

Town Council Meeting  
September 11, 2023

Agenda Item:

Title: Report on the startup of the Cooper Canyon Police Department

Contract: Town Administrator Troy J. Meyer

Background:

Denton County has been providing law enforcement services for more than 8 years which includes the following services, dispatch service, criminal investigations, crime prevention, daily patrols and traffic stops. The town's current contract is renewed annually by the council. The town's annual cost is \$235,240.00 which includes two part-time law enforcement officer coverage. After hours calls would fall into a que along with other demands on county deputies and they would respond as soon as possible. Due to unforeseeable challenges the county has only been able to provide the town with one officer over the past several months. Other challenges include, a sheriff deputy assigned to our town can get called to a neighboring area that requires Denton County assets at any time and sheriff deputy response times maybe delayed based on where they may come from after responding to another call within the county. The Town and County officials agree to reduce the cost of the agreement until the county can provide two officers.

With the increase in population growth of the county and the Town of Copper Canyon over the past five years, there is a need for law enforcement services. In 2021 the council considered other options for these services and contacted other towns and cities that border Copper Canyon who could possibly assist with the need. The Highland Village police department would have been the best fit geographically and with the level of services available to our town. However, the cost of just matching our service was well outside our budget. The council and staff concluded that continuing our agreement with the County was our best bet financially and for law enforcement services. In August 2022 staff and council members met with Assistant Deputy of the Denton County Sheriff's Office at his request. In that meeting, the Assistant Deputy informed us that they were requesting an amendment to our annual contract from two deputies, down to one. The county was no longer able to provide two officers to cover the town. The amended agreement was approved by the council in the fall of 2022. This agreement will give the town basic coverage from the County on an as available basis with the challenge of being short staffed.

The next option was to research what it would take to create Copper Canyon's own police department. The town council had discussion regarding Police service at the following Town Council meeting in 2023, February, March, May, June, and in July approved Ordinance 23-004 to create a police Department for the Town of Copper Canyon.

In 2023 the town council and staff consulted with the county, state and local agencies to determine what it would take to start our own police department that would be able to provide a high level of law enforcement services to our community. The goal was to use already available funding to create the start-up cost for the police department. Funding sources include but not limited to the following:

- \$306,000.00 in COVID grant funds/ new office space
- \$150,000.00 FY 2023- 2024 two police vehicles
- \$456,874.00 FY 2023-2024 PD Supplies and equipment
- Reduction in the county contract

Staff is also looking into to applying for the following grants,

- COPS grants
- JustGrants
- U.S. Department of Justice
- CoServ

In order to receive some of these grants the police department will need to be approved by TCOLE. Staff has submitted the application to the state in August and will take three to four weeks to get approval.

Staff have begun the hiring process for the new Copper Canyon Chief of Police as outlined below.

- August 2022 - Create hiring committee:
  - 2 Town Council members - Steve H. and Rudy C.
  - Town Administrator- Troy M.
  - 2 Town residents – Fred B. and Adrea
  - 1 Consultant – Conlin V.
- September 5<sup>th</sup> – Posted position on Texas Municipal League website.
- September 25<sup>th</sup> – select the top 5 candidates and set up in-person interviews for the first week in October.
- October 9<sup>th</sup> – Second round of interviews with the mayor, other council members.

A selection will be made after the second interview and the candidate will then complete background check, reference checks, physical, psychological testing and medical checks.

Based on these results an official job offer would be made in late November or early December. Our goal is to have the new police chief on board in early January 2024.

The Police Department building, in addition to the town hall, will include offices, a conference room, locker rooms and a safe room. Staff is currently working with GPF Architect firm on getting construction documents completed by the end of October. Staff are interviewing for a general contractor in September. The project will go out to bid in December.

This project will also include a parking improvement on the west side of town hall and a new parking area on the east side of town hall to accommodate town visitors. This project is funded in the town Capital Improvement budget in the FY 2023-2024 budget. The estimated cost of the parking improvements is \$250,000.00.