

MINUTES
CITY OF KEY COLONY BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT WORKSHOP
Friday, April 3, 2009 9:30 a.m. City Hall Auditorium

The Police Department workshop of the Key Colony Beach City Commission was called to order at 9:35 a.m. by Mayor Sutton. *Present were:* Mayor Ron Sutton, Vice-Mayor Geraldine Zahn, Commissioner Jeff Vorick, Commissioner Seneca "Tucker" DeGraw and Commissioner Mary Schmidt. *Also Present:* Police Chief Robert Petrick, City Clerk Vickie Bollinger, Sgt. Birklund and Ofc. DiGiovanni. Public: 3

Mayor Sutton stated the commission held a workshop last September to discuss the open police officer position and whether to replace that officer or reduce the size of our police force. At the October 23, 2008 commission meeting, it was agreed the position would not be filled for a 6 month period to evaluate operations with a reduced police force.

The commissioners and Chief Petrick discussed:

- Expenses to date for overtime and contract police services – they are over budget, but that was anticipated when the vacancy was not filled.
- The last six months are not the busiest for the police force; the summer months are busier, especially lobster mini-season through the opening of regular lobster season.
- The police force can do the job at the current level of staffing, but with reduced services.
- New Quay boat ramp may provide relief for the congestion on the Causeway at the marina.
- All police staff are working extra hours to cover 24/7: Chief worked 13 shifts, officers worked 14.5 overtime shifts and the sheriff's office worked 5.5 shifts.
- History of turnover, use of part-time officers, and commission decision to hire a sixth full-time officer; tax relief from Monroe County if we maintain 24/7 coverage.
- Property owners do pay taxes to Monroe County for dispatch, courts, jail and special services.
- Number of times contract police have been used, response by a Sheriff Deputy in the city, and response by city police in Marathon as part of the mutual aid agreement.
- Whether sixth officer is needed for service calls and kinds of services that can be provided.
- Police officers do a lot more than police services.
- Estimated costs during the summer months when there is more demand for police services could result in total costs of \$27,000 for overtime and contract police services.
- Savings from not hiring could be as high as \$50,000 which is significant given the economic condition.
- Chief shifts his work hours to cover daytime patrol; that is more difficult to do with night shifts.
- Police are ambassadors for city and sometimes there are complaints about attitudes and treatment of visitors and residents.
- Police are hired to enforce rules and regulations established by the commission; commission should provide direction on enforcement issues.
- Some people who complain do not tell the whole story. Chief and officers should be consulted before judging situations.
- Many compliments have been received about the officer's attitudes and helpfulness to both residents and visitors.
- Rules and regulations should be applied evenly to all groups: visitors, renters and residents.

Mayor Sutton summarized that commissioners generally agreed to not fill the vacant position at this time, thereby saving up to \$50,000 of expense.

Commissioner Vorick left the meeting due to a previous commitment.

Discussion of enforcement and service levels continued. Commissioners acknowledged that overtime and contract police services will continue to be used and will be over budget for this fiscal year. This will be offset by reductions in the salary and benefits line items.

Citizen commented that the extra expense for overtime and contract police and the cost savings should be better defined; and that the level of service and base of operations must be maintained during bad economic times as well as the good times.

Chief Petrick stated the Cops Hiring Recovery Program will be providing \$1 Billion of grant funds to local and state law enforcement to fund vacancies due to budget constraints. The application deadline is April 16. The basic grant would fund salary, benefits, and equipment for an officer for 3 years with the requirement that the officer must then be kept for one additional year. The Chief suggested that if the city received a grant to fill this vacant position, the savings from overtime and contract police for those three years could be placed in reserve to pay salary and benefits in the fourth year.

The Chief stated the grant money would probably not be available until fall; there was no cost to apply, except for his time, no grant writer would be used; and the city cannot use the grant instead of city funds, it must be for unfunded positions. The Chief stated it was important that the position was not filled for budget reasons.

Commissioners agreed that the city should apply for the grant. Chief Petrick will bring this item to the next commission meeting for approval. Commissioners thanked Chief Petrick for finding this grant and efforts to complete the application process.

The workshop adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Vickie L. Bollinger, City Clerk