Office of The Mayor
Shreveport, Louisiana

TOM ARCENEAUX
MAYOR

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September 20, 2024

Re: Shreveport Police Department Facilities

Dear Councilmembers Boucher, Green, and Taylor:

Thank you for your letter dated September 16 regarding the poor condition of the Shreveport Police Department's headquarters located at 1234 Texas Street. We agree with your concerns. These issues deserve attention, as the health and safety of our employees is of utmost importance. We have been working diligently to address the issues. We also understand, and share, your and the police personnel's frustration about how long and complicated the process is.

These issues have been on our radar for quite some time. While we believe we have kept you updated on individual actions, I'd like to summarize the actions that have been taken and are being taken ultimately to move police personnel out of the James C. Gardner Building complex and into both temporary and permanent locations:

1. Please understand that approximately 470 police personnel are housed out of the Gardner Building complex. This is nearly 20% of the total employees of the City of Shreveport. Moving that many employees to temporary and permanent alternate locations is a monumental task which we have already begun.

2. Ultimately, most police functions will be decentralized using locations other than police headquarters, some of which are already underway. For example, the Traffic Division will be moving to a new location on Monkhouse Drive that is under construction, and the Office of Special Investigations (OSI) will also moving to a new location that is also under construction. We anticipate that those moves will be completed before the end of the year.

3. We have received bids for the Monkhouse Drive Substation, and, thankfully, the lowest bid is less than $1,500,000. That contract will be awarded shortly, and construction will begin. We hope that construction will be complete in the summer of 2025, after which Patrol Area 3 will be able to relocate to the new substation.

4. We will shortly go out to bid on the North Market Street Substation, which has the same design as the Monkhouse Substation. That substation contract then will be let, so that Patrol Area 1 can move to the substation.

5. The two substations will end up consuming about $4,000,000 of the $4,500,000 set aside for three substations in the 2021 bond issue. We have been searching diligently for additional funds to acquire and/or build the third substation, and I believe the Chief Administrative Officer has located approximately $1,600,000 that could be used for that purpose. You will have a budget amendment on your agenda next week to appropriate those funds. We are actively looking for a site for that substation. Some of you have suggested sites, and we are evaluating those, in addition to other sites. Once completed, Patrol Areas 2 and 4 can move to that location.

6. Long term, the remaining police functions will be housed in a new police headquarters on the site of the existing complex. That building is under design contract, and we hope to have the design completed before June, 2025. The 2021 bond issue allocated $27,000,000 for this building. We believe that the building cannot be constructed for that sum, and we are searching for $8,000,000 to $9,000,000 in additional funds so that when the design is complete, we can go to bid and construction on the new headquarters. We estimate completion of construction, assuming we find the additional funds, in 2027 or 2028.

7. It will be necessary to relocate police personnel who ultimately will be housed in the new headquarters to one or more temporary sites pending construction of the new headquarters and perhaps before. We are evaluating several sites and are looking for others. Any of the sites will require negotiation with third parties, reaching agreement, then undertaking construction and/or retrofitting for police functions. In addition, we must locate the funds for the rent and the construction. We could use funds from the 2021 bond issue for this, but that will reduce the funds available for the actual construction. For that reason, our goal has been to limit that expense to the extent possible.

8. We have spent considerable sums to make repairs and to address shortcomings of the existing complex to make working there more tolerable. We will continue to address those issues as they arise, and we appreciate the understanding and patience of the personnel who work in the current complex.

9. With respect to concerns about mold, when those concerns were raised several years ago, the city engaged Ensolum, LLC, to evaluate whether there was active mold in the premises. In a report dated January 21, 2022, the consultant concluded that there was “no suspect fungal growth” in the building. We believe that recent moisture issues have created mildew, not mold. We have addressed those issues as they have arisen, including the issue raised last weekend and resolved on Monday.

In short, this Administration has been working on these issues, which you acknowledge have existed for over five years, diligently for over a year, and we have made substantial progress. We are not satisfied with that progress, and we pledge to continue to address both the short term and the long term issues.

With respect to a declaration of emergency, the Administration has reviewed applicable statutes to see if a declaration of emergency would make any resources immediately available to the city that are not already available. We have not identified any such resources, and any actions we might take to relocate police personnel will have sufficient times for action that no emergency declaration is warranted.

We thank you for expressing the urgency of the situation, and we pledge to address the issues with urgency and purpose.

Very truly yours,

Tom Arceneaux
Mayor

cc: Honorable Alan Jackson
Honorable Gary Brooks
Honorable Jim Taliaferro
Honorable Ursula Bowman
Police Chief Wayne Smith
Ms. Shelly Ragle
Mr. Tom Dark
News media