



**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE AGENDA**  
*Monday, September 11, 2023 at 8:30 a.m.*  
**Adel City Hall, 301 S. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Adel, IA 50003**

**NEW BUSINESS**

- a) May 8, 2023 Public Safety Committee Meeting Minutes
- b) New Fire Station
- c) Full-Time Fire Chief
- d) Additional School Resource Officer

**OTHER BUSINESS**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Public Safety Committee**  
**Monday, May 8, 2023 – Meeting Minutes**

The City of Adel's Public Safety Committee met in the City's Public Safety Building. Selby called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. Members present: McAdon, Ockerman, and Selby. Others present: City Administrator Brown (by phone), Finance Director Sandquist, Public Works Director Overton, Police Chief Shepherd, Lieutenant Book, Fire Chief Nemechek, and Assistant Fire Chief Knipper.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**a) July 5, 2022 Public Safety Committee Meeting Minutes**

Ockerman motioned, seconded by McAdon, to approve the minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

**b) New Fire Station / Full-Time Fire Staff / Aerial Truck**

*AND*

**c) Fire Districts / Territory (e.g., Areas Served by the Cities of De Soto and Van Meter)**

Ockerman stated that the City needs to begin looking for land for a new Fire Station. Selby stated the City could consider using funds from LOST and/or the General Fund.

Ockerman suggested considering land south of town on HWY 169 to facilitate a combined Adel, De Soto, and Van Meter fire department or district. Sandquist noted that township fees and funding from other cities may not be able to support a combined territory.

McAdon asked about the space at the City's existing Public Safety Building. Nemechek stated that both the Police and Fire Departments were out of room now. Further, a ladder / aerial truck could not be housed inside the existing building.

Ockerman stated that the City needs to plan for a full-time Fire Department because it is missing too many calls now. McAdon noted that most of the calls are for first responder calls or assists.

Sandquist stated that adding one full-time Fire staff position may not change the call response, and the City's current funding level could not support more than one full-time position. Ockerman stated that the cost could be split with Van Meter and De Soto, or the City could apply for grants. Ockerman noted that the City needs to prepare for more calls every year.

McAdon stated that ladder trucks seem to be used for cities with populations of 15,000 or more, as those cities tend to have taller buildings. Nemechek stated that new three-story apartments have been proposed in the Southbridge development. Ockerman stated that, if the City builds a Fire Station, it should be designed for the future. McAdon asked how a large facility could be justified to the public. Knipper stated that the public wants fire protection. Ockerman stated that fire station project bonds are generally supported.

Selby stated that a full-time Fire Chief could be hired to help and prepare for a new Fire Station. Ockerman stated a full-time position could help prepare the City for the next 20 years. McAdon asked about a new position's duties given the number of calls. Nemechek stated he was reviewing job descriptions and a full-time chief could oversee emergency management and fire inspections for buildings.

Sandquist stated that it is unknown how the State Legislature's new property tax reform bill will affect the City's revenues in the coming years. McAdon stated that a new building will require the building cost but also ongoing, recurring operational and maintenance costs to fund. Ockerman stated that State laws will continue to change in the coming years.

Ockerman stated that, if the City wants to target the November 2024 election with a bond ballot measure, the City will need to purchase land and hire an architect soon. Ockerman stated that the federal fire grant will help with staffing a new full-time position.

McAdon stated that prices will continue to increase over time. Overton stated that HR Green's pavement management study may suggest funding \$1.75 million in street projects annually.

Selby asked about locating a new fire station south or combining fire districts. Ockerman noted that the City could look to the County, as many cities are struggling with fire services.

Nemechek stated that a new fire station would need 3-7 acres, with 7 acres improving the community's Insurance Services Office (ISO) ratings (which can help property owners' insurance rates). A new station should be built to accommodate growth but not overdone. Ockerman stated a new station's location may depend on where the ADM School District's next building is built next.

Selby asked whether the City could work with a realtor confidentially to locate land. McAdon stated the City would need to know what it wants first. Ockerman suggested the council could use a closed session. Ockerman suggested the mayors of Adel, De Soto, and Van Meter could meet to talk about combining fire districts and services.

Brown stated that the City could consider its 40 acres near the aquatic center. McAdon stated she would not favor that location, but the school has land in that area as well. Sandquist noted that, if the City pursues a new Fire Station, it will not have funding for the proposed Water Tower Park on its 40 acres.

Shepherd stated that a new Fire Station would allow the Police Department to use the existing Public Safety Building for another 10 years. Shepherd stated that he does not favor a new combined Police / Fire building, as the Police Department prefers to be centrally located in Adel.

Ockerman stated that the federal firefighter grant process opens in September, with an award in December for the City's FY24-25. This award could be delayed a year as well.

Selby asked about a ladder / aerial truck. Ockerman stated it could be bonded for with a new Fire Station.

Ockerman stated that residents east of Old Portland Road could petition their Van Meter Township trustees to change their fire coverage to the City.

#### **d) Update on Orders of New Fire Trucks and Any Needed Equipment**

Nemechek stated that one chassis for the new fire trucks has arrived at the dealer. There will be a surcharge for the 2024 model.

McAdon stated that the City has approximately \$80,000 in remaining American Rescue Plan Act funding that could be used for equipment. Nemechek stated that hose replacements and other equipment replacements or upgrades will be needed.

#### **e) Clarify Fire Department / Fire Chief Reporting or Chain of Command**

Brown stated that, ahead of his medical leave, he would like to clarify how the Fire Department and Fire Chief fit into the City's chain of command.

Currently, the Adel Fire Association (i.e., the volunteer group that effectively is the City's Fire Department) votes and selects its own Fire Chief. The City's Employee Handbook states that the Mayor oversees the Fire Chief, who oversees firefighters.

However, the Mayor's City Code chapter does not reference the Fire Department, and the Mayor recently stated that he has not been involved with anything Fire related.

Brown stated that different Fire Chiefs have worked with him or kept him apprised differently. When Brown was selected as the interim City Administrator in 2014 and then appointed as the City Administrator in 2015, he understood that all departments but Police, Fire, and Library reported to him. This idea is somewhat reflected in the City Code, but the Code also has some discrepancies with Fire and generally references the council's involvement (e.g., appointing the Fire Chief).

Selby stated that the State Code references a city's mayor as the chain of command for Fire. Sandquist stated that this role would fit with the Mayor's public safety responsibilities. Ockerman stated that having the Fire Chief report to the Mayor makes sense.

**f) Any Other Fire Department Items?**

Nemechek asked about how to sell the Fire Department's old trucks once the new ones arrive. Nemechek is reviewing a government auction website.

**g) Any Police Department Items?**

Shepherd stated that the Public Safety Building has installed a new roof, new office phones, and a new security system. A new police officer has been funded for FY23-24. Shepherd stated that several certified officers have applied so far, but he may need to send a new person to the Police Academy.

**h) Dallas County Hazard Mitigation Plan – Capability Assessment and Actions**

McAdon asked about Section 7 (Mitigation Strategies) and the priorities and prices, which would need to be built into the budget process. Overton stated that some of the storm water items will be considered during major street projects.

Ockerman stated that the City could change its ordinances to require shelters or safe rooms in new construction. Overton stated that future grants will help with the rest of the list.

Ockerman noted that the County works with cities to update these plans every five years. McAdon suggested that no particular item was apparently urgent right now. Overton noted that, if the City were to have a full-time Fire Chief, that position would handle this work.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

In other business, Ockerman noted that the County has two emergency management positions open.

**ADJOURNMENT – 3:40 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted: Anthony Brown, City Administrator

## **Anthony Brown**

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**Subject:** 24/25 budget

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**From:** Brittany Sandquist <bsandquist@adeliowa.org>

**Sent:** Tuesday, August 15, 2023 10:44 AM

**To:** Bob Ockerman <bockerman@adeliowa.org>; Anthony Brown <abrown@adeliowa.org>

**Subject:** RE: 24/25 budget

Good Morning Bob,

I agree, the addition of a full-time fire position should be considered given the Council's discussions surrounding a new station. We could have an initial discussion following our meeting next Tuesday. Below are just some of the things we would need to consider.

- Appropriate wages/benefits to be budgeted.
- Office location for this position and budget for office furnishings, equipment, etc.
- What the City is willing to forego in other departments for this position.
- The needs of the City as they relate to establishing duties and developing a job description.
- Reporting structure for this position (Mayor/City Administrator). Related Ordinance updates.
- Individual(s) responsible for the hiring/appointing of this position.
- Potential impact on current department structure and environment. What would this mean for the Association?

Please feel free to chime in with anything else.

Thank You,

***Brittany Sandquist***

Finance Director

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