

# POLICE COMMITTEE MINUTES

June 24, 1998

The Police Committee of the City of Mesa met in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on June 24, 1998 at 4:00 p.m.

## COMMITTEE PRESENT

Pat Pomeroy, Chairman  
John Giles  
Bill Jaffa

## COMMITTEE ABSENT

None

## COUNCIL PRESENT

Keno Hawker

## STAFF PRESENT

C.K. Luster  
Lin Adams  
Neal Beats  
Elbert Collier  
Fred Conway  
Linda Crocker  
Luigi Digirolamo  
Dennis Donna  
G.T. Fowler  
Mike Hutchinson  
Barbara Jones  
Mike Kalember  
Gil Otanez  
Ellen Pence  
Wade Pew  
Ronald Poulin

## STAFF PRESENT (CONT.)

Bryan Raines  
Tom Remes  
Fred Ruhland  
Jan Strauss  
Ursula Strehans  
Jeff Welker  
Mike Whalen  
David Zielonka  
Others

1. Hear an update concerning the expansion of the main Police building and the construction of a parking garage.

Acting Chief Jan Strauss introduced staff present at the meeting.

Assistant Chief Mike Whalen provided the Committee with a brief overview of the main Police building and noted that the project will entail a 30,000 square foot facility, one at sub-grade and one at-grade which will essentially house the Central Patrol function which is currently located in the basement of the headquarters' building. Chief Whalen noted that the Central Patrol Division encompasses approximately 70 officers and the Traffic Division encompasses 50 officers, in addition to support personnel, the Warrant Section/Swat Team Headquarters, the community action teams and ancillary personnel that have been assigned to Central Patrol. Chief Whalen noted that the expansion will provide sufficient space and allow the Department to operate in a more effective and efficient manner.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that the facility has been designed to match the existing headquarters but will have a removable metal roof that will accommodate the addition of two more floors in the future, the fact that the 530-space, 4-level parking structure, with four levels below grade and three above, will be located directly west of the main Police building and will accommodate all of the Department's marked and unmarked vehicles at below grade, secured parking for Police Department and Court personnel, and the fact that the facility will be secured with gated access.

Chief Whalen informed the Committee that construction on both projects will be bid in October 1998 and commented that the total project cost will be approximately \$7 million. Chief Whalen stated the opinion that the bid will be awarded in November and added that construction of the parking garage will last approximately nine months while the headquarters building will require a 14-month construction time frame.

In response to a question from Committeemember Jaffa, Chief Whalen advised that the project has received minimal resistance from the neighbors. Chief Whalen stated the opinion that the development of the parking garage will positively impact the neighborhood and will provide added citizen parking in the area.

Chairman Pomeroy thanked staff for the presentation.

2. Review and discuss allowing patrol officers to take assigned vehicles home.

Police Commander Mike Kalembert addressed the Committee relative to this agenda item. Commander Kalembert referred to overheads displayed in the Council Chambers and advised that a survey conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics in 1993 indicated that of 641 police agencies that responded to the survey, 263 utilized some form of take-home patrol vehicle program. Commander Kalembert added that 111 of the 263 agencies allowed the officers to utilize the vehicles for off-duty transportation.

Commander Kalembert outlined a number of issues that would have to be addressed prior to the implementation of a program that would allow patrol officers to take assigned vehicles home, including: costs analyses on vehicle mileage, the number of personnel who would qualify to participate in the program, the implications of any type of off-duty vehicle use, a policy referencing officers who live within Mesa City limits versus a policy for officers who live outside of the City limits, the security and safety of the vehicles while in the possession of the patrol officers, FLSA issues associated with on-duty status to and from work and public perception in reference to the presence of police vehicles overnight in various neighborhoods.

Commander Kalembert commented that a proposal researched and developed for Mesa's Police Department would involve 184 qualified patrol officers and supervisors only and stated that the proposed participants currently live within City limits.

Discussion ensued relative to the Police Department's marked patrol car fleet, the fact that the current proposal is based on having an assigned patrol car for each participating officer, the fact that 178 patrol cars would have to be purchased in order to implement the program utilizing vehicles that are no older than 1995, estimated costs associated with the program, the fact that the long-term use of the vehicles will be extended since the vehicles will only be driven ten hours a day, four days a week versus the current usage which is two shifts, twenty hours a day, four days a week, and the fact that currently two officers are assigned to each patrol vehicle.

In response to a question from Chairman Pomeroy relative to the positive benefits to be realized as a result of allowing the patrol officers to take the vehicles home overnight, Commander Kalember reported that in addition to cost savings and extending the life of the vehicles, various departments have reported a strong positive response from neighbors who support having patrol vehicles visible in the area overnight. Commander Kalember added that agency reports indicate that officers' morale has improved as a result of the programs and noted a decreased response time which is attributable to the fact that the officers are readily available to handle problems which may arise in and around their immediate neighborhoods.

Committeemember Jaffa stated the opinion that staff should pursue this issue further and perform additional research relative to the overall benefits and cost savings associated with the implementation of the proposed program.

Chairman Pomeroy stated that it is the consensus of the Committee that staff be directed to pursue this issue further and present their findings at a future meeting.

Chairman Pomeroy thanked staff for their input.

3. Hear a report concerning the gang prevention program.

Police Commander Lin Adams addressed the Committee relative to this agenda item and provided the Committee with a brief overview of the organizational composition of the Mesa Gang Intervention Project. Commander Adams advised that the goal of the project is to implement and test a comprehensive community-based model program for gang prevention, intervention and suppression, focusing upon violent offenders and the reduction of violent activity.

Commander Adams outlined the various project participants and reported that the City of Mesa is one of five sites that is being funded on a nation-wide basis to participate in a model program. Commander Adams noted that the Mesa and San Antonio, Texas programs are operated under the auspices of the Police Department; the Tucson and Bloomington, Illinois programs are operated under the auspices of various human service agencies, and the Riverside, California program is operated under the auspices of the University of California.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that the Mesa Gang Intervention Project is funded by the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the City of Mesa is currently in its third year of funding, the fact that the City anticipates that a fourth year of funding will be approved and

the possibility that the Federal government will extend the program funding to five years, the utilization of a team case management approach throughout the program, the importance of collaboration, the fact that the Project provides services for gang members and their associates ages 15 to 22 and their families in addition to at-risk youths and their families, the fact that the Mesa Gang Prevention Steering Committee oversees the Project in partnership with the City of Mesa and the fact that the Maricopa County Juvenile and Adult Probation Departments, Prehab of Arizona and the Mesa United Way provide staffing for the Project team.

Commander Adams briefly highlighted an update on the accomplishments of the Project during 1998 and provided data relative to 1997 gang detective activities. Commander Adams emphasized the importance of the Project and the short and long-term positive impacts the program will have on Mesa's youths.

Committeemember Giles spoke in support of the program and commended staff on their efforts. Committeemember Giles discussed the importance of establishing parameters to gauge the long-term effectiveness of the program.

Chairman Pomeroy and Committeemember Jaffa encouraged staff to continue their efforts and thanked staff for their presentation.

4. Hear a report concerning the progress on re-accreditation of the Police Department.

Police Lieutenant Gil Otanez addressed the Committee relative to this agenda item.

Lieutenant Otanez briefly highlighted the re-accreditation process which was established to promote public acceptance of law enforcement policies. Lieutenant Otanez stated that the benefits of the program include recognition from an international professional association, the fact that the process contributes to a strong defense against law suits, provides a benchmark against which to compare policies and procedures and provides a higher degree of accountability.

Lieutenant Otanez reported that the City of Mesa was first accredited in 1993 and noted that the five-year accreditation cycle expires in 1998. Lieutenant Otanez noted that following the City's re-accreditation in 1998, the cycle will be reduced to three years. Lieutenant Otanez informed the Committee that in order to receive accreditation, the City must meet 436 standards of compliance, 346 of which are mandatory and an additional 90 that are other than mandatory. Lieutenant Otanez added that of the 90 other standards, the City of Mesa must meet 72 in order to comply.

Discussion ensued relative to other cities/organizations which have achieved accreditation or are currently in the process of applying for this status, the fact that the City will undergo an on-site inspection that will be performed by command-level staffing from other police departments from September 12th through September 16th, a scheduled public hearing soliciting citizen input on September 14, 1998 in the upper level of the Council Chambers, and the fact that following the successful re-accreditation process, the City of Mesa will be presented their re-accreditation status is Knoxville, Tennessee in November 1998.

In response to a question from Chairman Pomeroy, Lieutenant Otanez advised that the City is required to perform a self evaluation as part of the re-accreditation process.

Chairman Pomeroy and the members of the Committee commended staff on their efforts and thanked them for their presentation.

5. Review crime prevention program in 8th Avenue-Grand-Country Club area.

Police Commander Mike Kalember addressed the Committee relative to this agenda item.

Commander Kalember discussed Problem Oriented Policing (POP) and the Community Action Team (CAT) and briefly highlighted crime prevention program activities in the 8th Avenue-Grand-Country Club Drive area of Mesa. Commander Kalember reported on the efforts of the Community Action Team officers to have the area designated as a drug-free school zone and explained that this designation provides the courts with added sentencing power if suspects are found to be utilizing or selling drugs in that area. Commander Kalember commented on area/alley cleanups that have occurred and discussed various neighborhood meetings that have been held to address neighborhood concerns.

Commander Kalember reported that staff initiated a neighborhood survey of 294 mainly Hispanic households in the area to solicit input relative to neighborhood problems and determine what effort the citizens would be willing to expend to improve the safety of their neighborhood, such as the implementation of Block Watch Programs. Commander Kalember reported that positive steps were initiated as a result of the input received from the survey. Commander Kalember noted that Rotary Park was closed for two months for renovations and stated that the closure assisted the Department in dramatically reducing the number of homeless people who were utilizing the parking on a regular basis during the evening hours. Commander Kalember informed the Committee that since the park has reopened, a large amount of family activities have resumed.

Discussion ensued relative to selective enforcement activities which were initiated in the area currently under discussion on June 15, 1998 to gauge the level of criminal activity that is occurring in the neighborhood, the fact that since the selective enforcement was initiated, only four arrests have occurred, the fact that undercover police officers have not uncovered any illegal drug activity in the area, efforts initiated to notify the City Prosecutor's Office of arrests that are made in this particular area and the fact that as part of the terms of their probation, individuals who are convicted of misdemeanor crimes are not allowed to be in certain targeted areas of the neighborhood.

In response to a question from Chairman Pomeroy, Commander Kalember expressed the opinion that the Police Department's view of the activities that are occurring in the area is vastly different from that of the neighbors who previously expressed concerns. Commander Kalember added that the officers are reporting minimal criminal activity and said that following the ten-day trial period, a baseline will be established from which to gauge the status of the neighborhood. Commander Kalember informed the Committee that should the intense selective enforcement measures cease,

members of the Police Department's Community Action Team will continue to patrol the area in the future.

Additional discussion ensued relative to efforts that have been initiated to address neighborhood concerns and determine the actual level of criminal activity that is occurring on a day-to-day basis.

Chairman Pomeroy thanked staff for their presentation.

6. Adjournment.

It was moved by Committeemember Giles, seconded by Committeemember Jaffa, that the Police Committee meeting adjourn at 5:22 p.m.

Carried unanimously.

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 24th day of June, 1998. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 1998

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BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK