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**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE ETNA CITY COUNCIL**

**Monday November 22, 2021**

Members of the Etna City Council met on this 22nd day of November, via TELECONFERENCE and at City Hall 442 Main Street. Mayor Jaime Tarne called the meeting to order and led in the salute to the Flag of the United States.

**Roll Call**

Councilmembers Cliff Munson (zoom), Brandon Fawaz, and Mayor Jaime Tarne were present, Councilmember Gilmore arrived late. Councilmember Mitch Trost was absent.

**Oral Comments from the Public on Non-Agenda Item**

None

**Current Business:**

**Discuss/Approve accepting DOJ COPS Grant.** Police Chief Josh Short and CSO Officer Kelly York requested City Council approval to accept $263,709 through a COPS grant that they recently were approved to receive. Chief Short would like to use these funds to hire a new police officer. The funds can only be used for a new hire and are only committed to three years with the requirement of retaining the officer for a minimum of 12 months at the conclusion of the 36 months.

Councilmember Fawaz asked when Chief Short applied for the grant. York replied June of 2021.

Chief Short mentioned that he would eventually like to develop future partnerships with Quartz Valley and the entire Scott Valley. In addition to covering Fort Jones they often get called out to other areas of the valley.

Councilmember Munson commented that he has had a difficult time hearing and would have liked to have had this information provided earlier to have more time to review it. He also stated that the information he was able to review is concerning and he asked if this grant covers all expenses. Chief Short replied that all expenses will be covered for three years. Munson expressed concerns after the three years. Chief Short would like the city to be in a financial position to retain this additional officer if approved for the 12 months after the three years.

Councilmember Fawaz asked what the estimated costs would be for the officer and his obligated expenses such as salary, workers comp, retirement, vehicle, outfitting, etc. Chief Short provided the Council with a breakdown of the estimated costs.

Audience member Cate Trost expressed concerns regarding the doubling of the police force when it was decided to take on Fort Jones and what Fort Jones pays does not compare to what Etna pays for police services. C. Trost asked where the need was to hire an additional police officer. Chief Short stated that community policing, law enforcement, public works, and city administration are all mandated services that an incorporated city must provide and the expenses to provide these services is what it costs the city to have.

C. Trost stated that Fort Jones should be paying half of what the police services cost, which they don’t, and she does not believe that Etna should be taking on an additional employee. The PD force doubled when they took on Fort Jones and Fort Jones does not pay for half of the services. Also, there are ordinances that can be enforced, and fines can be issued.

Audience member Che’usa Wend commented that the information does not specify that it will cover 100% of the expense associated with a new employee. Fawaz clarified that the grant would allocate up to $82,000 and in year four the cost to the city would be $82,000. Councilmember Gilmore explained the sliding scale for the salary that the grant specifies. Fawaz asked if there were any holes in the police department’s schedule, or any issues with scheduling and coverage. Chief Short explained that police are required to cover 24/7 and with an additional officer it would help alleviate some of the workload and burnout.

Gilmore complimented the police department and Chief Short for doing a great job but the idea of expanding to the entire valley cannot be on the backs of Etna. Perhaps a special bond should be placed on the entire Scott Valley community to help pay for police services. Gilmore expressed concerns about the budget and does not support providing police services to the entire valley at this time.

Wend asked if there is an issue with violent/gun crime since that was mentioned as being one of the reasons for applying for the grant. York replied that we are lucky that our area does not have violent/gun crime, but we are not immune from these types of crimes. Adding this extra position will allow our officers to be more proactive in the community and exercise crime prevention. Wend is frustrated with the lack of code enforcement in Etna and doesn’t feel like Etna is getting a fair share of code enforcement for this city. Hiring someone else and figuring out how it gets paid for later is not a good idea.

Mayor Tarne read the definition for community policing. Tarne also explained that since Etna has taken over the policing in Fort Jones a lot of their issues have declined. Tarne feels that having an adequate police force is important but agrees with Gilmore on the financial concerns. Tarne applauds Chief Short and York for going after the grant but recommends looking into another funding source rather then it coming out of the budget to fund the additional position. Tarne asked if Chief Short and York can explore any possibilities of another funding source.

Fawaz encouraged Chief Short to approach Fort Jones to find out if they are willing to understand that there is a pro-rata share of the insurance increases that were not predicted. Chief Short reminded the Council that Fort Jones is paying their fare share of the contract price. Fawaz stated the insurance change was not in our control and needs to be a topic of discussion with Fort Jones. Mayor Tarne recommended Chief Short, and York gather the requested information and a special meeting can be scheduled. Munson agreed and would also like to do some research regarding this proposal in the meantime.

Chief Short shared concerns about the decriminalization of crime which has resulted in an increase of calls for service. York stated that she predicts in four years Etna will have need for an additional officer.

Mayor Tarne made a motion that Chief Short and York explore additional options for a fourth-year payment so that the burden is not on the City of Etna and when they are prepared call for a special meeting for approval, Fawaz seconded, and the motion passed.

**Ayes: Gilmore, Fawaz, Munson, Tarne**

Gilmore requested that in the future the material needs to be provided sooner so the Council has more time to review the information.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business Mayor Tarne adjourned the open meeting at 4:23 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenny Bennett

Asst. City Clerk