

**CITY OF GARDNER, MASSACHUSETTS  
CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF FEBRUARY 19, 2019**

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The Committee Chairman, Councillor James Johnson, called the Public Safety Committee meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Mayor's Conference Room, City Hall. Committee member Councillor Karen Hardern was also present. Councillor Edward Gravel was absent.

Other Officials present and/or participating were Fire Chief Richard Ares; Chief of Police Richard Braks; Building Commissioner Roland Jean; and, City Clerk Alan Agnelli.

**I. Minutes of Prior Meeting(s).**

On a motion by Councillor Karen Hardern and seconded by Chairman James Johnson, it was voted to accept the Minutes of December 17, 2018 Public Safety Committee Meeting, as printed.

**II. Department Updates**

**Police Department – Chief of Police Richard Braks**

- Senior Citizen Police Academy held at 50 Pine Street, 28-30 participants, in week 4 of 10-week program. Senior Program operates using the same materials and guideline as the regular Citizen Police Academy.
- Lafayette Square Traffic – No issues or concerns; there have been no problems with vehicles backed-up to West Street due to installation of temporary Yield Sign.
- Plate Readers were installed in cruisers. Allows Officers to run license plate registrations while on patrol.
- Two solar-powered radar speed signs were deployed. The first is situated on Green Street between Heywood Hospital and WGAW Radio Station and the second on Central Street near Lakeview Terrace. Additional units may be purchased from grants for deployment throughout the City.
- The front-ends of the Ford SUV cruisers do not hold up as well as the old Ford Crown Victoria cruisers. It is almost to a point where the manufacturer may issue a recall.
- The Department's radio band has experienced "momentary interference" from the Reservoir Hill antenna and the Department is attempting to identify the source of the interference. The interference has not affected the Fire Department, since Fire is on a separate radio band. The Police Department is on "high band frequency" while the Fire Department is on "ultra-high band frequency." The Chief added that the Police Department has been utilizing a second antenna for its communications until the problem is resolved.
- The three new Police Officers are in "Field Training" until March 6. All three have prior Military training and the Chief has received very good reports from the training officers.
- One Police Officer who has been out on injured leave is due to return in June.
- The Department has experienced many staffing changes in the past year, including:
  - A new Chief of Police
  - A new Deputy Chief of Police
  - A new Lieutenant

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- A new Detective
- 3 new Sergeants
- 3 new Police Officers.
- As a result of the staffing changes, the Training budget “has been taxed.”
- IM Power has been working to regulate the Police Station’s HVAC System. The heating system is expected to be “in good shape” by the spring and IM Power will then tackle the air conditioning system.

**Fire Department and Ambulance – Fire Chief Richard Ares**

- Since October, two Firefighters left the Department and another is expected to leave in July. The Department is in the process of hiring three Firefighters to replace them. If all pass their physicals, PATs, and psychological exams, they most likely would be admitted to the Fire Academy in late July or early August.
- The Overtime budget has been impacted due to the departures.
- The new pumper was ordered (thorough the FEMA Grant). The Pumper will be a Sutphen 1500GPM pump with a 1000 gallon tank. The Apparatus Committee and the Chief will be going to the Sutphen factory in two weeks to finalize details for construction and delivery is currently expected at the end of this year. The Engine is being purchased through a cooperative buying program.
- The Department’s Ambulance currently averages 6 transports per day.
- The Advanced Life Support (“ALS”) arrangement with Woods Ambulance is working very well.
- In 2018, the Department responded to 5,023 emergency calls, of which 175 were fires of some type, and 4,054 were emergency medical calls.
- In addition to the emergency calls, the Department conducted 1,319 fire inspections and code compliance activities.
- In the 2019-2020 school year, Monty Tech will construct a concrete block building on Reservoir Hill to house public safety radio systems, which will replace the existing wood shed.
- On questioning by Councillor James Johnson, Chief Ares stated that a new chassis for the older Ambulance is estimated to cost \$150,000. He said that he would address the issue with the vendor.
- The Chief addressed emergency/disaster response.
- Councillor Johnson addressed the creation of dedicated Stabilization Funds for Fire and Police vehicles.

**Building Department – Building Commissioner Roland Jean**

- Inspections of multi-family housing units (3 units or more) are being conducted and that Inspection Certificates are valid for 5 years. Some landlords do not understand the reason for the inspections and have expressed frustration. Some of the multi-family units have never been inspected, which is a requirement every five years.
- A grant was awarded to assess the sprinkler system in City Hall.

**CITY OF GARDNER, MASSACHUSETTS  
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- The Department applied for a “Tech Grant” for software. A decision is expected soon.
- The Department issued 900 permits in 2018. 210 Permits have been issued in 2019, to-date (an increase over 2018 at the same point in time).
- State law requires that any club with an occupancy of 100 persons or more is required to install sprinklers. Four local clubs will be affected, since they currently do not have sprinklers. The Notices of Compliance will be issued soon.

**III. #10053, An Ordinance to Amend the Code of the City of Gardner, Chapter 312 Thereof, Entitled “Animals,” by Deleting and Repealing § 312-2F** *(In City Council and Referred to Public Safety, 2/4/2019).*

Chairman Johnson reported that the City Council also referred the Ordinance to the Public Service Committee since the issue affects public cemeteries, parks, and playgrounds.

**IV. An Ordinance to Amend the Code of the City of Gardner, Chapter 600 Thereof, Entitled “Vehicles and Traffic,” to Change Provisions Relating to Rotary Traffic, Traffic Islands, and Obedience to Isolated Yield Signs (Lafayette Square)** *(Ref: #10033, Temporary Traffic Changes).*

On a motion Councillor Karen Hardern and seconded by Chairman James Johnson, it was voted to recommend that the City Council pass the following Ordinance:

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CODE OF THE CITY OF GARDNER, CHAPTER 600 THEREOF, ENTITLED “VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC,” TO CHANGE PROVISIONS RELATING TO ROTARY TRAFFIC, TRAFFIC ISLANDS, AND OBEDIENCE TO ISOLATED YIELD SIGNS.

Be it ordained by the City Council of the City of Gardner as follows:

Section 1.

The Code of the City of Gardner is hereby amended by striking from Article VII. One-Way Streets; Rotary Traffic. § 600-43. Rotary traffic, Lafayette Square: Parker Street, West Street and Oak Street.

Section 2.

The Code of the City of Gardner is further amended by changing Article XII. Traffic Islands, § 600-74. Location designated, to read as follows:

D. Lafayette Square: Parker Street, West Street and Oak Street, where vehicular traffic shall move only in a counter clockwise direction, except when directed by an officer.

Section 3.

The Code of the City of Gardner is further amended by adding to Article VIII. Operation of Vehicles, § 600-55. Obedience to Isolated Yield Signs, the following:

<b>Yield Street</b>	<b>Direction of Travel</b>	<b>For Traffic Entering</b>
Oak Street	Eastbound	Parker Street
Parker Street	Westbound	West Street

**CITY OF GARDNER, MASSACHUSETTS  
CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF FEBRUARY 19, 2019**

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Section 4.

This Ordinance shall take effect upon passage and publication as required by law.

**V. Other Business**

None.

**VI. Adjournment.**

On a motion Councillor Karen Hardern and seconded by Chairman James Johnson, it was voted to adjourn at 6:45 p.m.