



Minutes
Public Safety Committee
January 18, 2024 9:00 a.m.
Via ZOOM

STAFF PRESENT: Scotty Hancock, *Committee Chair, Board of Commissioners*
Rhonda Wallace, *Committee Co-Chair, Board of Commissioners*
John Blalock, *Committee Chief of Staff, Public Safety Division Director*
Jamie McCord, *County Manager*
Katy Walters, *Director, P.A.W.S.*
Gene Proctor, *Coroner*
Tim Herrington, *Director, EMA*
Chris Fincher, *Assistant Director, EMA*
Sommer Robinson, *Director, E-911*
Troy Brock, *Chief, Rome-Floyd Fire Department*
Cathy Taylor, *Sargeant, Rome-Floyd Metro Task Force*
Ron Hunton, *Captain, Floyd County Police Department*
Mike Long, *Warden, Prison*
Steve Acker, *Captain, Floyd County Sheriff's Office*
Rick Flanigen, *Chief Safety and Security Officer, Floyd County Schools*
Lauren Chumbler, *Committee Secretary, County Manager's Office*

Others Present: WRGA News, *Media*
Nick McLemore, *City Manager, City of Cave Spring*
Dawn May, *Department of Public Health*

Call to Order

Commissioner Hancock called the meeting to order at 9:07 am and opened with prayer.

Public Participation - None

Review Minutes from October 19, 2023

The minutes of the October 19, 2023 meeting were approved by common consent.

Order of Business:

I. P.A.W.S.

P.A.W.S. Director Katy Walters stated the live outcome for 2023 was 94.9%. Stated they have received the new cat condos that were funded by SPLOST. Stated they took in 68 dogs on Friday due to a cruelty hoarding case and have taken in 37 strays so far this year. Ms. Walters stated they do have one position open at Animal Control.



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II. Coroner

Coroner Gene Proctor stated there was a total of 39 cases in November including nine accidents, five of which involved motorcycles. Stated there were four suicides and one infant death. Mr. Proctor stated in December there were 48 cases including one suicide, one infant death, but the majority were natural deaths. Stated there was an overdose death they had to get assistance from Metro Task Force and the Fire Department due to fentanyl being present. Stated in 2023 there were 529 death calls, which is down approximately 70 from 2022.

III. Emergency Management

EMA Director Tim Herrington went over the reports from November and December. Stated in 2023 there was a total of 5,607.5 hours, which included training, community events, and emergency operations.

a. Radio fees

Assistant EMA Director Chris Fincher stated he is proposing an increase to the radio fees across the board in order to cover the cost of maintenance and upgrades. Mr. Fincher stated this would include the City, colleges, Public Works, Cave Spring, and the hospitals. Stated it has never increased since it started between twelve to thirteen years ago. Commissioner Hancock stated he would like all of the agencies to be notified before it is increased and would like for it to go into effect next January. Commissioner Wallace stated if the cost is there, then they need to increase. County Manager Jamie McCord stated it can wait until next year and that this came up as they were going through the budget this year. Cave Spring City Manager Nick McLemore stated their budget begins July 1 so if he can get numbers, he will add it to next year's budget.

Mr. McCord thanked EMA and 911 for their social media updates during the bad weather as that has been very helpful to citizens and the media.

IV. E-911

E-911 Director Sommer Robinson stated the social media posts have helped dispatch as well as they are not having to field as many calls from the public or departments. Ms. Robinson stated they currently have four openings. Stated their dispatchers have been involved in community outreach including volunteering at the Community Kitchen. Stated they also sponsored over twenty kids for Christmas.

V. Fire Department

a. Stats

Chief Troy Brock stated in 2023 they had a total of 6,799 calls, which was down a couple of



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hundred compared to 2022.

b. Operations Report

Chief Brock stated they've made prepayments on two new pumpers and squads. Stated they hope to have the squads by spring, but the pumpers have a lead time of at least three years.

c. Support Report

Chief Brock stated they've hired 11 people that will start on February 12.

d. Other Business

Chief Brock stated the remodel of Station Four is complete and they will move back in over the weekend.

VI. Metro Task Force

Sargeant Cathy Taylor stated in December there were 24 arrests with 20 search warrants. Stated in 2023 they doubled the amount of search warrants and arrests. Stated they seized 14 vehicles and 127 firearms in 2023. Sargeant Taylor stated all of their number have been up compared to 2022. Stated they have already executed ten search warrants this month. Sargeant Taylor stated they've had two new investigators from the Sheriff's Office and are fully staffed from County Police, but do not have anyone from the City. Public Safety Division Director John Blalock stated the City told him this would be temporary and they would be assigning officers to Metro. Mr. Blalock also mentioned they would begin paying on call pay for each investigator assigned.

VII. Floyd County Police Department

Captain Ron Hunton stated they have six vacancies, and they had a hiring assessment yesterday and another one scheduled for next week. Stated there was one candidate from yesterday's assessment that is moving forward. Captain Hunton stated they have three officers in FTO currently. Stated Robert Carrington was named the 2023 Officer of the Year due to saving a woman's life from injuries. Captain Hunton stated Sergeant William Wacker and Mike Bell graduated with their Master's Degrees in December from the Georgia Command College. Stated the department partnered with EMA and Floyd County Schools for a successful coat drive at the end of 2023. Captain Hunton stated the grant funds for 2024 is almost \$1,100,000. Stated they are also looking at adding a mobile app for the County Police and they would like to use RedSpeed funds towards that. Captain Hunton stated they would like to have a place within the app for students to use if they have something they would like to report anonymously. Stated the app they are looking at is a little over \$17,000 and then a yearly fee of approximately \$7,000. Captain Hunton stated they are also looking into two programs for the investigation unit that is approximately \$16,000 total. Stated they could use forfeiture funds initially, and then potentially add to the budget after the first year.



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VIII. Prison / Work Release Center

Warden Mike Long stated they've completed a few internal projects such as carpet installation, tile removal and concrete sanding in the dining area. Stated they've also started the camera installation across the campus. Warden Long stated they currently have three positions open, but they are in the interviewing process with five candidates. Stated the residents in the Work Release Program participated in a fundraiser in December that raised over \$5,000. Warden Long stated they've started the replacement of the tabletops at the Lindale Train Depot and they also did repair work for the Museum of Flight at the airport. Stated Lieutenant Yochum applied and received a grant for \$100,000 for Covid relief and this will be used to replace all of the bedding in the facility. Warden Long stated there a few items that will be going to the Board of Commissioners including a request for approval for the gym renovation, replacement of the tank and boilers in the kitchen, fire alarm system upgrade, and door control upgrade. Warden Long asked that the Commission help with asking the State for a per diem increase due to the rise of costs. Mr. McCord stated they had a legislative breakfast in December and discussed this. Warden Long stated it may help to speak with Polk and Bartow as they receive inmate details and would support this as well. Commissioner Hancock agreed and asked Warden Long to send an email to him and the other Commissioners so they could pass it along.

IX. Sheriff's Office / Jail

Captain Steve Acker stated the Sheriff's Office is still fully staffed and there is currently one in the police academy and two in jail school. Stated in December they had two graduate from the academy and three from jail school. Captain Acker stated the Sheriff Santa program as able to give Christmas to over 600 kids and they also helped provide for local senior citizens in need. Stated they participated in Operation Watchful Eye at the end of October which verified all 278 sex offenders. Captain Acker stated Deputy Bruce Edmondson is retiring after 30 years of service. Stated they have a walk-in freezer that will be on the next agenda. Mr. McCord stated the sewage grinder replacement will also be on the upcoming Commission agenda.

X. Floyd BOE

Chief Safety and Security Officer Rick Flanigen stated they held their fifth annual SRO Christmas banquet in December and presented Dallas Bryant with the 2023 award of honor. Stated they also recognized Marcus Roberts and Mike Bell for their work as SROs. Mr. Flanigen thanked Commissioner Hancock for speaking at their banquet. Stated Ginger Shelly and Brittany Werner will be working on an internet safety program that will be presented to parents.

XI. Cave Spring Police Department

Cave Spring City Manager Nick McLemore went over the monthly report for December. Mr. McLemore thanked the County Police for their assistance and back up when needed. Commissioner Hancock thanked Mr. McLemore for his work and congratulated him on his new



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position.

XII. County Manager

Mr. McCord stated they hope to adopt the budget at the upcoming Commission meeting, and this will be a tight budget this year as thirty-one positions were cut. Stated the County needs to work on the fund balance which will take a year or two. Mr. McCord thanked all the departments on their work on the budget. Stated the City purchased the Scott Logistics building and tentatively scheduled to move in March. Mr. McCord stated the County's plan is to have Glenwood out for bid in February.

XIII. Chief of Staff

a. Inmate Work Details

Mr. Blalock stated the in-county details are \$73,250 and the out of county details were increased 3.7%, which was the CPI in November. Stated these contracts used to be renewed every three years, but they will start renewing annually so they can account for the actual cost.

b. Jail Housing Agreements

Mr. Blalock stated the main agreement is with the City of Rome. Stated this sets the cost for City inmates who are booked. Stated currently the fee is \$15 for booking and \$40 for housing. Mr. Blalock stated those numbers are from the agreement in 2013 and has not increased since. Stated they analyzed the time it takes to book an inmate along with the average pay of the employees needed and it came out to \$25 for booking. Stated for housing they looked at the Sheriff's Office operations cost for the jail and salary and benefits for the employees assigned to the jail divided by the average number of inmates and it came out to \$65. Mr. Blalock stated there is an escalator clause that allows the County to reassess the cost and raise it if needed without making a new contract. Stated these contracts are with the City of Rome, City of Cave Spring, Chattooga County, and a blank contract for agencies that need to house an inmate overnight if they are traveling through the area. Commissioner Hancock stated he thinks the fees are fair and asked when the effective date would be. Mr. McCord suggested a March or April effective date to allow the City and Cave Spring time. Mr. McLemore stated that would work for them.

XIV. Chairman

Commissioner Hancock stated there may be more adjustments to pay for State employees and stated they need to be aware of that. Mr. Blalock agreed and stated they do not need to lose the progress they've made over the years. Mr. McCord agreed and added that leadership in the departments has also helped. Commissioner Hancock stated he hopes they are able to adjust the budget for next year so it is not as tight. Warden Long stated the GDC Commissioner has sent out something for salary increases and he would send it to Commissioner Hancock and Mr. McCord. Commissioner Wallace thanked everyone present for the meeting and their leadership



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in their departments.

XV. Other Business

XVI. Adjourn

With no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned.

**Next meeting TBD, 2024*