

State College Borough Council
Work Session
May 21, 2004

The State College Borough Council met in a work session on Friday, May 21, 2004, in the Council Chambers of the State College Municipal Building, 243 South Allen Street. Mr. Daubert called the meeting to order at 12:35 p.m.

Present: Bill Welch, Mayor
 Thomas E. Daubert, President
 Catherine G. Dauler
 Craig R. Humphrey
 Jeffrey R. Kern
 Janet K. Knauer
 Jeffrey H. Meyer

Absent Elizabeth A. Goreham

Also present: Thomas J. Fountaine, II, Borough Manager; Ronald A. Davis, Assistant Borough Manager; Michele Nicolas, Director of Human Resources; Thomas R. King, Chief of Police; Carl R. Hess, Director of Planning/Community Development; Timothy Grattan, Director of Information Systems; Amy J. Story, Borough Engineer; Edward C. Holmes, Parking/Facilities Coordinator; Cynthia S. Hanscom, Recording Secretary; members of the media; and other interested observers.

Expanded Hours for the Police Front Desk

Mr. Fountaine explained that, following Council's request, staff met to discuss expanding the staffing hours to include evenings and weekends for the police front desk. In the meantime, a resignation was received from one of the Records Technicians in the Police Department which presented an opportunity to explore another option. Staff came up with three options. The first, as proposed in the 2004 budget, is to add two part-time Community Service Representatives to keep the police office open from 5:30 to 10:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. on Saturday. The cost for this option would be about \$32,000. The advantages would be a greater flexibility in scheduling with two other part-time Community Service Representatives doing the same job. Disadvantages would be the cost and the additional future costs because of benefits and wages for an additional employee.

The second option, developed when the Records Technician resigned, involves creating a full-time, evening position, combining the Community Service Representative and Records Technician functions. The part-time Records Technician position would become full-time with an afternoon shift (1:30 to 5:30 p.m.) and the Community Service Representative shift being in the evening (5:30 to 9:30 p.m.). Existing staff could be used for the one 10-hour shift on Saturdays, noon to 10:00 p.m., at overtime rates. The advantages would be similar to option one exception that clerical assistance in the Police Department's records office would be reduced. Disadvantages would be that the Saturday shift would be at overtime rates. The cost would be between \$20,500 and \$31,600. Eliminating the Saturday shift would reduce the cost by \$12,000.

The third option would be to use existing staff. The daily assignment to the police front desk would be rotated among all clerical/secretarial staff. Each person would be scheduled to work 2:00 to 10:00 p.m., one day, once every five weeks (25 employees spread over five weeks). From 2:00 to 5:30, the individual would work at their regular job and would relieve the Community Service Representative at 5:30 p.m. This would still require a part-time Community Service Representative to work on Saturdays. The cost would be \$7,300 for the Saturday shift plus \$900 in additional wages for employees in lower classifications. The only advantages would be that employees would become well-rounded by gaining the experience and that the costs would be minimal; however, the upheaval due to the change in hours for so many individuals could be detrimental. Other disadvantages included lost productivity in other areas and the limited amount of training that could be given.

Mr. Fountaine said the fourth option would be no change. This is the recommendation from staff. Although staffing the police desk for additional hours during evenings and Saturdays would improve customer service, the improvement is not sufficient to justify the increased cost. If Council disagrees, then staff would recommend option 2. Mr. Fountaine commented that he has not received enough complaints to justify having someone here during those hours.

Ms. Dauler said she would prefer the fourth option -- no change.

Mr. Meyer asked if the third option would alleviate the backlog in records for the Police Department. Mr. King felt it would do little to reduce the backlog. Mr. Meyer agreed the fourth option would be best.

Mr. Welch agreed the fourth option seemed to make sense at this point but believed re-orienting the police counter so that it faced into the lobby would also be helpful.

Ms. Knauer asked if adding laptops to the police cars had reduced the paper work for Records Technicians. Mr. King replied negatively. Ms. Knauer believed that option 2 should be pursued without the Saturday shift and agreed that the police lobby window should face directly into lobby.

Mr. King noted that the second option would mean a reduction of 10 hours a week of clerical support for the records office. Mr. Fountaine noted the real cost of the second option would be the additional Saturday hours.

Council agreed that the next agenda should provide Council the option to vote on the second proposal (without the Saturday hours) or the fourth option, which was to do nothing. Members also asked staff to come back to Council with the cost of installing a window from the main lobby into the police department receptionist area.

Police Department Report on Priorities

Mr. King distributed a mission statement with the primary goals of the police department, which included:

- Community relations
- Patrol (increased foot patrols)
- Enforcement (traffic)
- Training
- Criminal investigations (alcohol/drug abuse/domestic violence)

Information collected from crime trends is used to determine the areas of enforcement. The highest numbers come from disorderly conduct, vandalism, theft, and liquor law violations.

Funding for a 62nd Officer

Mr. Fountaine indicated the 2003 budget included an authorized sworn compliment of 61 police officers. However, the 2004 budget has funding for 62 sworn police officers because the department exceeded the authorized compliment by one officer in anticipation of the resignation of at least one officer. Council appropriated funds in 2004 for 62 sworn officers contingent on staff bringing the matter back to Council if an officer leaves. In March 2004, a 29-year veteran officer retired from the department. Council is being asked to approve the funding to replace that officer and keep the sworn compliment at 62 officers.

Mr. King explained that, compared to other Big Ten college cities having a similar number of residents, the number of officers is lower while the number of criminal offenses is higher. Mr. Humphrey asked why it was anticipated the number of incidents would rise in the future. Mr. King explained the projected level of services continues to

rise; there is no indication of a slow down, especially with the law school moving to the area and the completion of Interstate 99.

Ms. Knauer noted that, with the present method of taxation, it is difficult to continually ask the residents to cover the growing need; therefore, it is difficult to compare the Borough to other college towns where they may have additional resources to provide a larger police force. Mr. King said he consistently looks for funding mechanisms to pay for additional patrols.

Mr. Meyer asked when the 61st officer was authorized. Mr. Davis said it was three years ago. Mr. Meyer asked how many additional hours were contracted with College and Harris Townships. Mr. King indicated he did not have the exact number but College Township's coverage has gone up steadily every year.

Ms. Dauler commented, because of the large number of off-campus fraternity houses, the Borough needs as many officers as possible within the confines of the budget. Because the University has abrogated responsibility for the fraternities years ago, she believed the University should be approached for assistance in funding police services.

Mr. Kern asked Mr. King how many officers would be needed for him to feel comfortable. Mr. King felt 75 officers would meet the need.

Council members agreed the item should be forwarded to their next regular meeting for action.

Off-Site Parking

Mr. Slaybaugh explained this amendment pertains to reinstating off-site parking as a permitted use in the RO zone. It does not cause a public policy change. Rather, it reinstates a change that was inadvertently made when the off-site parking regulations were relaxed from 150 feet to 400 feet. The new language did not list specific zones, but rather said "other zoning districts that allow parking as a primary use." This resulted in the unintended elimination of the RO zone as an option for off-site parking because parking is not a permitted primary use in the RO zone.

Mr. Slaybaugh said the amendment would change the language to replace the phrase "other zoning districts that allow parking as a primary use" with names of the zoning districts as previously provided.

Council had no questions about the amendment and scheduled receipt of it on June 7 with a public hearing on June 21.

Religious Use

Mr. Slaybaugh explained the impetus for this amendment was a request by the Greenly School, a private religious school, to locate its facility at the Calvary Baptist Church at 1250 University Drive. Following consultation with the Solicitor, the request was denied because it would be an accessory use in an R2 zone. The ordinance permits religious instruction as an accessory use, but this would be an accessory use by a second party. Subsequently, Greenly has requested a change in the ordinance which both the planning staff and Planning Commission thought had merit. The proposed ordinance would clarify what is meant by religious instruction and religious school. The amendment would also permit religious schools in the R1 and R2 zones as second or third party uses. And, the ordinance would permit religious schools in those districts which already allow private academic schools as special exceptions (R3, R3B, R4, RO and UV).

Ms. Dauler was concerned that Calvary Baptist Church had a very busy congregation and questioned what would happen to the school if the church should decide to move or build a larger facility. Mr. Slaybaugh explained the school would then become the primary use, which would be prohibited.

Ms. Knauer asked if the parking would be adequate. Mr. Slaybaugh indicated there is plenty of parking on the premise and believed this use would not generate much need. Mr. Meyer noted that parking has become a problem at the Catholic School on Westerly Parkway, particularly when parents are dropping off and picking up students.

Council agreed to review the issue and asked that it be received at their June 7 meeting with a public hearing scheduled for June 21.

COG Agenda

Emergency Generator

Mr. Daubert indicated Council is being asked to fund \$4,000 a year for five years for an emergency generator for the Park Forest Middle School. The facility could then be used as a community emergency shelter, if needed. Mr. Fountaine noted that, as other schools are built, they would have emergency generators installed. Mr. Meyer said the issue now is who should pay for the generator. The School Board is saying that it is not their responsibility. Mr. Kern said he would want to know that a generator will be in place in a school in the Borough and felt the School district should contribute. Council members agreed that the question should be asked as to where the emergency shelter would be in the Borough and how it would be funded before Council could vote on this item.

ANY OTHER MATTER

Mr. Kern noted that District 10 PADOT is pushing municipalities to apply for grant money from the "Save the Streets" program. Indiana has recently received \$1,000,000 for sidewalk replacement. The deadline for submitting a proposal is August 1. Mr. Fountaine noted that grant money could be used for the realignment of Fraser Street. Mr. Kern felt that enhancement money was available and Borough staff should make greater strides to apply for it.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Barbara J. Natalie
Assistant Borough Secretary