MINUTES
City Council Public Safety Committee

Monday, January 27, 2025 – 3:30 PM
City Hall Council Chambers

Members Present:	Mac Morrow, Vice-Chair, Council Member Kevin Gallo, Citizen Member Mayor Mauren Copelof, Ex-Officio Member
Member Absent:	Aaron Baker, Chair, Council Member (Present via Zoom)
Staff Present	Wilson Hooper, City Manager Tom Jordan, Police Chief Bobby Cooper, Fire Chief David Todd, Assistant City Manager Emily Brewer, Senior Planner Selena Coffey, Assistant to the City Manager
Guests:	Robert Senecal, Linda Gallo, Rachel Hall, Clarke Wellborn, Kellyn Haight, Millie Hyman, Wayne Hyman, Raymond Hipp

A. Welcome & Call to Order

Committee Vice Chair Mac Morrow welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 3:30pm.

B. Certification of Quorum

Assistant to the City Manager Selena Coffey certified that a quorum was present.

C. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Mr. Gallo, seconded by Mr. Morrow to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

D. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Gallo noted typographical errors "evident," which should be "evidence" on page 1 and on page 3, "eliminate" should be "illuminate" in the January 6, 2025 minutes. Motion by Mr. Morrow, seconded by Mr. Gallo to approve the minutes as corrected. The motion passed unanimously.

E. Police Department Workplace Culture Study Update

Mr. Hooper stated that the city has embarked on a workplace culture study for the Brevard Police Department to focus on issues including recruitment, retention, employee satisfaction, and other elements, to ensure professionalism in the Department. He noted that an RFQ for the study was issued in November 2024 and the city received 10 responses from qualified firms. Mr. Hooper noted that the review team, which comprised himself, the city's Human Resources Director Kelley Craig, and the Brevard Police Chief Tom Jordan, chose to move forward in interviewing 5 finalists. The finalists were interviewed in January and the review team concluded that the company, Berry Dunn, was the top candidate because their project team has significant experience in law enforcement and organizational development. Berry Dunn is now developing their draft scope of work, which should be finalized soon. Mr. Hooper shared that Berry Dunn's fee is expected to be within reason and the firm felt that they could complete the project within 6-8 months. There were no questions from the committee and the members voiced support for the study.

F. Update on Traffic Calming Measures

Mr. Hooper led an update on a list of locations/streets that the committee had asked staff to evaluate for potential traffic calming measures.

Fisher Road was the first street discussed. Mr. Hooper noted that Fisher Road becomes McLean Road. Mr. Hooper noted that staff has been collecting traffic data on the upper and lower sections of Fisher Road and that the road is a state road, which means that the city will need to ensure that the State of North Carolina agrees with any calming measures implemented.

Railroad Avenue was the second street discussed. Mr. Hooper noted that the trail crossing in this area is awkward due to the geometry, the trail curving to meet Railroad Avenue, and the presence of utilities. He noted that the beacon that is planned for installation is solar powered, but ADA regulations may require the addition of a push button, the installation of underground conduit, a concrete pad, and appropriate signage. Mr. Hooper stated that the city's traffic consultant will be reviewing this street and giving staff recommendations for improvements and potential traffic calming measures.

The intersection of Oaklawn Avenue and Carver Street was the next location discussed. Mr. Hooper stated that the city's traffic consultant will be reviewing this location to ensure that the right turn from Oaklawn to Carver is sufficient to install a stop bar on eastbound Carver. He noted that the traffic engineer will also look at the possibility of adding a pedestrian crosswalk to connect sidewalks. Mr. Hooper added

that the irregular four-way junction of Oaklawn Avenue, Carver Street, Hamlin Avenue, and Morgan Street would make this a difficult location for traffic calming measures because the streets do not form a typical 90-degree intersection. He raised the idea of installing a miniature roundabout at this intersection and noted that the city's traffic consultant/engineer will also review this and give her opinion.

Carolina Avenue and Shipman Avenue were the next streets discussed. Mr. Hooper noted that the state has confirmed that a portion of Carolina Avenue belongs to the city, with the Shipman Avenue intersection being the boundary. He noted that everything north of the intersection to Cashiers Valley Road belongs to the city and everything south remains the state's road. Mr. Hooper noted that any traffic calming measures proposed for the intersection would need to meet state standards. He further noted that he felt that the state would consider a three-way stop and that once staff gets data back, they would approach the state with this proposal. Finally, Mr. Hooper noted that staff has discussed additional possibilities for the remainder of Carolina Avenue, noting that the data received would inform the next steps for traffic calming. He introduced the concept of the "advisory bicycle lane," which could be helpful in this area. Mr. Hooper concluded that even though the city doesn't control the southern portion of Carolina Avenue, the state probably wouldn't object to the city taking steps to decrease the traffic volume on the street because traffic incidents are high.

Members of the committee and the public asked general questions about the Railroad Avenue intersection, which were addressed by Mr. Hooper and Mr. Todd.

G. City of Brevard Fire Department 2024 Annual Report

Fire Chief Bobby Cooper presented the Brevard Fire Department Annual Report for 2024 and copies of the report were distributed. Mr. Cooper noted that the 2024 calls for service were up by 176 over 2023 with type of calls, time of day, and days of the week remaining relatively consistent. He also highlighted the number of overlapping incidents as 830, where multiple incidents are happening at the same time. He noted that this can significantly strain resources. Mr. Cooper noted that the staffing ratios stands out in comparison to other fire departments because the Brevard Fire Department has less regarding staffing ratios but maintains a high number of calls for service.

Mr. Gallo asked what was driving the increase in calls from 2021 to 2024. Mr. Cooper noted that additional full-time staffing was added in 2022, and the Department began assuming medical response calls at that time, which caused an increase in calls.

The committee commended the Chief and the Fire Department for their work in responding to calls. Mr. Hooper also noted that Transylvania County is considering

changing their funding model, but he isn't sure if that will impact the city's fire services funding.

H. Public Comment

Robert Senecal, Carolina Avenue, indicated that he came to the meeting to hear about traffic calming measures on Carolina Avenue.

Linda Gallo, Probart Street, indicated that she encouraged the city to continue with installing the speed cushions on Probart.

Rachel Hall, Probart Street, questioned where the remaining speed cushions would be installed on Probart. Mr. Todd responded that the locations for future speed cushions are painted on the pavement of the street. Ms. Hall noted that she was curious why some of the speed cushions are concentrated more in some areas on the street. Mr. Todd responded that there are 11 total speed cushions planned. Mr. Hooper responded that the speed cushions are concentrated where the road is most curvy, where there's grade, and where the road is most narrow.

Clarke Wellborn, Carolina Avenue, spoke to endorse Kellyn Haight's proposals and that he felt there was a significant speeding problem on Carolina Avenue.

Kellyn Haight, Carolina Avenue, asked who provided traffic engineering for the city. Mr. Hooper noted that the City contracts with the traffic engineering firm. Ms. Haight asked what involvement NCDOT has with Carolina Avenue. Mr. Morrow noted that this is yet to be determined based on Mr. Hooper's presentation about traffic calming measures earlier in the meeting. Ms. Haight asked why the current tracker is placed so close to the highway. Mr. Jordan responded that placed in locations to gather the best information for traffic speeds and traffic volume. Ms. Haight then asked what determined the need for improvements to the sidewalks. Mr. Morrow responded that the city must have right of ways for sidewalk construction. Mr. Hooper responded that the city could receive these rights of way via donation of land, purchases, or by eminent domain.

Millie Hyman, Shipman Avenue, noted that she and her husband do not live in the city, but are in the county. She noted that she and her husband don't see the need for a four-way stop, but supportive of a three-way stop sign at the Carolina Avenue and Shipman Avenue intersection.

Wayne Hyman, Shipman Avenue, asked if it was possible to cut the bank back on Silversteen Drive going towards Caldwell Street. Mr. Hooper responded that the city will review this possibility.

Raymond Hipp, Carolina Avenue, who lives outside the city, spoke about speeding on Carolina Avenue and encouraged law enforcement to enforce speeding more in this area. Mr. Jordan responded that he and his staff would investigate this issue.

Ms. Copelof thanked the public for their input at the meeting and the staff team for its work on making improvements to public safety.

Mr. Baker spoke via Zoom, thanking members of the public for attending and participating in the meeting and noted that he appreciates the work being done to improve public safety in the city.

I. Set Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for Monday, February 24, 2025, at 3:30pm.

J. Adjourn

There being no further business, Mr. Morrow asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Gallo made the motion, which was seconded by Mr. Morrow. The meeting was adjourned at 4:41pm.

Minutes Approved: February 24, 2025

X _____
Aaron Baker, Chair, Council Member or
Mac Morrow, Vice Chair, Council Member

X _____
Selena D. Coffey
Assistant to the City Manager