

**CITY OF BELLEVILLE**  
**POLICE & FIRE COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**FEBRUARY 2, 2026 MEETING TIME – 6:00 P.M.**  
**COUNCIL CHAMBERS, BELLEVILLE CITY HALL**

Aldersperson Mary Stiehl called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Committee Members Present:	Bryan Whitaker	Carmen Duco	Scott Ferguson
Johnnie Anthony	Kathy Kaiser	Mary Stiehl	Phil Elmore
Kara Osthoff			

Excused:

Department Head/Staff:	Fire Chief Lougeay	Deputy Fire Chief Garnica
Asst. Police Chief Heffernan	Police Captain Keilbach	Police Captain Thomason

Guest Aldersperson:	Raffi Ovian	Ed Dintelman
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Meeting called to order at 6 o'clock for the February 2, 2026, meeting of the Police and Fire Committee.

**Public Participation**

- No public participation.

**Approval of Minutes**

- Aldersperson Whitaker made a motion second by Aldersperson Ferguson to approve the minutes of the January 5, 2026, meeting.
- All members voted aye.
- Motion carried.

**New Business: Police Chief's Report**

- Staffing Update:
  - Currently 72 officers.
  - Three in police academy, three in field training (one new hire, two laterals).
  - Hiring push planned, current list has two potential candidates.
  - Three spots available, lateral activity (St. Louis city guy interested).
  - Need a new list before the August academy to reach 75 officers.
- Crime Stats:

- Annual report being created, spearheaded by Captain Kielbach, to be posted on belleville.net in March.
- Report includes department structure, manpower, and crime stats.
- Crime Stats Comparison (2024 to 2025):
  - Crimes against persons: virtually even (+0.32%).
    - Murder down 50%, rape down 29%, simple assault up 7% (60% of category).
  - Crimes against property: down 25%.
    - Robbery down 66%, burglary down 61%, vehicle theft down 36.6%, misdemeanor theft up 17%.
  - Crimes against society: down 19%.
    - Drug offenses down 15%, weapons offenses down 27%, animal cruelty down 38%.

### Questions on Crime Data

- Inquiry about North 39th Street apartment complex.
  - Issues flare up in various parts of town.
  - Enforcement strategy implemented to regain control.
  - Location specifically discussed, multi-layered strategies to mitigate issues.
- Crime free housing area being looked at.
- New local owner, Officer Sam Parsons, is in contact.
  - Owner opened an apartment for a Police Substation.

### Officer/Staff Recognition

- Officer, Detective, and Civilian Staff member of the year awards to be presented at council meetings.
- Replacing the Exchange Club annual dinner recognition.

### Police Vehicle Motion

- Alderperson Elmore made a motion second by Alderperson Duco to approve the sale, trade, or conversion of the following police vehicles:
  - 1989 Chevrolet S-10                   1GCCS1421K2191523
  - 2008 Ford F-150                       1FTRF12238KC33977
  - 2019 Ford Explorer                   1FM5K8AR9KGB28254
  - 2001 Chevrolet S-10                   1GCCS19W118131994
  - 2004 Ford Mustang                    1FAFP45X84F180324
  - 2011 Dodge Charger                   2B3CL3CG7BH591491
  - 2014 Can-Am Spider RT               2BXNBDD16EV002530
  - 2014 Can-Am Spider RT               2BXNBDD19EV003980
  - 2014 Ford Explorer                    1FM5K8AR5EGA65092
  - 2019 Ford Explorer                   1FM5K8AR1KGB28247

- 2013 Ford Taurus 1FAHP2M81DG144877
- 2013 Ford Taurus 1FAHP2M81DG144878
- 2014 Ford Taurus 1FAHP2MKXEG124223
- 2016 Ford Explorer 1FM5K8ARXGGA77886
- 2016 Ford Explorer 1FM5K8AR5GGA77889
- 2016 Ford Explorer 1FM5K8AR8GGA77885
- 2017 Ford Explorer 1FM5K8AR1HGA71024
- 2017 Ford Explorer 1FM5K8AR0HGA62833
- 2017 Ford Explorer 1FM5K8AR2HGA62834
- The department received 12 new police units in the last fiscal year, purchased in 2025.
- Some vehicles are being given to the Fire Department for training purposes, while others will be auctioned or traded in.
- The Can-Am Spyders are being disposed of due to lack of parts and overheating issues. The mechanic says, "we cannot get parts for them anymore and they overheat every time we take them out."
- Members voting aye on roll call vote: Whitaker, Ferguson, Kaiser, Elmore, Duco, Anthony, Stiehl, Osthoff.
- Motion carries and will go to the February 17<sup>th</sup> Council meeting.

### **Fire Chief's Report:**

- Fire Department vehicle purchase was Tabled for a 2026 Tahoe at the last meeting.
- Fire Chief Lougeay explained the estimated costs to repair fleet vehicles:
  - 2010 Expedition: \$7,000 - \$15,000
  - 2013: \$5,000 - \$12,000
  - 2016: \$3,000 - \$6,000
- The 2010 Expedition has a potential engine issue and frame/body rust, posing a liability.
- The purchase was approved and budgeted by Finance, according to Director Maitret and former Chief Mills.

### **Fire Department Vehicle Inventory**

- The department has seven vehicles in total: three Chief cars, one Battalion Chief car, and two training vehicles.
- Oil changes are performed every 3,000-6,000 miles.
- Chief vehicles were purchased in 2021 (Chief), 2024 (Deputy & Assistant Chief), and 2025 (Battalion Chief).
- The plan is to use vehicles for five years in frontline use, then rotate them to backup for another five years before selling.

### **Vehicle Proposal Breakdown**

- The Police Department proposal breaks down vehicles into three categories: training, sale or trade, and sale or conversion.
- Training vehicles are not suitable for use but can be used for Fire Department training.
- Sale or trade vehicles have high mileage or other issues.
  - Examples include a Ford Taurus and two Explorers with engine problems.
- Sale or conversion vehicles are good vehicles that have reached a mileage where they can be rotated out of the Police fleet.

### **Vehicle Suitability and Usage**

- Three of the Police Ford Taurus' are Detective vehicles that have a longer life because they haven't been in patrol.
  - One has 132,000 miles, while others have under 100,000 miles.
- One of the Police Ford Explorers would be better than what the Fleet Maintenance guy currently has.
- Larger vehicles are needed in the Fire Department fleet for training to carry equipment.

### **Vehicle Visibility and Fleet Composition**

- The Police Chief drives a Ford Explorer.
- New, Fire Department red vehicles are very visible around town, which can be a plus for accident prevention.
- Police vehicles are black and white, while administrative and detective vehicles are black.

### **Vehicle Replacement and Budget**

- Chairperson Anthony explained that the vehicle the Chief is requesting is in the approved budget.
- Waiting to purchase the vehicle will result in a much higher price in the future.
- Emergency vehicles accumulate a lot of miles.
- The Chairperson cannot make a motion but will bring the issue to the board for reconsideration.

### **Fleet Maintenance and New Position**

- The Fleet Maintenance Manager was hired under Chief Mills.
- The position didn't exist before and does not have a permanent take-home vehicle.
- The fleet maintenance manager is saving money on the maintenance budget by doing small repairs in-house.
- The position saves time by doing minor repairs in-house.

### **Potential Vehicle Transfer**

- A Ford Explorer that the Police Department is offloading could be used by the Fleet Maintenance Manager.

- Transferring a vehicle is fiscally responsible.
- The city owns the vehicles, and after approval, vehicles can be moved to those who need them.
- A 2026 Chevy Tahoe is reasonably priced at \$59,702.

### **Vehicle Maintenance and Turnover**

- Police vehicles are typically moved to spare status once the warranty expires.
- The Police Department aims to replace six vehicles a year to maintain fleet rotation.
  - Detective fleets get vehicles rotated out of patrol due to lower mileage and less wear.

### **Vehicle Purchase Motion**

- Two options: purchase a new vehicle or transfer one from the Police to the Fire Department.
- Alderperson Elmore made a motion second by Alderperson Kaiser to purchase a 2026 Chevy Tahoe for \$59,702.

Members voting aye on roll call: Anthony, Kaiser, Elmore. (3)

Members voting nay on roll call: Whitaker, Duco, Ferguson, Stiehl, Osthoff. (5).

Motion fails.

### **Annual Report**

- Overall decrease of 9 1/2% in calls for service.
- Inspections have increased after COVID restrictions.
- There has been a dramatic increase in response time for EMS calls.

### **Private Service EMS Issues**

- Waiting 18-20 minutes for cardiac arrests is a common problem.
- Fire department often arrives before ambulances, but members lack EMT or paramedic training/equipment.
  - Limited to basic first aid, CPR, and AED.
  - There is a liability accepted when they are there.
- The Fire Department used to have EMTs, but it was financially unsustainable due to certification costs, continuing education, and associated time off.

### **Response Times and Liability**

- 20-minute wait times for ambulances are common.
- Medical protocols require 40 minutes of life-saving efforts after EMS arrival before ceasing.
- Firefighters can be tied up for over an hour, impacting response to other calls.
- Concern about liability with untrained personnel responding to calls.

- Public expects more due to the "Chicago fire culture" and TV portrayals.
- Firefighters are doing Narcan and CPR.

## **Potential Solutions and Challenges**

- Alderperson Whitaker wants to consider first responder certification for firefighters.
  - There were 414 EMS assists and 299 motor vehicle accidents this year.
- Good Samaritan provisions need to be considered.
- Firefighters get frustrated with delayed EMS response, especially in cases like gunshot wounds.
- EMS, Police Officer, and Firefighter positions are becoming less desirable.
- The quality of people entering these jobs has been decreasing.

## **Staffing and Cost Considerations**

- Having fire responders treat emergency cases would require two people per firehouse, reducing available firefighters.
- Alton Fire Department's progression: first responder trained firefighters -> EMT level -> paramedic level -> adding ambulances.
- Ambulances and paramedic salaries are expensive.
- The system is going to break eventually.

## **EMS Personnel Shortages and Training**

- EMS companies are hiring medics from other states who may not know local protocols.
- These traveling medics sometimes expect Fire Departments to act as Paramedics.
- Private ambulance companies aren't always educating contract workers on the capabilities of local Fire Departments.
- Example: A crew from Gary, Indiana, working for Abbott or MedStar, expected the Fire Department to do things outside their scope.
- Private ambulances do not have unions.

## **EMS Issues and Potential Solutions**

- Alderperson Whitaker suggests creating a subcommittee to address the EMS problem, offering to serve on it.
- He believes the problem is worsening and catastrophic results are imminent.
- He suggests confronting MedStar/Abbott about their subpar service level and holding them accountable.

## **Regionalization and Other Cities' Experiences**

- Fire Chief Lougeay notes that the EMS problem is not unique to Belleville, citing conversations with fire chiefs in the region.

- Granite City Fire Department averages 17 EMS calls a day with one ambulance, operating in the black.
- Collinsville has a similar call volume to Granite City.
- O'Fallon's EMS is under their police department.

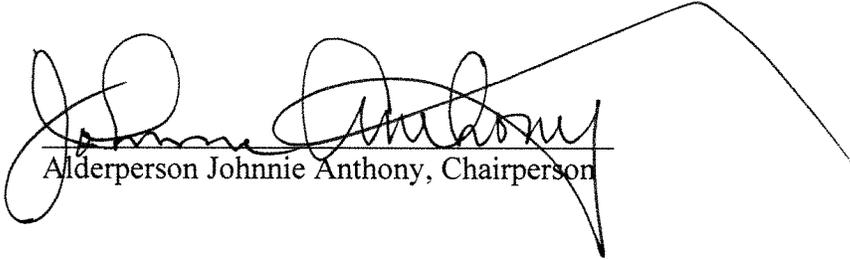
### **Challenges and Historical Context**

- Fire Chief Lougeay acknowledges that addressing the EMS issue would involve changing working conditions.
- He notes that the average person rarely interacts with ambulances or Fire Departments.
- Regionalization has been discussed before, citing Louisiana County as an example where multiple fire departments merged to reduce costs. Millstadt is in the process of regionalizing an ambulance service.

Aldersperson Elmore made a motion second by Aldersperson Whitaker to adjourn the meeting at 6:53pm.

All members voted aye.

Motion carries.



Aldersperson Johnnie Anthony, Chairperson

Minutes by: Niccy Cook, Asst. City Clerk

