Meeting was brought to order by Committee Chairperson Susie Weinacht at 4:00 p.m.

Present: Council members Susie Weinacht, Ashley Vanorney, Dale Todd, Fire Chief Greg Smith, Police Chief Wayne Jerman, Building Services Director Kevin Ciabatti, Area Ambulance Services Executive Director Keith Rippy, Amanda Grieder with SAFE‐CR, and Sgt. Laura Faircloth for Youth Services.

The May 20, 2019 Public Safety and Youth Services Committee minutes were approved.

Fire Department Fireworks Presentation-Chief Greg Smith & Fire Marshal Vance McKinnon

Chief Smith and Fire Marshal Vance McKinnon presented a report on fireworks, and a copy of the presentation is attached.

Discussion included:

- A review of Fireworks Incidents in Cedar Rapids
- Iowa Fireworks Law
- Sale and Use in Cedar Rapids
- Cedar Rapids Municipal Code
- Fireworks Vendors
- Police Calls for Service
- Citations Issued
- Fireworks Related Incidents

In 2017, there were 25 vendors selling fireworks; in 2018, there were 3 vendors selling fireworks; and in 2019, only 1 vendor sold fireworks. Beginning in 2018, vendors were only allowed to sell fireworks in industrial zoned districts.

In 2016, there were 486 calls for service; in 2017 (when fireworks were legalized) there were 948 calls for service; in 2018 (when Council banned fireworks) there were 851 calls for service; and in 2019 there were 618 calls for service (a 35% decrease from the previous year).
In 2017, 8 citations were issued; in 2018, 9 citations were issued; and in 2019, 28 citations were issued. SAFE-CR had calls for service related to fireworks and sent out 21 letters to property owners informing them of potential disturbing the peace citation due to fireworks being shot off from their property.

Regarding fireworks related incidents in 2017, there were 13 fire incidents (2 grass fires and 1 garage fire that spread to a house fire with $176,000 damage, and 21 injuries were reported at local hospitals. In 2018, there was 1 serious injury and a detached garage with a car sustained $30,000 in damage. In 2019, there were only two fire related incidents in which a detached garage sustained $800 damage and a grass fire and portable toilet was destroyed.

Damage from fireworks has dropped over the last three years. No hospital transports were reported by Area Ambulance Service. St. Luke’s Hospital had 2 walk in injuries, and Mercy Hospital had one, but they are not sure if it was from Cedar Rapids or from a surrounding area. The number of serious incidents has dropped dramatically over the last three years. The combined effort of the Police Department, as well as the work that the Council has done to ban the use and limit the sale of fireworks, has really helped with the property damage and injuries, and the number of complaints are trending downward. They are not sure if it will trend downward to the pre-legislation level.

Comments from Committee Members regarding fireworks included:

- There were not enough people staffed in Dispatch to handle the calls, and not enough officers on the street to respond to fireworks calls.
- The Fire Department should be teaming up with the Police Department responding to fireworks calls.
- Concern about the amount of money/resources spent relating to fireworks and a need to increase the budget next year to cover the costs of overtime, etc. during the holiday.
- People are confused by the boundaries of Hiawatha, Marion and Cedar Rapids concerning where fireworks are being used or sold.
- Request for data regarding water quality, as a result of the shooting of fireworks.
- Educate public that people who submit video or photos of violators, and the charge goes to court, they would have to appear in court as a witness.
- When vendors sell fireworks, add to the educational material that is distributed that it is illegal to sell fireworks to minors.
- Discussion related to keeping fireworks a municipal infraction versus a State charge.
- Discussion regarding lobbying at the State level.
- Discussion related to having a property on the outskirts of the city where people can shoot off fireworks.

Fire Department Report-Chief Greg Smith

Fire Chief Greg Smith highlighted a few key points from the reports that are attached.
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. In May and June there were 27 total fires, and 12 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. 9 were confined to the room of origin. 78% of the fires responded to in May and June were confined to the object or room of origin, which is above the national average of 75%.

The Fire Department had 2,178 total incidents in May and June, and fire loss data for this time period was $1.9 million in structural and content loss. They had an uptick in their average response time, which was attributed to the cold, long lasting winter; however, they are trending downward again. They strive for a fast response time because in 30 seconds a fire doubles in size.

Chief Smith mentioned a new project, which should be implemented within the next 12 to 18 months. One of the key features is an automated voice that will dispatch firefighters to the address, and the type of event so the crews can start enroute and get more information either on the MDC apparatus or via human voice enroute. This should increase their average turn out time.

Fire Department related comments from Committee Members:

- Thank you for 150 years of excellent service at the Fire Department and the recent community outreach event.
- Request for data on the usage of the heat relief stations.

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

Kevin Ciabatti from Building Services provided the summary from his Department for activities for the months of May and June, and his report is attached.

As Building Services has been forecasting, the total number of trade inspections has been trending lower than the same time period last year. Total inspections completed in May and June of this year are 5% lower than the same time-period last year. Regarding permit valuations, the permit valuations has also been trending lower than the same time period last year. However, when compared to last year, last year was a record year. There was a 29% reduction in permit valuations than the same time period last year. The top 5 Commercial building permits issued in May and June had a valuation of over 28 million dollars. The total valuation recorded for all projects in May and June was over 63 million dollars. The total number Total permits issued were approximately 11% lower than the same time-period last year. There were 34 New Single Family permits were issued in May and June.

Concerning preliminary fiscal year end data, the total valuation reported was over 330 million. Again, not as high as last fiscal year, but clearly the third highest in the last 19 years. There were 130 single family homes permitted in last fiscal year. Most permits applications were submitted in the last 60 days.
Not included in the report, but worth mentioning is there have been 2 building demolitions that have occurred in May and June, which were a result of lengthy Court proceedings to allow the City to remove the blighted structurers from our community.

**Area Ambulance Report-Keith Rippy**

Keith Rippy provided a few key points on the Area Ambulance report, which is attached.

June and July are the two busiest months they have for community events and standbys. In June, AAS performed 39 standbys for various community events, which included Motocross, Freedom Festival, Hawkeye Downs racing, the Kernels Baseball, and the River Kings. For public safety, AAS performed 21 Fire Department standbys and three law enforcement standbys.

Looking at the fiscal year end of June 30, they had about 21,620 calls for service. Last year, they had 21,266 calls for service, for an increase of 354. Four years prior to this year, they had between 700-1,000 calls for service.

In 2016, they performed 14,197 transports, and 1,400 of those transports went to out of town hospitals. In 2017, they performed 15,012 transports, and 1,495 went to out of town hospitals. In 2016 and 2017, approximately 10% of their transports went out of town. In 2018, they performed 15,816 transports, and 1,324 of those went out of town, for about 8%. In fiscal year 2019, they performed 16,898 transports, and 1,303 went out of town, or 8%. The out of town hospital transports include the Iowa City hospitals, Quad Cities hospitals, Waterloo hospitals, and the Mayo Clinic. The reason for out of town transports include space availability, condition of the patient/degree of injury or illness, the need for a higher level of care, or the availability of a specialist. If the patient doesn’t have a preference of which hospital to be taken to, then they are required to go to the closest hospital.

**Youth Services Update-Sgt. Laura Faircloth with CRPD**

Sergeant Faircloth presented the attached reports for Youth Services.

The Cedar Rapids Police Department is featured in a national campaign called “Share Blue Smiles”, which spotlights police officers who go above and beyond to make a difference in their communities. Sgt. Faircloth shared a video of the featured presentation. Members of the Cedar Rapids Police Department went above and beyond the call of duty when a mom and her young son experienced a burglary in their home on Christmas Eve in 2016. The officers replaced the son’s Christmas gifts, many items that were stolen, including a television and other household items. The video is being streamed and can be viewed on social media.

The summer has been very successful with the youth, and listed below are some of the activities:

- Pop-up clubs will be occurring for two more weeks, where they join the Boys and Girls club at different locations.
- Youth Academies are being held at the Police Department in June and July.
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- Jump Start program, where they partnered with Mount Mercy, with 50 children attending
- Kids on Course
- Catch with a Cop
- Tours at the Police Department
- Career Talks
- Custard with a Cop
- K9 Dodgeball
- Partner with Safe Kids Coalition
- Various community events
- National Night Out will be held on August 6th
- Police Explorer Program

Sgt. Faircloth gives credit to the CRPD PCAT (Police Community Action Team) for promoting good relationships with youth. They are out in the community gaining relationships with the youth.

Youth Services comments from Committee Members:

- Request for a report from Parks and Rec regarding youth programs. Also, programs for kids in adverse neighborhoods. This will be an agenda item for the next meeting.
- Positive feedback regarding the Share Blue Smiles video.
- Request for information reporting regarding youth programs at the Fire Department.
- Anti-transgender needs to be added to the website in addition to sexual orientation, bi sexual, etc. regarding tracking hate crimes. Also have City Attorney evaluate an ordinance proposal to include hate crimes as an added offense to some crimes.

SAFE-CR Update-Amanda Grieder

Amanda presented the update on the SAFE-CR report, which is attached.

Amanda reported that the City received judgments against two landlords for $250 and $480, plus court costs. SAFE-CR has asked for a revocation of another landlord’s license and registration of his property, since he has not paid his invoice of $2,500. Amanda states that taking property owners to small claims court is a good tool, but that some people just pay the fines and don’t show up for court. They can also collect the fees through the State Offset program. They continue to work to make sure property owners are being held accountable; however, Amanda is always open to suggestions for what else can be done.

SAFE-CR related comments from Council Members:

- What more can be done to make the program more effective.
Police Department Report-Chief Wayne Jerman

Chief Jerman presented the attached reports for the Police Department.

The Police Department is encouraged by the fact that the number of reported violent crimes continues to trend downward in comparison to the number of violent crimes a decade ago. Comparing the average number of violent crimes over the past 5 years, which is often a more meaningful barometer of trends, violent crime was down 1.74 percent in first half of calendar year 2019 compared to the five-year rolling average. Aggravated assaults were higher than the 5-year average by 5 incidents.

Domestic abuse incidents were the primary factor in the increase in aggravated assaults. The Police Department had 2,845 calls for service for domestic abuse incidents between January 1-June 30, 2019 and 2,671 for the same period last year. The 5-year average for domestic abuse calls for service is 2,338. This is about 22% higher than the 5-year average and 6.5% over the previous year.

It is important to note that the Police Department began using the “Lethality Assessment Program” in February 2017. The program, created by the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence, is a series of 11 questions police ask when responding to a domestic abuse call. The questions seek details such as whether a partner is controlling or jealous, or if he or she has choked the other. If the victim’s answers to the questions are enough to alarm an officer, the officer will call a service provider while still on the scene. If the victim does not want to speak to the social services agency, the agency or officer will still work with the victim on a safety plan, which could include having a bag packed and ready at a neighbor’s house. If there is an injury, an arrest is mandatory. Ultimately, the program provides help to the victim – whether through social services and/or arrest of the offender.

Property crimes were down 3.52 percent in the first half of 2019 compared to the 5-year average for January-June of previous years.

Theft from motor vehicles is down over 10 percent compared to the past five years. The Police Department has been using a #9PM Routine on social media for several months in an effort to increase awareness about the importance of locking your vehicle doors. Even with this effort, 91 of the 207 incidents (about 44%) of theft of motor vehicle were the result of victims either leaving their keys in the car or leaving the vehicle running unattended.

Burglaries are the most prevalent property crime issue driving up the rate. The vast majority of these burglaries are crimes of opportunity. There were 418 burglaries reported and the majority of these burglaries were residential break-ins, and 71% of these burglaries did not involve force. Entry was gained either through an unlocked door or window. The Police Department is going to be more aggressive with a crime prevention outreach regarding burglaries. The Police Department is going to encourage citizens to make sure homes are secured using deadbolt locks, windows are locked, proper lighting is installed, shrubbery is trimmed to prevent burglar concealment. The Police Department also intends to reinvigorate and enhance their Neighborhood Watch Program. Chief Jerman also stressed the importance of capturing a crime on video. Also, Sgt. Faircloth was instrumental in getting the voluntary registration of video cameras for residents.

There have been 38 shots fired incidents in the first half of 2019 compared to 53 for the first half of 2018.
Police Department related comments from Committee Members include:

- Thank you for the work during the July 4th holiday, including the Ellis Boat Harbor fireworks and the incident command center.
- The marijuana law change in Illinois, and what can be done to prepare for how that will affect Cedar Rapids. Council member Vanorny is requesting information regarding the Police Department’s response/handling this change in Illinois law.
- Thank you regarding Police Departments’ work relating to gangs.
- Create a public campaign on the importance of capturing and submitting videos of crimes to the Police Department.

SEPTEMBER AGENDA ITEM FORECAST

- Building Services Report (Ciabatti)
- Cedar Rapids Fire Department Report (Smith)
- Area Ambulance Service Report (Rippy)
- Youth Services Report (Faircloth)
- Police SAFE-CR Report (Grieder)
- Cedar Rapids Police Department Report (Jerman)
- November Agenda Forecast Items

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Novak
Administrative Assistant III
Cedar Rapids Police Department