

# POLICE COMMITTEE MINUTES

August 25, 2003

The Police Committee of the City of Mesa met in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on August 25, 2003 at 3:00 p.m.

**COMMITTEE PRESENT**

Rex Griswold, Chairman  
Janie Thom  
Claudia Walters

**COUNCIL PRESENT**

None

**STAFF PRESENT**

Mike Hutchinson

1. Consider proceeding with the acquisition of a Laboratory Information Management Solution.

Police Chief Dennis Donna, Crime Laboratory Administrator Jon Kokanovich, and Senior Project & Services Leader Karen Winter, addressed the members of the Committee relative to this agenda item. Mr. Kokanovich thanked the members for allowing them the opportunity to present this issue and said that they are seeking Committee support for the purchase of a Laboratory Information Management Solution (LIMS), including associated project reserves and system hardware and software, from Forensic Technology WAI, Inc. (FTI).

Mr. Kokanovich advised that the Forensic Services Crime Lab currently uses a paper-based system to store and retrieve important case-related information needed for discovery requests, interviews and trials. He explained that this system is extremely burdensome, time consuming and ineffective and added that having to rely on the paper-based system also negatively affects workflow scheduling, evidence tracking, and instrument data storage/retrieval. He noted that the number of analyses performed by the Crime Lab increases each year and this, combined with the growing need for cost accounting and performance-based statistics, make the current paper-based system increasingly unworkable. He said that one file drawer per month is being added for toxicology records alone and discussed the sheer volume of paper associated with an ever-increasing workload.

Mr. Kokanovich informed the members of the Committee that an automated information system will save significant time for the Crime Lab staff and the related criminal justice system by improving the availability and distribution of discovery related information. He said that the implementation of a Laboratory Information Management Solution (LIMS) is strongly encouraged by state and national agencies as well as by the various accrediting agencies. He

stated that the LIMS will enhance the investigation process by creating a comprehensive file of secure case information that can be accessed and updated throughout the investigation of a case. He pointed out that FTI's LIMS will also include the NuGenesis Scientific Data Management System (SDMS), which is designed to interface with Crime Lab instruments to capture instrument systems output, including graphical output, into a searchable database.

Discussion ensued relative to the benefits that would be realized as a result of the system, including the elimination of calculation errors; providing secure, reliable and accurate chain of custody; ensure the tracking of evidence by identifying and tracking evidence with bar codes; ability to capture analytical notes and collect scientific analyses; the fact that the system will help the City maintain national lab accreditation; NuGenesis' capture of electronic signatures; eliminate the need to store hard-copy documentation and manuals, thus freeing up floor space for use by Crime Lab staff, etc.

Mr. Kokanovich stated that implementation of the system would be done in phases as resources are available and said that they would begin with Toxicology. He added that other modules to be considered include Controlled Substances, Firearms, DNA, ID and Evidence as well as interfaces with PD's Records Management System and Document Management System. He commented on the extensive assistance ISD and Police Department Staff have and will continue to provide. Mr. Kokanovich also informed the members of the Committee that the Police Department has been awarded three grants for the implementation of the system and announced that \$305,617.62 is needed and the City has received \$259,000 in grants. He said that the difference, \$46,617.62, will be funded by Crime Lab Assessment Funds provided by the Legislature and there will be no cost at all to Mesa.

Additional discussion ensued relative to the RFP process; the fact that the next step would be to purchase additional LIMS software modules and purchase additional LIMS functionality; and the positive impacts the system would have on the entire City.

Committeemember Walters stated support for the purchase of the system and commended the Department on its proactive grant capturing.

In response to a question from Committeemember Thom, Ms. Winters stated that system availability and security issues were incorporated into the RFP and thoroughly evaluated. She added that the recommended vendor met all of the City's requirements.

Chairman Griswold commented on the sensitive nature of the data and asked whether there was a way to "separate" it from public records. He was advised by a member of Staff that there is no public access to the data.

In response to a question from Chairman Griswold relative to the selected vendor, Mr. Kokanovich stated that FTI has a great track record of doing more complicated programming than what is being talked about in this particular situation. He added that it is a great service organization and user friendly as well.

Committeemember Thom asked whether training would be provided and if any new employees would be needed to operate the system. Mr. Kokanovich said that in-house support and vendor assistance would take care of the training and added that the system is just going to help the department do what they do better. He added that no new employees are necessary.

It was moved by Committeemember Walters, seconded by Committeemember Thom, to recommend to the Council that the purchase of a Laboratory Information Management Solution (LIMS), including associated project reserves and system software and hardware, as outlined by Staff, be approved.

Carried unanimously.

2. Hear a presentation and discuss implementing a house arrest program.

City Manager Mike Hutchinson, Presiding City Magistrate Walter Switzer, and Court Administrator Kathy Barrett addressed the members of the Committee relative to this agenda item. Mr. Hutchinson said that the members were provided information on two separate house arrest programs. He explained that the purpose of implementing a house arrest program is to reduce jail costs, which are constantly increasing. He added that the materials also included a copy of Chandler's RFP for review. He said that if the Committee approves staff's recommendation, they will send out copies of an RFP and then bring the issue back before the Committee and then move it on to the Council. He requested input from the Council relative to moving forward and on the different areas that they would like to see incorporated into the program. He added that each of the cities have implemented different programs and indicated Staff's willingness to respond to questions.

Committeemember Walters said she had concerns that someone convicted of a DUI would be placed on home arrest instead of being sent to Tent City, but stated that in reading the materials it is her understanding that some jail time would be required for DUIs. Judge Switzer said that although you can work the program any way you want, when it comes to DUIs, the statutes require that a certain amount of jail time be served prior to going on home arrest. He noted that Chandler's program states that if someone gets two DWIs within six months, they are not eligible for the home arrest program.

In response to a question from Committeemember Walters, Judge Switzer reported that the prisoners can be released for work up to five days a week, twelve hours a day. He added that the same is true of the home arrest program. He said that no monitoring is done; however, the jail checks to see if anyone has alcohol in their system and they can be removed from the program and forced to serve a sentence if alcohol is found.

Committeemember Walters posed questions relative to the reason why the City of Chandler utilizes probation officers and whether the City would have to do the same. Ms. Barrett responded that Chandler's probation officers are used for other purposes and are not hired just for this purpose. Judge Switzer added that it is his understanding that the entire program will be handled by the County and the defendants will pay all of the costs.

Committeemember Walters asked whether any ruling has been made regarding liability associated with the program and Judge Switzer recommended that City Attorney Debbie Spinner pursue this matter.

Committeemember Walters said that she sees jail costs continually increasing and added that she would not support the proposal if it did not include jail time. She commented on the impact even a short stay in jail can have, particularly on youths. She stated that she is very interested

in moving forward with the program and although there may be some modifications, she does like Chandler's program and the concept in general.

In response to a question from Committeemember Thom, Judge Switzer confirmed that everyone sentenced in Mesa's courts is sent to the County jail and the City is charged a fee on a per person basis, \$99 for the first day and \$46 for each day thereafter. Committeemember Thom commented on the jail tax and said that the City of Mesa is really being charged twice. She noted that the Town of Gilbert has voted not to pay it and said this is an issue she would like to come before this City Council.

Mr. Hutchinson advised that the issue is on the agenda this evening and said he has always felt that the City was being charged twice. He said that a year ago when the County was talking about an extension, he told them they should think about paying for some of these costs. He stated that they did not feel that it would be palatable.

Committeemember Thom suggested that the City consider building its own jail. Mr. Hutchinson commented that Staff has looked at that as well and that option also has some problems associated with it.

Additional discussion ensued relative to "two for one" time; the fact that the program would be designed by the Presiding City Magistrate and the City Council; the fact that they can decide which type of crimes are eligible; and the fact that Chandler's Presiding Judge has been contacted and he indicated that the program is working very well in that City.

In response to a question from Chairman Griswold, Judge Switzer stated that persons who commit crimes such as assault, trespassing, criminal damage, harassment, prostitution, etc. could be included in the program. He emphasized the importance of providing the individual judges with the ability to make decisions in those situations.

Chairman Griswold asked what the "downsides" of the program are and Judge Switzer responded that liability is one and people's negative perspective. He said he would anticipate that organizations such MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) would respond.

Chairman Griswold stated that New York City has a program whereby the cars of people who are caught driving on suspended licenses are impounded. He asked whether anyone is doing this out west. Mr. Kokanovich said he is not aware of any place that has a similar program in place.

In response to comments from the Chairman, Judge Switzer said that probation officers are obviously good and will provide a better product if they are given the job of monitoring. He added that the City uses probation officers from the County for some domestic violence situations.

Committeemember Walters said that she is interested in moving forward with this to the extent that she would like Staff to develop a draft plan and asked whether Chief Donna and Judge Switzer could work on this. She added that she would not support allowing anyone convicted of an extreme DUI to participate in the program.

It was moved by Committeemember Walters that the house arrest program be referred back to Staff for the purpose of developing a draft plan for Committee consideration.

Committeemember Thom commented on Loper's Law and the fact that it increased penalties for anyone with .15 or higher alcohol levels.

Committeemember Thom seconded the motion.

Chairman Griswold recommended that the new Magistrate be involved as well as Chief Donna. He commended Judge Switzer on his performance as Presiding City Magistrate and noted his upcoming retirement. He asked if he would be willing to work on the draft proposal as well. Judge Switzer responded that he would be happy to and that he intends to volunteer a considerable amount of time to the City.

Carried unanimously.

3. Hear an update on the acquisition of CNG police vehicles and the new Falcon Field substation.

Assistant Police Chief Greg Fowler addressed the committee relative to this agenda item and discussed the fact that the City has a fleet of Crown Victoria CNG vehicles. He said that he believes Mesa's fleet to be the safest fleet around; however, Ford Motor Company has announced that in 2004 they will no longer sell Crown Victorias as CNG vehicles. He noted that none of the retrofit companies are around any longer and the City must now look at gasoline type vehicles. He noted that there are no other vendors in existence today that provide CNG vehicles and therefore the City has no option in this matter.

Chief Fowler said that the City is in a good position since it will not be required to purchase any new vehicles again until 2005 and this will give them time to see what other Police Departments are doing. He added that in 2005 Ford will introduce their fire suppression system at a cost of approximately \$2,300 per car. He noted that the City currently has 360 patrol vehicles with 288 dedicated CNG vehicles. He said that 66 of those vehicles have fuel bladders and 6 are bi-fuel vehicles and added that most of the bi-fuel and fuel bladder vehicles will be phased out.

Chief Fowler also discussed the Falcon Field Substation and said that bids were to be opened this week, however, after hearing that they are no longer going to have CNG, they have delayed the bid opening until January 2004 to allow time to redesign the site and accommodate gasoline instead. He said that will put the project's completion around January 2005.

Committeemember Thom asked whether it would be easier to use propane instead of gas. Chief Fowler responded that he is not sure that propane is being used by patrol cars. He said Staff could look into whether there are any vendors who provide extended range fuel systems but said at the current time he is not aware of any.

Committeemember Thom indicated support for pursuing propane.

4. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Police Committee meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.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 25th of August 2003. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

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BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK

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