



MEMORANDUM

TO: Finance Committee

FROM: Rich Olson, City Manager
Chief Eddie Buffaloe

DATE: April 1, 2013

RE: Consideration - Discontinued Use of Two Police Sub-Stations

BACKGROUND:

Under the previous Police Administration, three FEMA trailers were purchased from the Federal Surplus Property Agency in Raleigh, North Carolina for a total of \$1,000 each. The trailers were then refurbished as police sub-stations and strategically placed throughout the City of Elizabeth City at the locations of Queen/Road Street, Factory/Harney Street, and Walker Avenue in an effort to enhance visibility and support for the Department's crime prevention and community policing initiatives. The first two trailers were acquired in 2007 and the third trailer was acquired in 2009. The policy of the Federal Surplus Property Agency is that once a department has possession of a trailer for a period of 18 months, and has kept the trailer in service for the same length of time, the trailer then becomes the property of the law enforcement agency. The refurbished trailers/police sub-stations served a great purpose in the initial years following their acquisition. However, given the length of time they have now been in service and the fact that the up-keep of the trailers in recent years has been inadequate, two of the three trailers now pose a significant safety concern. City staff recommends that usage of the two deteriorated trailers be discontinued immediately. The trailers will then be surplus with the possibility of being auctioned off by the City of Elizabeth City's Purchasing Department. The third and remaining trailer will continue to be maintained by the Police Department and utilized at special events such as National Night Out and the Potato Festival.

ANALYSIS:

The Elizabeth City Police Department acquired three different FEMA trailers over the past six years, all of which were refurbished and used as police sub-stations throughout the City. Make and models of the trailers are as follows:

- 1) FEMA Travel Trailer (Current Location: Harney Street) Status: DETERIORATED
Manufacturer: Thor; Model: Kodiak
Year: 2006; Serial Number: 47CTS5P246L115699
- 2) FEMA Travel Trailer (Current Location: Walker Avenue) Status: DETERIORATED
Manufacturer: Coachman; Model: Captiva
Year: 2005; Serial Number: 1TC2B328253163413
- 3) FEMA Travel Trailer (Current Location: Queen Street) Status: SALVAGEABLE
Manufacturer: Adventure; Model: Timberlodge
Year: 2006; Serial Number: 5C1TJ332X6P008444

The combined retail price of the three trailers at the time of purchase was \$58,000 and the Police Department only paid a \$1,000 processing fee for each trailer, for a total of \$3,000 in the initial purchase of the trailers. Costs associated with the striping of the trailers with the appropriate "ECPD" identifiers were \$2,100, for a grand total of \$5,100 associated costs involved with the use of the trailers. The trailers are at least seven years old and have been in use by the Department between four and six years. Two of the trailers are in very poor condition, with rotten floors and damaged interiors. These trailers are no longer safe to be used by staff and also pose a safety threat to citizens if they are left in their current deteriorated state. It would involve several thousand dollars to bring them back up to code and this is not a cost effective expense for the Police Department at this time. It is more cost effective to surplus the most damaged trailers as City property and auction them off at a competitive price to be salvaged by the highest bidder. The salvageable trailer is still in good enough condition to maintain and still serves a valid purpose at events such as National Night Out and the Potato Festival. This trailer will continue to be used and kept in adequate condition as a service to the public.

The Police Department's primary sub-station (located at the corner of Road/Shepard Street), which is a permanent structure, will remain in existence and continue to be used in the daily operations of the Department. Additionally, the Department has taken many pro-active stances that will continue to remain in effect, including security checks of businesses, churches, and schools as well as the successful completion of collaborative special operations, the first of which is "Operation Tightrope" that resulted

in the arrest of 120 fugitives, service of 161 warrants, and apprehension of 12 probation absconders. The closing of the non-permanent trailers/police sub-stations will, in no way, have a negative effect on the overall job that the Police Department is performing in the community. Although the sub-stations were initially a positive component of the Department, they have now become a negative one because of the increased liability they possess. The costs associated with two of the trailers now outweigh the benefits that once were gained in their acquisition. Anyone who now uses these trailers as a sub-station is at risk of getting hurt and unless the City invests more money, these trailers cannot be brought up to the proper standards. It is in the City's best interest at this time to surplus the property and attempt to recoup a portion of its expenses by auctioning the property to an individual or business that has an interest in salvaged property.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend that the City Council authorize discontinuing use and surplus of two of the FEMA trailers currently being used as police sub-stations; and auctioning the trailers to the highest bidder.