

Board of Alderman Minutes
81 S. Orchard Blvd.
March 7, 2024
Page 1 of 4

OPEN MEETING

Roll Call taken by Mayor Stephen Short

Dennis Roe PRESENT, Jeffrey Danderson PRESENT, Richard Icenhower PRESENT, Ben Lord PRESENT, Sherry Veach PRESENT, Leon Beaty PRESENT

Call to order at: 6:30 p.m.

Approve Agenda. Motion by Veach to approve agenda. Seconded by Roe
Roe AYE, Danderson AYE, Icenhower AYE, Lord AYE, Veach AYE, Beaty AYE

CLOSED SESSION

Motion by Veach to go into Closed Session 610.021 (3) hiring at 6:31 p.m. Second Beaty
Roe AYE, Danderson AYE, Icenhower AYE, Lord AYE, Veach AYE, Beaty AYE

Motion by Danderson to go back to open session at 7:28 p.m. Second Beaty
Roe AYE, Danderson AYE, Icenhower AYE, Lord AYE, Veach AYE, Beaty AYE

Public Forum

Community to meet Chief candidates and ask them questions. (15 minutes per candidate)

Chief Candidate Chris Horn via WebEx

Tommy Voorhis: Why do you want the job in Fair Grove?

Chris Horn: Originally from Fulton. Been an officer for 8 years. Prior to that, worked in corrections; 6 years in National Guard. Time in Joplin. Was in Ferguson. Have Bachelors and Masters in Homeland Security. When he first looked at this position, he wasn't sure he was ready. Saw it again, and you miss 100% of the shots that you don't take. Found it to be a unique opportunity to build a police force. Get community on one page with city council. Recruit solid officers so in 10 years, we don't have to have this happen again.

Voorhis: Have you looked into history of Fair Grove with officers. With some issues taken place, are you ready to take on that position, are you ready to lose your job, if you can't get along with Aldermen?

Horn: Police Chief's are generally appointed, ultimately, serves at the pleasure of the Mayor and Counsel but responsibility is community he serves

Tim Cooke: Thank you for your interest in serving Fair Grove. Fair Grove has always had a strong relationship with its police department. Are there any initiatives that you have been a part of as part of his career and what would be your goal to restore community relationships in Fair Grove.

Horn: Was able to get hunter education restarted and back into high school to teach new hunters hunter safety. As far as other initiatives, being an officer, I have interacted with members of the community to the point that they prefer to deal with me. I'm not sure it is community-oriented

Board of Alderman Minutes
81 S. Orchard Blvd.
March 7, 2024
Page 2 of 4

policing but just being a good officer. You have to interact with the community. It's not sitting in an office or a car. It's figuring out what the community is facing and help fix problems.

Mark Stewart: I am an officer in Springfield, Why do you have you been to so many departments?

Horn: When I started with Missouri Conservation, I thought I would do more police work. The position at the Attorney General's office was not as described. I got burnt out in Columbia working 16+ hour days with little reprieve. I left the last department because of medical issues that have since been resolved.

Stewart: What is your preferred call volume?

Horn: I don't have a preferred call volume.

Stewart: What does the future look like for you here.

Horn: Academies are about 6 months out, so the first year will probably be just me and I would work with county to get the department built up. By the third year I would like to be fully staffed and by the fifth year fully staffed department with new applicants lined ready to go so we don't have the problems that we have now.

Roderick Icenhower: This is a unique opportunity. With it being such a small town, it is a close-knit community because the biggest entity is the school. How do you look at being involved in the school? Our biggest drive here is kid safety. Have you been introduced to this?

Horn: I figured that out by research. I have kids and want all of the kids to be safe. I would love to interact with the kids at the school. And the same with my officers. Talk to parents, teachers, kids, go to classrooms. Walk through and talk to the kids at lunch. Let people see you, let people talk to you. Be available and present.

Ben McMains: You look pretty young, how can you reassure us that this isn't a stepping stone? We need someone long term.

Horn: Absolutely, the best reassurance I can give, it's kind of like when you ask your parents to buy you a car, you work for it. I will put in the hard work to build this department and relationships. The flip side to that coin is police chiefs traditionally are not positions that are occupied more than 7 to 10 years at a time. This is not my intention and I would like to stay as long as the Aldermen would let me. In 10 years if you think it's time to move on, then you start grooming someone to slide into that position.

Sheriff Arnott asks Mr. Horn why he isn't here in person tonight. Horn's fiancé went into labor this morning so he has been in the hospital all morning. He had a girl. Her and Mom are doing great.

(Mr. Horn stays for the duration of Mr. Howell's public Q&A)

Chief Candidate Ulrich “Roy” Howell

Mr. Howell joined Army out of high school. 8 years active during desert storm and decided he was done. While in reserves he got hired by Nebraska. He moved to a correctional office and helped start a unit from the ground up. He ended up becoming a police officer in a small town. Also worked for the Sheriff's office part time. Became a Field Training Officer. Started training other officers and while he was there, he worked with the Bellvue PD. Took a School Resource Officer position. Started a drive for single moms, elderly and the homeless, tried to help schools to help the community. Was also recruited to be a baseball coach, not only did he work in the school as an SRO and a coach which he didn't get paid for. After 3 years, he applied for detective. That department was about 100 staff. During that time, the chief told him he wanted him to build a crime lab and now it is the best in the state of Nebraska. Built one of the nicest computer and cell phone forensic labs. He was able to create training. He was the first one to have a K9 to sniff out cell phones. He was in charge of child exploitation crimes. He started out with a laptop and ended with a \$65,000 budget. Retired out of there because after 10 or 15 years of child exploitation it gets tiring. Retired and came down here, spent two years in Missouri Probation and Parole. Currently a park ranger for the City of Springfield. Been in law enforcement for 32+ years.

Tommy Voorhis: Thank you for your service – With the stigmatism surrounding Fair Grove, why do you want to be chief?

Roy Howell: I am a fixer. I think I can build a relationship with the board and community.

Voorhis: Are you willing to take on the challenges working with the current city administration?

Howell: I have ethics and integrity. I think we can work together.

Mark Stewart: You said you want to be here 10 to 15 years. What's your goal?

Howell: In 30 days, I would be speaking with Aldermen and start hiring officers. Finding qualified candidates is tough, but if you have a leader that can lead, then you can build a force. I would review the police policies. In 6 months, I would be building a police force, training and moving on from there.

Stewart: Do you realize you will have to work the street?

Howell: Yes. I love working the streets.

Stewart: If you have 2 officers, what's your schedule?

Howell: We would work law enforcement days (pitman schedule), getting every other weekend off. But it is 12 hour days. I respect family time. I would be working during the day and I would build it up to get the night time covered. I want 4 on nights, and me and another on days.

Tim Cooke: I have a similar question for you. Fair Grove has always had a tight bond between community and law enforcement. My 3-year old became familiar with former chief, and my

Board of Alderman Minutes
81 S. Orchard Blvd.
March 7, 2024
Page 4 of 4

child got to know when the police department comes, it's an exciting thing and not something scary. Without law enforcement now, what is your plan to restore interaction with the community?

Howell: I love being around the community. I want my officers to interact as well with the community. Honesty, trust, and integrity is what you want. If you don't establish that then you won't succeed.

Cooke: You mentioned you have been a park ranger with Springfield for only 9 months. Why are you looking at this position?

Howell: I enjoy my job, but I like to fix things. When the Buffalo Chief left, I applied and didn't get the position. I think I can fix relationship with the community and the board. My time in a small town department, I know the difference between big town law enforcement and small town law enforcement.

Cooke: Thank you, sir.

Howell: If anyone would like a copy of my resume, they are more than welcome to it as long as address and phone number are redacted.

CLOSED SESSION

Motion by Danderson to go into Closed Session 610.021 (3) hiring at 8:06 p.m. Second Veach Roe AYE, Danderson AYE, Icenhower AYE, Lord AYE, Veach AYE, Beaty AYE

Motion by Danderson to go back to open session at 8:48 p.m. Second Beaty Roe AYE, Danderson AYE, Icenhower AYE, Lord AYE, Veach AYE, Beaty AYE

Mayor introduces Roy Howell as the new police chief.

Public claps and congratulates Mr. Howell.

Adjournment

Motion by Danderson to Adjourn at 8:50 p.m. Seconded by Veach Roe AYE, Danderson AYE, Icenhower AYE, Lord AYE, Veach AYE, Beaty AYE

Adjourned at 8:50 p.m.


Sara Davis, City Clerk