

**Snohomish City Council Special Workshop Meeting Minutes
January 26, 2021**

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Kartak called the Snohomish City Council special workshop meeting to order at 5:00 p.m., Tuesday, January 26, 2021.

COUNCILMEMBERS/MAYOR PRESENT

Larry Countryman
Steve Dana
Judith Kuleta
Tom Merrill
Felix Neals
Donna Ray
Linda Redmon
John T. Kartak, Mayor

STAFF PRESENT

Debbie Burton, Finance Director
Emily Guildner, City Attorney's Office
Robert Palmer, Police Chief
Rebekah Park, HR Manager/City Clerk
Glen Pickus, Planning Director
Steve Schuller, City Administrator and Utility
General Manager
Brandi Whitson, Deputy City Clerk

NOTE: Due to the COVID-19 declared federal, state and local emergency, and pursuant to Governor Inslee's Proclamations 20-05 and 20-28, the Snohomish City Council held its meeting via remote participation.

2. **DISCUSSION:** Law Enforcement Contract

Mr. Schuller explained tonight was an opportunity for the City Council to ask questions and receive feedback regarding the contract between the City and Snohomish County Sheriff's Office (SCSO). The current contract expires December 31, 2021.

He provided basic information on the contract:

- Law enforcement services were included in the adopted 2021-2022 budget.
- Contracting with the County saves money from running its own police department.
- The contract is for 20 FTEs (18 commission, 2 non-commission), which has remained the same over the past nine years, despite population growth.
- Council can select quantity and type of deputies and sergeants, but not the costs.

Questions, topics and discussion included:

- Comparison of costs and increases experienced by cities that manage their own police departments rather than contract. Expenses can vary based on population size (more people means more calls), geographical size (distance for an officer to travel), types of calls received, and amenities (i.e. drinking establishments, large shopping centers).
- Effectiveness of specialty pay to encourage retention and reduction of turnover. While this is a newer program and difficult to evaluate, it appears to be quite effective at retaining officers.
- Contract negotiations between the County and their Union and the impact those decisions could have on the contract cities.
- Use of social workers and crisis responders. The current City Community Resource Officer provides many social interactions with the community, and is able to connect people with services, such as drug and alcohol treatment. Chief Palmer believes the

Police Department is staffed at an appropriate level to provide a high level of service to the community while also providing for its officers. There may not be a need for a full-time social worker or crisis responder, and officers have access to those services when needed.

- Enacting Public Safety Commission to assist with outreach.
- Filling extended absences to ensure proper level of coverage.
- Training, competency of officers. SCSO thoroughly vets officers, and ongoing training is required by the state in a variety of areas, such as crisis intervention, discrimination, racial bias, reporting, and de-escalation.
- Consideration of Captain and/or Lieutenant as Police Chief. The City's preference and contract wording necessitate additional discussions with the SCSO.
- Types and number of calls and dispatches were requested, to better understand the services actually being provided by the Police Department.
- Proactive outreach of the Community Outreach Officer to ensure community services and expectations are being met, as well as educating citizens and businesses on crime prevention.
- School Resource Officer, and how involved the City should be. Consider alternate duties during the summer when school is out.
- SnoPAC and SERS issues and possible impacts to the contract.
- Audits and accreditation to ensure policies and procedures are being followed.
- Increase in fees due to County recently approving cost recovery included as part of new contract negotiations. A significant portion of their expenses is due to risk management fees, which were not previously covered by the contract. The County is now looking to recoup its costs.
- Itemization of the costs rather than consolidation, to better track where and when fee increases develop.
- Increased costs equaled nearly the amount of two FTE positions, about \$247,000 per year. Council voiced concerns on the City's ability to maintain revenues to cover the increased expenses, the potential of losing two FTE positions to cover the increased costs, and the impacts on the level of service that would incur. To ensure a proper level of service, the Council may be tasked to find revenue sources.

A Town Hall has been tentatively scheduled for March 9 to engage the community and provide an opportunity for them to learn about the City of Snohomish Police Department. Negotiations with the County will likely start in April.

Chief Palmer reminded all that the Police Department was the City of Snohomish Police Department. The resources may be provided by the SCSO, but the officers identify with the City of Snohomish, and focus on the City's issues and needs.

3. **ADJOURN:** The special meeting adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

APPROVED this 16th day of February, 2021.

CITY OF SNOHOMISH

ATTEST:

John T. Kartak, Mayor

Brandi Whitson, Deputy City Clerk