

SAFETY COMMITTEE
September 1, 2009
4:00 P.M.

Councilwoman Ladd, Chairman, called the meeting of the Safety Committee to order, with Councilmen Benson, Murphy, Scott, Rico, Gilbert, McGary, Berz and Robinson present. City Attorney Michael McMahan and Shirley Crownover, Assistant Clerk to the Council, were also present.

Others present included Chief Cooper, Captain Snyder, Chief Williams, Dan Johnson, Lee Norris, Mark Keil, Daisy Madison, Richard Beeland, David Johnson, Chief Parker, Barry Bennett, Paul Page, Danny Thornton, Fredia Forshee, Simone White, Gary Hilbert, Donna Kelley, Mayor Littlefield and Vicky Haley.

CHATTANOOGA ENDEAVORS—TIM DEMPSEY

Chairman Ladd introduced Tim Dempsey and turned the meeting over to him, stating that this was a nice transition from the earlier Legal and Legislative Committee meeting.

Mr. Dempsey stated that we had had Chattanooga Endeavors since 1988; that they had re-worked their original re-entry program with a Work Trainee Program; that they had delivered service to 1200 former offenders from State facilities and were seeking a way to bring them back into the work force in a safe way. He mentioned, also, that tax credits were available. He stated that during the last four years they had had 485 participants, and they were asking the City to consider taking an active role; that there was a lot of research that showed such programs reduces recidivism and makes communities safer; that they trained, assessed and supported offenders with temporary jobs; that they remained on their payroll and then the employer's payroll; that they would like the City's help in hiring them, and then they would have a recommendation from the City.

T. W. Francescon of Southern Champion was the next speaker. He stated that he had some hesitation in hiring offenders, even though he believed in second chances; that he had been very impressed with their diligence and ability to follow through; that Freddie Robinson had been a great success—that he was very transparent and very respectful; that he was very impressed with Freddie and his attitude and diligence.

Steve Watson, another employer, was the next speaker. He stated that he thought he predated Tim Dempsey; that he gave this program a shot and thought it truly offered a value to the community; that the toughest job is breaking with old habits and old friends, and these people need a job. He urged to give an opportunity to those with a record—that they are still just people with a bad experience and are quite a bit wiser. He stated that employees from the Endeavor Program have potential that needs to be developed.

Two employees from M&M Industries spoke. The first was **Wally Smith**, Plant Manager, who stated that employees had performed well and had been promoted within the company; that their attendance and attitude was good.

Casey Bruce, a beneficiary of Endeavors, was the next speaker. He stated that coming out of jail, he had to pay fines and probation; that prior to jail, he sold drugs and when he got out, he went through this program. He stated that he had been promoted, with four raises.

Chairman Ladd noted that time was of essence and other speakers in the program would be allowed if time permitted.

Councilman Benson stated that Mr. Dempsey was a miracle worker; that he gave life and had been very successful; that this was a tremendous program; he asked if Mr. Dempsey went into prisons and got good applicants.

Mr. Dempsey responded, “not any more”; that there was difficulty with logistics, and he used on-line referrals; that these people came voluntarily to them, and they were used as a Release Plan for Paroles.

Councilman Benson verified that the City would have to pay \$9.65 an hour. Mr. Dempsey added, “with no additional costs”. Councilman Benson stated that he could not see the City not being a part of this.

Councilman McGary thanked Mr. Dempsey for being here, stating that he wished him the best in Chattanooga Endeavors and asked if he was involved in the Visioning Process? Mr. Dempsey stated that they were involved in Nashville; that locally we don’t have the resources—that Chattanooga has one single agency, and Endeavors was it.

Councilman Gilbert thanked him for what he did and also thanked the companies that hired that were present, stating that they gave hope and that the City needed to provide resources.

Mr. Dempsey responded that the heroes were the companies; that they wanted the City to take a lead in this; that this was a viable way to reduce recidivism.

Donna Kelley was asked if she wished to speak to this. She stated that she had nothing direct to say; that the City had participated in the program and had had some successes. Councilman Benson asked her if she had any qualms about this Resolution? She responded that she had no problem with this; that as Mr. Dempsey explained, we offer equal access to positions.

Chairman Ladd stated that Ms. Kelley could get back to us later. She apologized to the three speakers who did not get to speak and commended the companies that were here and congratulated those in programs that were being successful and excellent employees.

CHIEF COOPER AND POLICE STAFFING

Chief Cooper stated that they were disappointed that they were not able to obtain additional Grant money and Captain Snyder would go over where we are with current staffing.

Captain Snyder stated that we did not received the Grant for 50 additional officers and some had asked why. She explained that we applied for this Grant, and there were 7,300 applicants; that in that process, 50% of the funds go to cities with over 150,000 population; that Memphis was awarded officers. She referred those present to the website and noted that the Grant could be funded again next year, and our application is still pending. Councilman Murphy confirmed that it was a competitive grant.

Chief Cooper added that Nashville and Memphis were awarded the Grant.

Councilman Murphy confirmed that there were four cities in Tennessee over 150,000 in population and only three asked for the Grant, and we did not get it. He asked if we were at the top of the heap the next time? Chief Cooper responded that we would be next in line and were looking at 2010 and 2011.

Mayor Littlefield added that research found this so close and Nashville was voted first and Memphis ranked second, but got less than they requested; that we were a close third, and our application was still active and funds might be available this year, which would be sooner than expected. He confirmed that we should be ranked at the top of the heap.

Councilman McGary asked if there were any similar grants, with Chief Cooper responding “not for staffing for police officers”.

Councilman Gilbert asked about a current Academy. Chief Cooper confirmed that none was planned and that an Academy takes about 20 weeks. Councilman Gilbert asked the cost and was told \$50,000 per person.

Councilman Murphy asked how many police officers we needed irrespective of funding. Chief Cooper responded that we currently have 472 officer slots at all levels and ranks and are 39 short of that. Councilman Murphy asked how many officers we needed on the streets? Chief Cooper explained that we had a five-year plan to add fifty—ten each year; that the first year of the Plan allowed this but not since that time; that our Plan, with our without, goes back to growing ten per year; that we need a plan to take action.

Councilman McGary stated that he was curious if the numbers needed would be greater with annexation? Chief Cooper explained that the five-year plan took the Urban Growth Plan into consideration.

Councilman Benson noted that we were throwing around numbers, and it was felt that several officers never left Amnicola and asked the number of officers on the street?

Councilwoman Scott noted that there were 472 sworn officers but asked if the department was larger than this? Chief Cooper responded that they had civilian support staff; that there were 472 sworn officers we are allowed to have.

Councilman Murphy asked if there was anything we could do in conjunction with the Hamilton County staff to free up more officers—anything with the Sheriff's Department and the County patrol? Chief Cooper responded that this could not realistically happen; that we have three times the area to patrol that they do; that if we had to wait on them to respond, we could not do the job we are doing with efficiency. He stated that we did work jointly together and that they do back us up.

Mayor Littlefield added that the County also handles SRO's in the schools; that they are stretched thinly, as well, over a much larger area and some of this is rural; that they have all of the schools; that he had met with Sheriff Hammond, and he would like us to contribute with the schools; that no one is overstaffed, and we are working towards 500 officers.

Councilman Gilbert asked if we increased the police in 2001 when we annexed Summitt? Chief Cooper responded that we did re-district—that he would have to look at his records, but he would say six to nine officers. Councilman Gilbert stated he would be curious to know the answers about 2001.

Councilman Benson stated that he had had no complaints in his district, with Councilman Gilbert stating that his constituents complained about services and response time. Chief Cooper stated that there was a five minute to ten minute response time, with Councilman Gilbert asking him about an incident in Washington Hills. Chief Cooper responded that this could be perception.

Chairman Ladd thanked Chief Cooper. Mayor Littlefield noted that each time we add one officer on the street, we have to hire five and asked the Council to bear this in mind; that 50 additional officers would have given us ten more on the streets.

The meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

