

March 10, 2025 Regular Meeting

Closed Session

Meeting minutes

Motion to begin closed session

Alderman Genita Hill made a motion to enter the closed session. Alderman Tim Hertzl seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The board proceeded to enter the closed session at 6:20 p.m.

Closed Session

Police Chief's Retirement Announcement

Police Chief Bates announced his plans to retire, stating that he had started the first stages of the retirement process. He informed the board that he and the manager would submit his paperwork around April, with the retirement date expected to be effective in August of the current year. Chief Bates mentioned that the timing could change by a month, but he did not anticipate it happening before August due to the busy retirement season for educators.

Chief Bates expressed his reasons for informing the board early:

- He felt obligated to inform the board that hired him first, before telling his staff.
- He wanted to explain why Major Reed would be presenting at the upcoming budget workshop, as part of preparing for the transition.

The Chief reflected on his time with the department, stating that it had been an honor to serve as chief. He mentioned learning a lot during his tenure, particularly about working with limited resources and implementing non-traditional methods in law enforcement.

Chief Bates assured the board that the agency was in a good position for his retirement, citing the strong command staff in place. He mentioned that the manager would have multiple options for his replacement, both internally and externally.

The Chief expressed his willingness to remain available as an information source for the town or the new chief if needed. He also mentioned his plans for a small retirement ceremony for his family and department staff, to which board members would be invited.

Board Members' Responses and Reflections

Board members expressed their gratitude and admiration for Chief Bates' service:

- One long-serving board member commended the Chief for bringing the police department to its best state, noting that officers now want to work there.
- Another member praised the Chief's ability to allow officers to "be the police" without fear of political interference.
- The board acknowledged the Chief's efforts in staff recruitment and retention, as well as his connection with the community.

Chief Bates reciprocated by thanking the board for their support, funding, and positive interactions with the department. He expressed appreciation for being able to retire on his own terms and fulfill his promise to his family.

Future Plans

The Chief assured the board that Major Reed and Captain Hardin were prepared to lead the agency forward, regardless of their future roles.

Motion needed to end closed session

Alderman Allen Bumgarner made a motion to end the closed session. Alderman Phyllis Pennington seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The board proceeded to end the closed session.