

**City of Cottage Grove
Public Services Commission Meeting
Cottage Grove City Hall Council Chambers
January 8, 2024, 7:00 p.m.**

The Regular Meeting of the Public Services Commission Meeting was held at Cottage Grove City Hall, 12800 Ravine Parkway South, Cottage Grove, Minnesota, on Monday, January 8, 2024, in the Council Chamber and telecast on Local Government Cable Channel 16.

1. Call to Order

Chair Lisa Kons called the Public Services Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Kons asked everyone to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Roll Call

Roll Call had been taken. Commissioner Moyer arrived late, after Roll Call was taken.

4. Approval of the Agenda

Commissioner Tracy Jenson made a motion to approve the agenda; Commissioner Nate Lotts seconded. Motion carried: 6-0.

5. Approval of Minutes

A. Approve minutes from the November 20, 2023 meeting.

Motion by Vice Chair Ron Kath to approve the November 20, 2023 meeting minutes; Commissioner Jenson seconded. Motion carried: 6-0.

6. Presentation - Ravine Parkway Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons

Staff Recommendation: Receive information on the Ravine Parkway RRFB requests and provide feedback to staff on recommended installations.

Ryan Burfeind, Public Works Director, spoke about a handful of requests that they've gotten on Ravine Parkway, for some enhancements to crosswalks. This is the section of Ravine Parkway, from Jamaica Avenue to Keats Avenue. That was the park that was built in 2018 and opened in 2019. The specific request is for Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB). We have these at a few different locations around town and displayed a photo of the one at Woodridge Park, 90th Street and Keats Avenue. There's also one at Hinton Avenue, off of 70th Street, and on Jamaica Avenue and 80th Street as well. This is an enhanced version of a crosswalk, just to draw more attention and make drivers obey the law of stopping when a pedestrian is in the crosswalk. The RRFBs are fairly expensive, can range between \$10,000-\$20,000 per installation; that depends upon what the existing concrete pedestrian ramps are like. Once you put in a RRFB, there are specific ADA requirements that have to be met; sometimes we find the pedestrian ramps don't meet those, so we have to do all the concrete work, in addition to buying and installing the device. They have gotten a lot easier over the years because now they're solar and Bluetooth, so they

have to be connected and they need power. We used to have to run power to them and then have a wire under the road to connect them, so that new technology has been a good improvement, but they still come with quite a cost. When we find locations and get a request, there's an initial staff review to see if MnDOT recommends something like this be considered. If it is recommended, we want to bring it to the Commission to get more feedback. Typically, the next step would be to bring it to City Council at budget time, trying to budget for something like this if the Commission has a recommendation to move forward with one or both of these. Usually, we look to do about one per year; obviously, if something is very important and necessary, we can always talk to the Council about more than one, but that's what we'd look to do.

Director Burfeind stated when we look at how we install these, it's all about the roadway characteristics. On Ravine Parkway, the traffic count actually isn't extremely high, it's about 1,000 vehicles per day. For a neighborhood collector, that's a little bit on the lower end, but we know it's going to grow over time, the area is developing, and that's definitely not the highest it will get. Other roads in town, like Hillside Trail and Indian Boulevard, those range from 2,000 to 4,000 for a collector roadway. So, that's getting to be more of the higher traffic amounts, it is a higher speed limit; a lot of our collectors when there are homes on them, which Ravine Parkway doesn't have, have a speed limit of 30 and Ravine Parkway has a 40 MPH posted speed limit. It is a two-lane design, just one lane in each direction with that median, and there are turn lanes at every intersection. He displayed an updated aerial photo to show the two locations that have been requested:

1) The first one is by the new Glacial Valley Park, and that park will actually be under construction this summer. Some of the driving factors for those requests have been twofold:

- There are townhomes to the south being built, and there are even more homes south of that, so, probably several hundred units of housing that may want to walk there. Especially because townhomes don't have as much room around their homes to play, so residents may want to go to the park instead.
- The parking lot at Glacial Valley Park, even though its as big as we could fit with all the amenities, there's concern that if you have overlap of a bigger rental at the new building, and maybe a tournament, there may need to be some parking on Joliet Avenue. So, actual users of the park would potentially cross Ravine Parkway on those busy times.

2) The second one is two locations by Military Trail that crosses Ravine Parkway. That's a trail corridor that will run from Keats Avenue up to where Military Road and Jamaica Avenue come together; its that kind of historic Military Trail corridor that we're developing as Military Road is removed.

One of the tools used by staff is from the MnDOT Traffic Engineering Manual for Pedestrian Facility Treatments. That looks at what's the speed limit, what's the vehicle ADT (average daily trips), how many lanes are crossing, and that's where it talks about considering doing something like an RRFB; it doesn't mean you shall put it in, but MnDOT says you can consider it. So, that's what we look at.

Location #1-Glacial Valley Park: He displayed a photo of that area. You can see its got a median, but being at an intersection, it has a marked crosswalk today. State law says at an intersection, pedestrians can cross. So, you don't see the signs here because its already a legal crossing point, and we typically don't do those signs at intersections. There are four lanes to cross, technically, because there are two turn lanes; this kind of acts like a three-lane section in terms of having two turn lanes and a through lane each direction, but there are four lanes of traffic to cross here. Based on that MnDOT guidance and the traffic counts, it says that an RRFB could be considered. That would be something that would work here and could be justified. If the speed limit is 45 MPH or greater, MnDOT says not to install that type of device.

One unique thing is the park isn't fully open yet, but it will be this year; so, we don't know what that use is going to be and we don't know if there will need to be parking on the south side; there is a lot of thought that there will be, but that hasn't happened yet. So, this is sort of trying to be proactive instead of reactive if something like this were installed.

Location #2-Trail Crossing: He displayed one photo, noted the other side is very similar to this. This is what we call a mid-block crossing, so its not at an intersection. It has the markings and one sign showing that the crosswalk is there. Because it is only one lane in each direction, MnDOT guidance wouldn't necessarily recommend an RRFB. It's not that you couldn't put one there, but as its only one lane, that might be a little too much. Its more than what you need at this type of location, but we have gotten several requests and questions about it, so he wanted to bring it to the Commission to consider. Another option would be a pedestal-style sign; those are quite often put on a centerline of a road so you can see the sign and you can see the markings. We could also possibly add another pedestrian sign on the other side so they'd see two signs pointing down, instead of one.

Director Burfeind stated he'd be happy to get any feedback or discussion from the Commission.

Commissioner Jenson asked when is the planned connection for Ravine Parkway to connect over to Hinton.

Director Burfeind stated that's a good question, we're asked that a lot. So, there are two undeveloped parcels there, but this is all development driven. So, you'll see that Right-of-Way obtained and the road built when they develop. There's always been a lot of interest in the Wolterstorff parcel over the last ten years, but there's a lot of bedrock in it and other challenges that have made it difficult to develop.

Commissioner Jenson stated she assumed the traffic volume would definitely increase at that point, which Director Burfeind confirmed.

Vice Chair Kath stated he can definitely see having the one by the park for sure. For the other one, first of all, we have the MnDOT recommendation that it really isn't needed. His fear is if we were to put one there, there's a lot more crossings as you continue west on Ravine that are kind of similar to that. So, we're going to get more and more requests, and you're going to have them all along Ravine, the whole way then. So, he would not recommend one at that second crossing, but certainly would support the one at the park as he can see the need there.

Director Burfeind stated one thing he should have mentioned was if you chose the trail crossing, we'd actually have to install two RRFBs, to serve this one section of road.

Commissioner Jenny Olson stated she thought installing a second pedestrian sign at the trail crossing would be very helpful. It would definitely draw more attention to that. Also, its one lane, you're not worrying about any passing traffic; she thought there was a lot less risk there, if you will, than the other location. She agrees with Vice Chair Kath that the first location would definitely be an area where we're going to see a lot of traffic at that park.

Chair Kons stated she liked the idea of being proactive as well. There's going to be more housing and more people, and it's going to take time to be implemented and budgeted for, so she thinks it's a good idea.

Commissioner Nate Lotts stated he's going to be biased because he lives right by it. One of the things with the second intersection is if you're coming left to right on that trail, oftentimes traffic, either direction, doesn't look for you. So, if you're running, they don't stop. He asked how much is a stationary sign, like the one that's there.

Director Burfeind replied the stationary signs we actually do ourselves; so, the sign is actually not a huge cost, probably about \$100 in material, and then we install that with our own staff.

Commissioner Lotts stated he would still say putting a stationary sign in there, at a minimum, should be done. But the park, the parking lot is smaller than we wanted it to be, he thinks we're going to have a lot of people parking on the other side of the road. So, he thinks that one is probably the primary marking that you should do.

Chair Kons stated we like the State Law signs, they prove to be effective because the pedestrian law, quite frankly, is very hard to interpret. As a pedestrian and as a driver, it just means different things, at the liberty of who is reading it. So, when you see a sign like that, she thinks it reinforces that okay, I need to yield if I see a pedestrian.

Director Burfeind stated that is hard, he gets a lot of calls from the public who say they stood back on the trail for three minutes and no one stopped. Technically, State law is you have to be in the crosswalk. It's hard because cars need to be stopping if you're in the crosswalk, but how many people do you see on their phones these days where maybe they're just waiting there for a minute to send an email or something; we obviously don't want cars stopping on a road for no reason, so, it's tough.

Commissioner Olson stated we also have people who choose to let traffic go, she sees that a lot driving bus. They'd rather stop and have you go before they go, even though they do have the right-of-way, which also can create confusion and misinterpretation.

Director Burfeind stated yes, that's a good point. He stated one of the most risky situations is when you have two lanes in each direction; because if you have one car stop and one car not, they can't see the pedestrian. That's where these single lane in each direction, but even with the turn lanes, is a much safer situation.

Commissioner Lotts stated the park is the first priority. The trail one he thinks you're probably going to have an issue down the road, once that connection is built, once traffic increases; that was something he wanted to bring up, too. Down the road maybe we'd need to have the flashing ones, but presently, he's not sure that's required.

Director Burfeind stated one thing we can definitely do is keep this area in mind, not just cast it off to the side, but let's monitor it. We do the traffic counts every other year, at a minimum, just for our State Aid funds that we get; we'll just kind of monitor everything as well.

Vice Chair Kath stated it's interesting because he lives on this side, over here on Jensen Avenue. He knows it's a County road, but talk about an issue where we have 55 MPH and we've got a crossing for a park, getting from Woodridge up to Ravine, and there's people coming along there all the time. It's interesting, we have a lot of opportunities throughout our community to find safer ways, especially as these parks develop and developments start coming in, like the new development just off of County Road 19 and 90th.

Chair Kons asked if anyone else had questions or comments, but no one did.

Director Burfeind stated he thinks based on that, we can refine these costs, and once we have numbers, we'll go to the City Council. They actually just approved our last budget, and before we know it, we'll start on the next budget at a staff level. So, we can kind of move it forward. He thanked the commissioners for their input.

7. Business Items

7.1 Commission Terms

Director Burfeind stated this is really just more of an FYI. Kari had reached out and let commissioners know where they were at in their term. This just shows commissioners who are in their first or second term; obviously, you can serve up to four terms. So, at this point, no one is terming out and everyone will be moving ahead. That actually goes to the City Council; he thinks at our next meeting or the first meeting in February, the Council will reaffirm the appointment of commissioners. So, everyone on this commission will be reappointed for another year.

7.2 Officer Appointments

Director Burfeind stated obviously last year we had a Chair and Vice Chair who had termed out, so, we had the voting and determined a new Chair and Vice Chair. He spoke with Council Member Thiede; what we typically do is as long as Chair Kons and Vice Chair Kath are still interested in doing that, you can serve another term in that role unless either of you has concerns. They indicated they were good.

Director Burfeind stated you can both keep those roles in 2024 and discuss it again in a year. Chair Kons stated that sounds good.

8. Commission Comments and Requests

Commissioner Lotts asked if anybody attended that snowmobile event on Saturday.

Vice Chair Kath stated yes, he was there, and it was well attended again. For a snowmobiler, this is not very good weather, but for the people who were there, it was actually a nice day and they got to enjoy it. He had a really nice time.

Chair Kons stated it was kind of weird to see everyone in sweatshirts, but it was well attended. The Snowmobile Club donated an AED to Lamar, and good things just really came out of it.

Vice Chair Kath stated yes, they did a good job.

Vice Chair Kath said thank you, but he doesn't know if it was Public Works or Parks who did it, but he knows that where he lives, by Woodridge Park, they came into that woods that goes along 90th Street, and really did a nice job of cleaning that up. It looks like they might have still a little bit more to go, but it's like night and day now when you drive by that, so, well done.

Director Burfeind stated it was our Parks people who were in there and did that.

9. Staff Updates/Reports

Director Burfeind stated he'll touch on some Engineering and Public Works projects. Probably always the biggest one is thinking about PFAS and PFAS contamination of our wells. He's given some random updates, as there are two new things coming out; there's Federal standards that'll be coming out, that were supposed to come out in December 2023, but they've been delayed until probably February or March, 2024. Those are what we call MCLs, that's like a hard number, a Maximum Contaminant Limit, that we can't be over. It's going to be set very low, so, it's going to be very, very restrictive for two different types of PFAS that have been looked at for many, many years. That will be the first time that there will be a new rule like that at a Federal level in a long, long time, so, it's a big deal. Cities have three years to be in compliance with that level.

We're obviously actively doing that with our permanent Water Treatment Plants, since we broke ground on one in September, south of 100th Street, and they just started pouring footings this past week; that was very exciting to see. The weather's been pretty cooperative, so, they could actually

get all their grading done, and now they'll pour footings actually all winter long. They'll actually have to pour concrete almost all the way through fall, as there's so much concrete in that facility, and that will be operational in 2025.

Our second, larger one will actually be behind the Central Fire Station; that will essentially serve all the homes north of the highway. Our goal for that one is to have it operational by the end of 2026 or early 2027. We have the temporary treatment plants, of course, that still serve the entire community. He always likes to make sure people know that even while that first permanent Water Treatment Plant is being built, all those temporary treatment plants are in place, and we're actually providing 100% treated water to our residents even today. He thinks that's a really big deal.

He stated the State's also going to come out with some new values, and we assume that will be any day now. They don't ever really give any notice of that, but there's been a lot of talk about it. So, we're actually building two more temporary treatment plants this Spring, which is kind of hard to hear because we're building permanent treatment plants, too. With the new values, we have to have more temporary treatment to do that. What's nice is once again, they're very small, very cost effective, and the big treatment vessels that actually do the work will be moved into that new permanent treatment plant behind the Central Fire Station. So, that's not any kind of waste of money; it's 100% paid for by the 3M Settlement, so, our residents don't pay a dime for that. We're very cost effective in how we reuse the treatment tanks for that.

So, that's another big deal; we actually got some quotes a few weeks ago, and those came in good, so we'll be looking to move ahead here soon and have those operational before summer.

Chair Kons asked Director Burfeind if the State typically mirrors the Feds or if they're a little stricter than the Feds, or how does that work.

Director Burfeind replied the anticipation is, based on some different comments at public meetings, they'll be even stricter than the Feds. The State's Rules aren't typically a mandate, they're technically a guidance, but every city follows them. We follow them, and that's technically what caused the watering restriction in 2017. So, we anticipate those to come out soon, and we do want to follow those; that's always been our goal and it's been the Council's strong goal and kind of our standard that we meet those State Rules, so that's what we continue to do.

Chair Kons stated so then you're ready for the Feds. Director Burfeind replied we are, yes, we'll be pretty well set.

Director Burfeind stated that's the big one, and you'll probably see that on the news; it's going to affect a lot of communities, more than just Cottage Grove, because it's so restrictive. We'll be providing 100% treated water, which is a really big deal with all of the work that's been put into that.

Director Burfeind stated from a construction standpoint, we met last in November, and really a lot of construction had wrapped up by then. We had a couple developments finish up some work: One right across the street here by County Road 19, and also Graymont Village, south of 100th Street, by the new 105th Street we built, by Ideal Avenue.

There's not a lot of work happening right now, but he'll let Gary Orloff speak about our streets, although it's been different than last year, not as much plowing.

Gary stated it's not been a good winter for snowmobilers, but it's been a nice break for our snowplow drivers. We have been out about five times, but just for salting; we haven't dropped a blade yet this year.

So, that brings us to tree removal, as we have 85 dead or diseased boulevard trees that we're in the process of removing. Parks had a hard time with their rink, so, they've been out in our parks, cleaning out a lot of trees with dead fall. We're in our ponds, a big one we just completed was over

by Hardwood and 70th Street. If you look down by the townhomes, you can see they're pretty clear. It was a disaster in there, and now it looks nice and clean.

We had one of our Streets guys transfer over to Utilities. So, we interviewed 14 people, we have it narrowed down to two. We had one second-round interview today, one tomorrow, so hopefully we can make a decision by the end of the week and get one on within the next month or so.

With development, we're making a lot of new street name blades; we've been making them, installing them, and replacing some damaged signs.

Other than that, we're a big group of foresters, taking care of a bunch of trees in town.

Director Burfeind stated our new Fire liaison is Fire Chief Jon Pritchard, who was at the last meeting. Because we moved the meeting, he had a conflict with the schedule, but he will be here at the next meeting. However, he sent some updates that he asked me to pass along:

Now that we're into 2024, Fire is preparing their yearend statistics:

- They had just over 4,600 calls last year, which is a 43% increase in the last five years, since 2018.
- They had 445 Calls for Service in December 2023, which is the busiest month ever for the Fire Department.
- They're working on their yearend statistics overall, which Chief Pritchard plans to present to the Commission at our next meeting.
- They're also recruiting five firefighter-paramedic positions, and they have three vacancies to fill for additional positions being added in April 2024.

Police Captain Brad Petersen stated he's the newly-promoted Patrol Captain, so would start with some updates on personnel because we've had a lot of change in the last few months:

- Captain McAlister announced his retirement a few months back, and so we started the process of replacing him.
- With my promotion, that opened up a new sergeant position, so we started the process to promote the new sergeant.
- In the middle of that process, we decided to implement some organizational changes. We wanted to add two additional sergeants and move some other chess pieces around; we wanted to really take a look at the entire organization and see how we could best provide the services given the current staffing we have of 46 authorized officers. We shook things up and promoted those three additional sergeants; they had their swearing in this past week, Sergeants Schoen, Bailey, and Young were promoted.
- From there, it was even more of a trickle-down effect because they vacated speciality positions, which then needed to be backfilled. So, we filled our Community Engagement Officer, Case Management Officer, some rotating detective positions, and probably some others that he's forgetting. There are a lot of officers in new positions, so we spent the last couple weeks of 2023 and the first week of 2024 just getting everybody acclimated to their new positions, learning their new responsibilities and roles. That's going to take a little bit of time, but we're still delivering excellent service.
- One of the big changes he commented on was how we restructured our Investigations Division. Previously, we had a Captain, who oversaw the Division, underneath him was a Sergeant, and then underneath that Sergeant were ten detectives. As you know, that's too many people to supervise effectively. So, we've now broken that up into two branches in the Investigations Division: 1) General Investigations, which handles traditional investigative work, case follow up, charging, some of our Task Force operations. 2) Our Community Impact Team, which is more of our community-oriented, problem-solving unit, which includes

our School Resource Officer, Community Engagement Officer, Case Management Officer, additional sergeants and some others. They've each got their own lane, but in reality, they're going to operate as a team to accomplish multiple missions to get out in the community, form relationships, address quality of life issues, solve problems, be proactive and try to prevent a lot of problems before they even happen. So, we're really excited to see that come to fruition and start to address some problems before they even become problems, for that matter.

- We've started work on a new five-year Strategic Plan. We've got a really good start on it, he'd say we've got a solid 90% solution on that. We're excited about that because we're finally going to have a document that we can use to bring everybody together with a shared mission and clearly define our roles and our vision for the future. By the time we meet next, he's hoping he can share that with you; he just doesn't want to put the cart before the horse and let the cat out of the bag before the Council and the rest of the leadership team has had a chance to see that and approve that. So, he's looking forward to sharing that with you.

Chair Kons asked if that's something that's new; Captain Petersen replied very new, yes. He stated we've had a Strategic Plan in the past, but it was the kind of document that sat on the shelf, and this is a vision that will be entirely different.

Captain Petersen stated the end of that trickle-down effect is we had to hire four patrol officers; so, we've offered four conditional job offers. Two of them are laterals, so, they're currently police officers working for other departments. The other two are C.S.O.s, so they come with some prior law enforcement experience, so the train up should be pretty quick and easy with them. They'll be starting on February 5, and he's confident that all four of them will be on solo patrol probably by early summer, if not before.

Chair Kons stated there's a lot cooking. Captain Petersen stated, yes, there's a lot of stuff in the hopper, and he'll have even more to share with you at the next meeting. Unless there are questions, that's all he has tonight.

Commissioner Olson asked where are we at, community wise, with the School Resource Officers; do we just have one in the high school? Captain Petersen replied that's correct. She said so, there's not one at the middle school, correct? Captain Petersen confirmed that.

Captain Rinzel stated that's the School District's choice; we used to have three.

Commissioner Olson asked if they had recently removed one from Woodbury and East Ridge.

Captain Rinzel replied no, Woodbury chose to come out due to the new legislation, which is still murky, to say the least, in regards to the School Resource Officer and the liability surrounding Use of Force. So, Woodbury requested their City Attorney's Office remove the School Resource Officers due to liability, and then the Attorney General had two or three different recommendations in regard to his interpretation of the law. Each one was a little bit different, so, the law is still murky, and we're still working through that, but we as a Department and City chose to stay in that. We would be more than happy at any point in time, that the School District wanted, to engage in conversation to add School Resource Officers back into the middle schools. That's something we would do, but there's staffing increases that we would have to accommodate to get that done; at our current staffing, we don't have enough officers to fill those roles, and there's a financial obligation.

Commissioner Olson stated long term, she thinks that's something they're going to have to seriously look at; today alone, there were issues at one of the middle schools, and it's not something that long term she thinks is going to work.

Captain Rinzel stated we're willing and able whenever they want to engage in that conversation.

Commissioner Lotts asked in the absence of an SRO in the school right now, is there any stopgap, like a security guard, or?

Captain Rinzel replied that's what some School Districts did, they hired some internal security measures. As far as law enforcement, if they have an immediate 911 service that comes through the Patrol Division, like any other call for service, there's no direct radio communication between either of the middle schools or the elementary schools. Unlike at the high school where it's direct, there's someone there, so their radio is internal; they talk to our officer and on our radio system, so, there's a sequenced transmission of information and that doesn't occur at the other schools at this point.

Commissioner Lotts stated it sounds like the School Board needs to develop a Task Force for this; Captain Rinzel stated he'll let that be a Commission question that's raised.

Captain Petersen stated with all the change that's on the horizon, one of the things that we're considering is following suit with a lot of other communities, who already have a Civilian Oversight Committee in place for their Public Safety Departments. So, the idea we're kicking around is using the Commission as our sounding board and our mechanism for soliciting community feedback on all these different ideas that we have in the hopper. So, if that's something that you are willing and able to do, we can have that discussion; not necessarily tonight, but maybe at a future meeting that's something we could put on the agenda to discuss.

Chair Kons stated she thinks that would be a great agenda item, and other commissioners agreed.

10. Council Comments

Council Member Thiede stated he's glad to be back. He sees some familiar faces, some new that he hasn't really met too much before. He felt they've been well informed with some of the things he's been hearing.

We had some lights out along East Point Douglas because we had some theft of copper wire out of the streetlights, so that's why they're out. That's being taken care of and being followed up on; so, if anybody asks, that's what happened.

Just this past Saturday we got together with a lot of the staff and had our annual Strategic Planning meeting at the new Glacial Valley Park building. It's a very nice building and everything worked well, too, which is a good thing. He'd say there's not going to be anything drastically new in terms of vision or direction; we're talking about different things, reinforcing some of the things that we're already working toward and looking at. We talked some about the focus on pavement management and looking at Jamaica and all the ruts, etc. and comparing that to some of the other areas. It was just some of the reiterations, too, of most of the comments we get from people, especially this year, about the snowplowing being great. Every year, though, people are commenting on how good the snowplowing happens here in the winter, and just the service level of Public Safety, and things like that. So, it's a real pleasure to really get some of that feedback, and it all comes back to all of us, because everybody's part of that effort in bringing back that feedback from citizens. It helps the Council and it helps the City make things happen safely and comfortably; we're accommodating and nice with our services and everything like that.

Council Member Thiede stated that's about it from him for now. He asked the commissioners if there were any questions that they had for him.

Commissioner Lotts asked what's the damage on the streetlight copper theft. Obviously, copper is expensive, but it's not that, it's rewiring the entire light.

Director Burfeind replied we know the extent of the damage, but we're still working with our insurance and looking at what the cost is going to be. Even though the price of copper has gone up significantly, the price has apparently doubled in the past few months, you've probably seen that St. Paul has gotten hit a lot. If the damage is \$50,000, the value they took in scrap is probably only a couple thousand. So, we don't quite know yet, but we have some messaging on Facebook just to have the public help look out for this. Basically, our staff only works on streetlights during the day; there's never usually a streetlight emergency, so, if a light's out, a light's out, and we fix it the next day. So, anytime you see anyone by a streetlight, especially at night, call that in because that really shouldn't be happening. He'd rather err on the side of caution and have the police come up on Tyler or Jeff in Utilities and give them a hard time rather than wait, so.

Captain Rinzel stated it's not just a St. Paul or Cottage Grove issue, this is a metro-wide issue. It's the newest precious metal; catalytic converters kind of got stamped on a little bit, and he thinks our friends that are in the salvage business, if you want to call it that, are finding new ways to salvage from operational equipment. At the State Fair, the entire road was stripped of all copper, so they're talking about \$250,000 or so. They stole the copper from that entire area, and that was a big safety concern with the fair. It's a big ring, word continues to spread, and somehow they found us on Highway 61.

Captain Rinzel stated one thing before he leaves this Commission completely, we'd like to get your feedback on recruitment and retention. As you know, this last go round we did well with initially having 30 applicants, which is good. He talked about this at the last meeting, that's good for this day and age, but in general, it's horrible in law enforcement for recruitment and retention. So, if you're talking with your neighbors or anybody, what is it that we can do to recruit and retain officers, and how far is the City willing to go? Just kind of think of those other things, and Captain Petersen will eventually come to you and say hey, we're kind of looking at this or this. So, just kind of put that on your radar right now, what do we do as the City of Cottage Grove to recruit, and then not only recruit, but then to obtain the best possible law enforcement officers that we can.

It's not just about new hires; if somebody were to leave, we're talking about hundreds of thousands of dollars, so, it's also retention of the people that we currently have. If an officer has been here for three-to-five years and leaves, that officer is walking out the door with \$200,000 of training, education, and equipment, and that's not replaced that easily. We're trying to think of new initiatives, so try to think about that with your friends, family, and neighbors. That's going to be his push before he leaves; he has some ideas, but these are internal and this is the Commission that we use.

What are other organizations doing? He's been steadfastly against bonuses to get people in the door because then the 46 people who have been here, diligently working on a daily basis, will think that the people who are coming on are more important than the ones who are already here. Then we end up paying, now that we're replacing, and we're losing all this additional money. So, it's just the retention, the culture, the wellness, the benefits, the equipment; what is it that we have here that people want to stay? We do a good job, don't get me wrong, but the minute you relax and you decide that mediocrity or just a little bit above is good, someone's going to come by and they're going to steal your talent. We need to stay at the cutting edge and at the very forefront of how we keep our people. How do we keep them happy, how do we keep them safe, and then how do we get the new ones in the door for replacement, because we're going to have internal changes; in and of itself, there's a succession plan and this is going to be a constant with people leaving with retirement. So, how do you fill those vacancies.

Captain Rinzel asked Captain Petersen what's the average in the last ten years, how many did we hire every year? Captain Petersen replied three per year, and that's with our growth. So, as our growth continues to increase, it will be more.

Chair Kons asked what's the retirement projection?

Captain Rinzel replied we have one probably in 2024 and then a number in 2025, higher than that.

Chair Kons stated in addition to growth, so, that's a lot of turnover.

Captain Rinzel said especially looking at a city of our size; he started in 1995, and he was the 33rd officer. We have 46 officers now, so, we went from 33 to 46, it's not that many. So, if on average we hired three every year in the last ten years, that's 30 people in ten years. Remember, we only have 46 and he was the 33rd. So, it's a constant grind, and the numbers aren't getting any better. The Skills Department for Rasmussen he thinks filled this last time, which, knock on wood, we've had a little transition where hopefully people are getting back into it. He thinks the military kind of picked up a little bit, too, so in five years it might not be an issue, but if we don't arrange our cards right for the next five years, we could have a serious problem. There are cities not far away from us, just north, that are short over ten people, and they can't get more. They hire as many as they get, and they still can't fill the ranks. We're very fortunate, but he wants to keep that fortune. So, we hope this Commission can come up with new and exciting ways of keeping people we have here, without giving people money to start here.

Commissioner Olson asked if there was a portion of the budget specifically set aside for that piece.

Captain Rinzel replied yes and no; we're doing a very good job with equipment, but we're looking for other ways of doing that. So, we don't have a line item for retention, per se, but it's definitely something we need to consider. On the recruitment end, he thinks we do a pretty good job with lateral transfers and/or our C.S.O.s and Reserve Officers. Over the last 30 years, basically half have come from C.S.O.s and half have come from Reserves; we very rarely have someone without any law enforcement background who comes here, and that goes back to his time. So, those are the two categories, we either steal from another agency, or we get them from our Reserves and C.S.O.s., from within. If you want diversity in other candidates, you still have to look further. How do we recruit the young ones, how do we get to that area where we have cadets, who might be from our community?

Commissioner Lotts stated one of the things we've done in the military is first of all, asking the people why they came there, and also why they're staying. Because we can use that to our advantage to appeal to new people, and also to keep the people we have, and quite possibly, lure some people from other departments. He doesn't know what that looks like for us, but it seems to be a pretty valuable tool, to the military anyway.

Captain Rinzel stated he thinks when you see the five-year plan, Captain Petersen has done a really nice job of laying out those specifics; what is your purpose for being here, and how do you keep people that want to be a part of your community. The big thing is we say work-life balance. He thinks there's a lot of people right now, about half, that currently live in the City, and at least that many are originally from Cottage Grove, graduated from Park High School, this community.

Council Member Thiede stated a big part of it that he hears, too, is just some of the community involvement, the respect, and some of those kinds of things. He thinks that's what would draw officers and things like that into our community, whereas some places' attitudes really stink. He's not a big social media person, but more of the message getting out to squelch negative comments out there and continuing to promote some of the great things that our City staff and Public Safety do definitely helps, too.

Captain Rinzel stated DOJ just put out a paper on recruitment and retention; we do 90% of everything they say you should do for recruitment and retention, so, we're already there. There's a

few of the other things, anomalies, that we have to look at, and maybe those would work, maybe they wouldn't. Money's not always the shining object that people are looking for, but nowadays, we also can't pay \$10,000 less than another agency and expect people not to leave. Especially when there are many agencies right now who offer \$10,000 to start, they're paying lateral pay, and they have all the other things. This generation is not afraid to hop around, where in the past that's not how it happened. He doesn't want to be just like every other agency and just expect people to come and go; he wants to be the landing place where people will stay.

11. Adjournment

Vice Chair Kath made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Commissioner Olson seconded. Motion carried: 7-0. The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Minutes transcribed by J. Graf and reviewed by Kari Reubish.