Meeting was brought to order by Committee Chairperson Dale Todd at 4:00 p.m.

Present: Council members Dale Todd, Ashley Vanorney, Scott Overland, Fire Chief Greg Smith, Police Chief Wayne Jerman, Building Services Director Kevin Ciabatti, Amanda Grieder with SAFE-CR, Sgt. Laura Faircloth for Youth Services, and Director of Parks and Recreation Scott Hock.

The November 18, 2019 Public Safety and Youth Services Committee minutes were approved.

The 2020 meeting dates were approved for: March 16, May 18, July 20, September 21 and November 16.

**Fire Department Report-Chief Greg Smith**

Fire Chief Greg Smith highlighted a few key points from the fire report for the year of 2019, and their report is attached.

The Fire Department had 13,324 total incidents in 2019, and fire loss data for this time period was 6.8 million dollars in structural and content loss. However, the pre-incident value was 134.4 million dollars on those structures, so roughly 127.6 million dollars in property saved was due to the efforts of the Fire Department. 8,650 of the calls were overlapping, which means that they have more than one apparatus out at the same time, which is about 65% of the calls. They continually run similar percentages of overlapping calls. Per NFPA standards, average turnout times for EMS incidents should be around 1 minute and 1 minute 20 seconds for fire incidents. Their average turnout time is 1 minute 22 seconds, which is right around the standards. They are in the process of a fire station alerting project, which will significantly help their turnout times.

Of the 13,324 total incidents in 2019, they had 15,617 total apparatus responses. Most of their EMS and Fire incidents only have one apparatus responding; however, there are a number of incident types where more than one apparatus is dispatched. They will always have more apparatus or unit responses than incidents.
Engine stats for busiest engine companies in 2019:

- Engine 1 is the busiest engine company with 2,442 incidents
- Engine 8 is the second busiest engine company with 2,025 incidents
- Engine 5 is the third busiest engine company with 1,936 incidents

Their major incident types continue to trend with over 50% of their calls being EMS responses. This also goes along with the National trends, which are somewhere between 50-70% EMS related.

Chief Smith reiterated the importance to confine the fire to the object or room of origin. The reason for this is if the fire causes over 50% damage to the structure, it means more time and cost for the owner to rebuild. Also, firefighters are entering a more dangerous atmosphere. During 2019 there were 226 total fires, and 166 of them were considered confined by nature, which means a cooking fire was confined to a container or a trash fire confined to its container. This equates to about 73.5% of the fires responded to in 2019 were confined to the object or room of origin, which falls in line with the national average of 75%.

Fire Marshal’s Office numbers for 2018 and 2019 were as follows:

- 2018 total number of inspections 2,996
- 2018 total number of permits 2,672
- 2019 total number of inspections 2,000
- 2019 total number of 2,002

A total of 81 investigated fires were reported. Of the 81, the determined causes were as follows:

- Accidental 43
- Incendiary 20
- Undetermined 17
- Natural 1

Fire Department related comments from Committee Members:

- There has been discussion of some capital leads for new fire houses. Will requests for new fire houses be a part of the upcoming budget?
- Question regarding difference of 1,000 inspections from 2018 to 2019.
- Request to include location of calls to service for each apparatus.

**Building Services Report-Kevin Ciabatti, Director**

Director Ciabatti presented the Building Services report, and a copy is attached.
Code Cases

November and December Code Case numbers were included in their report. Director Ciabatti provided a review and analysis that demonstrates the following:

a. In the month of November and December, 172 cases were opened (or created). In the month of November and December, 216 cases were closed.
b. There remains 700+ Code Cases open at this time.

Since it is the start of the New Year, Director Ciabatti thought it would be best to provide a highlight of the enforcement activities from 2019. For the time being, he has removed the “building permit” data from their report and only has included the requests and code case activities.

Code Cases Closed in 2019

To highlight 2019 year-end Code Case highlight, Nuisance, Housing and Zoning staff closed 1,247 Code Cases. These have been closed by any number of ways:

a. Compliance. In the process of sending a Courtesy Notice, First or Second Notice, the owner complies. As Director Ciabatti stated in numerous past meetings, the highest rate of compliance remains in vehicle violations.
b. Court Proceedings. Through Court Proceedings, the City gains compliance through Municipal Infractions. First step in small claims in mediation. Therefore, an owner can gain compliance thorough a mediated agreement.
c. Through failed Mediated Agreements. In some cases and after multiple failed mediated agreements, the Courts have authorized the City to take action against a property or an owner to gain compliance.
d. This process is closely tied with Chapter 22A where the Courts find in favor of the City, either through failed mediated agreements, or in case where the owners decide to skip mediation and present in front of a Judicial magistrate (and they find in favor of the City).

Highlights from 2019

In the extreme cases, the Building Services Department staff have pursued demolitions as a means to gain compliance. Concerning private ownership, this is the most aggressive action a City can order through a Notice and Order process, and because of this, Director Ciabatti wanted to provide the Committee with some background of these activities. Given that context, in 2019, a typical Notice and Order and Court proceeding process have resulted in the demolition and removal of numerous properties by the property owner of such properties. They include the following:

a. Five (5) accessory structures either dilapidated or damaged by fire AND;
b. One (1) residential structures damage by fire AND;
c. One (1) commercial property damaged by fire; AND
d. Two (2) vacant residential structures.
Where the Courts have found in favor of the City or the owner has not met the mediated agreement provisions, the Courts have authorized the City to take action in the form of demolition. Therefore, the City has taken action on the following:

a. Two (2) dwelling units damaged by fire.

Where the Courts have found in favor of the City or the owner has not met the mediated agreement provisions, Courts have authorized the City to take action in the form of other activities, such as a Court authorized clean up or removal of material in violation of City Codes and Ordinances. Director Ciabatti only highlighted a few examples during the presentation, but this has occurred on multiple properties throughout last year.

In October, staff from multiple departments performed a zoning and housing abatement for a residential home and yard located in one of the City’s neighborhoods, which was in violation of several zoning ordinances. This cleanup was the culmination of an extended investigation, continuous requests from the public, and a lengthy Court hearing process, resulting in authorization to clean up the property and assess costs to the property owner. The City Attorney’s Office was also instrumental in obtaining this Court authorization. This multi-department effort demonstrates their organizational values of teaming up and finding a way to improve life for our residents.

On an additional property, after a lengthy Court proceeding, multiple mediated agreements and failed action by the owner, the Courts authorized the City to take action to remove material, junk and debris from a property. Ultimately, there were 1.7 tons of metal and other scrap material, 4.0 tons of garbage from the property.

These properties highlight the collaborative effort of multiple Departments in the process. In fact, in both of these cases, almost every Department was involved in some way. Again, these are just a few examples of their success and collaborative effort from 2019.

1527 2nd AVE SE

The last example Director Ciabatti wanted to highlight from 2019 is a property in which their staff has spent a great deal of time and effort and working toward a solution collaboratively to remove a blighted structure from a neighborhood. As you may recall, 1527 2nd AVE SE was owned by a private owner who passed away many years ago. The City was in a position to demolish the property in 2012-2013. Because of the historic nature of the structure, and at a request of an interested party, the Historic Preservation Commission placed a permanent hold on the property while the estate and the interested party came to an agreement on the sale of the property. Unfortunately, this negotiation failed and the property ultimately became a “zombie” property, effectively a vacant property in dilapidation without a living owner. Because the estate had since closed and there was not an apparent owner to take through Court proceedings, the property was in limbo. The City worked with the County Attorney to obtain the property with the hope of saving the structure. However, because of the severe and serious structural damage to the interior, the City moved toward demolition.
Director Ciabatti highlighted this final example to demonstrate that these cases, along with the other cases brought forward, are not simple and easily navigated. They take time and effort of staff to ultimately get to a resolution. In the case of 1527 2nd AVE SE, it took years to resolve this and it was only resolved through perseverance and dedication, in addition to collaboration of multiple Departments. Director Ciabatti started out this report by highlighting that there have been 1,247 Code cases closed in 2019. Many, if not all, of these cases go unnoticed and do not get the coverage as some of the larger clean up or demolition operations, but all are important. Each case has its own background and history, and staff does everything within their means to solve the issue. In closing, the Building Services staff remains committed to the City of Cedar Rapids and the standards within our neighborhoods.

Building Services comments from Committee Members:

- Councilmember will continue dedicated effort to report issues that are seen throughout neighborhoods etc. A lot can happen in a neighborhood even based upon what took place over the weekend.
- Thank you for your dedication on the issue at 15th and 2nd. That was a sad story on how that ended up happening.

**Parks and Recreation-Scott Hock**

Director Hock presented a proposal to amend City Code Section 10.09 Parks opening and closing times, and a copy of his presentation is attached.

The current ordinance states that all parks shall be closed from 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. on each day with the following exceptions: (1) the Parks and Recreation Director may grant special permission to persons or groups to use designated parks, venues, or facilities after 10:00 p.m.; (2) persons participating in attending scheduled tournament ball games in progress may remain to completion of game if not finished by 10:00 p.m.; (3) any municipal employee on duty, law enforcement officer, or person duly authorized by the Parks & Recreation Director or his representative to be in the park. Any person entering, being in a public park during the hours the park is closed, except as above provided shall be guilty of a misdemeanor subject to penalties provided in the Municipal Code, City of Cedar Rapids.

Current practices: Those that use the park/trails for commuting purposes or those that might be getting an early start on activities such as fishing on the River are not areas of concern and typically not viewed as an issue by officers and Park staff.

Increasing number of campers over the past few years and based on the wording of the ordinance have been leaving campers unattended in places such as Ellis Park near the River.

The proposed change: Any person entering, being in, or depositing, storing, or leaving personal property, including but not limited to a vehicle, tent, camper or trailer, in a public park during the
hours the park is closed, except as above provided shall be guilty of a misdemeanor subject to penalties provided in the Municipal Code, City of Cedar Rapids.

The intention is to address those leaving campers and tents on park property unattended overnight and not change their other practices regarding the current ordinance.

The tentative next step includes setting a public hearing at the February 25, 2020 Council Meeting.

Parks and Recreation comments from Committee Members:

- How will we effectively manage this? How do we distribute CRPD officers in order to cover all of the parks, and would it be connected with Darrah’s for towing?
- I fail to understand how someone would leave their personal property in a park to begin with.
- The intent isn’t necessarily to target the tents?

Youth Services Update-Sgt. Laura Faircloth with CRPD

Sergeant Faircloth presented a summary for Youth Services, and a copy of her reports are attached.

PALs are in school, with the last of the fall classes and going into their spring curriculum. They had two events over the breaks.

The SRO’s (School Resource Officers) have been busy, and have done 17 safety drills (lock down, fire and tornado).

They have had 29 disorderly conducts:

- 10 sent to diversionary program (wrote letters and essays on their behavior)
- 19 charged (each juvenile can only have one diversionary program, then charges have to be made)
- 211 outreach to parents (behavioral problems, suicidal thoughts/threats)
- 17 referrals to other agencies which include mental health and Foundation II

The classes that the SRO’s are involved with are Driver’s Ed, OWI Awareness, Search and Seizure, Cyberbullying and one of the SRO’s did a courthouse tour with the students.

The SRO’s have intervened with numerous arguments and disagreements before they turned into disturbances.

Youth Services comments from Committee Members:

- Are you noticing any distinct trends or issues that are getting worse or are things staying about the same?
- It seems to be a constant state of trying to stop teenagers from fighting one another during the breaks.
- Thank you for your update, it is nice to have a breakdown like this.

**SAFE-CR Update-Amanda Grieder**

Amanda presented the update on SAFE-CR, and a copy of the SAFE-CR report is attached.

SAFE-CR issued 6,235 founded calls for service since the program began. 879 of those have become nuisance properties. Over the past few months, they have worked with Building Services to look at some of the properties that they have received emails about per property holders. They have looked at what they can do to hold them more accountable, and they are in the process of seeing if there are any additional penalties they could put on them. They have a couple of those small claims packets ready to take to municipal infraction to get some of the money back from the property owners call for service.

SAFE-CR related comments from Council Members:

- Since we’ve had this ordinance in place, are you finding it easier to get the rental properties and landlords back into compliance?
- With the momentum that we’ve got going it seems this is a good time to do as you’re doing in looking for other ways to hold people accountable.
- It’s tough to believe there was a time when we didn’t have this as a tool and it’s still refreshing to be able to have this to help with the quality of life in neighborhoods. The goal is to decrease the amount of resources we’re expending on some of the same people time and time again.
- Thank you for the great data and it seems you’re making some progress. I’m hearing good things from a lot of the property owners.

**Police Department Report-Chief Wayne Jerman**

Chief Jerman presented a summary of 2019 for the Police Department, and a copy of the Police Department reports are attached.

Since 2013, violent crime within the city is down about 6%, although the report indicates that violent crime was up 2.49% in 2019, which is where the analysis comes into play. That figure is driven to that level due to the increase in aggravated assaults and domestic violence assaults. The other categories of robberies and rapes within the city were down. Robberies decreased significantly compared to the five year average. A theory of why they believe the domestic violence abuse incidents have increased is due to a number of reasons:

- The Lethality Assessment Program that has been implemented.
- The victims of domestic violence are reporting the crimes more often

Last year 7 victims died as a result of murder in 6 incidents, and that is equal to the 5 year average. Property crime was down 10% in 2019 compared to the 5 year average. Burglaries were down over 8%.
They believe the decrease could be attributed to a social media campaign sent out by their Community Outreach Section. A routine reminder (Nine PM Routine) at 9 PM to remind residents to lock their windows and doors was sent out on social media. They believe this also attributed to the decrease in thefts from motor vehicles.

One area that they targeted and focused on for the upcoming year was to decrease the theft of motor vehicles. They saw an 18% increase compared to the previous years. The vast majority of these thefts are preventable, as most of these cases were due to a vehicle being left running unattended or left unlocked in their driveway or the street. In many cases, the vehicles are being stolen because the keys have been left in the vehicle. They will have a very aggressive social media campaign planned to remind residents to not make it easy for someone to steal their vehicle.

They have reached double digits in the theft of firearms that were left unattended in vehicles. 70% of the time the vehicles were left unlocked. In 2019, these incidents have included 26 handguns and 2 shotguns that were taken from inside vehicles, most of which were unlocked. Who knows the whereabouts of these firearms now, and there are deadly weapons out there in unknown hands. They are trying to find a remedy to reduce these types of incidents.

They had 18 fewer shots fired in 2019 compared to 2018. That is encouraging, and 9 of these incidents resulted in an arrest of the person responsible. The effort that the Police Department is committed to is to make arrests for individuals who are prohibited from possessing firearms. In 2019, the Police Department took 175 guns off the streets. The Police Community Action Team was responsible for seizing illegally possessed firearms, and they will continue to be aggressively engaged of ridding the community of illegally possessed firearms.

Police Department related comments from Committee Members include:

- Can you speak to the theft from building? Was it re-categorized or added the year prior?
- Do you have any idea if the human-traffic ordinance has attributed to the 40% decrease in prostitution? There was a request to look into this more.
- Do we track elder abuse? There was a request to see more information about that.
- Do we have an update regarding a grant for the purchase of doorbell cameras?
- How are the new police officers and PCAT teams doing?
- Request for more information at the next meeting regarding fireworks charges and how they make their way through the court system.
- Does anyone pay attention to incidents of domestic violence that end of being a result of a no-contact order violation?

MARCH AGENDA ITEM FORECAST

- Building Services Report (Ciabatti)
- Cedar Rapids Fire Department Report (Smith)
- Youth Services Report (Faircloth)
Public Safety Minutes
Jan 20, 2020

- Parks and Recreation *(Scott Hock)*
- Police SAFE-CR Report *(Grieder)*
- Cedar Rapids Police Department Report *(Jerman)*
- May Agenda Forecast Items

The meeting was adjourned at 5:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Megan Schillinger
Administrative Assistant II
Cedar Rapids Fire Department