



**CITY OF SCOTTSDALE
COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SAFETY
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, March 25, 2026
Community Design Studio – Nave
7606 E. Indian School Rd.
Scottsdale, AZ 85251**

PRESENT: Councilwoman Jan Dubauskas, Chair
Vice-Mayor Adam Kwasman
Councilwoman Kathy Littlefield

STAFF: Greg Caton, City Manager
Luis Santaella, Interim City Attorney
Tom Shannon, Fire Chief
Joe LeDuc, Police Chief
Richard Slavin, Assistant Police Chief
Helen Gandara, Assistant Police Chief
JoBeth VerHoef

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Dubauskas called the meeting to order at 1:09 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members present as listed above.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no response to the call for public comment.

1. Approval of Minutes

VICE-MAYOR KWASMAN MOVED THAT THE JANUARY 21, 2026, COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SAFETY MEETING MINUTES BE APPROVED AS WRITTEN. COUNCILWOMAN LITTLEFIELD SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED 3-0 WITH CHAIR DUBAUSKAS, VICE-MAYOR KWASMAN, AND COUNCILWOMAN LITTLEFIELD VOTING IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

2. FY 26/27 Public Safety Budget Discussions

Fire Chief Tom Shannon conducted a slideshow presentation and reviewed slides entitled Operating Packages and CIP. He explained that the \$1.9 million allocated for attrition-related firefighter replacement was to ensure that journeyman firefighters can take over when retirements happen, not novices, and the \$1.4 million below was to ensure that incumbent firefighters maintain their skillset and certifications.

City Manager Greg Caton stressed the importance of the City conveying a consistent message during the budget process. He noted that each department's budget was reduced by 10 percent over the previous year, and each department handled that reduction differently. Every single line item was impacted, resulting in a reduction of approximately \$8.5 million. There was also a 2 percent reduction in staffing levels, though vacant positions were the first to be considered in this. Sworn personnel were not eligible to be reduced.

In response to Committee member questions, Chief Shannon said fire staff's goal was to reduce the budget by close to \$1 million, but they were only able to achieve \$600,000 in savings. He explained how the budget was contemplated to determine what could be trimmed from it. Mr. Caton indicated the \$8.5 million was a loose estimate as certain things could not comply with the reduction, such as overtime considerations. Discussions took place about finding potential savings after certain City contracts expired. He spoke about the differences between attrition-related firefighter positions and standard City positions and how the former, which included larger numbers of the same position, were easier to plan for in terms of retirements. The funding for this, he noted, was higher now than it had ever been.

Chief Shannon remarked that significant analysis had been done in this matter using actuarials from the pension system and real-time surveys of staff. The analytics revealed that firefighters who have been in the system longer are more likely to leave earlier than the actuarial might indicate. He expected to see larger departures in the coming years, which could result in the \$1.9 million allocated for this to grow to \$2.5 million. Mr. Caton estimated spending between \$8 and \$10 million on this over the next four to five years.

Chair Dubauskas expressed support for the concept, saying that this will let firefighters know that the City appreciates them.

Mr. Caton stated the City will change its methodology towards one-time grants for vehicles in the future to try to reduce the chance of needing to pay large amounts all at once.

Responding to additional queries, Chief Shannon did not anticipate any other large high-cost expenses as the department identified areas of vulnerability. Additionally, funding through a proposition related to a marijuana tax could be used to establish new programming for upstaffing. He thought the department was on a good path financially as long as the economy held and no major changes were needed.

Councilwoman Littlefield wondered about the ability to house and care for the ambulances. Chief Shannon noted there would be a groundbreaking event for the ambulance annex at the end of the month. He believed the department had the right resources for the operations it intended to deliver with everything currently being built and everything planned to be constructed.

Vice-Mayor Kwasman suggested trying to work with the Legislature to get the State to defray some of the costs associated with the CBRNE apparatus. Chief Shannon said the department works with state homeland security grant programs and federal programs, which sometimes require state legislators and congressional representatives to be educated. He described how the department works with its lobbyist to ensure that capable responders get the necessary resources. Mr. Caton added that 22 new fire staff are anticipated in the new budget, which was not common across the rest of the City organization.

Assistant Police Chief Helen Gandara indicated that her department requested no new positions in the new budget. She said six positions would be eliminated to meet the 2 percent reduction requirement, all of which had been vacant for a while. Because the police department would take over emergency management, two positions would move into the department, while four positions would move from the police finance office to the city manager's office. She discussed how the department went through each line item in their budget to find opportunities for cost savings. She spoke about the department's wellness and training initiatives, some of which were being reimbursed through the participation of more and more organizations. The fire department, she noted, was beginning to participate in the Struggle Well training program as well.

Ms. Gandara said \$35,000 was allocated in the budget for new enhanced flares. \$90,000 was set aside for a security contract for WestWorld, as was \$90,000 for new laptops for the field training program. She talked about two pieces of software that are planned to be implemented shortly. The three major areas of infrastructure in the budget were capital improvement plan (CIP) projects, technology initiatives, and security enhancements. She provided updates on some of the department's planned CIP projects.

Responding to Committee member questions, Police Chief Joe LeDuc indicated the police department barn will be expanded but located in the same footprint as it is now, and the space adjacent to the McKellips District, which already has a dog run and existing kennels, will be refurbished and expanded. Mr. Caton said the barn project was an example of stopping a project that was not on a successful path and recalibrating it.

Vice-Mayor Kwasman expressed concern about the time to satisfy public records requests increasing with the cutting of two records clerk positions. Ms. Gandara said those two positions were identified as not needing to be filled right away, and the department is currently recruiting for two records supervisors. She discussed the amount of training time received by records specialists, noting that there is great complexity when it comes to redacting body-worn camera footage. The Vice-Mayor wanted to make sure cuts in public safety were not happening just for the sake of it, and that the police and fire departments be given what they need.

Chief LeDuc stated the cuts they made were strategic, and technology will be implemented which will make operations more efficient. They have seen triple-digit reduction in their backlog because of some of these changes, and no cuts were made that would impact service levels. Vice-Mayor Kwasman wanted to make sure the laptops that were purchased would be able to handle the department's needs. Ms. Gandara indicated staff is working with the field officers to determine their needs so the department can be intentional with its purchasing. Chief LeDuc indicated the computer dispatch system in the cars was nearing its end, and staff has met with companies to provide updates as the contract with current vendor sunsets. The new records management system will be cohesive, he noted, and funds for that will be included in a future budget. He said the department was able to make a 10 percent reduction to its budget.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

3. Diversion and Probation Compliance Services

Interim City Attorney Luis Santaella announced that a compliance officer position will start next year, focusing on diversion and domestic violence (DV) type issues, as well as probation issues. That position would investigate issues and revoke probation if necessary, along with ensuring that people are completing their programs, all of which will improve public safety. The salary for that position will start at \$66,000 and top out at \$89,000, and the position will interact with people on diversion and monitor the effectiveness of the programs. If the position turns out to be successful, staff will consider expanding the program.

In response to Committee member questions, Mr. Santaella explained that diversion is within the jurisdiction of the Prosecutor's Office while probation is a court function. His office will have certain limitations it will need to respect, though he felt it will be able to provide effective services on the probation side. Scottsdale experiences 800 to 900 DV cases a year, many of which involve first-time offenders, who the department tries to get into diversion to break that cycle. If the program is successful, they can consider contracting with the County Probation Department or creating an in-house probation department. He said diversion is a way for first-time offenders to avoid conviction. He provided examples of different diversion programs that are ordered for different offenses. Some programs are offered by the City through private providers and Youth and Family Services, and they do screenings in DUI cases to determine the level of alcohol treatment or the specific substance abuse programs that need to be completed.

Vice-Mayor Kwasman said he was a huge advocate of the program and thought the diversion program should be expanded. Diversion programs were opportunities to correct certain behaviors, and he wanted to see a report on how they could be expanded. Councilwoman Littlefield agreed, saying this was a great opportunity for the City and for all involved.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

4. Public Safety Preparedness

Fire Chief Tom Shannon noted it was a dry winter, and the department is being pessimistic about fire patrols. It plans to work with the Planning and Permitting Departments to ensure contractors adhere to safe practices in open areas and around the Preserve. He expected to share the enhancements made to the department's capabilities for rescue in open spaces at the Committee's May meeting. He thought the preparation for the special events season was successful, and he felt well-suited in terms of staffing for upcoming events.

In response to Committee member queries, Chief Shannon thought the Council's continuing espousal of public safety and engagement would help the program move forward. He encouraged them to relay any feedback or areas of concern it hears about. Regarding resource sharing, he said staff was prepared for volatile conditions, but the west was well-positioned to receive federal resources. He highlighted the automatic aid system used by the City, which includes brush and larger firefighting capacities. He felt comfortable with the setup and the City's relationships with the Tonto National Forest and the State Forester.

Assistant Fire Chief Richard Slavin conducted a slideshow and reviewed slides with the following titles: Public Order Mission; The Public Order Unit's mission...; Capabilities; Approach (2 slides);

Preparedness; Resources; and Summary.

Assistant Chief Slavin discussed the roles and responsibilities of the dialogue officers, the Line Team, the Bike Team, and the Extrication Team. He noted that the department also utilized unmanned drones. The primary goal during protests, he explained, is voluntary compliance, not enforcement. He described the model they follow for protests as the lowest-risk approach, protecting the City from unnecessary civil liability. The City's policy of avoiding mass arrests, he noted, significantly reduces constitutional challenges, claims of overpolicing, and litigation risk. He indicated plans were already underway regarding the upcoming No Kings protest and racing events. He summarized that the goal was to protect First Amendment rights by creating conditions where free speech can occur safely.

Police Chief Joe LeDuc remarked that the Public Order Unit has evolved significantly since 2020 utilizing new technology and a program he thought other agencies could use as a model. While the goal was to deescalate when possible, he assured the Committee that the department will enforce laws and not allow people to take over roads.

Responding to questions, Assistant Chief Slavin highlighted the department's outstanding relationship with the City Attorney's Office. Vice-Mayor Kwasman expressed gratitude to the Scottsdale Police Department on behalf of the Jewish community.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

5. Possible Items for Next Meeting

Fire Chief Tom Shannon requested a topic to discuss the preparations being made for open spaces for the upcoming fire season. Chair Dubauskas suggested a discussion on the grant process, possibly even identifying other potential grants. Vice-Mayor Kwasman wanted an update on recruitment.

City Manager Greg Caton said the City would continue to support the police and fire departments with resources.

Interim City Attorney Luis Santaella suggested that he and Chief Shannon do a presentation regarding abuse of emergency services with nursing homes and a potential ordinance that staff wanted to propose. Vice-Mayor Kwasman suggested expanding the topic to include any ordinances that might strengthen public safety.

ADJOURNMENT

COUNCILWOMAN LITTLEFIELD MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. VICE-MAYOR KWASMAN SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED 3-0 WITH CHAIR DUBAUSKAS, VICE-MAYOR KWASMAN, AND COUNCILWOMAN LITTLEFIELD VOTING IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

With no further business to discuss, being duly moved and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 2:29 p.m.

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