

Roll Call

The Kalamazoo City Commission met as a Committee of the Whole on Monday, May 1, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. in the City Commission Chambers at City Hall.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Mayor David Anderson
Vice Mayor Don Cooney
Qianna Decker
Jeanne Hess
Stephanie Hoffman
Chris Praedel

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Esteven Juarez

Also present were City Manager Jim Ritsema, City Attorney Clyde Robinson, and City Clerk Scott Borling.

Commissioners Excused

Commissioner Hess, seconded by Commissioner Decker, moved to excuse the absences of Commissioner Juarez. With a voice vote, the motion passed.

Public Comments

An opportunity was given for general public comments, but no comments were offered.

2023-19-01

Presentation re:
KDPS Community
Update

Public Safety Chief Dave Boysen, Assistant Public Safety Chief Victor Green, and Captain Danielle Guilds delivered a presentation entitled, *Kalamazoo Public Safety Community Update: Committee of the Whole, May 1, 2023*. A copy of the slides from this presentation was filed with the papers for the meeting.

In response to questions and comments from City Commissioners, Chief Boysen, Assistant Chief Green, and Captain Guilds provided the following information:

- the responsiveness of youth and parents to the programs offered by the City was about 50/50. The Police Athletic League programs were popular.
- transportation was a barrier for youth wanting to participate in the City's programs. The Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety (KDPS) was working with the Parks and Recreation Department on a solution to this issue.
- when someone calls 911, the call triggers a text message with the link for the my90 survey.
- the my90 surveys were anonymous, so there was no standard process in place to reach out to respondents who reported negative experiences. However, some respondents put their contact information in the free-form comment box at the end of the survey. KDPS considered that situation a request for follow-up.
- there were multiple potential reasons for the higher percentage of black respondents to the post-traffic stop survey compared to the black population percentage in the City. First, the numbers described survey respondents, not all traffic stops. Second, officers were deployed where there were calls for service, which would result in a higher number of traffic stops in areas like the Northside and Eastside Neighborhoods.
- people seemed to be driving more aggressively since the COVID-19 pandemic. Public Safety Officers focused on violations for "reckless operation" rather than "speeding". There was one Public Safety Officer (PSO)

dedicated to traffic enforcement. KDPS needed to know where speeding was happening, so enforcement could be directed to those areas. Residents were encouraged to report speeding and reckless operation to KDPS.

- the my90 survey would replace point-in-time traffic stop studies, like the one from 2013, but my90 would not be the only tool used. KDPS needed to do more to collect data internally on why officers were making traffic stops.
- crime statistics were trending down, but KDPS needed to work harder to make the community safe. KDPS needed to make sure it was correctly reporting crime data; we may have been over reporting.
- once implemented, PSO's would receive random texts with a link to a survey asking about their wellbeing. There needed to be a balance between not sending the surveys too often and getting enough responses to make the data useful. It was hoped that officers would be open to using the surveys and would give honest responses.
- a media release regarding the my90 survey would be issued tomorrow morning. KDPS representatives would go to the neighborhood associations and give them updates regarding the survey.
- KDPS did not implement the OIR Report recommendations simply to "check boxes". In fact, the department had taken actions to improve police-community relations that were not in the OIR Report.
- officers really appreciated when City Commissioners recognized their service and hard work.
- year-to-date, there had been a 12-14% decrease in violent crimes year-over-year, but property related crimes were rising.
- there were four members on the Wichita Homeless Outreach Team. Wichita had more affordable housing than Kalamazoo, which enabled the team to get housing placements within a week. The KDPS Community Service Team's visit to Wichita showed that Kalamazoo was doing a lot of things right. The team was able to come away with best practices to implement.

Commissioner Decker stated the my90 surveys were a good tool for identifying training opportunities for officers.

Commissioner Hoffman thanked Chief Boysen for the presentation and expressed appreciation for Community Collaborator LaTonya Turner and the attendance of officers at the recent Expanding Your Horizons event.

Commissioner Hess remarked that KDPS had improved its communication with the community.

Commissioner Praedel commended Chief Boysen for meeting personally with every officer to get their feedback on the department. Commissioner Praedel stated he was impressed with the quality of the dialogue at the public meetings where the OIR Report results were presented and discussed. Commissioner Praedel noted the City had responded to the report at every point and had done what it said it would do.

2023-19-01

Presentation re:
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Update (cont'd)

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Update (cont'd)

Commissioner Cooney thanked KDPS for its crime prevention efforts and remarked that their work to build relationships in the community was paying off.

Mayor Anderson recognized Johnnie Berry, who managed the Police Athletic League. Mayor Anderson described the changes in at KDPS as “transformative” and encouraged the City Commission to support the department. Mayor Anderson observed that the KDPS values and the City’s values were the same: a safe community for all, building meaningful relationships, enhanced employee wellness, improved communications, increased transparency. Mayor Anderson thanked KDPS officers for their work, noting they saw life and death every day and experienced people at their worst.

Commissioner
Comments

An opportunity was given for general comments from City Commissioners, but no comments were offered.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:09 p.m.

Scott A. Borling
City Clerk

Approved by the City Commission on: _____

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