

CITY OF JEFFERSON

Special Council Meeting – Public Forum #3

March 5, 2022

10am @ Greater Jefferson Community Center

COUNCILORS PRESENT: Dave Beyerl, Mayor Michael Myers, David Kellogg, Bob Rossiter
COUNCILORS ABSENT: Keonali Hutley, Walt Perry, David Watkins
STAFF PRESENT: Sarah Cook, CM/R
OTHERS PRESENT: Commander Stutrud, Deputy's Rick Kittleson and Sophia Contenta, MCSO

Mayor Myers opened the public forum at 10am, pointing out that it was the 3rd and final public forum to discuss options to fund a 3rd deputy, before opening it up for comments and questions.

Dennis Person, 1878 Talbot Rd SE – questioned the national standard language provided in the tri-fold that indicated Jefferson should have 5 deputies for a City of its size, and noted he could not locate validation for it, to which Commander Stutrud provided additional information on. Mr. Person added that he did not think the statistics were realistic and that it was up to each community and their crime rate to determine how many deputies they wanted. With all the added costs the City pays to the County, he suggested it may be time for the City to re-visit starting its own police department. He also felt a lot of the calls were domestic, and did not involve a crime, so thought a social worker may be a better, less expensive option.

Mayor Myers and Councilor Beyerl provided information on the costs of starting and maintaining a local police department, noting the very high risk involved, which increased liability insurance, not to mention staffing and oversight of local officers, evidence storage, dispatch, and so much more behind the scene things to maintain proper operations. Commander Stutrud also pointed out the high costs of training associated with keeping law enforcement agents certified, which the City did not currently pay for beyond the normal wages of the deputy's they were already paying. Additionally, the City did not pay for any of the support staff involved in preparing reports, statistics, managing the contract, etc. Finally, Commander Stutrud noted MSCO was self-insured, which kept their costs down by allowing them to cover certain claims in-house.

Catherine Simpson, 380 Sunnymeade – was curious if the fee would be continuous, and/or increase from year to year. Mayor Myers explained the funds the City had set aside over time, which was factored in when considering the cost projections. He did not anticipate a change in the fee for 5 years and hoped the future Council would take the same approach as they had with extensive public outreach and education.

Keith Rude, 510 Delores – questioned why there was not enough revenues to fund another officer, and Mayor Myers explained the sources of General Fund revenues and their uses and restrictions. Mr. Rude disagreed with the fee, noting he saw deputies sitting around in places where there was no traffic and didn't see how a 3rd deputy would help.

Rebecca Barnes, 301 University – said having police officers was not just about monitoring traffic. She explained her recent experience with the local deputy who came to her home in the middle of the

night because they had left their garage door open and gone to bed, so she felt their presence prevented crime too.

John Lucas, 952 Filbert – Had mild concern about collecting a fee for something on a water bill, but wanted to respond to an earlier statement suggesting a social worker instead of law enforcement. He said domestic calls were very dangerous, sometimes volatile situations and you'd never want to send a social worker alone. He felt strongly that the City needed real police officers present so Jefferson didn't end up looking like a trash bin, adding that his children lived in Portland and Seattle.

Moving on, Mayor Myers called upon the City Council for any statements. Councilor Kellogg shared that he had started off 100% in favor of putting the decision on a ballot for voters to decide; however, as the data and information came available that indicated the fee was more equitable than a levy, because every property would pay it whether it was a non-profit, apartment, or business, and having 3 public forums on the subject with overwhelming support from the public, he felt better about implementing a fee. In response to why the City needed another deputy, Councilor Kellogg felt a response time of approximately 3 minutes vs an average response time of 40 minutes when there was not a local deputy on duty spoke for itself, adding that he would be paying the fee too.

Councilor Rossiter agreed, noting they all would be paying the same fee and of course, nobody wanted to pay more. He shared an experience where a prowler had broken into his shed and with no deputy on duty at the time, he waited 40 minutes for a response. Fortunately, he was able to scare the guy away, but he was long gone by the time an officer arrived. He felt strongly that people needed to feel safe in their community.

Councilor Beyerl shared the City's budget was a public document and encouraged people to get involved or come to the meetings to better understand the restrictions cities were faced with.

Mayor Myers added the City was required to be audited every year and the finances were well managed and thorough. In closing, he thanked everybody for their input and explained the very deliberate process they took in an effort to reach as many people as possible. He said there were two forms of democracy: direct democracy, where a single candidate was selected, and a body that represented a larger group, entrusted to represent them all with their best interest in mind. He explained the Council was working to the best of their ability to improve Jefferson, noting when a decision was finally made, some would be happy and some wouldn't, but an informed public made for a better City Council, and that they care very much about what the public has to say.

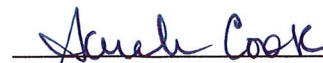
The forum was closed at 10:45am. Refreshments were available to all.

MINUTES APPROVED this 28th day of April, 2022.



Michael D. Myers, Mayor

ATTEST:



Sarah Cook, City Manager/Recorder