

Police Committee Meeting

City Of Virden

City Council Chambers

Thursday June 12th 2025

Meeting called to order by Alderman Boster at 7:00 PM

Aldermen in attendance: Bertolino, Neighbors, Boster, Karrick, Carter, Donley, Matrisch, and Alderwoman Calloway

Absent: None

Also in attendance: Mayor George Murphy

Audience: Michael Turner, Marney Turner, Jacquelyn Martin, Gary Marsaglia, Lynda Watters

Comments from Audience:

Marney Turner inquired about repeated disturbances at Jason Reel's house, including an alleged explosion, the use of campers with no utilities as residents and disruptive motorcycles.

Chief Snodgrass responded that the Secretary of State's bomb squad was called in and after a search of the property nothing else was found. The reports and information is going to be forwarded to the FBI to see if they want to take over, for referral of federal charges.

On the previous calls about explosions when the officer arrived no one knew exactly where the explosions were coming from. They only knew the general area.

In living in campers the police have to prove without a doubt that someone is in fact living in the camper before anything can be done.

Chief Snodgrass requested that the residents continue to immediately call in, any disturbances.

Topics:

1. Approval of Minutes (special 2/25/25 and 5/8/25)

Motion made by Boster seconded by Matrisch to approve Police Committee Meeting Minutes of 02/25/25 and 05/08/25

Consensus passed

2. Advertising to hire 6th patrol officer

Discussion on advertising for a 6th patrol officer due to overtime burden and potential upcoming retirement.

Overtime for the past fiscal year was 931 hours (police alone), this did not include holidays. This has created not only a financial strain but an operational risk to the officers and the city.

Hiring would require candidates already certified from the Academy; plans to screen applications accordingly.

Concerns raised about budget coverage for an additional full-time officer; estimated cost is approximately \$63,000 per year.

The request was tabled pending confirmation of applicant qualifications and reviewed by the Finance Committee.

3. Property owner mowing ditches

The issue was raised about residents failing to mow city easements leading to visibility concerns at intersections.

Ordinance requires mowing of weeds over 10 inches. The debate over responsibility between the homeowner and the city for the easement areas has been an ongoing issue for years.

The problem is considered minor in scope (few properties) but compliance is enforced upon receipt of complaints.

4. Discuss possibility of hiring out police and dispatch services to Girard and/or Thayer

Discussion about Financial/budget implications, union considerations, and the fairness to Virden's taxpayers.

For dispatch, Girard currently pays \$20,000 a year to county; possibility for Virden's dispatch for Girard considered.

For police, services would require compensation significant to fund additional staffing; details and needs to be clarified with the town officials before advancing talks.

Issue tabled until next Police Committee meeting.

5. Part time police raise

Proposal to raise pay for part time police officers: from \$22.50 to \$23.50 and then after Certification and 200 hours go from \$23.50 to \$25 per hour; the \$19.00 per hour during training will remain the same.

Chief Snodgrass noted the difficulty in recruiting and retaining part time officers.

6. Chicken Ordinance

A rough draft was presented that was modeled by neighboring towns.

Propose enforcement: warnings, notices, three chances before requiring removal of chickens, and possible revocation of permit for violations.

Issues of enforceability, limits, and precedents discussed; concerned that chickens could set expectations for other livestock.

Details: maximum of 5 chickens per owner-occupied single family dwellings; no rooster; coop/run must be at least 10 feet from the property lines; chickens must be kept behind a six foot privacy fence; no sale of eggs/no byproducts will be allowed on premises.

Permits: A one-time permit of \$100 from the owner-occupants only; renters are ineligible.

Chicken allowing numbers to be monitored on an honor system with investigation upon complaints.

A draft to amend the code will continue to be discussed before a council vote.

7. Employee training

Removed by Boster

8. Liquor license discussion

Research of surrounding areas done by Boster revealed that Virden's current fees are lower than many nearby towns.

Different types of liquor licenses was discussed.

Recommendation by Boster is to move Liquor licenses to the administrative committee for action.

Consensus all in favor

9. Golf Cart Ordinance hours of operation

Current ordinance limits operation to daylight hours (dusk to dawn).

There was a discussion on revising hours to accommodate residents' needs and seasonal change; a consensus was sought for a clear year round curfew rather than fluctuating by season.

Consideration of law abiding versus non-compliant users, identification via reflective stickers, the cost recovery through the fees.

Implementation of the new hours was discussed for immediate or at the beginning of next year.

There was a consensus to take before the Council a change to the city ordinance to allow operation from 6:00 AM to 11:00 PM.

10. FB post of teenagers/speeding and shooting BB's at people

Discussion on

Most reported events are documented and referred to the state's attorney.

Many incidents are unreported directly to the police.

Concerns were expressed about escalation from BB guns to real firearms.

Police are monitoring social media and acting on tips but are very limited by the juvenile justice system structure.

More discussion about the complexity of policing youth behavior.

The limits of enforcement and the need for awareness reporting by community members.

Additional: None

Executive Session:

Motion Made by Mayor Murphy seconded by Karrick to enter into Executive session at 8:28 PM for Personnel

Consensus Passed

Motion made by Boster seconded by Bertolino to approve the Executive session meeting minutes of 5/8/25.

Consensus Passed

Adjournment:

Motion made by Boster seconded by Karrick to adjourn at 8:43 PM

Consensus passed.

Jonathan J. Myint
City Clerk

Date Approved: