

TOWN OF PALM BEACH

Office of The Town Clerk

REPORT OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, JULY 13, 2009

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The Public Safety Committee Meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. in the Emergency Operations Center, 355 South County Road, Palm Beach. On roll call, Chairman Wildrick and Committee Member Kleid were present.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Wildrick led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Agenda was approved as printed.

IV. COMMENTS OF THE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBER

Chairman Wildrick announced that the purpose of the meeting was to inform the public of what is happening in the Police and Fire Departments, especially with a new Police Chief, Kirk Blouin, and new appointments. He wanted to have the Fire Chief go first and asked that they identify how to move forward and asked what projects the departments are currently undertaking. He also said that he did not want to discuss the past.

Committee Member Kleid cited that two of the main reasons people move to Palm Beach, based on surveys, are for the safety in the Town and the level of service. He hoped that these Chiefs will continue with the levels of service even in the hard economic times.

Chairman Wildrick corrected himself and indicated that the agenda listed Chief Blouin going first. He asked Chief Blouin to give a brief history of himself. He thought it was a good story and proud that both Chiefs rose to the top ranks from within.

V. CURRENT STATE AND FUTURE PLANS OF THE PALM BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT. [KIRK W. BLOUIN, POLICE CHIEF]

Chief Blouin said he has worked in virtually every unit in the police department. He started with the department as a patrol officer and held assignments in the motorcycle unit,

1 the organized crime, vice and narcotics unit and the detective bureau. After he was promoted
2 to sergeant, he served in the patrol division, detective bureau, organized crime, vice and
3 narcotics unit and was involved in numerous training and community outreach programs. He
4 wrote the first field training officer manual and a new sergeant development manual which
5 was one of the first of its kind in the nation. As a Sergeant and later a Captain, he
6 commanded the SWAT team, the underwater, search and recovery team and a newly formed
7 position in Support Services, which included Administrative Assignments, Code
8 Enforcement, and Parking.

9
10 Chief Blouin said he was promoted to Major and was in charge of Law Enforcement
11 operations which is comprised of the uniform patrol division, detectives and all sworn
12 supervisors. He was chosen as the Town's Police Chief on May 29th and is dedicated to
13 keeping Palm Beach safe. Chief Blouin told the committee that when there are economic
14 downturns, crime tends to increase but he is optimistic the Town will continue to maintain a
15 low crime rate because of the quality of police officers hired and retained as well as the
16 Town's policing style.

17
18 Chief Blouin cited some crime statistics and outlined some of the procedures and
19 techniques used throughout the Town to deter crime such as community policing. The
20 Department has increased foot and bicycle patrols by 54%. Chief Blouin said he wants his
21 officers to be proud to wear the Palm Beach Police Department uniform and pass on that
22 legacy to the younger officers who will replace them.

23
24 Chief Blouin stated he was proud to have promoted two fine police officers, Major
25 Dan Szarszewski and Captain Scott Duquette, who are hard working, dedicated and
26 professional. He plans to promote those types of officers in the future. Chief Blouin stated
27 that both Major Szarszewski and Captain Duquette are highly decorated officers who have
28 added great value to both the police department and the community.

29
30 Chief Blouin advised he wants to continue to develop and train the younger officers
31 so they share the same vision and understand what it is to be a Palm Beach Police officer. He
32 intends on identifying the next generation of leaders and ensuring they are well equipped to
33 build on the past successes and keep the community safe. He intends to empower the
34 workforce and hold officers accountable.

35
36 Chief Blouin said he is working collaboratively with Fire Chief Amador on
37 combining fleet mechanics and Ocean Rescue and how best to serve the Town. He cited
38 increased training with the Fire Department to increase the Town's ability to handle any
39 incident which requires a unified command. He also cited working with the Town in various
40 programs such as Crime Watch, National Night Out, the Citizens Police Academy and direct
41 connect alarm systems. Chief Blouin cited several other technological advances which have
42 improved the effectiveness and efficiency of the police department. He does not plan on
43 policing from an "Ivory Tower" but wants to be an active participant in improving operations
44 and community relations.

1 There were over 40,000 calls for service last year and the average response time is
2 4.04 seconds but he would like to see an even faster response time. Chief Blouin said he
3 looked forward to working with the Town government and the community to make
4 improvements.
5

6 Chairman Wildrick stated he spent a day with the Police Department and that the
7 Town is blessed with a great top management team. He noted Major Howe is a first rate man
8 with exceptional top executives. He praised Major Szarszewski for his experience and great
9 work. He provided a summary of how Major Szarszewski obtained the job in Palm Beach.
10 He had recently been married, and lived in a pup tent until he had his interview, since he
11 traveled from across the state and did not have the money for a hotel. He noted that this is
12 the caliber of men in the Town of Palm Beach Police Department.
13

14 A citizen question was asked by Chairman Wildrick if the Police arrive prior to the Medical
15 personnel, what role the police officers have. Chief Blouin responded that all officers are
16 trained in CPR, have Defibrulators, (AED) and are trained to handle emergencies until the
17 Fire Department /EMT's arrive. Chair Wildrick commended both Chiefs for their
18 collaborative efforts.
19

20 A second question Chairman Wildrick asked was regarding Code Enforcement. He
21 noted that there are many buildings in Town that look rather shabby. Chief Blouin indicated
22 they recently lost a good staff person to the Police Academy, but there is a training level
23 needed and the department is working on it. He noted that when a resident calls to complain
24 about the condition of a neighbor's home or yard, most of the time there is an open case with
25 Code Enforcement. He also noted that Florida Statutes indicated there are rules and time-
26 periods that must be complied with before a fine or violation can be issued.
27

28 Committee Member Kleid echoed Chairman Wildrick's comments. He was particularly
29 pleased to hear about the community policing and having more officers visible. He asked for
30 Chief Blouin to elaborate on the joint efforts between the Police and Fire Departments,
31 particularly since 9/11. His third comment was in regard to Code Enforcement and having
32 more patrol officers noticing violations and reporting them to Code Enforcement. He
33 commended Chief Blouin. He also asked if the Chief was happy with the staffing during
34 these economic times.
35

36 Chief Blouin addressed the training he intends to provide for making Palm Beach
37 officers the best, and he noted the concerns with Code Enforcement and the limited staff. He
38 is concerned with the economy, but he notes that there have been technology advances that
39 have saved time. He stated he may take more time in hiring officers, to make sure that they
40 are absolutely the brightest and best officers.
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VI. CURRENT STATE AND FUTURE PLANS FOR THE PALM BEACH FIRE-RESCUE DEPARTMENT. [WILLIAM AMADOR, FIRE-RESCUE CHIEF]

1 Chief Amador addressed Committee Member Kleid's comments and assured him that
2 the Fire Department will continue to provide the highest level of service during these difficult
3 times in a professional, respectful and courteous manner. He is willing to work with the other
4 departments to improve efficiencies and save money.

5
6 He started by discussing advances in medical technology. The first was induced
7 hypothermia. The new rescue units will have the ability to store IV fluids which will be used
8 to lower core patient's body temperatures. This is similar to a cold water drowning victim
9 increase for survivability and the new units will have capabilities to refrigerate the IV fluids
10 that will ensure survivability in cardiac arrest victims, in particular. This therapy will
11 increase the survivability for cardiac victims.

12
13 The Fire Department has received an EMS grant for an intubation scope that has a
14 camera with it. Some situations are difficult because of the surroundings. They have used
15 these devices successfully.

16
17 The advances in technology in the pre-hospital settings include medical treatments
18 with medications, and now have equipment to transmit electrocardiogram to the hospital
19 prior to the patient arrival. They entered into an interlocal agreement with the Palm Beach
20 County Health Department to set up point of distribution for the town to distribute
21 vaccinations if an outbreak of a pandemic flu occurred. This includes flu vaccines such as
22 pandemic flu, and is for both the employees and residents.

23
24 Chief Amador commended Chief Blouin for his refreshing attitude in working
25 together between their two departments, as well as possibly using Public Works employees.
26 He noted that there have been preliminary discussions regarding Ocean Rescue employees
27 being under the fire department vs. their current position under the Police Department.

28
29 He noted knowledge and training is essential since 60% of the Fire Department has
30 been with them less than 5 years. Morale is an issue during the economic times. He noted
31 that currently, morale does seem to be high, and they understand what is needed.

32
33 Chief Amador noted in the fall that there will be an ISO evaluation. They currently
34 have class rating of 2, and only thirty departments have achieved that status and the Town
35 had achieved that rating about ten years ago. The Department is undergoing self-
36 accreditation. The goal is to continue to look for cost-savings and effectiveness.

37
38 The next topic was community relations. Chief Amador noted that he has used the
39 resources of the Civic and Citizens Association. They are holding the Citizens Fire
40 Academy, fire extinguisher training, CPR, and also will be starting a Flu Vaccine program.

1 The Fluvax program will be another avenue that the citizens can obtain their vaccines at the
2 Fire Department.

3
4 Committee Member Kleid noted that the Fire Department Union agreed to a pay
5 freeze for this year and it was ratified unanimously by the uniformed fire fighters. He noted
6 that was exemplary. Chief Amador agreed.

7
8 Chief Amador noted there are mutual aid agreements with the City of West Palm
9 Beach and Palm Beach County Fire-Rescue. They will continue to do that in the future.
10 Committee Member Wildrick asked how many fire fighters are trained as paramedics. Chief
11 Amador responded that 80% of his staff are trained as paramedics.

12
13 Chairman Wildrick commended Chief Amador on his staff and noted that the
14 outreach program is becoming very successful.

15
16 Chairman Wildrick noted that both Chiefs have risen through the ranks and are doing
17 a great job. He stated he was very proud of both of them.

18
19 Chairman Wildrick recognized Mayor McDonald who had no comments. He next
20 recognized Council President Pro Tem Coniglio.

21
22
VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

23 Council President Pro Tem Coniglio asked if hypothermia would work with
24 respiratory difficulties or if it was only for cardiac patients. Chief Amador responded that the
25 application of induced hypothermia is primarily for cardiac patients. Council President Pro
26 Tem Coniglio also stated she thought it was interesting that stroke patients would benefit
27 from hypothermia therapy. Chief Amador said he thought there would be advances for stroke
28 patients in the future.

29
30 Council President Pro Tem Coniglio asked if the advance cardiac diagnostic tools
31 decided which hospital was used locally. Chief Amador stated that the Medical Director and
32 medical protocols dictate where a patient gets transported to, depending upon the capabilities
33 of the hospital. For cardiac, North end resident go to Palm Beach Gardens, for stroke, they go
34 to Good Sam's.

35
36 Council President Pro Tem Coniglio stated that she was extremely proud of the
37 Town's Fire Department rating and asked Chief Amador if anyone had a rating of "1" in
38 ISO. He responded that the City of Miami has a rating of one. One of the main reasons is the
39 Town having its own water supply. The Town does not have its own water supply. Another
40 element is a training facility, but the Town is trying to form an agreement with Palm Beach
41 County Fire Rescue.

1 Council Member Diamond noted that Police Chief Blouin has come into his position
2 at a difficult time. In the next five years, he wanted to know what the Chief plans on doing.
3 Chief Blouin said he plans on meeting the challenges head on and the department will be run
4 in a professional manner. Chief Amador also agreed.
5

6 Chairman Wildrick stated that he understands the difficulty that each department is
7 facing. He noted that he would like to see everyone work together. With choices, there is
8 accountability and some danger. He has studied the numbers and the future is bleak.
9

10 Resident Lee Goldstein indicated there is a problem with cell phones during storm
11 events. Chief Amador noted that there are new antennas installed in areas on Town property
12 and depending on the individual carriers, service may or may not be interrupted.
13

14 Committee Member Kleid noted that the Town is cognizant of the cell tower problem.
15 The Breakers and the Ambassador Hotel have recently installed cell antennas.
16

17 **Chairman Wildrick encouraged both Chiefs to be more diligent and set up a**
18 **protocol with regard to the dispatching system. They both are to report back in three**
19 **months at the next Public Safety Meeting.**
20

21 Town Manager Elwell indicated it is a technological issue and that the issue has been
22 addressed, but he also encouraged the Chiefs to look into it further. There has been increased
23 communications between agency dispatchers and the cell phone problem.
24

25 Former Mayor Marix asked the Fire Chief about fire alarms (meaning smoke detectors) and
26 said she had been told the Fire Department did not have them anymore but they would come
27 out and tell people where to best install them. Chief Amador corrected that, advising that the
28 Fire Department had both smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors and although they
29 could not install them, they would assist residents in where to put them. Chief Amador stated
30 that the Fire Department offers complimentary smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.
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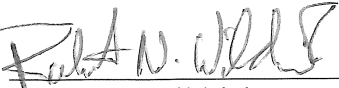
33 **VIII. ANY OTHER MATTERS**

34
35 There were none.
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38 **IX. ADJOURNMENT**

39 There being no further business, the Public Safety Committee Meeting was adjourned at
40 10:42a.m.
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1 APPROVED:

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4 

5 Robert N. Wildrick
6 Chairman



Richard M. Kleid
Committee Member