



CITY OF WASILLA

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interoffice WASILLA P.D. MEMORANDUM

to: Council Members
from: Chief Charlie Fannon
subject: Firearms
date: September 15, 1997

IM 97-49

RE: Ordinance Serial N. 97-53

This ordinance gives the impression that it mandates the possession or ownership of firearms. This may not be the intent of Mrs. Langill. Her concern, as I understand it, is that if people are going to exercise the right to possess and bear arms, then they should have to do so safely. She further felt that the City of WASILLA should insure firearms safety by offering the public the benefit of the police department's firearms instructors and range masters.

With the above thoughts in mind, I think that this would cost quite a bit of money. How much money depends on how in-depth the training would be. If the public were to be given the same amount of training as a police officer, then I think that this concept would require two full time personnel and tens of thousands of dollars. On the other hand, one could opt for a public relations campaign that called for an officer to go throughout the community doing safety talks at schools, scout meetings, church groups, etc. This could bring the cost down to about a half time position if it were used sparingly. This would mean no hands on training, but would save a small fortune in ammunition costs.

Some other concerns are such things as the liability the city might incur if they did get involved in giving the public training. I also note that the State of Alaska requires people to pay for the training and costs of a concealed weapons permit. A lot of people are going to ask why the City of Wasilla is willing to pay for the public to be trained while the State of Alaska is not. Personally, I think that whenever possible, we should try and keep city ordinances aligned with state statues and policy. This just makes things easier for the public to understand.

I'm sure that as the public and the council discuss this ordinance, many other issues, questions and concerns will arise. I think that this type of debate could be healthy for our community as long as the outcome is the will of the people. In closing, I should note that in my opinion this ordinance needs to be rewritten to better express its intent. In its present form, I think it sends the wrong message.