

# POLICE COMMITTEE MINUTES

January 18, 2001

The Police Committee of the City of Mesa met in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on January 18, 2001 at 9:25 a.m.

## COMMITTEE PRESENT

Dennis Kavanaugh, Chairman  
Jim Davidson  
Pat Pomeroy

## COUNCIL PRESENT

None

## OFFICERS PRESENT

Mike Hutchinson

### 1. Hear a report and consider recommendations concerning a Career Enhancement Program.

Police Chief Jan Strauss and Police Commander Dan Saban addressed the Committee regarding the Career Enhancement Program. Commander Saban informed the Committee that the program represents an alternative career path which, as designed, will assist in retaining highly motivated and skilled police officers and will generate both economical and professional benefits for the City of Mesa.

In response to a request for input from Committeemember Pomeroy relative to this agenda item, City Manager Mike Hutchinson indicated support for the proposal and stated the opinion that the program will allow the City to attract and retain experienced, highly qualified police officers. Mr. Hutchinson added that the proposal will enhance the City's attractiveness as a workplace and positively impact the City as a whole.

Committeemember Pomeroy spoke in support of the Career Enhancement Program and the overall benefits for the City of Mesa.

It was moved by Committeemember Pomeroy to recommend to the Council that staff's recommendation relative to the implementation of a Career Enhancement Program be approved.

Committeemember Davidson commented on the fact that the report indicates that by July 1, 2004, the proposal will represent a \$624,000 increase in the budget. Councilmember Davidson added that it is his understanding that the program would allow individuals within the Police Department who have attained a certain level of expertise and who wish to remain at that level, to receive compensation for their continuing efforts.

Committeemember Davidson stated that although he appreciates the intent of the program, he has concerns regarding the significantly large amount of overtime that is being paid to police officers within the Department. Committeemember Davidson said that in view of the budget limitations and recent losses of revenue to the City, he finds it extremely difficult to justify approving the proposed funding for the Career Enhancement Program at this time.

Police Chief Jan Strauss stressed the importance of taking a strong stance at this time to encourage Police Department staff to remain with the City after they have completed 20 years of service. Chief Strauss stated the opinion that the proposal would allow the Department to retain, for an additional five years, many employees who are eligible for retirement. Chief Strauss informed the Committee that the Department recognizes the fact that overtime is an issue and indicated staff's intention to continue to address this important matter, which, because of the nature of the Department's work, will always constitute the largest amount of overtime among City employees. Chief Strauss said that staff will continue their efforts to ensure that overtime dollars are justified.

Chief Strauss commented that the major focus of the Career Enhancement Program is to assist the Police Department in retaining staff beyond the 20 year retirement timeline. Chief Strauss noted that the City loses a significant amount of valuable expertise when employees leave after only 20 years of service.

Committeemember Davidson said that upcoming budget limitations and reductions make it difficult at this time to support continued overtime hours and career enhancement issues. Committeemember Davidson stated that he will second the motion based on the fact that additional discussion will occur among the members of the Council regarding this matter.

Committeemember Pomeroy concurred with Committeemember Davidson's comments regarding excessive overtime and budget restrictions but expressed the opinion that those issues are separate matters. Committeemember Pomeroy emphasized the importance of implementing a program that will assist the City in attracting and retaining the highest level of personnel possible.

Chairman Kavanaugh stated that he supports the motion and said that he is currently serving in his 5th term as Chairman of the City's Public Safety Retirement Board and is therefore well aware of the wealth of knowledge and experience that is lost when employees choose to retire after 20 years of service. Chairman Kavanaugh added the opinion that the proposal will represent an important tool for the City in the employment market.

Carried unanimously.

Chairman Kavanaugh thanked staff for their input.

2. Hear an update on various gang prevention activities.

City Manager Mike Hutchinson stated that in response to a request from the Committee at a previous meeting, staff has prepared a brief presentation to update the members on various gang prevention activities.

Police Lieutenant David Ashe and Kimo Souza, Mesa Gang Intervention Project Case Management Coordinator and an employee of Prehab of Arizona, addressed the Committee relative to this agenda item. Mr. Souza stated that he is happy to be a part of this innovative project and said that he would like to provide the Committee with a brief overview of gang status and trends that are being seen on both a local and national level.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that City of Mesa gang activity has increased considerably over the last five years; the fact that the Mesa Gang Intervention Project is part of the Mesa Police Department Special Investigation Division Gang Unit; the fact that the Project's goal is to reduce gang violence and crime through multiple agency collaboration and community mobilization; the Project's current geographic area and plans to expand in the future; the importance of getting the word out to students that a variety of services are available to them; the fact that gang activities among younger, female gang members is escalating and the importance of targeting that segment of our youth; the fact that greater success is achieved in assisting youths to get out of

their gangs when their entire extended families are involved and provide support; an increase in the number of undocumented gang members and the fact that many are interested in obtaining their GEDs; and the fact that a number of gang members have responded enthusiastically to both cultural and sport-related activities presented by the Project.

Mr. Souza noted that the Mesa Gang Intervention Project has an excellent reputation and has received national recognition. Mr. Souza added that the Project is currently viewed as a model for the nation. Mr. Souza also informed the Committee that at it's National Conference in Washington, D.C. in December, the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) recognized Police Chief Jan Strauss for her support of the Project. Mr. Souza noted that the award represents one of only fifteen OJJDP Leadership Awards presented for work to protect children and combat juvenile crime. Mr. Souza added that Chief Strauss received the only award presented to a police department executive.

In response to a question from Committeemember Davidson, Mr. Souza confirmed that Prehab of Arizona has been more proactive in the prevention area. Mr. Souza said that Prehab has developed prevention programs for the schools.

Committeemember Davidson commented that he would like to be notified of any meetings that are being scheduled to discuss intervention and prevention issues so that he could arrange to attend. Committeemember Davidson also requested that Chief Strauss be recognized as the recipient of the OJJDP Award at the January 22, 2001 Regular Council Meeting.

Committeemember Pomeroy discussed the fact that this project was one of five original projects funded by OJJDP and is the only one remaining in existence at this time.

In response to a question from Committeemember Pomeroy relative to a tattoo removal program, which is a collaborative effort that is overseen by the Project, Mr. Souza explained that gang members' tattoos significantly hamper their efforts to gain employment. Mr. Souza said that assessments are provided and gang members are required to sign consent forms prior to tattoo removal. Mr. Souza noted that for every laser treatment a gang member receives, he or she is required to provide 8 hours of community service. Mr. Souza reported that this east valley program has been successful and even gained recognition in the *Best of Phoenix* publication as "the" place to have a tattoo removed.

Lieutenant Ashe discussed the fact that in November, the Project was awarded a \$75,000 grant from the ASU/Motorola Community Building Foundation for evaluation and assessment activities over a three year period of time. Lieutenant Ashe added that in February, the Project, through the City of Mesa, intends to apply for a \$1.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor to provide pre-employment and employment opportunities for gang members City wide, which will represent a critical supplemental component to other Project services.

Chief Strauss introduced Sergeant Mike Goulet, with the Police Department's Public Information Office, to the members of the Committee. Sgt. Goulet played a video of a Channel 10 newsclip which was recently aired and which recognized the efforts expended by Mesa's Gang Intervention Project.

Additional discussion ensued relative to the fact that currently 11 people are assigned to work on the Project and that the Project currently has 114 clients; the fact that this number will triple over the next two to three years as referrals are received; the Project's intention to increase staff to 17 people over the next three years and the fact that there are currently five City employees assigned to the Project, and staff's intention to increase this number to 9 over the next two to three years, including additional detectives, support personnel and a Youth Intervention Specialist.

Police Commander Ron Poulin also addressed the members of the Committee and expressed his appreciation to the City Council, City Manager Mike Hutchinson and staff for their ongoing support and cooperation in this important area.

Mr. Hutchinson stated that the City is extremely proud of this Program, which began as a community-based group which still meets, and said that the Project represents a collaboration between the City and important human services agencies.

Committeemember Pomeroy agreed that the coordination of efforts in this area is crucial.

Chairman Kavanaugh expressed appreciation to staff for their presentation and update.

3. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Police Committee meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Police Committee Meeting of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 18th day of January 2001. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2001

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BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK