

# Public Safety Committee Meeting

March 11, 2024

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**Members Present:** Chairman, Jim Engelman, Barry Mitchell, Ann Smith and Mayor Janet Winkler

**Others Present:** Town Manager, Jonathan Greer, Chief of Police, Brandon Nelson, and Town Clerk, Tammy Swanson

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## Call to Order:

Jim Engelman called the meeting to order at approximately 3:00 pm.

## Police Department Policy Update – Personal Appearance:

Chief Nelson discussed a Policy change for the Police Department’s Operations Manual. He commented that although Policy changes do not require Board approval, he wanted to make the Board aware of this change. He stated that area agencies are beginning to allow their officers to have their tattoos exposed mainly on their forearms. Chief Nelson stated that we do have some officers that have tattoos, and although we want our officers to remain professional in their appearance, we also do not want them to have to wear long sleeves to cover their tattoos during the hot summer months.

Chief Nelson presented the following “Tattoo and Body Mutilation” Policy for the Committee to review.

### III. Tattoos and Body Mutilation

- A. Tattoos are authorized to be visible on the arms and legs of all sworn and non-sworn employees. The following types of Tattoos are PROHIBITED:
1. **Extremist:** Extremist tattoos are those affiliated with, depicting, or symbolizing, extremist philosophies, or organizations or activities.
  2. **Indecent or Derogatory:** Indecent or derogatory tattoos are those that are grossly offensive to modesty, decency, or professionalism. Tattoos depicting any type of nudity are considered to be indecent.
  3. **Sexist:** Sexist tattoos are those that advocate a philosophy that degrades or demeans a person based on gender.
  4. **Racist:** Racist tattoos are those that advocate a philosophy that degrades or demeans a person based on race, ethnicity, or national origin.
  5. **Political:** Political tattoos are those that advocate or present any current, past, or future political views that may cause controversial in the agency or community.
  6. Tattoos on the head, face, neck, and hands (below the wrist bone) are **PROHIBITED**. The only exception to this section is that an employee may have one ring tattoo on each hand, below the joint of the bottom segment (portion closest to the palm) of the finger. This section also applies to units working in an undercover status.

- B. If at any point a tattoo is deemed in violation of this policy then the employee may be required to cover the tattoo pending the result of an internal investigation. Depending on the nature of the tattoo, an employee could be disciplined up to and including dismissal for violating this policy.
- C. Employees who wish to display their tattoos while on duty must get prior approval from the Chief of Police.
- D. The Chief of Police may determine if revocation of approval is appropriate to conform with evolving community standards, attitudes, or beliefs.
- E. Employees shall immediately cover a tattoo upon direct order from the Chief of Police.
- F. Intentional body mutilations or other body adornments on/in the hands, neck, face, head, ears and other visible area of the body are **PROHIBITED**. These adornments include but are not limited to:
  - Split or forked tongue.
  - Foreign objects inserted under the skin to create a design or pattern.
  - Foreign objects inserted in the tongue or mouth.
  - Enlarged or stretched holes in the ears.
  - Intentional scarring or branding.

Members with tattoos, intentional body mutilations and/or other body adornments on the neck, forearms, or legs will wear the long sleeve shirt and/or long pants, or appropriate arm covering during all seasons to fulfill the requirements of this policy.

#### **IV. Exception**

The exception to these regulations shall be only with the written consent of the Chief of Police. Some reasons that an exception may be considered are those based upon medical conditions, special assignment, etc.

Chief Nelson stated that he believes this is a strict policy, but it is in line with what larger agencies require. He added that all of the tattoos exposed will have to have his approval.

Jonathan commented that tattoos are a very common thing now, and the public, as a general rule, has become accustomed to seeing them.

Chief Nelson commented that he wants to be pro-active with these types of policies. He stated that he does not want an officer to go to another agency just because the Town makes them cover their tattoos.

Jim asked if there should be a provision in the Policy that would allow an officer to object to the Chief's decision if the tattoo is not allowed to be exposed.

Chief Nelson stated that if an officer questions his decision to not allow a tattoo to be exposed, he could put together a committee of officers to help make the final decision.

**The Committee had no problems with the Policy for tattoos.**

**Off-Duty Officers Required for Events:**

Chief Nelson stated that the current rate of pay for off-duty officers is \$35 per hour.

Surrounding agencies are now at \$40 per hour for off-duty officers, and we typically try to keep ours the same as the area agencies. Chief Nelson stated that the Town has a policy that off-duty officers are to be hired for events happening in Town. For concerts in Windmill Park, car shows, etc., off-duty officers are required, whether or not the event involves alcohol.

The Committee discussed whether or not this policy needs to be re-evaluated.

It was suggested that the policy could be changed, with a requirement added to the Event Application that the Board would make the decision whether or not there needs to be off-duty officer(s) hired for the event.

The discussion on requirements for having off-duty officer(s) at events is to be continued.

**Adjournment:**

**Motion: (Ann Smith/Barry Mitchell) to adjourn the meeting. Unanimously approved.**

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**Tamra T. Swanson, Town Clerk**