementing several measures to increase the safety of our responders. She reported that each year many members of the fire and EMS services are killed or injured while performing their emergency duties on highways and roadways. This year we have been proactive in the distribution and use of high visibility vests, retrofitting emergency vehicles with rear markings and the implementation of Traffic Incident Management (TIM) guidelines for all of Portage County.

**12. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.