



## **PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE**

**Sam King Room**

**May 20, 2008**

**12:00 Noon**

**PRESENT:** Duane Reid, Commissioner  
Milton Slack, Commissioner  
Bill Fricks, Commissioner  
John Bennett, City Manager  
Hubert Smith, City of Rome Police Department  
Lonzo Roberson, City of Rome Police Department  
Terry Autry, City of Rome Police Department  
Travis Goss, City of Rome Police Department  
Bobbie McKenzie, Fire Department  
Gordon Henderson, Fire Department  
Kevin Grueber, Floyd Against Drugs  
Scotty Hancock, Emergency Management

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the March 18, 2008 Public Safety meeting were approved as submitted.

### **ANIMAL CONTROL**

A written report on activities at Animal Control was distributed to the committee. Mr. Hancock reported Jason Broome has officially been appointed as Director of Animal Control and plans to attend all future Public Safety Committee meetings. Mr. Hancock addressed an issue of concern with writing citations within the city limits. After working with the City Police Department and City staff, the Animal Control Department has worked out an agreement that will enable them to issue city citations which will go to Municipal Court and the funds will be returned to the County at the end of the year.

### **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

A written report on activities in Emergency Management was distributed to the committee. Mr. Hancock thanked everyone for their participation in the recent rescue and cleanup efforts after the recent tornado that hit in the southern part of Floyd County. He stated the City Police Department participated by bringing the command post. He reported the Fire Department did a great job responding to the scene since they were at a fire on Rockmart Road approximately one half mile from where the tornado came through. He also reported 550 tons of debris was removed from that area with 90% going to Inland. The few minor issues that arose have been corrected in the "after-action" segment of their follow-up discussions.

## **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT cont.**

Mr. Hancock reported that FEMA will reimburse the City and/or County 75% but if a pre-event contract is in place and a debris management plan is established, the City and/or County will be eligible for an additional five percent. The County is working on this and hoped to have these plans in place soon. Two million dollars in mitigation funds are available to be split between the six counties that were affected by this tornado.

Mr. Hancock also stated that due to this particular tornadic season they have been receiving several calls asking why Floyd County had no warning sirens since most of the surrounding counties had them. He stated there was \$200,000 available for a warning system and he has priced 14 weather sirens at a cost of \$288,000. He went on to explain it would take over 100 weather sirens to cover the entire county with a maintenance cost of approximately \$50,000 a year. He stated that even though they have in the past advocated weather radios he suggested looking at applying for grant money to purchase a "Code Red" system (telephone) for \$25,000 per year. This can be placed on the local websites and will allow residents to register up to two phones and they will be notified by the National Weather Service of inclement weather in the area. Mr. Bennett stated the local news channels offer this same service. Mr. Hancock suggested doing a public service campaign to encourage local residents to register for this service. Commissioner Reid asked if there were other communities using the Code Red system. Mr. Hancock stated there were several communities in Georgia using this system.

## **911**

A written report on activities in the 911 Center was distributed to the committee. Mr. Hancock stated he was still working on communication upgrades. Mr. Bennett stated he would like to put this project in the next SPLOST referendum.

## **FAD DEPARTMENT**

A written report was distributed to the committee. Mr. Gruber reported he had recently attended a Meth Summit that was very informative. He stated he would begin having one-day programs to educate the public on the on going problem and what all is involved with meth usage.

He also stated the new edition of the LAW publication drug booklet was about to come out and would have letters of support from local police chiefs and the Sheriff which will show a united front against drugs.

Mr. Gruber stated he was in the process of working on grant proposals that will help funding his position and for other programs he would like to introduce. He also discussed changes to the FAD website and the upcoming preparations for Red Ribbon Month in October.

Mr. Gruber also explained that a Darlington student has put together a drug awareness video that he is going to put on the website and hopefully show throughout the school system. He stated he would be glad to bring the video to the next Public Safety Committee meeting for the Committee's review.

## **FIRE DEPARTMENT**

A written report on activities at the Fire Department was distributed to the committee. Chief McKenzie then went over the report explaining they responded to 352 alarms in both jurisdictions of which 169 were in the city with 183 remaining in the county. This averages out to 11.73 calls per 24-hour shift for the month.

Chief McKenzie also reported that since this is the end of school year that Fire Prevention was in the process of issuing fire safety awards. He went on to explain that this fire safety program runs throughout the school year and goes to all fifth grade classes, public and private, located in Floyd County. He also reported that the department now has two Dalmatian mixed dogs (rescued from the animal shelter), one of which works with Rita Smith in her programs.

## **POLICE DEPARTMENT**

A written report on activities at the Rome Police Department was distributed to the committee. Deputy Chief Roberson went over the report with the committee.

Chief Smith reported to the committee that they have recently had a Citizens Police Academy which is a 10-week one night a week program with 33 people in attendance. He also explained that every facet of law enforcement is presented to the class with a one-night ride-along. He stated that other than the female gun class, this is their most popular class.

Captain Autry who is the commander of the investigative unit gave the Committee an overview on activities within the police department. He reported that from January 1 to April 30 of this year as opposed to this same time last year, thefts were up 22%, robberies up 50%, burglaries up 40%, and fraud and forgery up over 137%. These crimes are increasing in other agencies as well due mainly to the economy. He also reported a big problem with graffiti. They have a suspect in custody for the recent spray painting of Rome High School and Rome Middle School. He reported that one of the Investigators in the department suggested an ordinance forbidding the sale of spray paint to anyone under the age of 18. He stated they were to check into this to see if any other communities have such an ordinance.

Major Goss and Deputy Chief Roberson explained their contribution to reducing the budget was to double up officers in patrol cars during the overlap time between second and third shifts. This should save in the course of a year \$10,000 to 12,000 in fuel. He also explained that with two officers being in the vehicle there was no need for calling in additional backup.

Mr. Bennett stated that an employee from the Building Inspection Department, who is a certified police officer, has been moved to the Police Department. This will be on a temporary basis. Deputy Chief Roberson stated that this person would take the place of an overtime bailiff in Municipal Court.

Ordinance Amendment

An ordinance change was presented to the Committee that would expand the duties and powers of the Police Chief to allow him to swear in new officers. Commissioner Fricks moved to present this ordinance amendment to the full Commission; Commissioner Slack seconded; motion carried.

Commissioner Reid thanked the Police Department for furnishing him with the records he requested on calls for noise complaints over the past year. He commented that according to the information presented and looking at the citations issued from the previous year, the ordinance is in place and the Police Department is enforcing that ordinance to the best of their ability.

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 1:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Beverly Johnston  
Secretary

*(reports available upon request)*