Cottage Grove
Where Pride and Prosperity Meet

MINUTES

COTTAGE GROVE CITY COUNCIL May 15, 2024

COUNCIL CHAMBER
12800 RAVINE PARKWAY SOUTH
COTTAGE GROVE, MN 55016

<u>REGULAR MEETING</u> - 7:00 P.M
COUNCIL CHAMBER

1. CALL TO ORDER

The City Council of the City of Cottage Grove, Washington County, Minnesota, held a regular meeting on May 15, 2024, at Cottage Grove City Hall, 12800 Ravine Parkway. Mayor Bailey called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The audience, staff, and City Council Members stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

City Administrator Jennifer Levitt called the roll: Mayor Bailey-Here; Council Member Garza- Here; Council Member Khambata-Here; Council Member Olsen-Here; Council Member Thiede-Here.

Also present: Jennifer Levitt, City Administrator; Ryan Burfeind, Public Works Director; Zac Dockter, Parks and Recreation Director; Jaime Mann, Interim Communications Director & Assistant City Administrator; Conner Jakes, Associate Planner; Pete Koerner, Public Safety Director; Gwen Martin, Public Safety Captain, Brad Peterson, Public Safety Captain, Greg Rinzel, Public Safety Captain, Aaron Price, City Attorney-LeVander, Gillen & Miller, PA; Gretchen Larson, Economic Development Director; Emily Schmitz, Community Development Director.

4. OPEN FORUM

Mayor Bailey opened the Open Forum. As no one wished to address the Council, Mayor Bailey closed the Open Forum.

5. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion by Council Member Thiede to approve the agenda; second by Council Member Garza. Motion carried: 5-0.

6. PRESENTATIONS

A. Swearing In Ceremony: Deputy Fire Chief Nicholas Arrigoni and Fire Captain Brandon Ekron
Staff Recommendation: Recognize the promotions and do the swearing in of Deputy Fire Chief Nicholas Arrigoni and Fire Captain Brandon Ekron.

Mayor Bailey invited the Council Members to join him in front of the dais for the swearing in ceremony.

Pete Koerner, Public Safety Director, stated tonight we'll be swearing in Nick Arrigoni as our newest Deputy Fire Chief and Brandon Ekron as a Fire Captain. As you know, Fire Chief Rick Redenius retired on December 31, 2023. With that Jon Pritchard was promoted to Fire Chief, and then Nick took Jon's position, and now Brandon is taking Nick's position. He introduced Fire Chief Jon Pritchard, who will read their bios, then we'll do the swearing in and badge pinning.

Chief Pritchard asked Brandon Ekron to step forward as he's introduced. He stated Brandon is being sworn in this evening after a well-deserved promotion to captain. Brandon started with the Cottage Grove Fire Department in October 2017 and brought a wealth of experience, knowledge, and skills to the department. Brandon started his Fire EMS career with the White Bear Lake Fire Department in April 2009, as a parttime firefighter and EMT. In 2015, Brandon was promoted to a parttime firefighter-paramedic at White Bear Lake after his graduation from the Hennepin County Medical Center paramedic program. Brandon has also served as an EMT for HealthEast, which is now known as MHealth, for four years.

Brandon has been a foundational part of the Fire Department since his arrival six years ago; he's been such a great role model for professionalism, excellence, leading by example. He's contributed profoundly to the development and training of many firefighters and has led the way to the department's many improvement efforts. Brandon has served as one of our primary field training officers, helped design the department's evidence-based field training program, and he's also served as a Fire-EMS instructor, wide burn instructor, and is a member of the Washington County Mobile Field Force. Brandon is also a State-certified fire instructor, wide burn instructor, fire officer, and fire apparatus operator.

Brandon lives in White Bear Lake with his wife, Bethany, and children, Tucker, who is here with Brandon, and his daughter, Violet. Brandon enjoys spending time with his family, working out, gardening, fishing, and gaming.

Chief Pritchard said tonight Brandon's son, Tucker, will be pinning Brandon's badge.

Administrator Levitt stated Brandon, this is your moment now, in front of your peers, your family, and the community, to take your oath. So, please raise your right hand and repeat after me, which he did. Administrator Levitt congratulated Brandon and everyone applauded.

Brandon's son, Tucker, then pinned his father, and again everyone applauded. Brandon shook hands with and was congratulated by Mayor Bailey and the City Council Members.

Chief Pritchard asked Nick Arrigoni to step forward. Tonight we're going to be swearing in Nick as our new Deputy Fire Chief. Nick started his career with the Cottage Grove Fire Department in 2009, where he served as a parttime EMT, firefighter-EMT, then as a parttime firefighter-paramedic. After completing his Associate in Fire Science Degree and obtaining his paramedic certification in 2013, Nick worked at Lakeview EMS as a paramedic until his promotion to a fulltime firefighter-paramedic in 2014. In 2020, Nick was promoted to fire captain. In his role as firefighter and fire captain, Nick has led the department in many ways, including supporting fleet and equipment services, serving as a Fire-EMS training instructor, a wide burn instructor, incident command instructor, and many other roles and responsibilities. Nick holds his Associates in Fire Science degree, and will be completing his Bachelor's degree this July, and he's promised he will complete that on time.

To many, this may be a surprise, but impressively, this is only half of Nick's background: Nick has served in the Army National Guard for 13 years with the last 10 years in a lead role as a flight paramedic and squad leader with Charlie Company 2211, General Supports Aviation Battalion, where Nick is currently a staff sergeant. In great service to our nation, Nick was deployed overseas from June 2018 through May 2019 to support Operation Inherent Resolve and Operation Spartan Shield, where his unit provided med evac coverage for Kuwait, Jordan, Syria, and Iraq. Nick proudly shares he would do it again in a heartbeat.

As a lifelong resident of Cottage Grove, Nick is proud to serve the community where he was spent his life and is even more proud to serve the nation that he loves. Nick currently lives with his fiancée, Katie. Nick is eternally grateful to his fiancée, family, and friends for all their support. Nick thanks his mentors that have helped him through this career, who have helped him learn and grow. He humbly shares he would not be in this position today if it was not for them. Nick is grateful to the Public Safety and City leadership team for entrusting him for the position and throughout his growth in his career. Nick looks forward to many years serving the community of Cottage Grove. Nick's fiancée, Katie, will be pinning his badge this evening.

Administrator Levitt asked Nick to raise his right hand and repeat his oath after her, which he did. She congratulated him and everybody applauded. Nick's fiancée, Katie, pinned his badge, and everyone applauded again. Mayor Bailey and the Council Members all shook hands with and congratulated Nick.

Photos were taken of Brandon and Nick with the City Council Members, as well as Director Koerner and all of the firefighters, after which everyone applauded.

B. 2024 Historic Preservationists of the Year

Staff Recommendation: Present the 2024 Historic Preservationists of the Year Award to Cindy Yff and Kathy DeMarre for their efforts of research and compilation of information on the Old People's Home and Cemetery that will inform future generations of the history and significance of the site.

Mayor Bailey stated Conner Jakes, Associate Planner, will speak about this award.

Planner Jakes stated it is my pleasure to be with you for the presentation of the 2024 Historic Preservationists of the Year Award. Annually, the Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation (ACHP) nominates a recipient of the award, who goes above and beyond in the promotion of Cottage Grove's history and the preservation of the rich history of the City.

This year the ACHP has nominated Cindy Yff and Kathy DeMarre for their work on the preservation of the history and information that they've gathered on the Old People's Home and Cemetery, which is off of 70th Street South. They've created a binder of information that will inform generations of future residents and really just told the history of that site for residents, staff, and anyone interested in Cottage Grove history. With that, Planner Jakes played a video in which Cindy and Kathy talked about the site and the work they've done on this.

Mayor Bailey stated let's give Cindy and Kathy a round of applause, which everyone did. He invited them up to the front to receive their awards.

Mayor Bailey read aloud and presented the award to Kathy DeMarre. He stated on behalf of myself, the Council, our staff, and all the citizens of Cottage Grove, congratulations and thank you. Everyone applauded.

Mayor Bailey read aloud and presented the award to Cindy Yff. He stated on behalf of myself, the Council, our staff, and all the citizens of Cottage Grove, thank you for helping us preserve our history. Everyone applauded.

Photos were taken of both award recipients with Mayor Bailey and the Council Members.

Mayor Bailey said he's always driven by there, and I remember that house when I was growing up here in Cottage Grove. He asked are there any real interesting people that you've discovered after going through all the history of the different people who were there.

Kathy replied I think the most interesting thing is that they were immigrants, and they didn't come from Cottage Grove. There are not people from Cottage Grove buried there, so they made it to the United States, they made it to this area that was high in Scandinavian immigration in that time. The families came, they had farms around Minnesota, but the grandmas and grandpas got old and sick, so, they had a place to go.

Mayor Bailey said thanks again to both of you and thanks for your service and the rest of the group's service on the Historic Preservation Committee. We do appreciate all of the work that you do. Kathy stated we're not done, and Mayor Bailey replied I'm glad you're not, thank you. Each of the City Council Members congratulated both recipients.

Mayor Bailey stated though it is kind of an unnamed cemetery, the reason I asked if they found anybody unique or interesting, specifically at that cemetery, is it took many years before we realized that the cemetery next to McDonald's actually has the original heirs of the Mars Candy Company, who are buried here in Cottage Grove. So, there is an interesting line of history throughout our community, whether it's immigrants who came to settle here or people that started their lives somewhere in the area and then went on to become the owners of the Mars Candy Company.

C. 2024 Historic Preservation Month
Staff Recommendation: Declare May 2024 as Historic Preservation Month for the City of Cottage Grove.

Mayor Bailey asked Council Member Thiede, since he's our liaison to the ACHP, to read aloud this proclamation; Council Member Thiede did so.

Motion by Council Member Thiede to declare May 2024 as Historic Preservation Month for the City of Cottage Grove; second by Council Member Olsen. Motion carried: 5-0.

D. Building Safety Month Proclamation
Staff Recommendation: Proclaim May 2024 as Building Safety Month.

Mayor Bailey stated he asked Council Member Garza to read aloud this proclamation, which she did.

Motion by Council Member Garza to proclaim May 2024 as Building Safety Month; second by Council Member Olsen. Motion carried: 5-0.

E. Public Works Proclamation
Staff Recommendation: Proclaim May 19-25, 2024 as National Public Works Week in the City of Cottage Grove.

Mayor Bailey asked Council Member Khambata to read aloud the Public Works Proclamation, which he did.

Motion by Council Member Khambata to proclaim May 19-25, 2024 as National Public Works Week in the City of Cottage Grove; second by Council Member Thiede. Motion carried: 5-0.

7. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approve the issuance of rental licenses to the properties in the attached table.
B. Approve the service agreement with SafeAssure for workplace safety consultant services.
C. Approve the hiring of Judy Afdahl as Assistant Finance Director, effective June 3, 2024.
D. Approve the amended and restated Joint Powers Agreement of the East Metro Human Trafficking Task Force.
E. Approve the pipeline licenses with BNSF Railway Company and authorize Public Works Director Ryan Burfeind to sign the agreements.
F. Enter into a temporary construction easement agreement with Northern Natural Gas.

G. Adopt Resolution 2024-080 approving the minor subdivision dividing a 10.17-acre parcel of land located at 9670 Kimbro Avenue South into one 6.086-acre parcel and one 4.086-acre parcel, and variances to the minimum front width of the new parcel and a 6-foot setback for the existing driveway.

H. Approve the Easement and Encroachment Agreements with Gerber Collision.

I. Adopt Resolution 2024-084 approving the State of Minnesota Department of Transportation and City of Cottage Grove Cooperative Construction Agreement for the TH 61 River Oaks RCUT.

J. Adopt Resolution 2024-081 authorizing the City to apply for funding from the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Program.

K. Adopt Resolution 2024-082 awarding the 2024 Joint Crack Sealing Project to the accepted quote supplied by Asphalt Surface Technologies, Inc. in the amount of $126,440.00, and the appropriate officials are hereby authorized to sign all necessary documents to effectuate these actions.

L. Adopt Resolution 2024-083 awarding the 2024 Joint Street Striping project to the lowest accepted quote supplied by Sire Lines-A-Lot, LLC, in the amount of $60,676.03, and the appropriate officials are hereby authorized to sign all necessary documents to effectuate these actions.

Council Member Olsen wished to pull Item I, TH 61 River Oaks RCUT Cooperative Construction Agreement, on the Consent Agenda for further discussion and/or approval.

Council Member Olsen stated the reason I chose to pull this item is because this is something that has been a long time coming. I wanted to make sure that the residents knew exactly what this is and why it is occurring. He stated if our City Administrator, Public Works Director, or City Engineer would speak on this, to give the residents a brief explanation: What we're doing, why we're doing it, and how this is going to work, I would appreciate that.

Director Burfeind stated this item is called an RCUT intersection, to reduce conflict in an intersection; they're becoming much more commonplace on these high speed, kind of more limited access highways, freeways throughout Minnesota and other states as well. I see a lot of them on Highway 52, and there's a new one down on Highway 61, further south, as well. Really, what they're targeting is these areas where it's just not practical or feasible or really safe to have something like a signal. I think we all know the history of Highway 36 and the challenges they've had up there with their intersections. So, what this does is it really takes out that median opening, right at the River Oaks entrance and kind of south entrance to Gerlach's, but it builds two U-turns in pretty close proximity. So, it's not necessarily providing new gaps or quicker access, but it's a safer access to the highway. The most deadly and dangerous crashes are those right-angle crashes at high speeds. I don't want to say this eliminates them, but it's about a 90% reduction in serious injury and fatality crashes, based on all the data MnDOT has over the years for these type of intersections. So, it's a great major safety improvement and something that I think is much needed and long deserved down there.

Council Member Olsen thanked Director Burfeind. We've been talking to MnDOT about this for a long time. So, I think it's pretty exciting that we actually are moving forward with it, and I very much appreciate your explanation so the public understands. If you're visiting River Oaks, this is going to create a much safer way for you to get out. Yes, you'll have to take a right-hand turn and move down Highway 61 just a smidge before you're able to take that U-turn, but I think this is going to save lives and certainly reduce accidents. So, I appreciate that.

Motion by Council Member Garza to approve the Consent Agenda; second by Council Member Khambata. Motion carried: 5-0.

8. APPROVE DISBURSEMENTS

   A. Approve payments for the period of 4-26-2024 through 5-08-2024 in the amount of $4,386,017.99.

Motion by Council Member Olsen to approve disbursements; second by Council Member Thiede. Motion carried: 5-0.

9. PUBLIC HEARINGS - None.

10. BID AWARDS - None.

11. REGULAR AGENDA - None.

12. COUNCIL COMMENTS AND REQUESTS

Council Member Olsen stated I have four things: 1) Junk day, May 4, at Public Works. It was a rainy, gloomy day for the vast majority of the day, and I know that our Public Works team and our Parks and Rec team certainly didn't relish being out in the rain all day. That being said, they did an incredible job of handling the number of cars that came through; in fact, I think we beat the previous year; somebody will have to correct me if I'm wrong, but were we over 900? Director Burfeind stated it was close to 1,000 cars. Last year was somewhere in the neighborhood of 850-860. Council Member Olsen said I just wanted to express my thanks to the team for braving through the rain. I know that there were brats on the grill and some hot chocolate, etc., but I also heard from many of the employees there that they had family member or friends bringing them changes of clothes because it was pretty miserable. So, again, a really successful day, even with the rain. I think that's something that our residents look forward to each year, I know my wife certainly does, and she was one of the very first ones in line. The team did an incredible job, as always. 2) Park Football Boosters have a pancake breakfast this Saturday at Muddy Cow, from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Tickets will be sold at the door, those are $10 each. This is Park football team 86; there will be all kinds of football players and coaches there, taking good care of whomever comes through the door, serving pancakes, coffee, and all the other fixings last year as well. I'm looking forward to stopping down there for that. 3) We are quickly approaching Memorial Day. For those of you who may not be aware, the City of Cottage Grove holds a Memorial Day event each year to honor the fallen and also to ensure that our residents have an opportunity to mourn loved ones lost. That event will be held at 10:00 a.m. this year on Memorial Day, Monday, May 27, right out in front of City Hall, weather permitting. That setup is over by the Veterans Memorial; so, if you are walking into City Hall, it's just off to your right. SWCTC will be there and they will be doing a live broadcast as well. So, if you're unable to attend, you'll be able to follow at home. Our guest speaker this year is somebody that you've already seen on TV tonight, Herb Reckinger. Herb is the Chair of our ACHP. He is also a longtime Cottage Grove resident, a former Navy reservist, and he does incredible work with the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. Our theme this year is a Salute to Vietnam Era Veterans, so Herb is the best speaker we could think of to tell stories about loved ones who were lost and who perhaps still have not been found. He does a lot of work with The Wall that Heals, which is a wall of pictures for Vietnam-era Veterans, who weren't able to make it home. We're really looking forward to having Herb tell us his stories. If the weather is bad, we will move inside. There aren't as many seats inside as we will have outside, but one way or the other we're going to have that event. That is sponsored by the Mississippi River Valley Beyond the Yellow Ribbon team, in partnership with our Public Safety team here in Cottage Grove and the Washington County Sheriff's Office. 4) As I speak about Memorial Day, I want to mention that today, May 15, every year is Peace Officers Memorial Day, as declared by Congress and President Kennedy in 1962. This year we've already lost 58 of our brave law enforcement officers across the country, we lost 138 last year, and today is the day that we pay our respects, that we remember, that we honor. I just want to say that on such a somber occasion, it's really important that we as a nation show our support to our law enforcement officers. The men and women who serve should come home every night, safe, to their families, but that doesn't always happen. Unfortunately, that's why we have Peace Officers Memorial Day. So, when you go to bed tonight, if you can take an extra minute and say a prayer for the families and the colleagues of those who have been lost, including those in the City of Burnsville, who lost three of their brave officers not very long ago, I would certainly appreciate that. I think that's the least we can do, we can never say thank you enough to our law enforcement professionals. So, let's take a moment to remember those that we lost.

Council Member Thiede stated I think I counted just five weeks until Strawberry Fest, and we're really gearing up. We've got great signups so far: Even though we increased food vendors, etc., we've had to cut that off, we've been turning additional ones away. In terms of the Strawberry Fields Marketplace, the different booths and so forth, I think we've got close to 110 or 115 of those; we're actually kind of closing that off, too, as we just can't handle too many more than that. We've got bands lined up, fireworks are lined up, everything is a go. Now, remember, in past years, it's been on the Father's Day weekend, but because of the way things worked out, this year it is the week after, so it's actually June 20th through June 23rd this year. If you show up the week before, nobody will be there yet, but Kingston Park is a great park so you can have fun anyway. So, I'd say get excited, we've got another meeting this coming Monday if we still need volunteers to help out. If we get the same kind of weather and turnout that we've had the last couple of years, it'll be a fantastic event in terms of quality people and everything that shows up, too. So, get excited!

Mayor Bailey stated a couple quick things that I'll mention going forward here, on every Thursday here at City Hall, if you're interested, there is a food truck that shows up. I know our staff and our Public Safety group love it. It is open to the public, so anytime between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m., you're welcome to come out and try some food. Tomorrow, Long's ComboRolls is going to be out in front of City Hall.

Mayor Bailey stated before we get to our next Council Meeting, the fourth annual One Family Sports Festival, is May 25th and May 26th, at Kingston Park. This is a huge event, has a lot of sports going on there, food trucks, a lot of fun things happening. If you haven't had the chance in the past, I encourage you to go over there and check it out. Spend a little time over there, meet your neighbors and friends, and others that are coming from around the entire state, frankly. It's a neat event that has had its home in Cottage Grove for many years now, but I don't think a lot of people realize what's going on, because it is a Memorial weekend event.

Mayor Bailey stated once we get further into June, obviously, we'll talk a little bit more about Strawberry Fest and some of the other items that are going to be coming up yet this summer.

Mayor Bailey stated with that, the next item is a workshop, open to the public. In this workshop, which will be held in the Training Room, is the Public Safety 5-Year Strategic Plan. There is no workshop that's closed to the public, so, we won't be adjourning in here; Council will join our staff and Public Safety team in the Training Room. So, everybody have a great evening and a great week.

13. WORKSHOPS - OPEN TO PUBLIC - TRAINING ROOM

A. Public Safety 5-Year Strategic Plan
Staff Recommendation: Receive information regarding the Public Safety 5-Year Strategic Plan.

Director Koerner stated I'll speak briefly and then I'll turn it over to the rest of the team. We're super excited to finally have a chance to be here and talk about this; the Five-Year Strategic Plan has been quite the endeavor. It's been a lot of work and Captain Brad Petersen has kind of been the one leading the charge, but he's gotten so much engagement from the rest of the department, citizens, etc. Actually, at our Awards Banquet, you got a sneak peek at it. It's a plan that's really rooted in Best Practices; as we've gotten into all of our strategic initiatives, so much of this when we talk about 21st Century policing as a team, Cottage Grove is already doing a lot of this. Our officers are asking what is our vision, so, we knew we finally had to put this in a document. We know all the work that the City Council puts into the Strategic Plan, and one of the top ones is Public Safety. We need a safe community, but we just felt like internally we needed more. So, today, you'll see our Mission Statement, some of our Core Values, Strategic Goals, Initiatives, and Performance Measures. We hope to tie these into the future budgets so you kind of know five years from now this is what we're thinking for staffing, equipment needs, or things like that. Director Koerner stated Captain Petersen will go over the details of this, at a higher level, but we're really looking for some feedback; ultimately, when we leave the room tonight, we want support of it and whatever kind of ideas you may have. You've already heard a bit about our assigned squad program, too, and that will also be included in this presentation. We're looking for support of some kind on that as well.

Captain Petersen thanked Mayor Bailey and the Council for the opportunity to talk to you about our five-year plan. As the chief said, you've had a sneak peek of this at our Awards Ceremony, and some of you had a chance to take a look at it in your Council packets. Are there any questions, comments, or concerns that I can address before I speak further.

Administrator Levitt stated I'll put a disclaimer on it; none of the items are specifically funded until they're in your budgets.

Captain Petersen stated to your point, please don't assume that we're coming to you with demands that are going to cost money, and we want this all right now. Part of the idea behind this is that we put things on your radar that we want or need in the future to give you an opportunity to budget those things and plan for those things accordingly. A lot of these things don't cost any money, or we have the opportunity to get grant money, and there are things like that; in a very large percentage of these initiatives, they're already in place. We're not here to try to spend all the City's money, we understand that this happens as well with the City's Strategic Plan; we need to share our resources and funds together with departments in the City, so we're perfectly willing to do that.

Captain Petersen stated the P.D.'s plan is to nest well with the City's overall plan. So, we created additional vacuum. Secondly, as the chief said, this is rooted in Best Practices; a lot of those recommendations come from this document that was printed in 2015. Most agencies didn't really start to implement these ideas, if at all, until the 2020s. That document identifies a host of different law enforcement Best Practices. If you have an opportunity to read through this, you'll see truly how many of these initiatives Cottage Grove is currently doing and have been doing for a long time; that demonstrates how ahead of the curve we have been. You'll see a lot of these Best Practices are directly correlated or associated with the initiatives in our plan. Next, you're going to see some references to Benchmark Cities data: It is an association of about 29 agencies from a cross section of the United States, rural, urban, big, small, and they kind of identify the kind of ideal agency, you're doing everything right by all measures. So, basically, they formed this association, developed a bunch of metrics, and they're kind of an ideal out there to use as a reference point. This isn't the only reference point, but it is a reference point that we're going to use to compare ourselves to because we know that they're already doing a lot of things right.

Mission Statement: This is something that's been around since Good to Great; we tweaked it just a little bit, a little bit of word play, but essentially the mission remains unchanged. Vision: This is new for us. What we tried to do with this is in one succinct paragraph identify who we are and where we're going. I think we did a really good job in a couple short sentences to identify for our community, our leaders, and our officers where we are headed. Core Values: This is something that we have not had in the past. You'll see a lot of different organizations, law enforcement and civilian, identify a set of core values for their organization, and it's usually three-to-five different virtues or traits. We kicked around the idea of doing that, but we realized that we couldn't pick the three-to-five most important virtues; we felt like we were neglecting all these other things that are equally as important. So, we settled on this list, and as I talked about at our Awards Banquet, this is our North Star, this is our standards for accountability, this is the pathways to organizational and individual success within our department. So, we've already started incorporating these core values into our daily Roll Call discussions and counseling statements and performance evaluations. We plastered them all over our P.D., and so we're really trying to ingrain these core values into our organization. C.G.P.D.'s Brand of Policing: We worked with our Communications team to develop a new slogan, *"Guardians serving our community,"* and new communications and brand new strategy. So, again, this is who we are, what we do, and why we feel we're special. I'm not going to line by line through this, but you can see that there's a lot of really heavy, important things in there, and it's done succinctly. When officers or community members or really anybody want to know what is Cottage Grove about, it's right here on this slide. And this kind of behind the curtain of a lot of our social media events and all of our communications with the community, so it'll be consistent with this branding and communications strategy. Organizational Overview: With our recent organizational restructuring, potentially what we did is set our organization up to grow and succeed in the future, knowing that we're going to be growing and adding services. We need to be absolutely resilient and adaptive. We feel that we have created an organizational hierarchy and structure now that's set up to accomplish all of those goals.

STRATEGIC PLAN

Captain Petersen stated our plan is divided into five pillars:

1) Safety and Security (Core Functions): Patrol, Traffic safety, Investigations, Special Services (S.W.A.T., Mobile Field Force (MFF), K-9), Emergency Management, Administrative & Support Services.

2) Community: As a law enforcement organization, it's imperative that we maintain the trust and cooperation and respect of our community. We do that through accountability, transparency, engagement, branding and communication. These initiatives will identify how we plan to engage our community, maintain their trust and support, and also serve their interests and their needs.

3) Employees: That represents an investment in our employees, knowing that if we want them to do their best work, if we want them to represent our department and our City to the highest level possible, we need to invest in them. Give them the best training, develop a good culture, make sure that they're well, and they feel recognized and valued.

4) Practices, Technology & Equipment: We need to give them all the best tools, that means Best Practices, policies, equipment, facilities so that they can do their job efficiently, safely, and effectively.

5) Growth: Cottage Grove is a growing, changing community. Over the past five years, we've seen an unprecedented change that was on nobody's radar; we've come through that very well, but we know that's not the end of it. There will be challenges and changes that are in our future that we need to overcome, so we need to position ourselves for those. Lastly, we know that our organization and our Police Department is going to grow as the City's population grows. We need to grow along with the community so we're not playing catch up.

On the following screens, the left side are our Strategies, Tactics, and Goals; the right side shows our metrics or our Performance Measures. We didn't want to have a plan that is a document that we write and then stick on the shelf and forget about; we want to build in performance measures to keep us honest, keep us accountable, know whether we're succeeding towards achieving our goals or not. If we're not, then we need to adapt our plan and change tactics.

We distributed our first ever quarterly report, I hope you had a chance to take a look at that. That was our first shot at measuring some of these things and seeing where we're at, okay? So, as we start to accumulate more data and start to trend that, then it will become more meaningful.

Mayor Bailey asked Captain Petersen on this one, as you're talking about it, we have that new service now, Crime Mapping. Are you utilizing that, too, to hone in on maybe areas in the community as that data's, if you see trends where there's a?

Captain Petersen replied Crime Mapping is the public facing app for the community, trying to figure out where stuff is happening. We've got a more powerful but similar mapping function that we use.

Mayor Bailey stated okay, so, you have something other than what they're seeing, I understand.

Captain Petersen stated yes, and then we've got our analyst that does all of the balances, and once we identify a trend or a hot spot, we definitely focus our resources on those problem areas. Bullet 1.1.2 actually addresses your point.

Mayor Bailey stated that's what I saw, that's why I was curious, but I didn't know if you were using that citizen basic one or if you had something else that you're using. Captain Petersen replied yes, we've got our own app.

Priority #1, Safety & Security

Captain Petersen said this really represents our patrol function.

Obviously, what's really important on this slide is to maintain our commitment to being proactive. We don't want to be a reactive Police Department, we want to deter crime and engage with our citizens rather than just show up and take their report.

Also, one of the other things is development of an online reporting function; that would give the citizens the opportunity to logon from their phones, their iPads, their computer, from work or home, and fill out a crime report. So, it accomplishes a couple things: It helps us engage our citizens where they're at in the means that are most comfortable to them. Some people don't want a police officer showing up at their house, and some people don't have the means to come to the Police Department to file a report; so, this gives them the ability and option to logon and file it electronically. The other thing that that does is it gives us a better picture of where crime is actually happening, it identifies those hot spots and trends, so we can focus our resources more appropriately. That's something that's not going to cost us any money, it's already in the works, and we expect that to be online within the next few months. Of the exciting things like that, you will see many of these things are already in practice or within reach and not costing us a lot of money.

You'll see Bullet #5, that's a bullet that identifies our desire to want to implement like, remember the old CITE Unit program where we had those proactive officers out there engaging our convicted criminals in problem areas who have livability issues, traffic complaints, things like that. We would love to have the staff to bring that back at some point in the future. Traffic: So, there are a lot of things we can do to address traffic, but traffic enforcement is just one aspect of traffic safety, it's not the only thing we can do; we do a lot of things with community education, improving road designs and signage, and we do traffic studies. There are a lot of opportunities for us to get out there, engage with the community, and improve traffic safety. Investigations: There aren't any earth-shattering changes or expensive initiatives here. Really, this is just memorializing all the things that we're already doing so well. You can see that we have a commitment to continue with the LAP Assessment, the Threats Assessment, and TAG, all those things that makes our investigative division unique and special. Special Services: These are initiatives or proposed measures, just making sure that we are giving our S.W.A.T., MFF, and K9 all the appropriate training, that we're meeting all those goals in Best Practices and follow their recommendations. I'll admit that's costly, but when we have those really big, really high profile, really dangerous incidents, they pay off tenfold. One new thing, as you see here is a Crime Scene Response Team; that's something that we plan to do inhouse, probably with forfeiture moneys. We want to have a team of officers that are trained and equipped to process crime scenes, do that expertly, and remove some of that burden from patrol. Captain Petersen asked if the chief or captains if they had anything to point out.

Director Koerner stated I do want to point out there's a lot of reference to a community survey. We've started sending the form to 50 households per month, and that's managed within our postage and everything, but we're just starting to get feedback to see how we can best survey. We've worked with Brian Bluhm, too, on that so they can scan a QR to send it back.

Mayor Bailey asked so your goal, once you get that data, is to share it with us?

Captain Petersen replied oh, absolutely. I'll share that with you, in fact, it was in the last quarterly report as well. It's been amazing, and it was verification of what we already suspected. At one point it was like 90% satisfaction, which in the police world, that's unheard of. I think there were two people that obviously weren't fans of law enforcement and gave us negative comments, but we expect that. And we were honest about those assessments; we can share and send them to all the citizens who we know are getting good service and are happy with our service, people who aren't arrested and who had no issue when we unlocked their vehicle or we served them on when they're having a good day. But we don't do that, we send it to a cross section of our entire clientele: The people who we arrest, the person whose door I just kicked in to make an arrest, the people who file a complaint against us because they weren't happy with our service. We randomize and make sure that we're getting a good cross section of our clients, even if that may be overwhelmingly positive feedback.

Council Member Khambata stated with developing and maintaining a Crime Scene Response Team, is that like an additional skill set that turns officers who can elect to take on, and then they become like an on-call type unit?

Captain Petersen replied yes, it's optional and an additional duty; he asked Captain Rinzel if he wanted to speak on that.

Captain Rinzel stated our former investigative aide, who became a crime analyst and then left, did a lot of the crime-scene processing for us. We haven't had anybody in that position that's taken on that additional responsibility. Dawn Young will be retiring in August, so hopefully we'll be replacing her. In part of that job description, she was a .8 employee. I think two years ago we got an authorization to go to a fulltime employee; we just waited for her to decide to retire to fill that spot with a fulltime position. So, that's one of the main duties. We also have an officer that transferred in from Bloomington, who was a part of their Crime Scene Team, who already has a lot of the basics, training and experience that's needed. Dan Anselment at the HERO Center ran Burnsville's when he was an officer and also taught it nationally and at the scene; so, we have some good resources available, and we'll ask for volunteers. We already have eight people who wanted to take the additional education. So, that will be training and development through a budget that we already have set, and making that team available during an incident. So, if we have a death investigation, there are three, four, or five street officers working, it takes a lot of resources to process that scene properly without cutting corners. So, that group will then be paged and they will come in and process that scene, allowing for an investigator to do the investigation and the Crime Scene Team to just work on the crime scene. Then the patrol officers can return to their duties for the day.
Council Member Khambata stated with that crime rate, that seems like a pretty attainable goal. My other question was regarding like the on-call nature of it, is that like an overtime scenario or is that a separate line item in the budget, then? How do you mitigate or manage that aspect of it?

Captain Petersen replied it would just be like our S.W.A.T. duty. If our S.W.A.T. officers get called out while they're off duty, they're entitled to overtime per their contract.

Director Koerner stated so if something happens between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., we have a detective that has additional training, so.

Council Member Khambata stated well, that's really encouraging then. I know that aspect of collecting evidence and making sure it's done properly is really important in terms of having a successful prosecution.

Administrator Levitt asked Captain Petersen if he can touch on the therapy dog.

Captain Petersen replied absolutely. So, a therapy dog is a very successful and beneficial tool for our Case Management Team community engagement officers. So, when they're doing either position or both of those positions, that dog sometimes breaks down the barrier between a citizen and a police officer. It makes that interaction more enjoyable and can also take somebody who's in crisis and bring them down to a manageable level. It's not going to fix all their problems, but it takes the edge off, and then we can start to address some of their issues and get them the help that they need. On the other side of that coin, it also brings down the officers' stress levels and helps them out as well. So, that dog can be serving our community as well as serving our officers. So, we would likely front the money for that dog and its training, so it wouldn't cost us anything. We're kind of working through a lot of different options on what is that model going to look like? It is going to be dedicated to work just with one handler, is it going to be a station dog that lives here all the time? So, as we work through some of those details, it'll become more evident whether there's going to be some financial implications to dedicate it to one particular handler, who takes it home. Then there's going to be some K9 pay and some things like that the officer would be entitled to. If it's just a station dog, then it's not really going to cost us anything more than the vet bills. We had some preliminary conversations with the Public Safety Crime Board, and it's something that they're also going to try to help us with. At least on a preliminary level, they're willing to take the chance. Emergency Management: Captain Gwen Martin said as part of Emergency Management, I'm currently in the process of reviewing our All-Hazard Emergency Operations Plan that will come to you later this year. I've got to finish looking at all 500+ pages of it and making the edits. So, that's kind of an end-to-end process. We've already started to engage all City personnel and the whole community in emergency management. With the recent train derailment tabletop exercise that we held at the HERO Center last month, we had 110 people showing up and participating; that was a combination of City personnel, City staff from all departments, and a lot of our external stakeholders and partners, local level mutual aid, County level, State level. We had a couple of folks from the F.B.I. even taking part in that process. So, developing those relationships and engaging everybody in that process is already something that we're going to want to continue, moving forward with that. Again, bullet point 3, validating these procedures through exercises, and then how we did. One of my goals has been to train our department directors and key supervisory personnel to what we call the ICS300 level. So, as a department, as a City, we've taken the online version of independent study ICS100, 200, etc., which is an introduction to how incidents are managed. ICS300 is a three-day course that I'm certified in the State to teach; so, there's no cost for teaching that, we'd do it here in the training room. It's just a matter of getting some people some time away from some of their usual duties to get that done; that really helps the City manage a significant incident if something were to happen in the City. My goal is to organize a Community Emergency Response Team, or CERT, as those folks help with community resilience. So, if something happens, they're out there; FEMA has organized a curriculum to do this, and it's a well established asset, as part of an Emergency Management function of the City to again help a community respond and recover if an incident should happen. We are looking at obtaining dedicated technology to operating the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), looking at different grant moneys out there. As you may or may not be aware, this is our primary EOC. Right now, we've got those TVs, but if you look at other EOCs, they've got TVs on different walls and other technology, dedicated computers for that. So, that's why I'm pursuing some grant money to try to help with the EOC. Again, just continuing to build strong relationships for planning and response to potential or actual disasters. Administrative & Support Services: This section addresses our clerical and administrative support, as well as our C.S.O.s. Our C.S.O.s have really saved our bacon in terms of recruiting; while many departments are struggling to recruit officers, we're doing okay, and that's in large part due to the success we've had in our C.S.O. program. We're really looking at that as our farm team, or another department might call it their cadet program. We're doing a really good job of recruiting talent into that program and then we're investing in it, in terms of mentoring, training, and developing them for the eventuality of becoming a police officer here in Cottage Grove. So, we've done things like inviting them to our monthly training and letting them go through our academy trainings. It's been a huge success; we've got multiple C.S.O.s who are salivating at the opportunity of becoming an officer here. That's really a result of and a large part of our recruiting issue, so we want to continue to do that. One of the things that we've noticed over the last few years is that there might be a need for a fulltime C.S.O. at some point. One of the struggles in that division of our department is there's a lot of turnover. Sometimes we run into a situation that there's been so much turnover that you lose that organizational knowledge and that skill set, where you get a rookie teaching a rookie teaching a rookie. It'd be nice to potentially have somebody who's going to be there for a long time to maintain that organizational knowledge and skill set and be able to field train the rookies. There are also other things that we could have them do, like address visibility issues, performance issues, and things like that. So, it's not something that we're charging full ahead on yet, it's just a consideration at this point.

Priority #2, Community

Captain Petersen stated now we're shifting gears and talking about community. Transparency & Accountability: Captain Petersen stated you've listened to us for years talk about our Use of Force Review. We want to take that to the next level and put that dashboard online where the community can see that, just like many other police departments are doing. We also want to update our police webpage and put a lot of things, like our Five-Year Strategic Plan, on there so the community can learn about us; we put that out there representing a contract with the community. Also, something relatively new that we started is we're using our Public Services Commission as a Citizen Advisory and Oversight Committee. It's not necessarily an oversight where they're going to tell us how to do our business, but again this gives the community an opportunity to give us input on how we can do our jobs. Engagement: This is where the Community Impact Team comes in and is also where our embedded social worker comes into play. We have all of the steps in place to make that a reality by the end of this year, and that'll be a huge resource for our CMU team and for our community impact as a whole. Pat Young did a phenomenal job last year with information he has access to, what resources he has access to; so, we really want to see the full potential of that program and we need to have that social worker on board as well.

Director Koerner stated I want to add on the embedded social worker, in one of my updates I didn't tell you that Washington County is adding some more people; Cottage Grove is one of the cities that will be the first ones to get that. We're just kind of looking at the numbers now, obviously the plan is to use full settlement dollars, and I think that's a perfect use for it. Kind of the next steps will be the fee agreement, we're working with Brenda and Jennifer on the financials so we make it work, but that's where that funding is going to come from, and that was exciting that the County's picked up.

Captain Rinzel stated we get to be a part of that process. They apply directly to work with the Cottage Grove Police Department, through Washington County, but we're on the interview panel, we get to vet them and everything when they come through the process. So, it's really a person who wants to work for Cottage Grove, they know where they're going to be when they're applying for the position.

Mayor Bailey asked would that be a fulltime position? Captain Rinzel replied yes. Mayor Bailey stated okay, and are they typically like on call or do they ride? I don't know if you want to get into it tonight, but at some point, I would definitely be interested to know more because you hear about this program but don't know details.

Captain Rinzel replied Monday through Friday, 8:00 to 4:00, are general social service hours. They will co-respond when scenes are safe and they're doing check-ins, but they have a lot of the resources and the knowledge through the computer systems and obviously the Department of Health. We have no access to any of those medical records or anything, so we might be dealing with someone who's in crisis and has a social worker and has all these resources already lined up. We have no idea about them, so we take the call and put a Band-Aid on. This now actually gives us that information with the social worker working directly with the Case Management Unit.

Director Koerner stated so, they'll be an employee of the County, but they'll be housed here. We're actually locating them back in the patrol area, then we'll move Detective Shaver there, so we're going to move some things around, but we have a workstation where all of them can be together. We hope to have with County whatever agreement they need and everything, so sometime in June we'll be bringing it to you. They're having the same problems as all other professions with hiring people, so they want to get the process started. Realistically, it will be September-October before they onboard a person.

Council Member Garza asked and this is through Washington County Social Services? Director Koerner replied yes.

Branding & Communication: Captain Petersen stated there's a consideration of maybe having a Public Information Officer (PIO) that's dedicated so they can be really good and efficient at that job; that wouldn't be their only job, it would be an additional duty.

Director Koerner stated every other week we meet with the City's Communications team, so a lot of this with branding is right up their alley, too. She helped us with this presentation, too, and did a lot of work on it. As much as we'd like to say we did all of this, we've got people to make it look pretty.

Priority #3, Employees

Culture: Captain Petersen stated there's not really a whole lot to dive into here, not that we minimize this, it's extremely important; but there's nothing that really requires any further discussion here. Safety: There's nothing really new there.

Administrator Levitt stated I'd like to mention about our implementing more recognition award ceremonies because that does a lot. Captain Petersen stated we also

started a new Employee of the Quarter as well, and that was a nice addition to fire some people up, a little competition.
Wellness: We're already doing tons of different things that we're doing to address initiative. I think we have a really good, comprehensive approach on this. There are things that we can do better; if we get that grant that we applied for, we can do even better, and that's not on the City's dime, which would be an awesome thing. So, there are a lot of exciting things on the horizon for wellness. My worry with that grant is that we're already doing such a good job that they might think you guys don't need the money; I hope they reward us for doing a good job, we'll see. Training & Development: We're looking for your ongoing support to continue our current training program. We're leading the industry in training, very effective, and we've got the HERO Center in our back yard, so it's an ongoing commitment to continue those plans. Recruiting & Retention: I think as we start talking about this assigned-squad program later this evening, that's a huge piece of that puzzle, but there are also other things like our C.S.O. program. We can talk a little bit about this later on, but like I'll give you the Cliffs Notes version now: So, we've identified, through analyzing all of our attrition over the last 13 years, that on average 2.8 officers leave per year through attrition; going to another department, medical, for whatever reason that may be. We hire 3 officers per year to cover that. So, knowing that we hire 3 officers per year, so set that idea aside for a second, and now understand that we've got this whole group of C.S.O.s, and they're generally on a very structured training program. For example, this December we've got 3 C.S.O.s who will graduate their skills program and become P.O.S.T. eligible, and they're going to get a job like that. So, if we don't hire them, they're probably gone because they're in a position where they can't wait for us to have an opening. We would be asking for the potential to go over our authorized strength at times, temporarily; so, let's say our authorized strength is 46 officers right now. In December, we have these 3 C.S.O.s who become eligible and we don't have any openings. So, if you allow us to hire those 3 C.S.O.s knowing that over the course of the following months we're going to lose 3 officers and come back down to that baseline of 46 officers. I understand there's all kinds of budget wrangling and other financial implications of that, but that's the Cliffs Notes version of that. It would really be helpful in our recruiting and retention solutions.

Director Koerner stated it kind of falls into when people give us that I'm going to retire in six months; so, we can start doing the planning and offer them the job that appears in six months, or a year and a half, or two.

Council Member Olsen asked in addition to the attrition, did you analyze data on how many officers you're down at a given moment due to injury or family life or whatever the case might be? To me, that's really where the linchpin of this sort of is; are you staffed at a place where you can withstand if someone broke their hand on a bike, somebody is having a baby, or whatever it is? I'm just wondering if you have looked at that same trendline because I don't ever remember a time you weren't down at least one or two.

Director Koerner replied yes, we are looking at that; in the fall, we know one will be on maternity leave, and we've always done a good job of not having to remove specialty positions or the S.R.O. This year we had to take our two rotators and put them out on the streets, on patrol. So, we're trying to get to a number where if one person gets hurt and one person's out on leave, it doesn't all of a sudden mean you're going to have to cancel your vacation, and things like that.

Council Member Olsen stated yes, because we still have to run the business. So, using your example, you've got somebody who's excited about a rotator position that they qualify for; I know that's one of the things that people like about our department, is there are these opportunities to do other duties and rotate in and out, whether it's investigations or whatever the case might be. Then we have to make an adjustment to ensure that the street's covered for 911 calls; that person then has to be pulled back out of that specialty position, it is what it is and it's what we have to do. I'm guessing that's not met with a tremendous amount of enthusiasm and joy. So, being down officers due to these other elements, it seems to me like it's probably the more important metric that we're going to need to look at; because we have had people who, for whatever reason, they haven't been able to go on a vacation. If you think about all of the public-facing activities that you guys do, think about the Community Showcase. That's something where there's an expectation that you're going to be there, that the public's going to get a chance to interact with you and learn more about you, etc. The public likes that, they like interacting with our Public Safety team, but there's more stuff every year. So, being able to staff appropriately to ensure that you don't have a dip in service level, that's a concern for me; that's something I think really needs to be locked in.

Captain Petersen replied to your point, I have all of that information for your review tonight, it is to come.

Council Member Khambata stated I'm sure you probably already looked this up: If you go back three years, what amount of time will be budgeted for 46 but we didn't have 46? Is there a way to kind of aggregate that and say, okay, on average, we were down 2 officers, so we were budgeted for 46, but we were only ever staffing 44, and try to find a way to kind of roll that back into the budget moving forward. Okay, if you hire 3 in December, but you know that 3 are going to leave within the next 6 months, you're really not asking for 3 FTEs, you're asking for 1.5 FTEs, you know? And then it's like okay, how does that average out over the next 18 months? So, I think there's a way financially to kind of make that work, it's a matter of how.

Administrator Levitt stated the financial implication is if an officer is hurt, we're still paying them. If an officer is on maternity leave, we still pay them. And, so, if they retire, we pay them out their annual leave, which can be a very big amount of money. So, the problem is if we want 3, you're literally paying the 3 extra, so you're not getting any savings because of those other factors. So, you're sworn officer count actually has to go up the total value of 3, because financially, there isn't a savings in this situation.

Captain Petersen stated so what you're all kind of getting at is, and something I'm going to share with you is through analyzing all of these different reference points, I can tell you statistically how many officers we need to account for training, injuries, maternity leave, all of that stuff. So, I can tell you what authorized staffing level we need in order to maintain that. I have all those numbers here, and I'll be honest with you, it's expensive, right? So, I get it.

Priority #4: Equipment, Technology & Practices

Equipment/Technology: Captain Petersen stated one thing that you may or may not be aware of is we just started a trial of an ALPR, which is an Automated License Plate Reader. We just flipped the switch last week before realizing that we missed one form of the BCA, so we're rectifying that. Hopefully, next week that will go live, and we'll start to deal with that program. Having a successful outcome of that trial, we would love to see that get expanded. It's not a crazy expense, it's about $500 per car, per year, so it's something we'd like to expand upon in the future. Obviously, it's proven very successful in other communities; we have stationary cameras that have license plate reader capabilities built into them. Woodbury has solved a tremendous amount of crime and we can deter crime now, that criminal element, with those cameras that are out there. It's a huge piece of our crime prevention and an investigative tool. Accreditation: We probably won't take any action on that because at the State level they're looking to go towards a statewide accreditation program; so, that's a long-term goal that we'll have to wait and see how it does.

Priority #5: Growth

Planning & Budgeting: Captain Petersen stated really what we're trying to do is think long term, five years and beyond, so we can help you do your job easily and better as well. So, we're trying to just figure out what we need five years from now: Do our due diligence with budgeting and putting it on your radar; working within the limitations of the City; being fiscally responsible so that we can all learn, grow, and do better in the future. It's all pretty self explanatory there. Adaptability & Innovation: We know as Cottage Grove grows and changes, we need to grow and change along with it. If we bring in a lot of retail establishments, we know that can also bring in more retail crime; so, we need to potentially change our organizational tactics accordingly. That's just one example of how we change along with our community.

Captain Petersen stated so that's the plan in a nutshell, good discussion. He asked if there were any questions he could answer.

Council Member Olsen asked have you guys gone through this plan with any of the other City departments, and has anybody else had a chance to see it?

Captain Petersen replied outside of the Public Service Commission, we've done pieces of it with some City staff. So, for example, the assigned squad inventory, we've had sit downs with Public Works. So, certain pieces of that puzzle, we have with the stakeholders, but not the entire plan, 360, as it is now.

Council Member Olsen stated the reason I ask is it's a really good plan and it's very comprehensive and it has a lot of good stuff in it. What stood out to me the other night and then again tonight is your Core Values slide; you're really trying to encapsulate lots of competencies and values in your plan, and I want to know potentially how does that align with the rest of the organization. How does that align with even the Fire Department because this is police, so how does that align with Public Works, etc.? The reason for that is, as a I mentioned the other evening, it's no secret that you guys are the forward facing customer interaction team every day, all day. You're the grand ambassadors. So, there may be things that you don't know that you don't know unless you interact with some of the other departments and talk through it, and make sure that they recognize what you're attempting to accomplish, the how, the why, and all that.

Council Member Olsen stated you mentioned performance reviews. I assume that one of the things you're going to hopefully accomplish is you're going to update the performance appraisals, dig into those values and competencies a little more, and maybe shorten it a little.

Captain Petersen said absolutely. Director Koerner stated we've already done most of that, yeah. Council Member Olsen stated that's good.

Council Member Olsen stated commitment: You've been through this with your team, right? And they had direct involvement in creating that; so, what is your perceived level of commitment from the rest of the department as it relates to all of the various elements that you have placed here? Because without that bind, it's not going to work. So, what are you guys hearing and seeing?

Captain Petersen replied I can tell you that originally this was our plan, it was the command team's plan. We did all the work on the front end to develop it, but months ago we put this plan in front of the officers in multiple mechanisms and phases where they could give their input on the plan. In real time, we are seeing those updates happen as they give recommendations; we vet it to see if it's a good idea. They're seeing that change happen; we go back out for feedback and go through that loop repeatedly. As we work through that process, they're getting more and more excited about it. They're extremely hopeful, extremely excited, extremely invested. I can't even tell you how many officers came up to me today to wish me luck on this proposal, and asked me to call them tonight or tomorrow morning to let them know how it goes. Those are just kind of anecdotal things that shows me that they are very excited and very invested.

Council Member Olsen stated and I ask because it's no secret to you guys, you've both been with the organization long enough to know that at least in the past, we've had some people who were pretty resistant to training and different things that the department was trying to implement. You mentioned CITE, I mean that thing got out of control or whatever. So, that bind, that critical commitment, to me, is what's going to make or break this, and I'm glad to hear that you are getting that kind of feedback right now. I mean, we have a lot of younger officers, who clearly are impressionable, but yet they're also in the field because they really want to be in the field. So, this seems like something where you could just take the ball and run with it if they get behind it.

Director Koerner asked Council Member Olsen if he could add one thing. Actually, the group that really needs to support this is our ground level, our sergeants, and we've talked about it at every staff meeting. We've had different workshops on these proposals, and they're the ones that make or break this, honestly, if they pull back and don't support it, or think this is stupid. I think we have a really good group of sergeants; so, last year, we kind of revamped our whole organization with the community impact, and things are moving in the right direction, as I see it.

Council Member Olsen stated Jennifer talked to us as a big group in one of our Strategic Planning sessions about that upstream thinking, and it feels like you're doing a lot of that here. So, getting everybody else to kind of grasp that that's what we do, I think is important.

Council Member Olsen asked when you look at today vs. even four-or-five years ago, have you done any analysis on the number of calls per officer, or the call volume per shift, and those kind of things?

Captain Petersen replied absolutely, and I'll share that with you in a few minutes. Council Member Olsen stated okay, good, that's great.

Captain Petersen stated just one more thing to your previous point: Once they saw this tentative plan, and we started to see some of these initiatives get checked off, there are probably 20 things on this list that we've checked off in the last handful of months. I've never seen so much change at such a rapid pace in our organization. There seems as things go, they are getting more excited. You know, cops don't like change, there's zero pushback. They have not pushed back, and I keep asking; I'm expecting them to hit me with this, all right, we're changing too much, stop, but they haven't voiced any of that yet, which is remarkable for a bunch of cops.

Council Member Olsen stated well, we're a very quickly-evolving community, and we've got to keep up, that's just our department.

Captain Rinzel stated and that holds really true because Brad did an initial meeting with all the sergeants; the first two-or-three hours there was a lot of, "Hmm." It seemed like a lot of rhetoric, they just weren't; by the time we finished the second full revolution of days, they were, "Oh," and the supervisors were all figuring out ways to make those improvements, so we saw that. Brad was behind the car, pushing, and we were down there, helping him forward, to them grabbing at the line and pulling along with us. I think it was a major change and better alliance for a lot of staff. We were in a staff meeting two hours past what we would normally average, and nobody was getting up to leave. For me, it was just like let's get this done, we've got this ball rolling.

Council Member Khambata asked how many other municipalities are having their police force do these five-year plans? Is this kind of a new step or is this kind of ahead of the curve, as far as local police units?

Director Koerner replied when I've talked to our chiefs' group, they don't have anything on paper like we do, like putting down a five-year plan. A lot of them kind of follow like what we put in our budget narratives, or once a year, they have a department meeting and talk about their mission statement.

Council Member Khambata stated this feels like, especially with you having a staff meeting, this feels like you're reaching out to the other officers to try and get a greater degree of buyin from them; and I kind of think that's where the success in this strategy lies.

Director Koerner stated one of the things we've heard loud and clear in the employee surveys year after year is communication. So, I think we've tried so many different venues, I know Jennifer is doing her recruitment and retention and getting a lot of good feedback. I know she's heard from some like just bringing back our formal Roll Calls. When we moved into this zone, all of a sudden people started doing Roll Call by their workstation; so, it's more formal now, we have two investigators there, we have support services back there. I think there's been a lot of positive and just back to communication. Sometimes we almost over communicate, but we're definitely moving the right direction. But to Council Member Khambata's question, you won't see a lot of departments in the metro that have something like this. In other states, there are some departments that have this kind of plan, but we're kind of taking the lead from the City with you doing the Strategic Plan every year. I don't know if all cities have a Strategic Plan like Cottage Grove does, but I think we're heading in the right direction.

Captain Petersen stated there are those agencies that will take the cookie cutter approach, will take a lot of the DOJ Best Practices and just copy and paste, or copy other departments' Strategic Plan. They don't do like what we just did, to develop this product.

Director Koerner stated I would love to see this, Brad's, in other departments. We were asked about that, and no, we haven't presented it to others. We'll do it at our Lunch & Learn, where we'll get it out to our staff. I've had numerous conversations with Director Burfeind and Director Dockter about what we're doing; the Fire Department is basically mirroring this. So, I think at the next Public Service Commission meeting, they're going to get the first draft of what we're doing for Fire. So, bear with us if you have to sit through another one, but Fire's is going to be very similar to this. I don't see why we couldn't do this citywide, with each department, too.

Staffing

Captain Petersen stated regarding staffing, there are a lot of different models for figuring out how many cops you need overall and how many should be on duty. None of them are perfect; so I look at these as tools, but we're going to take kind of a hybrid approach and just consider different reference points. Our first staffing level is: You've got 46 authorized officers, 29 of them are dedicated to patrol. So, we know once we drop below 28 officers that we start to see frequent shift jumps; that means I'm taking a night power guy and bumping him to nights, and I'm taking a day guy and bumping him to different shifts, or taking a detective and now putting him back on patrol. We see an increase in denying annual leave requests, and we see our overtime budget increase. We have more calls per officer, things like that. So, there are a lot of these very tangible things that we know happen when we have 28 officers. Further, when we drop down, that more than amplifies the effects.

So, looking at calls per officer, our Benchmark Cities average is 296 calls annually per officer. If you look at Cottage Grove last year, our officers had 937 calls. That looks like a shocking number, but understand that a lot of those calls are park checks, business checks, community engagement, vehicle lockouts, low-level stuff. But even when we factor out all of those calls, our officers are taking 429 calls per year, on average, compared to our Benchmark Cities average of 296. So, what that says to me is we may need some more officers.

Council Member Thiede stated or that they're doing their job better, more productive.

Captain Petersen said or very productive, right? It can mean a lot of things, but the hazard is that could lead to some burnout.

Captain Petersen stated so then when we look at the per capita data model here, these are all the numbers that were collected over the last two weeks. So, like Fridley has a population of 29,731, authorized officers is 46, which means their ratio is 1.55.

When I average out those cities that range in population from 25,000 up to 89,000, it gives me a ratio of 1.24 officers per thousand citizens. Cottage Grove is currently sitting at 1.07 officers per thousand. So, bringing that over to this graph, our baseline is 46 officers right here, and as we move from the left side of the screen to the right, it shows population growth. This line right here represents a little over 42,000, which I'm estimating is our current population. Fast forward five years to 2029 where we're sitting a little below 50,000; we assume about a 4% population growth per year.

So, if we use that 1.24 average, that means I should have 52 officers right now, and in five years, we're looking at about 60 officers. I used the benchmark average, the Benchmark Cities average is way higher; don't freak out, I'm not asking for that many officers.

Years ago we went through this same process and we kind of settled on a ratio of 1.15, that's what got us to the current number. So, I'm not saying we need ten officers tomorrow, but what I am encouraging you to think about is that if we don't start to hire officers, that deficit gets bigger and bigger over time and could potentially put us in a predicament. So, just for the sake of discussion, if you want to use this 1.15 number, know that we should be around 55 officers in 2029.

Council Member Olsen asked and that's your total sworn, including command staff, right?

Captain Petersen replied correct; again, this is a reference point, that's all I'm using it for at this point. I'm not saying this is where we need to be.

Now when we start to get into the workload or performance model, it starts to accomplish things like how long are your officers at training, statistically, how often are they injured, how much maternity leave, all of that. There's a bunch of complicated math you go through. You can see that there are 2080 hours in a year, but contractually, our officers only work 1,984. When I subtract their average annual leave, it brings me down to 1,600; when I subtract their training, it brings me down to 1,400. Then we plug in our staffing model, and do the fancy math, it tells me if I want a minimum of six officers on my crew, then I need 35 patrol officers. If I want a minimum of five patrol officers, I need 29 patrol officers; so, this is where we're currently sitting at, 29 patrol officers. So, it doesn't give us a whole lot of buffer because we know that once we drop down to 28, we start seeing all those adverse effects. So, I understand it's a lot to digest, but what I'm encouraging you to consider is that somewhere between the 29 and the 35 is kind of that sweet spot where we can account for training, injuries, and all those predictable eventualities that bring our staffing levels down. So, somewhere in that 29 to 35 patrol officers.

If we assume that we're going to have 51 officers in five years, this is kind of how we envision them plugging into our current schedules. The first 3 officers would go into patrol, and that would bring us up to 32 officers in the Patrol Division; assuming nobody's off, there's 8 officers per shift. That means that 3 officers can be off on illness, training, etc., and we can still maintain that minimum of 5 officers per shift and call volume. So, the first priority is building up patrol, that's where they need to be, and then we could start filling out the other case management officers, especially that CITE Unit, things like that. Then, if there's additional roles after that or if there's other unforeseen changes and challenges, then we need to reevaluate this. At least right now, this is kind of where we envision those officers plugging in. So, this is kind of that growth; I understand this is kind of temporary, so, currently, 29 patrol officers, 17 on patrol, and this red line represents that minimum 28 that we want. Next year maybe if we can get 1 more, the year after that we need 2 more, now we're at that magic number of 32, I can start plugging some officers into potentially some other areas. We'll see once we start digital if we're more comfortable there.

Captain Petersen stated this is the Recruiting & Retention data we were talking about. Just for the sake of time, I'm not going to get into this unless you have any questions on that. This is that +3 Staffing Model, I think everybody probably understands this at this point so there's no reason to dive into that.

Assigned Squad Plan

Captain Rinzel stated so within that Five-Year Plan, I've been shaking this around for probably four-or-five years. Two years ago, Washington County went with a full assigned fleet program as an avenue to recruit and retain individuals within their organization; they have the same issues and problems that we are having.

So, the fleet proposal really is growth, increasing the fleet size to keep pace with our demands. As we continue to grow and add squads under our current model, we will run out of garage space within probably four-to-five years. Cars will have to be moved back outside again if we don't do something different or add on space. We're not recommending adding on space, so this is a part of that model. The base of what was really kicking this is you've heard me come to your Council Meetings when I need to order squad cars, because they take six-to-eight months to get here. We've been chasing our tail for the last four years on supply-chain issues; not only getting our cars, but then getting them built. Today, I can call Guardian Supply as we have four cars that are downstairs, ready to be built, and ask when are they going to get in? The answer is September, that's the nearest date that a supply builder can build my cars. So, you're looking at huge timeframes in between. So, those are issues that we have that we're trying to figure out. The other big thing is the lifespan of a vehicle; we're running them three-to-four years. The price when I started doing this, I could build a squad and completely outfit it for about $40K; that price tag now is $90K, and $20K of it is basically expendable. You put it in, and you take it out three years later, and you have no value; that's $20K of loss, right? The equipment in these cars usually goes through two cycles, so it'll go through the first car and then it'll get into a second car, so it'll last about eight years. Essentially, if we were to keep this car double the amount of time, the equipment would stay in the car, and you'd save $20K every time you didn't have to build that car. If you kept it for eight years instead of four years, you're saving $20K in build costs; however, there are other costs associated with it; there are some pros and cons. <u>Service Plans</u>: The lifespan if we were to do an assigned program, like Public Works, they all have their own pickup trucks and they have other utility vehicles, those trucks usually last around ten years or more, and then they cycle out. What we're saying is we feel our current squads in the current model with two people using them last between three-and-four years. If we have one person in it, we feel very strongly that it's an eight-year car vs. a six- or seven-year car. We think we're going to get eight years out of it with a single driver, and it'll last longer and be better taken care of. <u>Recruitment and</u>

Retention: We want to really stand out as being above and beyond what other organizations are offering, or at least at what the other organizations are offering within our area. So, again, we're competing against those same people, Washington County that has the cars that are assigned to take home. There are others that are going to this model, I just saw Grand Rapids, it's becoming more and more popular. If you leave the State of Minnesota, pretty much everywhere else in the country has had take-home cars forever. If you're not aware, we're one of the only states that doesn't.

So, here's your setup price, we're really at $90K for that. The lion's share of this is right here, $18K just for the equipment and setup; again, that's a throw away after the second cycle, so, it's basically a $20K loss.

Proposal: Captain Rinzel stated here's what we want to go to: Each officer is assigned a car, they may or may not take them home; we've done a lot of research on this and it's kind of all over the board on what organizations have. So, Washington County is five miles outside the County, that's our nearest competitor when we're looking to get people in to apply for us. St. Paul has where the chief kind of chooses whatever he wants to choose, theirs is very liberal. We've had the K9 Policy that was a 20-minute response time, that's pretty vague, we didn't really have a number. So, here's where we landed on that: Five (5) miles outside the City limits would be the limit. If you're going to have this assigned car and you're going to be able to take it home, that's going to be the amount of distance that you're going to have. Anything past that, we would look at as the Federal per diem for mileage. So, if you get a car past that five miles, you're paying .67 a mile that would go back into the kitty because you have excessive wear and tear on that vehicle.

Council Member Thiede stated so right now, I assume there's like a 24-hour utilization of the cars themselves. Captain Rinzel stated there are two officers assigned to one car. Council Member Thiede said right, but the cars are actually out on the road for 24 hours?

Captain Rinzel replied no, not quite. No, it depends, right? They're either on for two shifts in that cycle or they're on for one shift during that day, so 10.5.

Council Member Thiede stated I'm just trying to do a little bit of your math here in terms of they're only lasting three to four; because with the assigned squad, they're probably going to be idle more often in the future than they would be now, right? Or it's essentially the same amount of miles, but it'll last eight years instead of the three to four. Captain Rinzel stated correct.

Council Member Thiede stated because in three to four, they get used twice as much during the day.

Captain Rinzel stated right, exactly. That's kind of what we get to when we get to the pros and cons when we start talking to Public Works about maintenance and repair and how much more it's going to cost. Our fleet's going to grow, so maintenance should grow; no, because it's really based on mileage. Maintenance of a vehicle is based on miles that it's driven and hours that it's run. So, it's really a horse a piece, whether you have two people in one car or one in each; so, it's just the cost of the car.

Council Member Khambata asked so, if officers are taking them home, are they required to store them inside at their residence or are they stored outside?

Captain Rinzel replied that would be a policy and, at this point, either would be allowed. We've done some nonofficial speaking to try to get kind of the base numbers; a lot of them would park them inside, some would park them outside. There obviously would be no on-street parking; you'd have to live in an established residence, you can't have them in an apartment complex, you can't be parked in the street. It would really be dependent, so, there are some State Patrol vehicles being driven around Cottage Grove. We have a ton of officers that live in our City.

Council Member Khambata stated I see them outside, and if we end up having them parking outside at somebody else's house, to me that's like a lateral move. Aside from the physical parking space, to me, there's not an advantage there.

Council Member Thiede stated I think there would be some advantage to the neighborhood, potentially, but then there's some liability, too.

Council Member Khambata asked with the base price of the vehicles, is that based on the Statewide bids? Captain Rinzel replied yes, that's the State contract.

Council Member Khambata stated with the supply-and-demand aspects being fluid, maybe the pressure must be on that side of things. Do you see that average cost per vehicle going down at all or maybe staying flat in the future vs. going up as rapidly as it has?

Captain Rinzel replied this is based on today's market and no increase. So, to figure out whether or not we're buying and have a fleet of 30 or a fleet of 20, you're still buying the same number every year to get to that number.

Council Member Khambata asked could some of this kind of be a phased-in thing? Otherwise, we're not going to double our fleet number, we can't do this for everyone right away as then we'll get dinged with that. Captain Rinzel replied I'll show you that as we move forward.

Captain Rinzel stated so, here's the assets that we've kind of established in recruitment and retention and branding, by your choice. State Patrol gets a lot of people who want that take-home car, and we've had this discussion with some people, people not in law enforcement, who say, well, why would you want a squad car parked in front of your house? To cops, it's really okay, it's kind of a norm for law enforcement. <u>Pros</u>: 1) The crime deterrence, what Council Member Thiede mentioned, the squad in the community. 2) Really the big one, too, is ownership and accountability; if you know it's your piece of equipment, people tend to take care of it a lot better than if it's a fleet, right? If it's a car sitting in the garage and you just hop in it, are you going to report it or are you going to take care of it as much? Are you going to wash it, are you going to clean it? There's some ownership that goes along with this that I think is good. 3) The longer lifespan, the cost savings, all of that. 4) It's more efficient for a service plan. So, what we kind of have at Public Works is if you work on a Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, you would drop your car off on Tuesday, then your last day would have runner cars or just old, retired cars that they would take home. Public Works would then have the three days to work on that set of cars, so it would give Public Works a little bit more flexibility.

Instead of saying we have these six cars that you need to get done here in a day because somebody's driving it tomorrow, they would have a two-or-three day window that they could work on this number of cars during the cycle of that repair. Cons: 1) Increased equipment and service plan: We have to buy more cameras, more radios. The big thing with radios that will come to you in the near future is over the last four years, the price of the cars went up so much that we cut the radios that we were going to buy for the 800 megahertz; we had to cut them out of every one of our builds over the last four years that we had planned on cycling through. So, in order to get the car, we had to cut equipment. The easiest piece of equipment to cut was a $6K radio, as the other radio still works. The County said we're switching; well, now the County said next year it's all encrypted and you have to have different radios. So, now we're behind the eight ball again, kind of a last-second deal, but that's something that there is an increased cost on. 2) The insurance cost was factored in when Adam did a long analysis over a ten-year program and looked at the extra cost for the insurance, the extra cost for the service plan. 3) The potential perception of inequality from officers if they were excluded; if they lived outside the area or just didn't want to take a car home, there's some of that. We talked a lot about this, kind of in the backwaters, and it's been very well received. 4) Very few people are opposed to it, however, we don't know, we're in law enforcement so those very few can have loud voices. So, we have to be cognizant about that and how we would mitigate those perceptions.

Current Fleet: Captain Rinzel talked about the current fleet: Right now, we have 18 squads that are available, we have four Durangos that are downstairs. We ordered three Ford Explorers, two were part of the six that were part of our replacement schedule this year. One was a lemon that was not good and we ended up giving it back to Ford, and they gave us a check for $36K, so we're basically replacing that car. So, essentially, you'll have seven cars downstairs to be built, hopefully within the next few months.

The six additional squads for 2025 was something that we had set out with this program; however, two years ago when we did the budget and we did the lookback, we only needed four for our current schedule. We would say well, we had four because we had a couple that had low miles and we felt like we could hold them off, so we did the budget and said we only need four. So, it only accounts for four and we want six; however, we can live with four. So, we have it budgeted and we already met with Administrator Levitt on this; if we had to have four, that's fine, that goes to Council Member Khambata's question of how long will this take to implement moving forward. So, if we have the seven and we were going to order four that we already have scheduled for next year, we have the amount necessary to provide all of those pieces of equipment, that gets us to 29. So, with the current level of patrol staffing that we have, we're one short of that with 28 cars.

So, what we would recommend is we've filled all the cars that we currently have as new builds, that would be that extra cost that we talked about that we already have budgeted. The four squads for 2025 that we would order late in 2024 or 2025, depending upon the window of what squads we had available to order, whether it's the Durango or the Ford; they have different service windows when we can order those.

Then we would finish the policy development, approve the assigned squads on a limited basis in the current fleet for full deployment in 2026, when that set of cars would be ordered, and then we have full deployment. We also know that there will be some people that don't take advantage of this and leave them here; obviously, those are cars that could be used by other people. We have new officers who wouldn't qualify for this program until they're off probation. So, I think the 2026 timeframe, where this would be a full implementation by that point in time, is pretty good. I think County took 2.5-to-3 years to do a full implementation; I think they're still working on it, but they did theirs within that short period of time. I think they got money from the Federal government that gave them like 20 squad cars, perhaps with some grants, but I don't remember how that came about. So, we're set in a good position right now that if we just take the cars that we have now and not the cars in the future, and make those all additional cars, we're right there. So, we'd essentially build what we currently have in stock and then order the four and then we're one short; so, 2026 would be a full implementation, after the 2026 order of those six cars.

Council Member Khambata asked do you guys have a current number for cost per mile or annual cost of operation per vehicle? I know it's somewhere in the length of service you were talking about, but is that a number that you guys know off the top of your head and then you can compare a four-year rotation vs. what the potential for the eight-year will be?

Captain Rinzel replied yes, Adam did that, and it's about $20K per year for the eight year.

Council Member Khambata asked is that per vehicle? Captain Rinzel replied per year for the fleet. Council Member Olsen stated it's $20,400. Captain Rinzel stated that's your increase plus the build of the equipment that we would have to put in, but then again that vehicle would last for eight years so you're saving on the building of it. So, at the end of it, the build is really $20K per year over ten years.

Captain Rinzel stated so that's kind of where we're at. We're looking for kind of your guidance on which way you want us to go on this. Because if we're not going to go with the assigned program, we have to change the way we're currently operating our fleet. We have to get the ones that have higher miles, that we've been keeping miles off so we can keep them another three years, we have to get those back to having two, three people into them to start piling the miles on them to get rid of them and replace them with new ones.

Tonight, I don't want to put pressure on you, but we really kind of need to know which direction; if you feel comfortable heading in this direction with what we're doing, or if you say full stop, do what you've always been doing, replacing them every three years. Then we will make the adjustments, either way.

Council Member Thiede stated obviously at any type of justification, there's a very tangible cost that we recognize that will be probably where you'll get your $20K. But then there are all those intangibles, which are more difficult to quantify; that could be things like retention and costs associated with that retention and things like that. So, I'd kind of like to see putting your heads together and saying okay, you've got probably the tangible, and that's the $20K add. Some of those intangibles you kind of mentioned a little bit, but try to maybe affix some value on those and see if you could get, kind of roll that $20K over a year.

Captain Rinzel stated I can tell you if we lose an officer to another agency and have to train one up, it's a $100K per person.

Council Member Thiede stated well, those are the kind of things, that's justification, right? And a lot of times I know you do it just because your mind's working that way, but it's a little harder, you know, to kind of try to put that in writing sometimes to actually show the justification for this, that, and the other.

Council Member Khambata stated I'll play a devil's advocate, and on the flip side of this, for the Town of Vail, they had Federal money to acquire a new kind of buffers, but it came with conditions. They had to keep those buffers for 12 years or otherwise they pay back the grant money. Is this a scenario where if we commit to this plan, are you guys going to commit to owning these things for eight years; it's that or otherwise, in order to maintain, so that we can budget accordingly. Or is this like if it's three to four now, does it become six to eight? What's our hard service schedule so that we can budget and kind of realize that long term ROI?

Captain Rinzel replied so we've essentially done those numbers and we need six cars every year moving forward on either scenario. Whether it's an assigned vehicle program or a current fleet model, it's six a year. So, that delta doesn't change moving forward. We have some savings and I think in your #5 or 6 where we'd need those cars. On the assigned vehicle program, because they're all new enough, that none of them omit that eight-year marker. Now, I'd be remiss in saying if we add staffing, we're going to have to add more vehicles. So, at the end of the day, that's going to have to be a cost that's associated with hiring someone and to figure that part, but we would have to do that regardless. So, we're still going to have that.

Council Member Khambata replied that's just as in the past, when we increase staffing levels; the same with an increased plow route, it comes with another driver and another truck. We take those things into account, but I'm just trying to kind of feel out the commitment to the plan. Obviously, if one gets wrecked, you're buying a new squad. That's out of our control, but assuming fleet schedules and everything are adhered to, that there's a contingency plan for okay someone's going to have higher miles. Do you have a way to cycle them out? Do the sergeants, who are going to put less miles on those cars, get those ones?

Captain Rinzel replied that's exactly what we have as a plan. We know we're going to have supervisors who are going to put less miles on it; so we will have those cars, once they've been driven five years and only have 40,000 or 50,000 miles on them, because the sergeants have different responsibilities, those will rotate through the C.S.O. fleet. So, we'll keep moving those based on the number of miles they're driven. Our School Resource Officer is not going to put a lot of miles on it, going back and forth for school during the school year, so we know that he is going to take a car with higher miles because he's going to put less miles on it. So, if we have a car that's six years old and has 80,000 miles, that's getting up to where we thought it would be in eight years, we rotate that to someone that has less miles. So, that's all part of the program as to how you maintain these. I'll say that if it doesn't work, we go back to what we were doing, we're still ordering six a year; that doesn't change. If the assigned vehicle program is an utter failure in four years, we're not out anything other than the original equipment, but there's a savings in not switching it; so, the delta is really zero on that. You're spending money, one way or the other.

Council Member Thiede stated I hope our mentality is still at a point where the age and miles are somewhat guidelines, but sometimes you get lemons, sometimes you get peaches. So, you just kind of judge that as you go along, and it might be that you got something that could last a little longer, and I know we do that right now. Sometimes we get a little bit, oh, well, it's ten years, out the door it goes, but it might be a car that could last longer.

Captain Rinzel stated that's why when we do this, it's really difficult, and Administrator Levitt tasked us with put this together over a ten-year plan with the scenario of what you know, but it's never going to be exactly that. But what we do know is we've come up with that, and we've agreed to it, we've even agreed to saying that if a car's five years, its going to require extra maintenance. I don't necessarily agree with that, but I will agree that if someone at Public Works says we think it's going to cost more because this or that might go out, there's an extra charge. So, there's extra money built it into those cars, there's where the $20K delta is; it's that extra repair and maintenance on a car that might be older than what our three-year car is.

Council Member Thiede stated it's always updating transportation, too, I guess. And it's like anything else, you can tell if something is acting a little different; it seems like you're hearing this little click, click every now and then, where somebody else driving might not hear those or something like that. Maybe it has a little different feel or something like that.

Captain Rinzel stated and the big thing is most states have been doing this forever. Every county outside of the metro area has been doing assigned cars forever, this isn't anything new; this is new to us, but it's not new. I'll just leave it at that.

Council Member Khambata asked so, you said if it's an utter and complete failure, what are our milestones or performance metrics? Like, when do we get to the point where we've gained enough empirical data, our department, to say this is working or it's not? Do you have some milestones or metrics in mind for how to identify if it's something that we should continue to pursue? Or if we kind of view it back, angle back in the five years?

Captain Rinzel replied I would say once we hit the sixth year is your tell; that's when everything has then come full circle through. And whether or not those cars that we assume are going to last us six, seven years like they do everywhere else, if that doesn't work or if there's some failures within this, or the breakdowns become too much. I would say there'd be a more utter failure of somebody within the Patrol Division saying something, that it would be an internal, not an actual car thing.

Council Member Khambata stated that's what I'm thinking, the failure wouldn't so much be like the maintenance or the budgetary side; but the effectiveness or the willingness to take a car home, if they're getting abused, or not maintained to the expectation that we think people are going to maintain them.

Captain Rinzel stated there are a lot of safeguards within the policy and procedures that we've already identified.

Council Member Khambata stated for my 20%, I think if there's intrinsic value in terms of outward facing, just overall presence, and there's estimated or perceived ROI for the time of ownership, I think it's worth pursuing. It's going to be the same six vehicles, we're just utilizing them differently in terms of annual purchasing. And if it comes to retention, as we've all talked about, that's one of our main sticking points. As we get into negotiations and budgeting for next year, what do we do to keep the good officers that we have, if at the end of the year or at the end of the day this doesn't cost us that much more a year or we break even. I think it's a move in the right direction.

Mayor Bailey asked if we do this, let's say Greg, you took a car home, and then you're out on a call and the car gets totaled, or obviously gets smashed up. So, then what happens to you because now you don't have a car? I'm assuming you have thought of that; what's the plan now for the police officer who's supposed to be on patrol but who doesn't have a car?

Captain Rinzel replied so there are a number of ways of fixing that. We have a number of cars that for a lack of a better term, we call them runner cars or training cars. They're old, retired squads that we've kept around because they're at a mileage that doesn't cost us anything and we're zero net anything. So, those would be become the runner cars, so they would have a runner car to get to and from work. They would have to come here, and then we know there's going to be a pool of cars that people don't take home. So, on their days off, those would become the spare cars for the other officer to use if his needs repair or something occurs in it. That's how we would do that until we build up our fleet to the point where in 2026, that's when we'll be buying those new cars. We will have two or three that we have just for that purpose. But we know that's going to take time. Like Council Member Khambata said, other than buying ten in one year, that isn't a good philosophy because we want to do this over a cycle. So that cycle would be in 2026.

Mayor Bailey asked when an officer goes home, I'm trying to think of all these different scenarios, we're now going to have all of our officers have their own tablet or their own computer, is that right?

Captain Rinzel replied it's budgeted for this year, yes.

Mayor Bailey stated so, it's wintertime in Minnesota and you're going to leave that squad outside, does that computer go in the house with the officer?

Captain Rinzel replied yes, it's just a dock; so, its ready to pull out.

Director Koerner said it's like bringing your briefcase in, they'll bring in their computer.

Captain Rinzel stated and we would have a policy on it; if it's parked outside, this is the equipment that needs to come inside.

Mayor Bailey stated that includes the other part, which I was going to say, the long guns. Director Koerner said yes, and if there's a semiautomatic or something in the trunk, all that stuff has to come in.

Captain Rinzel said yes, it's all dependent upon the policies and procedures that we've set forth. We've talked with a lot of agencies; I'll be honest, most allow them to just stay in, computers, the whole nine yards. If you go through any of the ones that the Sheriff's Office has got, they're all outside and they're all fully ready to go.

Mayor Bailey stated you kind of mentioned it earlier, but a friend of mine, Ken, there is a State Patrol person and a Metro Transit person that lives in his neighborhood; their cars are always out in the driveway, and there is that perceived notion that it's safer. Whether it's real or not, I guess the whole point is that seeing squads sitting in the driveways around town, I think is something that would be a positive, that maybe you don't get to see from a $20K miracle number.

Director Koerner stated obviously you guys are noticing, right? Mayor Bailey said I do. Director Koerner said I know where the troopers and the Ramsey County deputy live, so I see them.

Mayor Bailey stated so, from my point of this, I think for the $20K that we're talking about, I think I would be willing to go forward with this proposal. I also think, and you alluded to the comment if one officer leaves, it's $100K; if this is what we're hearing from some of our newest recruits and such, that hey, this is important to me and it's a benefit that's really not going to negatively impact our community, if you will. If anything, give it value within a neighborhood. To me, it's a small number when you think about the budget to do something better for our officers, but also a better feel within the community. That's my take on that.

Council Member Olsen asked what, if any, advantage is there relative to response time if people have the take-home squads?

Captain Rinzel replied that's the other part that's actually huge. We've had a number of incidents in the recent past that had somebody had the opportunity to leave from home with everything in it, and I didn't really touch on them setting that up, right? That's just like you have an office, and you have all your stuff in it, and every time you leave the office, you take all of your stuff out because someone else is going to be using your office later. You put it over here, and then you come in to start your shift, and everything goes back in your office. There's time, that's all the time that's taken away from their duties, like even preparing and getting their cars ready. They're ready the minute they walk into their driveway; they turn their computers on, they're getting ready, they're signing in, they're logging on. Our K9 has been, I can't even tell you how many times on their way into work, they're running into things and addressing them, or responding to a call while en route to work because it's a K9 call.

Captain Petersen stated it's saved us S.W.A.T. guys precious minutes; in those rare instances where somebody needs to get there right now, it would save precious minutes.

Council Member Olsen stated I think about what happened in Woodbury recently. I think that's a perfect example of every second counts, and we need to get where we need to get as fast as we can. I'm sure you guys have thought about that, but I think that is a massive advantage to something like this, I really do, especially for command staff. So, I'm on board with it.

Council Member Thiede stated we've committed ourselves to the Financial Management Plan (FMP), and I'd like to see how this rolls up into that; in general, I mean, I'm not against it.

Council Member Garza stated I think it would make a big difference, especially if we're already behind the curve, and we're just really trying to get ourselves to compete with the other surrounding communities that already take them. And I wondered also, statistically, how many police cars are being stolen? And I say that because we were talking about the equipment inside the cars and maybe they're not bringing them in, but do we have police cars that are being stolen?

Captain Rinzel replied we have not ever taken a stolen police car in the City of Cottage Grove from an outside agency getting it stolen while it was parked in town. We had an officer who thought they had their personal car stolen 20 years ago, and it was actually they just forgot where it was parked; so, that's more of a liability, somebody forgetting where they parked.

Council Member Khambata stated I know criminals are always leading far more exciting lives, but what's the number of police vehicles, checking to see if they got stolen or broken into? If somebody sees there's equipment in it and so on, I'm assuming all the cars have those.

Director Koerner stated I don't want to jinx this, but none of our K9 vehicles.

Captain Rinzel replied no, I've heard of one in the County, this was I don't know how long ago in another city, not ours. It's more often that it's an unmarked car that people don't know is a squad car that they're breaking into. And then all of a sudden we'll get a report Golden Valley lost an AR-15 in an unmarked car, and this and that was in the car. Council Member Khambata stated from a potential liability standpoint, that is the only thing that makes me nervous.

Director Koerner stated that's why we have the vaults in our vehicles.

Council Member Khambata stated I know that the vehicles are set up and equipped to be safe, but so long as your SOPs and your protocols kind of reinforce that, I would be okay with it.

Captain Rinzel stated yes, and we're not opposed to ensuring that none of that occurs.

Director Koerner stated just to back up, on our Five-Year Strategic Plan, we're kind of looking for formal support of that plan, or if there are any things you want to change. Again, we're going to follow that and mirror it with our Fire Department, too. So, I'm wondering whether there's feedback or more questions?

Council Member Olsen stated I think it's an excellent plan, personally. I think it's well put together in terms of not only what do I want to do, but also when do I want to do it, and how do I manage it so it will work? My only feedback, and I've already given it, would be ensure that you are partnering with your partners throughout the City, so that those Core Values are not just your Core Values; but the Core Values of everyone that you work with, because you are the grand ambassadors and you represent the City of Cottage Grove. And, in my view anyway, there's a responsibility to share with all of the other partner departments: This is what we're thinking, this is what we're doing, this is why, this is how. They may give you some feedback on some of the things you talk about. But the bottom line is I think you want those folks to be behind what you're doing, too. They can't just feel like oh, the Police Department is going broke.

Director Koerner stated I will tell you that I've had pretty in-depth conversations with both Director Burfeind and Director Dockter, especially about the Core Values, because we were just talking about this is more of a great community. If someone complains about the potholes or the snow, Public Works takes a lot of pride in their work, just like the cops. So, there are those conversations, too, and I don't see why there is not a version of this that the other departments couldn't use, too, because Core Values are amongst the City.

Council Member Thiede stated I think, Jennifer, it's part of your responsibility to make sure that it's all, you know, that's it's all kind of not different things, in terms of philosophy; that it fits and will look good to be, and it flows down to blend with the Strategic Plan. So, that is, they all have the same feeling and the look of the policies.

Administrator Levitt replied yes, I've got it.

Council Member Khambata stated I think it's a pretty comprehensive plan. Again, that's why I asked if other departments are doing this because I feel like you guys put a lot of work into this. I know, especially with the staffing, the +3 staffing and long-term projections are where we eventually need to be. The only reason I asked you guys regardless of the department is to do more with less; but as we get deeper into budget, it's like okay, where are we going to find the money for additional cars or where are we going to find the money for additional FTEs. If there are efficiencies or grants, I know you guys are already on top of this stuff, but if there are opportunities to save money or prolong the service life of equipment to save money in the long run, that opens up opportunities in the budget to bring these things into play. So, keep doing what you're doing.

Mayor Bailey said I think the Strategic Plan and the Core Values and the messaging, is great. I only sit here because all these different things are rolling in my mind about budgets this year, next year, the following year. There's even some tweaking changes that we just found out about today that we're going to have to make some adjustments to our long-term plans as it relates to the PFAS water thing. But do I like this plan? Absolutely. My one comment for you guys and I don't know, maybe this is the reason that Council Member Olsen made the comment, is you said a lot of the officers are waiting, they want you to call them when you hear from us. My gut tells me, other than the core pieces of all this and things you want to do, what they're most interested to know is did the Council say yes, we're getting another cop next year, three more cops the following or whatever, right?

Captain Petersen replied well, I don't think so; they know that.

Mayor Bailey stated well, I heard not, so, I will stand corrected if that's the case. But my point of getting back to what Council Member Olsen was saying, is sharing the message and here's what our plan is. As we all know, like it or not, we come to budget cycle, and you guys are going to ask us for these police officers, Public Works is going to ask us for their guys. So, that's why when you talk about bringing everybody into the fold, so to speak, and our staff, you guys do an amazing job. I'm all about trying to work with each other, but I just want you to be cognizant of that. Because they may, you'll have the plan out there that says by year whatever, our hope and goal is to have this many more officers and these many more positions. Understand that they're asking probably not exactly what you're asking for, but they're going to be asking for the same thing. And there is only so much money, so we have to; are you shocked at that? And it isn't that I don't want to, it's just that there's so much uncertainty right now and unknowns out there that we've got to be cognizant of.

Director Koerner stated I think I just want to speak. I mean, when I got promoted to director, right away everyone's like, what direction, who's sailing the ship, what direction are we going? So, I don't want you to feel as though you're pinned into any budget numbers or anything like that, but we've; it's not just the staffing and not just the Core Values, it's the community engagement, the different things. And how, when we come to you guys and say we need a new officer, we want to have these benchmarks. So, we want to say our calls for service has gone to a level where we can't do this level of service.

Council Member Thiede stated yes, basing it on that management stuff is fantastic.

Director Koerner stated so, that's what we've been struggling with, even with our records management system; we're working with how do we get these numbers, what are these outcome measures? So, I think that's more of what we're looking for here; that we're not holding anyone to in 2026 we need this, but we at least want you to know that as we move forward, we need the three patrol so we can handle these pregnancies, and can handle these others. So, I think it's more of a vision, more of a fluid document.

Council Member Olsen stated I, for one, really appreciated the metrics. I spoke at the budget kickoff about efficiencies and what we need to do this year and understanding that it's a contract year, etc. And that's exactly what I'm looking for, from everybody, from every department that's what I'm looking for is give me the hard data. Let me know what is or isn't happening, the impact that that has on a million different things, but those numbers, that gives clear direction relative to service delivery. And none of us wants service delivery to lack.

Director Koerner stated we want to know how many cases our detectives have open, what's our clearance rate. At what point does a detective having 14 open cases efficient anymore? So, how many files can I have open on my desk at one time?

Captain Rinzel stated and I think we've done a good job of giving you like a 1.15; we've never gone as in-depth as Brad did, of showing you three different metrics that are only used here. We've always done one or two, and kind of said that's it; all of a sudden, we're starting to get this data where we're able to track most of this. Brad compiled a pretty good list of showing you that we're not just saying hey, we need a body here; we're showing you empirically that compared to all others, this is where we sit. You then have to go back and make those hard decisions. We appreciate that you have the information that you need to make those hard decisions.

Mayor Bailey stated I would say this because I've been the mayor for 16 years, and to your point, even prior to you, with Ryan and Craig, etc., I've yet to see where we've actually been able to be at our actual level in the department because something happens. So, I do like the fact that you're trying to figure out the how and why, how can we circumvent that, right? So, when somebody goes out, there's a budget implication, and I totally understand that; so, I don't know how you guys can kind of figure that out.

Council Member Olsen stated but you have to plan for the unknown.

Director Koerner stated well, this last year, we held off on the hiring and didn't start them all at once.

Mayor Bailey stated I want to tell you I absolutely love the idea of what you're trying to do. Now we just have to figure out how do we pay for it. And I don't know how much, I know if it's one, two, or three; both of you said that on average, it's three per year.

Director Koerner stated I just want to really quickly add the officers aren't expecting us to come back and say we get a cop next year.

Mayor Bailey stated what I'm also saying, though, is that in 16 years, there's not been a year that's went by where we've been at our full allotment in our Public Safety Department. I don't know how we fix it; we've been trying to figure it out, and I liked your idea of putting that person in the budget.

Director Koerner said we've had good conversations with Brenda, like do you know of any cities that are able to do this? We're trying to be creative.

Mayor Bailey said and that's a good plan. But if you're hearing anything out there about what cities are doing outside of, even just in Minnesota, to help circumvent that, I would absolutely be willing to hear it, because that is I know we're not alone.

Director Koerner stated I'll be honest, a lot of the chiefs I've talked to are like let us know how you can; they're asking the same thing is what it breaks out to.

Council Member Olsen stated we're still getting lots of applicants, we have a lot of internal candidates interested in being here. We're sitting in the catbird seat, but we can't just assume that that's always going to stay that way. We have to continue to evolve as the market evolves, and your take-home squad program is one element of that.

Council Member Garza asked with all of the new development that we have approved in our City and the more development that's coming, that we just heard of in our workshop earlier today, how does that relate to what you guys are asking right now? So, I understand we have budgets and I'm new to this, I'm not really understanding it all. So, I'm just trying to understand with your proposal and with all of this new growth and all of these new people that are coming to our community, you would think that we must figure out a way to boost up our Public Safety Department.

Director Koerner replied there's not an easy answer to that, but I can tell you as we've grown and we've had neighborhoods that are $600K, their expectations of police services are different. They are not having huge crime waves necessarily, but they want us doing more traffic patrols in their neighborhoods. I think with any of this growth where we've felt this more is with the senior housing; Fire Chief Pritchard knows that's where we've felt it more with the medical responses and everything. So, yes, as we grow, calls kind of go up, but certain neighborhoods have different expectations.

Council Member Garza asked now with all of that development out there, is there any opportunity because we're growing so rapidly and bringing different opportunities for people to move into our community, is there any like support from our State or from County for any financial help with that?

Director Koerner replied two years ago we had the COPS grants for our Case Management Officers. We're going to continue to look for grants; there are grants out there now through the State for officers who will do more proactive enforcement, like DUIs, etc. So, Jennifer and I are constantly getting emails about those.

Council Member Olsen stated the legislature last year did an abundance of one-time funding for Public Safety Departments and Sheriff's Departments across the State. We were in receipt of some of that funding, as was Washington County. But here's the thing, so, when you think about the growth of the community, we are growing less quickly today than we did 20 years ago. Our pace of growth is actually slower now than it was before Myron was mayor. It used to be roughly 2.7% every year, and now we're growing at about 1.8% every year. So, one of the things you look at is you look at population, and you heard Brad mention that there are a lot of ways to measure your officer allotment. One of the very simple ways that people have used for a long time is for every thousand people, you need a cop. So, if you're at 46,000 people, you need 46 cops. Now, is that the perfect metric? Of course it isn't. So, that's why you have to look into things like call volume, which I'm very grateful that you guys provided us tonight, what kind of calls are you dealing with, and then attrition. When are people out, when are people hurt, downtime basically, right? So, these folks have been doing this for a long time and doing a really good job. But in terms of the growth, the growth of the community has actually been managed very, very well since the 2008-2010 timeframe, we were in a recession for a period of time there in 2008. One of the things that I admire about the staff is when they do any kind of growth planning, they get every department together, everybody, and they have a technical meeting about if we do this, what is this going to look like in terms of Public Safety response? What's it going to look like in terms of potential fire hazard? What's it going to look like in terms of snowplowing? Do we need to add another route? They all put their heads together so that when they come to us, they can tell us this is what we should do, this is what we shouldn't do. These guys have made just unbelievable decisions to continue to deliver services to our residents at such a low cost, because we're the second lowest tax rate in Washington County; the lowest being St. Paul Park, who gets a lot of Local Government Aid that we don't get, so, if you took that out of the equation, we would be the lowest. So, they are making very good, efficient, smart financial decisions without losing that service delivery that people have become used to. No, that doesn't just happen. We all have to be holding hands to make sure that when we do have the new developments, or when we do have situations like they talked about with staffing, etc., we keep all of that in mind. I have yet to meet a department head who comes to us and asks for things that they really don't need. They're very disciplined, look, we really need this, we could use this.

They were forced to act in the Parks Department, as they didn't ask for anything for 15 years.

Council Member Garza stated well, I wasn't saying that they were asking for some things that they shouldn't be asking for. I was saying that more on our side of the fence, that maybe we need to look at it a little bit better. Because if they've been running low for such a long time, and we have five new spots of families going in, that's what, another 10,000-20,000 people in the next two years. It just makes me wonder, that's all.

Captain Rinzel said I think the big thing is, is what is it, three years before a lot comes on the tax rolls; so, we don't see the City money for three years, so we're always going to be behind the eight ball unless there's some magical way of collecting City funds upfront. Where we see a development of 1,000 people, but it takes two years, and the third year we finally get that tax, so we can now catch up to where we need to be. So, it's really a funding issue, when all of the taxes are collected.

Council Member Khambata said but I think if we're being fiscally responsible as an organization, we're always going to leave something on the table, like we should always be wanting more. If we're not, then we're not being responsible. So, but if we have a five-year plan, we know what's on our radar, we have to offset the costs. If a squad cost doubles, then we know what, from a prioritization standpoint, what's coming down the line next so we can have it. It's tough, for all the new development that the best case scenario is two-or-three years before that gets on our tax capacity. Otherwise, it's disproportionate. If we raise taxes prior to that, it disproportionally affects things. Council Member Olsen stated it creates a rollercoaster. Council Member Khambata agreed, and said we're trying to avoid that as well. We don't want ups and downs, we want to try to keep this as flat of a levy as possible; we want to try to adhere as strictly as possible to our FMP, and that's why our job is so easy.

Council Member Olsen asked does that give you an idea of what you guys need?

Administrator Levitt stated I want to mention when you think about affordable housing and senior housing, which are both a part of our Strategic Plan, you have to remember it's 7-to-15 years where we don't see any revenue in taxes. So, we're actually subsidizing it, that's the only way I can say it; when we bring in affordable housing and senior housing, the City as a whole is subsidizing that service because we're not collecting any taxes from that, and it may be up to 15 years.

Captain Rinzel stated it suddenly got cold in the room now, right? Council Member Olsen agreed. Director Koerner stated well, I will say it's an assigned loss.

Council Member Thiede stated well, on the squads, I would like to see how it plays into the FMP, so I'm sure.

Director Koerner asked is that something that you want brought back at another?

Mayor Bailey stated no, just put it in when you guys are doing the budgetary discussions. I also think that $20K in a budget that's $18-$20M is such a small piece of the puzzle.

Director Koerner asked what is the rule, you know?

Captain Rinzel stated well, that's the maintenance part of it, and I think we have already budgeted for the four cars at $90K, so that's part of that implementation. If there's any additional, we do have the squad radios that is something that's up for discussion; it's part of reallocating what we had planned.

Administrator Levitt stated how about if we come back to you with the planning as to what we can do financially within the 2024 budget? It might have to hold off until we actually roll out those numbers, to your point, and then Greg put together the intangible values.

Council Member Olsen stated you said you needed an answer tonight. Captain Rinzel stated well, we need to start thinking about what we're going to do with our current fleet.

Administrator Levitt stated what I'm hearing you guys saying is move forward, and so, we will move forward. We just need to tell you what is sitting in the 2024 budget.

Council Member Khambata stated and you'll come up with that; Council Member Olsen stated yes, fair enough.

Captain Rinzel stated it might be late 2026 for a finalization or early 2027. We'll get it done, I'll financially prove it. Director Koerner stated okay, that's fine.

14. WORKSHOPS - CLOSED TO PUBLIC - None.

15. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Council Member Garza, second by Council Member Olsen, to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 p.m. Motion carried: 5-0.

Minutes prepared by Judy Graf and reviewed by Tamara Anderson, City Clerk