

City of Cleveland
Minutes
Police Department Workshop
Thursday, March 19, 2026 at 5:30 p.m.
205 4th Street, Cleveland, MN 56017

The regular meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Mayor Don McCabe, Council Members present: Tonya Schummer, Sarah McCabe, Nancy Gens and Anne Hiller. City Staff present: City Clerk-Treasurer Charles Hodge and Police Chief Randy Tiegs.

Mayor McCabe opened the meeting by explaining that the purpose of the workshop was not to eliminate the police department. He noted that the City has had ongoing difficulty recruiting and retaining officers, and that the Council is doing its due diligence by gathering information from the County to explore how it may be able to assist. The Mayor also stated that the Council is interested in hearing what residents would like to see moving forward.

Chief Tiegs stated that law enforcement agencies across Minnesota are currently struggling to attract applicants, noting that the pool of candidates coming out of colleges is not what it once was. He added that the department currently has one full-time and one part-time position posted. For the full-time position, the plan was for the new hire to work alongside the Chief for approximately six months. After that time, the individual may be considered for the Chief position. Depending on how that transition develops, Chief Tiegs may either retire or move into a part-time role to support the department. The Chief also noted that he does not have plans to retire but has previously informed the Council that he would provide a six-month written notice when he decides to do so. The Mayor added that the 2026 budget currently includes funding for two full-time positions, with the expectation that one would eventually transition into the Chief role. He noted that, in the future, the department would likely operate with one full-time and one part-time position.

The Mayor asked if the Council had anything to add before opening the floor for public comment. Council Member Schummer reiterated that the purpose of the workshop is to determine what the City wants its policing services to look like moving forward. Council Member Hiller noted that there may be other options to consider, such as partnering with neighboring communities, including Le Sueur or Le Center. Council Member Schummer responded that Le Sueur would likely not be interested in a partnership. Schummer went on to share information based on prior discussions with the County would need to hire a full-time deputy dedicated to Cleveland to provide approximately 40 hours of patrol coverage per week.

Public Comments:

Barry Platt asked whether Le Sueur County would bill the City for administrative time in addition to patrol hours. Council Member Schummer responded that the County would provide dispatch services and that all costs would be outlined in the contract. The Mayor added that the County has not provided full contract details at this time, as the City is not yet at that stage, but has instead shared preliminary information on how the arrangement might be structured. Barry expressed that he would prefer to keep the City's police department, if possible.

Brad Strobel shared that they appreciate seeing Randy and part-time officers present at the school and at community events, noting that a visible presence can help prevent crime rather than simply respond to it.

He also expressed concern about coverage within Cleveland if an emergency were to occur elsewhere in the county, as well as concern regarding how officer hours are being tracked. Brad also was concerned how homes would look if there wasn't city police department. Council member Schummer addressed the concern by stating that the county would address blight issues.

Dennis Hiller expressed that Randy deserves to retire, noting his long tenure with the City. Mr. Hiller acknowledged the challenges the City is facing in finding a replacement and emphasized the importance of maintaining consistent coverage and the need to develop a plan moving forward. Additionally, concern was expressed about recruitment difficulties, noting that surrounding communities are able to offer more competitive wages, making it challenging to attract full-time officers to Cleveland.

Council member Gens noted that state and federal grant opportunities may be available to support School Resource Officers (SROs) and suggested that the City and the school district collaborate to pursue potential funding. Dustin Bosshart (Cleveland Public School Superintendent) expressed support for having an SRO and shared that, in his previous role at St. Clair Public Schools, an SRO was present in the building approximately three days per week through a grant-funded arrangement.

Council member Hiller reported that she contacted Hibbing Technical College and spoke with a representative regarding recent law enforcement graduates. She noted that the most recent graduating class included 14 students, of whom six obtained employment. According to the Hiller, when she identified the community as Cleveland, the representative commented that smaller communities are often viewed by graduates as entry-level opportunities where they gain experience before moving on to positions with higher pay. The council member also indicated her support for the idea of establishing a School Resource Officer (SRO).

Gwyn Ploog asked whether the City would be responsible for maintaining vehicles or equipment if the County were to provide services. Council Member Schummer responded that the County would utilize the vehicles and equipment and would be responsible for their maintenance through the end of their useful life.

Mike Kollo currently serving as the Community Service Officer (CSO), announced that he has applied for a full-time position with the Police Department. He noted that he lives in the community and is scheduled to graduate in June.

There was a letter received from Cassidy Block regarding her support for the Cleveland Police Department. (see attached)

A Motion was made to adjourn at 6:55 p.m. by Hiller and second by Gens. Voting: Yes – All

__NO SIGNATURE REQUIRED DUE TO BEING A WORKSHOP – NO VOTING CAN TAKE PLACE__

Don McCabe, Mayor

Charles Hodge, City Clerk-Treasurer