



# **CITY COMMISSION SPECIAL WORK SESSION**

**February 12, 2024**

**NOTE: This meeting is an “informal” meeting of the City Commission. The content of the Agenda is subject to change at the meeting.**



# **Public Safety Discussion**

## WHATS WORKING?

- Continuing to process the most cases per prosecutor than any other City
- Our team
- Seamlessly replaced the loss of an experienced prosecutor
- Able to attract extraordinary candidates to open positions.
- Culture



## STRAINED/BROKEN?

- Mission
- Processes
- Service to Crime Victims
- Witness co-ordination
- Morale
- Ability to Cross-Train



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## Trends:

- Fewer traffic citations
- Increase in disorderly conduct and assault of officers services
- Increase in theft/shoplifting cases
- Increase in cases/defendants with hired or appointed counsel
- High rate of continuances



## Biggest Challenge: Addition of Second Judge

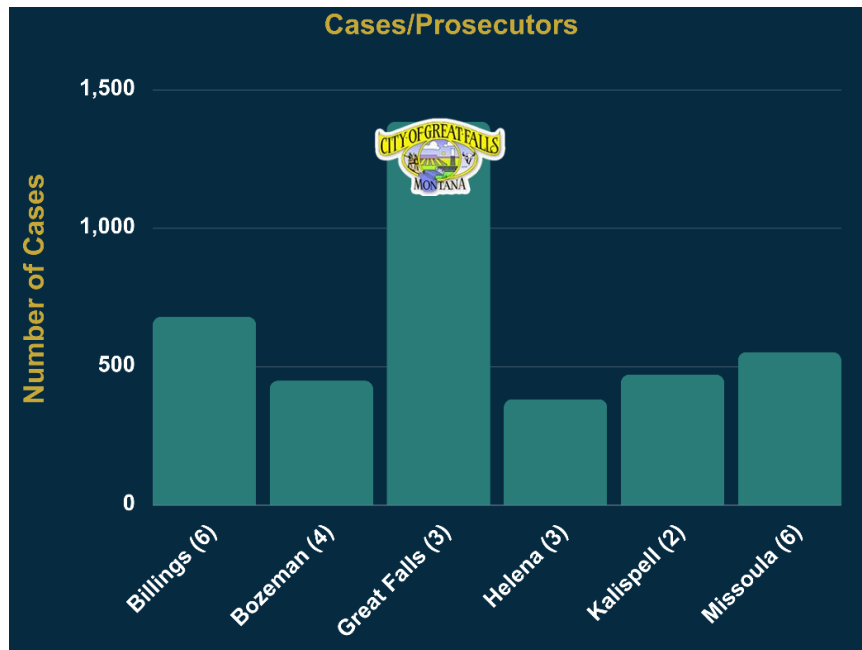
- Increase speed at which cases move through system.
- Requires department to staff two courts.



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## Changes:

- Implement Prioritization of Offenses
- Reduce Time Spent Per Case
- Pursue Earlier Resolution of Cases
- Identify/Dismiss Problem Cases Earlier
- Reduce Unnecessary Court Attendance



## CRITICAL NEED

Prosecutor	\$135,000
Prosecution Management Software	\$30,000
Victim/Witness Coordinator	\$115,000
Related Accommodations, Equipment, and Training	\$15,000

**\$295,000**



City of Great Falls Legal Department

## COGF City Commission Special Work Session

Chief of Police - Jeff Newton



## GFPD Updates

### What's working well?

- Supervision
- Patrol training programs
- Employee commitment
- Outside agency partnerships
- Citizens Academy
- Units within the department

### What's strained or broken?

- Staffing/budget/resources/vacant positions within department
- Training personnel/background investigators
- Sexual/Violent Offender Registration
- Hiring qualified applicants and new officer retention



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## What's Changing?

\*\*\* *More focus on core functions* \*\*\*

- Solvability factors in investigations
- Concentrated patrol efforts (DDACTS, saturation traffic patrols, etc)
- Revisit alarm response (over 95% of alarms are false)
- Eliminate community presentations (risk assessments, safety talks, training for businesses)
- Eliminate Master Citizens Academy
- Require more on-line reporting
- Streamline vehicle crash reporting
- Transition to self-issued trespass notices (residents and businesses)



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## What's Trending?

*Growing mental health and substance abuse issues are impacting every facet of the department*

### INVESTIGATION SERVICES BUREAU

- Seizures of Fentanyl up 148%
- More gang activity - younger populations
- Increase in calls for SRO's
- Challenges with staffing Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners
- Overdose deaths and suspected overdose deaths up by 5%

### PATROL SERVICES BUREAU

- Shoplifting up 65%
- Assaults on officers up 21% (highest level in 5 years)
- Using data to focus officers where needed most (DDACTS)
- Retooling the mental health Mobile Response Team (*Many Rivers, grants*)



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## What's Trending?

### COMMUNICATIONS BUREAU - 911

- Maintaining minimum staffing requirements
- Recruiting practices review

### RECORDS BUREAU

- Complying with unfunded mandates from State of Montana
- Changing requests for data creates additional workload for staff (SAKI, SVOR)

### SUPPORT SERVICES BUREAU

- Recruiting/hiring/training challenges - changes at State level impact procedures/timelines
- Reduction in slots at the Montana Law Enforcement Academy
- Critical review of recruiting/hiring practices



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## What's Needed

- **At capacity with available resources, no option to further cut without negative effect to core services**
- **Steps taken to streamline services**
  - changed processes
  - sought grant funding
  - collaborated with allied agencies
  - focused personnel into core functions
- **2023 Public Safety Mill Levy proposal**
  - what was asked was what was needed
  - met minimum standards
  - focused on operations
  - added minimum support staff
- **2023 levy ask outlined resources to serve *current* needs**
  - reduction does not prepare for future growth/community challenges



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## Questions?



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## GFFR's Current State Of Operations

### WHAT'S WORKING?

- Personnel ability to operate with minimum resources (Workforce and Apparatus)
- Community Partnerships working together to create solutions for deficiencies
- Ensuring delivery of emergency response for Advanced Life Support emergencies
- Proactive options for businesses and residents to provide critical emergency information (Community Connect/Knox Box)

### WHAT'S STRAINED/BROKEN?

- Operations/Equipment Budget
- Community Mental Health Crisis Services
- Response Posture - Readiness Force
- Workforce Mental Stress
- Expanded Responsibilities for increased number of incidents & right resourcing
- Lack of training facilities - High Risk/Low Frequency
- Mutual Aid Partners ability to consistently fill requests to backfill



## Personnel (Recruitment, Retention & Morale)

- Decline of applicants to fire service locally and nationally
- Firefighters are retiring earlier in their careers due to fatigue and stress from increased calls for service
- Morale is impacted by increase of call volume combined with the nature of the incidents

## Community Trends

- Increased need of EMS transport services
- Fentanyl impact on resource utilization
- Mental Health and lack of crisis intervention resources
- Great Falls' highest percentage of 911 user population is ages 65+, higher than the state and national average
- Number of overlapping incidents continues to increase
- Increased need for housing availability
- High number of non-emergent calls



Over 40% of the City  
is outside  
industry standards of fire  
and emergency services  
response

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## Minimum needs for **Impact**



### 2023 Public Safety Levy and Bond

The 2023 request would have improved GFFR's ability to meet NFPA and ISO response standards for the City as it stood 5 years ago.

The 2023 PSL and Bond WOULD NOT cover future needs.

Current resources fail to meet national standards to provide timely and effective response.

If GFFR is mandated to implement a least possible, staggered approach for personnel, the following will "help" but won't address public safety shortcomings

- Operations: Minimum of 12 or more firefighters (This WILL NOT prevent ISO Regression or meet NFPA Standards for timely and effective response)
  - Cross staff an aerial/med unit
- Prevention/Code Enforcement: 1 Deputy Fire Marshal

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## Changes to the Department

### Currently implemented

- Reduced delivery of Prevention Education in schools
- Changes to City Ordinances for False Alarms and Code Violations
- No longer primary response to Code 1 medicals
- Implementation of Third Party Reporting Platform (IROL)
- Cross staffing
- Utilization of MT ANG and MAFB to backfill City



### Implementations to address PSL & Bond failures

- 1-FTE Deputy Fire Marshal Position increasing proactive education, prevention activities and life safety plans review
- Increased safety requirements for public events - adoption of IFC permitting
- Reduced EMS standby at events
- Update and amend Title 5 and Title 15, Chapter 9 of Official Code of City of Great Falls
- No longer responding to lift assist calls at Assisted Living and Independent Living facilities
- Triage calls. Review of Emergency Medical Dispatch. Delay response to non-emergent calls during surge events
- Unable to support development outside current City limit boundaries

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## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- Community survey establishing baseline for residents' for current and future expectation of public safety
- Hiring of third party consultant evaluation of current public safety posture
- Forced annexation of all County enclaves within incorporated City limits
- Implement Special Improvement Districts and reduce TIF Designations
- Implement a Payment in lieu of Taxes for large non-profits that have high public safety reliance

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## Municipal Court – Current Status

- Adjusting to second Municipal Judge
- Court is fully staffed
  - Although stretched thin, staff morale is good
- Discontinued open court sessions on Wednesdays
- Evaluating other methods of operation

## Minimum Needs

1 Additional Jury Clerk	\$62,000
1 Additional Court Office Clerk	\$62,000
1 Compliance Officer	\$72,000
Related Accommodations, Equipment, and Training	\$36,000

*Work flow of Municipal Court is impacted heavily by the number of officers on the street. Requests reflect the projected impact of new GFPD officers on Judges and support staff.*

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## Jury Clerk Need

- Municipal Court has seen a number of mistrials due to lack of compliance by those summoned.
  - For a jury trial, the court must have 13 jurors.
    - Example: 60 community members were called for jury duty; 15 showed up.
- The Court schedules on average 60 jury trials **a week** (Tuesday – Thursday).
- Current Court Clerks are pulled away from their current tasks resulting in a work and overtime.

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## Compliance Clerk Need

- Approximately 7,000 outstanding warrants at any given time.
  - 2023 court ordered 8126 hours of community service
    - Total hours completed 872.75 (11% compliance rate)
  - A Compliance Clerk
    - Aid in compliance with warrants, court orders and sentencing requirements, community service, and jail alternatives.
    - Position would potentially decrease the number of warrants being issued by the Court
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