

**Council Minutes July 23, 2019**

**STATE OF TEXAS §**

**COUNTY OF TARRANT §**

**CITY OF BEDFORD §**

**The City Council of the City of Bedford, Texas, met in Work Session at 5:30 p.m. at the former library building, 1805 L. Don Dodson, on the 23rd day of July, 2019 with the following members present:**

Jim Griffin	Mayor
Michael Boyter	Council Members
Dan Cogan	
Ruth Culver	
Roger Fisher	
Amy Sabol	
Rusty Sartor	

constituting a quorum.

Staff present included:

Brian Bosshardt	City Manager
Cliff Blackwell	Assistant City Manager
Michael Wells	City Secretary
Stan Lowry	City Attorney
Cassey Amburn	Senior Administrative Assistant
Debbie Carlisle	Police Support Services Manager
Sean Fay	Fire Chief
Natalie Foster	Public Information Officer
Jeff Gibson	Police Chief
Meg Jakubik	Strategic Services Manager
Russ Laurin	Fire Lieutenant
Frank Tamayo	Battalion Chief
Mark Williams	Deputy Chief - EMS

**CALL TO ORDER/GENERAL COMMENTS**

Mayor Griffin called the Work Session to order at 5:30 p.m.

**WORK SESSION**

• **Discussion on Public Safety staffing.**

City Manager Brian Bosshardt stated there was discussion the previous year regarding the use of overtime in the Police and Fire Departments. He stated Council funded new positions in each department, but staff indicated at the time it would be at least a year before seeing the impact of adding staff. In this year's budget, there is the continuation of heavy use of overtime, which exceeds the approved budgeted amount. He stated this work session is to discuss the causes of overtime, how the public safety departments are staffed, and how the overtime and staffing issues can be addressed.

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Fire Chief Sean Fay stated the Fire Department currently hires more closely to the exact number of minimum staff, and then hires overtime when people are out. He presented an overview of the Department's basic organizational structure and resources. Operations is made up of three stations, three shifts of 20 personnel each, and the minimum number of responding units is one ladder truck, two engines, three ambulances, and one shift commander. The Department employs a cross-staffing model, by which firefighters are trained to be paramedics and paramedics are trained to be firefighters. The minimum staffing needed to ensure vehicles are in service continuously is 16 employees per shift. The Department's minimum staffing standards are established by general industry and regional standards of care and levels of service, and standards published by the National Fire Protective Association (NFPA). In response to questions from Council, Chief Fay stated there are no punitive measures for not meeting those particular NFPA standards. He presented an overview of the NFPA and regional response standards for responding to structure fires at single-family residential dwellings, open-air strip malls, garden-style apartments, and high-rise buildings. There was discussion on the number of high-rise buildings in Bedford, and mutual aid and automatic aid agreements with neighboring cities.

Chief Fay presented an overview of the two generally accepted fire department staffing models. The constant staffing model consists of a high percentage of the minimum staffing level compared to the maximum fully authorized staffing level, and relies heavily on the use of overtime to supplement the minimum staffing level to keep units in service, which can lead to employee fatigue. The overstaffing, or balanced, model has a lower percentage of minimum staffing compared to the maximum, and there is less reliance on overtime to maintain minimum staffing levels.

Chief Fay presented an overview of staffing levels in the neighboring cities. Hurst uses the constant staffing model, with a minimum of 14 personnel and authorized staffing of 17 personnel. Eules uses the over-staffing model, with a minimum of 16 personnel and an authorized staffing of 22 personnel. In response to questions from Council, Chief Fay stated Eules has been moving to the over-staffing model over the previous four years. Both Eules and Bedford put out an additional unit for service to handle lower acuity calls. There was discussion on the cause of the higher volume of annual calls in Bedford compared to Hurst and Eules, including the number of nursing homes, retirement facilities and other medically-based businesses in the City. There was further discussion on the number of mutual aid calls. Chief Fay stated Bedford's additional unit can handle non-emergency calls and supplement other units in the field.

Chief Fay stated the primary drivers for overtime use are vacancies and injuries, followed by Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) time off, training, personal time, benefit accrual time off, and other miscellaneous reasons. In response to questions from Council, he stated most of the injuries were personal, and the most common on-the-job injuries are strains and sprains. For Fiscal Year 2019, there have been nine vacancies and ten injuries. Other absences included one for spouse care and one for well-baby care. He presented an overview of employee accruals, including vacation, holiday, FLSA time off, and personal days. The Department's internal policy allows up to three employees per day to use their accrual time. There was discussion on the limits in accrual time. Chief Fay stated if the number of personnel falls below the minimum staffing level, it would be necessary to hire overtime.

Chief Fay stated the Department is making improvements to the use of overtime by making cultural changes, which hopefully will impact retention; eliminating the FLSA time off; adopting a 15-day pay cycle; implementing a firefighter health and wellness/fitness program; and making changes to personnel policies. There was discussion on the FLSA time off. Chief Fay stated he believes the Department needs to pursue a more balanced staffing model and recommended

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moving to 21 personnel per shift, while maintaining 16 personnel as the minimum staffing level. He stated there is a correlation between being able to avoid overtime by having one or two more employees. There was discussion on eliminating the excess overtime. Chief Fay stated overtime cannot be eliminated but they are trying to control it.

In response to questions from Council, Chief Fay stated the overage in overtime is similar to the previous year, and the baseline for overtime is approximately \$347,000. There was discussion on the impact of adding personnel to the overage in overtime. Chief Fay confirmed overtime hours are tracked and stated they are similar as the previous year. He further stated the number of employee losses is higher than average and is the biggest driver in overtime. There was discussion on the response of firefighters to the loss of overtime pay and fatigue. Chief Fay stated the Department has utilized the constant staffing model for a long time, and there has been a historical dependence on overtime, which has increased over the previous five years. A majority of Council was in favor of staff analyzing the number of overtime hours and calls for service over the previous 15 years. Chief Fay stated recruiting and hiring are going well and there was discussion on the implementation of the NEOGOV software in the Human Resources Department.

Police Chief Jeff Gibson presented an overview of the Police Department's current sworn positions. including the Administration, Professional Standards, Criminal Investigations (CID), Patrol, Traffic and Behavioral Intervention Unit (BIU) divisions. He stated three officers were moved from Patrol to the BIU when it was first implemented. There are currently 17 vacancies, with ten being open, funded positions, and seven others currently in training. The Patrol Division is allotted 48 sworn personnel, with ten personnel per shift. Currently, Patrol staffing consists of six officers with two supervisors during the day, and seven officers with three supervisors at night. The minimum staffing level is five officers with one supervisor during the day, and six officers with two supervisors at night. The three vacant positions in CID and the five vacant positions in Traffic are due to officers being reassigned to Patrol to satisfy the minimum staffing requirement. In response to questions from Council, Chief Gibson stated there minimum staffing standard, which was established in 2012, is determined by a state average based on neighboring cities and calls for service.

Chief Gibson presented information on the minimum staffing requirements in Hurst and Euless, which are six patrol officers with two supervisors both during the day and night, with their allotted count being ten officers with two supervisors. Hurst is allotted a total of 75 sworn officers, while Euless is allotted 95 sworn officers. There was discussion on calls for service for each of the cities, and reporting by law enforcement agencies. Chief Gibson stated that the Department had approximately 50,000 calls for service the previous year. Grapevine has 102 sworn officers and are allotted 13 officers during the day and 15 officers at night. Their minimum staffing standard is seven officers with two supervisors during the day, and eight officers with two supervisors at night. There was discussion on mutual aid calls for service.

Chief Gibson presented an overview on what drives overtime, including vacancies, modified duty, time off, training and other miscellaneous reasons. He stated a review of the last four years shows the Department has averaged five vacancies per year through resignations, retirements and terminations. Regarding tenure, 38 percent of the sworn workforce is eligible for retirement, and he anticipates several retirements over the next three years. Chief Gibson stated with a balanced staffing model, those retirements can be absorbed. Further, the overtime budgets of the other cities are significantly affected by the additional staff. He stated the City would not see a rate of return on overtime from an additional staff person for two years, but moving to a balanced staffing model would have a significant positive impact on the overtime budget. In response to questions from Council, it was stated Patrol's overtime budget is

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\$170,000, and is projected to have an overage of approximately \$100,000, which is being made up with salary savings from vacant positions.

Chief Gibson presented an overview of the consequences of staffing shortages, including fatigue, using overtime to backfill officers in required training, and major shortages in other divisions, including Traffic. In response to questions from Council, it was stated ticket revenue is projected to be off by approximately \$300,000 to \$400,000. Chief Gibson discussed the Department's recent recruiting and hiring process, the impact of hiring officers that are already certified, and retention efforts. In response to questions from Council, Chief Gibson stated the City loses officers because of lateral programs offered by other agencies, and there have been discussions on hiring experienced officers at a higher step level than the entry level. Other efforts to reduce overtime include a switch from a 40-hour to an 80-hour pay week.

There was discussion on recruitment, the number of vacancies, and the Department's frozen positions. In response to questions from Council, Chief Gibson stated the reasons for attrition in their Department are retirements and resignations, including losing employees to other cities. For the upcoming budget, he is asking to add four sworn positions. There was discussion on hiring experienced officers that can be put on the streets more quickly; implementing a lateral program in the Police and Fire Departments; offering bonuses or incentives; the norm regarding vacancies; salaries compared to neighboring cities and addressing burnout and fatigue. Chief Gibson stated ideally, Patrol would be allotted 10 officers with two supervisors per shift, but with their request for four more officers, they are trying to create an allotment of nine officers with two supervisors per shift. There was discussion on equipment needs in the Departments and upcoming retirements.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Griffin adjourned the work session at 7:13 p.m.

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Jim Griffin, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Michael Wells, City Secretary