MINUTES
City Council Public Safety Committee

Monday, March 24, 2025 – 3:30 PM
City Hall Council Chambers

Members Present:	Aaron Baker, Chair, Council Member Mac Morrow, Vice Chair, Council Member Kevin Gallo, Citizen Member
Members Absent:	Mayor Maureen Copelof, Ex-Officio Member
Staff Present	Wilson Hooper, City Manager David Todd, Assistant City Manager Tom Jordan, Police Department Bradley Elmore, Interim Fire Chief Becky McCann, Communications Coordinator Denise Hodsdon, City Clerk Aaron Bland, Assistant Planning Director

A. Welcome & Call to Order

Committee Chair Aaron Baker welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 3:31pm.

B. Certification of Quorum

City Clerk Denise Hodsdon certified that a quorum was present.

C. Approval of Agenda

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

D. Approval of Minutes

Gallo requested revisions to the minutes to S. Coffey, but Coffey was absent and did not have the opportunity to review Gallo's input. The consensus was that the minutes would be tabled until the next meeting when Coffey was present and had the opportunity to consider Gallo's input.

E. County Single Fire District Proposal

Manager Hooper introduced Transylvania County Assistant County Manager David McNeil and stated that the County would be updating their ordinance that governs fire services within the county. They are also considering their funding model for countywide fire services funding.

Hooper provided background information noting that city residents don't pay fire tax as county residents do, but city residents pay property taxes, which covers their fire protection. He noted that the city has an agreement with the county, whereby the county pays approximately 45% of the Brevard Fire Department budget in return for the city providing fire protection for the city and a portion of the Sylvan Valley II rural fire district. He noted that the funds that the county pays to the city for that portion of their contract is supposed to come exclusively from the Sylvan Valley II fire district. He noted that on occasions, the county supplements with General Fund dollars. Hooper further shared that because the county has realized drawbacks to this model and is considering transitioning to a single countywide fire district, thereby collecting the fire tax countywide and then distributing the funding according to needs regardless of district lines. Hooper stated that McNeill was present at the meeting to hear the committee members' input about opting into this new model. Hooper noted that he hoped that the committee would take action regarding its recommendation to city council. Hooper outlined the following points for the committee members' consideration in evaluating the pros and cons of the new model:

Pros	Cons
• City of Brevard "fire district" will be eligible for funding from county. • City tax rate can decrease by 3-10 cents, depending on how much the city wishes to supplement base service level.[1] • Proceeds from fire tax could be used countywide. Individual departments' funding levels could be based on actual need and not limited by district lines. • Provides operational flexibility.	• County will decide funding levels. • Brevard residents will be subject to countywide fire tax.[2] • Funding levels, and thus base service levels, set the county commissioners. Unknown at this time what criteria they would use to establish funding levels.[3] • May change who responds to calls within city limits.

[1] FY26 projection sees between $0.048-$0.063 of the projected revenue neutral rate going to fire depending on service levels.
[2] Countywide fire tax rate unknown at this time.
[3] Historically Transylvania County's approach has been to fund each department in a way that maintains comparable service levels across districts. Under current funding model, Brevard Fire Department service levels exceed those of other departments.

After Hooper reviewed the pros and cons, McNeill added that the county currently has eight service districts and all of them were established at different times with different tax rates. He noted that the fire districts weren't necessarily "tax districts," but were "service districts." McNeill explained that there were issues that need to be addressed regarding the consistency of funding for the fire districts, the need for revision of service district resolutions for all eight districts and noted that the board of commissioners could ask Brevard and Rosman if they would like to opt in on the single countywide fire district proposal. McNeill also shared some advantages and disadvantages of the proposed funding model and its impact on the city's residents, similar to the points that Hooper referenced earlier in the meeting (see table above). McNeill indicated that he anticipated that Rosman will opt in on the new funding model because they do not have a municipal fire department.

Baker inquired about the county's established funding levels going forward if the city opted in for the single countywide proposal. McNeill responded that he doesn't anticipate that this method would change and explained that the county evaluates property values within the district, call volumes, any special requirements within the district, the need for specialized response teams, and the geographic size of districts when making decisions regarding fire department/district funding levels. Morrow noted that the city has had difficulties getting replacement equipment and the county hadn't supported the city when it went to full time staffing, thereby leaving the city independent of the county with regard to fire services. Morrow asked if the county considered call volumes in the city when determining funding levels and McNeill responded "no" and stated that the "level of services you want to provide within city limits is left to the city." Committee members continued their discussion, asking questions of McNeill. McNeill stated that EMS and rescue calls are the most significant drivers for calls for service throughout the county.

Baker noted that the county requested that the Brevard Fire Department begin responding to calls for service for rescues and EMS a few years ago. As the committee and staff proceeded with discussion, members of the committee expressed interest in learning more about the funding formula and methodology and its impact on city fire services funding but indicated that they were not prepared to recommend that the city opt in on the countywide formula without this pertinent information. Gallo asked if the city could opt if it wished to do so in the future. McNeill responded that this would not be possible. Morrow reminded the committee members that the city owns its equipment this would need to be considered as well. Hooper summarized the committee's feedback that without having a fixed formula showing how the new funding model would benefit the city, the committee would recommend that the city decline opting in and therefore remain independent. The committee agreed with Hooper's summary.

Mr. Todd asked McNeill if the city would continue to receive the 45% funding as stipulated in the current interlocal agreement. McNeill clarified that the county

would continue to contract with the city to provide fire protection in the district and the funding would be based on property valuations within the city and within the Sylvan Valley II district. McNeill noted that the funding percentages would not change from the current agreement between the county and the city. McNeill left the meeting at this point and the committee continued with its agenda.

F. Review of Bike-Ped Plan Safety Components

Mr. Bland provided a brief background on the bike-ped plan, which was adopted in 2020, and shared the methodology for the plan development and its implementation. He noted that priorities had been developed regarding safety metrics and stated that the top recommendations were the completion of the Estatoe Trail and Ecusta Trail. Bland noted that safety-specific priorities related to infrastructure projects focused primarily on crossing improvements and enforcement of vehicular speed and law enforcement training related to safety, as well as the potential installation of flashing beacons and on-street markings such as those for bike lanes. He shared that the top safety crossing improvement projects included greenway crossings in high-traffic, high-volume, and high-speed areas such as Asheville Highway at Hospital Drive and Broad Street at the library.

Committee members and staff continued discussion of the plan priorities, staff's collaboration with McAdams as the city's traffic consultants and NCDOT in implementing the plan's safety recommendations and priorities. With no action required on this agenda item, Hooper summarized the continued work in achieving the bike-ped plan goals and expressed that council members should be prepared to provide direction to staff on these initiatives during upcoming budget deliberations if applicable.

Bland shared information regarding the "Safe Streets for All" program and agreed to forward printed information on the program and potential external funding to address the plan priorities. Hooper also noted that staff will use the bike-ped plan in negotiations with NCDOT in making sure that city requests of NCDOT align with the plan. The committee briefly discussed crash data and the State's regulations regarding the use of cameras to monitor vehicular traffic. Chief Jordan shared information in this regard.

G. Update on Traffic Calming Measures

McLean and Railroad Intersection

Hooper noted that staff had learned that there are more complications to employing some traffic calming measures than expected. He stated that the flashing sign that had been considered for used at the McLean/Railroad intersection is not ADA compliant and it will not be sufficient on its own. He stated that the city would need to buy a compliant sign and make additional updates in that intersection, which will increase the complexity and cost of addressing these issues. Todd noted that the sign that the city has in stock is not viable for use at all because signage must be

audible, have content of both sides of the sign, and have handicapped accessible push buttons. He noted that McAdams traffic consultants are continuing to look at alternative options for addressing traffic calming at this intersection.

Fisher and McLean Intersection
Hooper noted that data collected for this intersection in January 2025 was incomplete because the device malfunctioned, and their validity of the data was questionable. Most recently, staff has implemented two traffic calming devices at this intersection are hidden and will collect data in the necessary directions to address speeding vehicles.

Carver and Oaklawn Intersection
Hooper reminded the committee that this intersection is irregular, which explains why there is no stop located here. The staff team is working with the city's traffic consultants to continue to provide traffic calming and address pedestrian safety concerns in this intersection. The committee will receive an update on this intersection once McAdams traffic consultants have made a recommendation.

Carolina and Shipman Intersection
Hooper provided data for Carolina Avenue and stated that NCDOT has said that they will consider this southern portion of Carolina Avenue to be a city street. He shared that this would provide the city with more opportunities to address safety concerns here. The city's traffic consultant remains reluctant to agree to a three-way stop at this intersection because the streets are so dissimilar that installing a three-way stop on Shipman could have the opposite effect, meaning that a vehicle on Shipman waiting to turn left on a narrow road with little traffic may not see the stop sign, which could cause accidents. Hooper noted that staff and the traffic consultants will continue to find resolutions for this intersection's safety.

Jordan summarized speed monitoring device data from Carolina Avenue, noting that he wants to continue to monitor the data before making further recommendations for a revised traffic calming policy. Baker asked Jordan questions about new bike-pedestrian lanes that were going to be added. Hooper noted that this has not been added to the MUTCD yet, but some cities have been testing it. He shared that the State would likely need to approve this since it had not been approved yet. Gallo asked about a speed hump on each side of Carolina. Hooper answered that this is a possibility.

H. Public Comment

Linda Gallo spoke regarding the speed cushions installed on Probart and stated that she felt that the community was starting to see positive results from their installation. She also noted that the crosswalks at Caldwell, French Broad, and Broad Street aren't operational. D. Todd responded that he would look into the crosswalk signaling issues.

Kellyn Haight spoke and thanked the city for collecting traffic speed data. She stated that she felt that the new data seemed accurate, although she questioned the number of units being high. Chief Jordan agreed that these units seemed high. Hooper noted that the volume rather than speed will justify the resolution. Hooper noted that he will bring back options as they relate to the MUTCD to a public meeting in the near future. Brief discussion regarding the MUTCD continued.

Vice-Chair Morrow thanked staff for their tree removal on McLean.

Hooper shared that Mayor Copeloff had been accepted into the Mayor's Institute on Pedestrian Safety.

I. Set Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for Monday, April 28, 2025, at 3:30pm.

J. Adjourn

There being no further business, Mr. Gallo made the motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Mr. Morrow. The vote was unanimous. The meeting was adjourned at 5:27pm.

Minutes Approved: April 28, 2025

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

X _____
Selena D. Coffey
Assistant to the City Manager