

# POLICE COMMITTEE MINUTES

September 9, 2002

The Police Committee of the City of Mesa met in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on September 9, 2002 at 3:00 p.m.

## COMMITTEE PRESENT

Rex Griswold, Chairman  
Janie Thom  
Claudia Walters

## COUNCIL PRESENT

Mayor Keno Hawker  
Mike Whalen

## STAFF PRESENT

Mike Hutchinson

1. Hear an update on traffic safety strategies implemented by the Police Department Traffic Section.

Police Commander Steve Toland addressed the Police Committee relative to this agenda item. He reported that the purpose of today's presentation is to provide an update of the Traffic Section's comprehensive efforts over the past five years to reduce traffic collisions and improve traffic safety in the City of Mesa. He referred to a September 9, 2002 handout distributed to the Committeemembers and briefly outlined a series of graphs depicting various collision statistics. (See Attachment 1.)

Commander Toland explained that in an effort to reduce traffic collisions and to apprehend traffic violators, the Traffic Section has implemented a series of programs including, but not limited to, Photo Safety, Red Light Cameras and Photo Radar; DUI Enforcement Squad; Selective Enforcement Squad; Commercial Vehicle Inspection Team; Aggressive Driving Program; Child Seat Inspection Team, and Seat Belt Enforcement Program.

Commander Toland commented that in addition to the above-listed programs, the Traffic Section has also provided drug recognition expert training; instructed school administrators and educators in recognizing drug impairment and alcohol abuse; provided traffic experts for legislative committees and the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG), and provided traffic experts for the Arizona Peace Officers Standards and Training Board.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that the Traffic Section primarily utilizes motorcycles for traffic enforcement; that they are more maneuverable in tight situations; provide quicker access

to collision scenes; facilitate the safe and expeditious movement of traffic, and that their cost and maintenance is considerably less than that of patrol vehicles.

Commander Toland further noted that in an effort to solicit input from residents in the community regarding a variety of traffic safety projects, the Traffic Section has implemented a series of strategies such as working with neighborhood groups and community action teams; providing alcohol abuse instruction at Mesa high schools; inspecting vehicles for the proper installation of child seats, and school zone enforcement.

Commander Toland reported that in the upcoming fiscal year, the Traffic Section will target ten City intersections in an effort to reduce the number of accidents at the intersections by 30%. He commented that the specific intersections were selected because they do not have photo safety cameras or red light cameras; there is a high incidence of DUI-related accidents/collisions, and the intersections are in close proximity to Mesa high schools. Commander Toland stated that the proposed intersections include: Country Club Drive and McKellips Road; Alma School Road and Guadalupe Road; University Drive and Stapley Drive; Lindsay Road and McKellips Road; Higley Road and Broadway Road; University Drive and Lindsay Road; Country Club Drive and Baseline Road; Gilbert Road and Southern Avenue; Power Road and Southern Avenue, and Country Club Drive and Brown Road.

In response to a question from Committeemember Thom, City Manager Mike Hutchinson advised that as a result of various studies conducted by the Traffic Engineering Department, it is the recommendation of staff that lagging left-turn signals not be used as a traffic control measure within the City. Commander Toland concurred with Mr. Hutchinson's comments and added that the Police Department has participated in discussions with the Traffic Engineering Department regarding the issue.

Commander Toland concluded his remarks by stating that since October 2001, the Traffic Section has assigned two additional officers to conduct commercial vehicle inspections. He stated that this has resulted in a substantial increase in the detection of unsafe commercial vehicles utilizing City roadways. Commander Toland added that due to the recent occurrence of a number of collisions in northeast Mesa, which involved commercial vehicles, as well as increased media coverage regarding the collisions, the Traffic Section has been requested by several trucking companies to provide their drivers with instruction regarding out-of-service violations.

Committeemember Walters voiced appreciation to the Traffic Section for its increased focus on commercial vehicle inspections.

In response to a question from Committeemember Thom regarding undocumented aliens in the community, Police Chief Jan Strauss clarified that it is the opinion of the City Attorney that the Mesa Police Department not be involved in Federal law enforcement issues. She explained that if a crime were to occur in Mesa in which an undocumented alien was in violation of the Arizona Revised Statutes or City ordinances, the Police Department would take appropriate action against such an individual. Chief Strauss added that if the person were held in police custody, based on an actual offense of the Arizona statutes, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) would be notified.

Chairman Griswold thanked Commander Toland for his informative presentation.

2. Hear an update on Police staffing issues and the patrol scheduling system.

Assistant Police Chief Dennis Donna provided the Committee with a brief overview of this agenda item. He stated the fact that the Mesa Police Department currently employs 808 sworn officers, which represent a ratio of 1.86 officers per thousand population; that the City's ratio is equivalent with other cities nationwide, but slightly above the Arizona average, and that in order to assess optimal staffing needs, various issues must be addressed including the types of crimes which occur within a city, service demands made by citizens, and the productivity of a police department. Chief Donna stressed that the Police Department's 808 sworn officers are deployed across a wide range of functions including Criminal Investigations, Special Investigations, Traffic, Aviation, School Resource Program and Warrants. He added that it is the needs of the City that determine the Police Department's annual staffing decisions.

Chief Donna advised that the Police Department currently has a ratio of five sworn officers per three civilian employees. He stated that with regard to determining civilian staffing needs, the primary factors that must be considered include workload and productivity within the Police Department. Chief Donna cited, as an example, that one detective may work a homicide case wherein more than 100 pieces of evidence must be analyzed by civilian crime lab employees. In such a scenario, the work of the civilian employees is much higher than a one-to-one ratio in the field.

Chief Donna provided the Committee with a brief overview of the Police Department's patrol scheduling system. He explained that in 1991, the Police Department purchased a software system known as PROS which, based on a spreadsheet application, integrates known data taken from the police computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system and management decisions regarding policies governing patrol response to calls for service, span of control for supervisors and acceptable shift start times. Chief Donna said that although the system enables the Police Department to predict the number of patrol officers needed in a specific budget year, it does not reflect the total amount of sworn/civilian personnel requested on an annual basis.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that a patrol officer's shift is divided into three separate areas of responsibility including calls for service time (50%), administrative time (33%), and proactive time (17%).

Chief Donna explained that in an effort to equalize workloads for patrol officers across the City, PROS has also been utilized to analyze patrol beat boundaries in Mesa's four patrol divisions and to balance the workload by beat and by patrol division. He added that this has created a more equitable division of work across the City and also improved response times relative to calls for service.

Chief Donna concluded his remarks by stating that the Police Department's minimum staffing requirements are based on the deployment of patrol officers to cover all City beats 24 hours a day, seven days a week. He added that other factors that determine the final shift schedule include the size of the various Police substations, the crime rates in each division, as well as response times. Chief Donna also stated that the patrol scheduler can identify officer shortages and surpluses by the hour of the day and the day of the week; determine the number of officers that may be off on any given shift due to vacations or sick time, and can make the necessary adjustments to ensure appropriate coverage on a particular beat.

Chairman Griswold thanked Chief Donna for the presentation.

3. Hear an update on community meetings held by the Police Patrol Bureau.

Chief Donna addressed the members of the Committee relative to this agenda item. He reported that community meetings conducted by the Police Patrol Bureau provide Mesa residents with the opportunity to learn about a wide range of topics including crime prevention methods, crime statistics, information on Police Department and City programs, as well as special crime related programs. He added that the meetings also allow citizens to express neighborhood and personal safety concerns and to identify specific areas in which police services could be improved.

Chief Donna explained that in 2002 thus far, the Police Patrol Bureau has hosted 46 community meetings, with attendance ranging from 15 to 500 citizens per meeting. He also stated that additional meetings have been scheduled for the remainder of the year, and that he will provide the members of the Committee with a timetable of future meetings.

Committeemember Walters noted that several Councilmembers who recently visited Mesa Sister City Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada were impressed with a model that incorporated greater police/citizen interaction. She requested that staff obtain information relative to the program to determine if it would be possible to implement a similar program in Mesa.

In response to a question from Chairman Griswold, Chief Donna advised that at the present time, foot patrols are not used by the Mesa Police Department and that bicycle officers are able to cover a larger geographic area.

Chairman Griswold thanked Chief Donna for the presentation.

(Councilmember Whalen was excused from the Police Committee meeting at 3:43 p.m.)

4. Hear an update on the upcoming Arizona Police/Fire Games.

Police Lieutenant Coy Johnston addressed the Committee and provided a brief historical overview of the Police Games. He explained that Mesa is currently scheduled to host the upcoming Arizona Police/Fire Games in October and that a large turnout is anticipated.

In response to a question from Committeemember Walters, Lieutenant Johnston clarified that Mesa has an excellent chance to be selected as the site for the 2006 International Police Games and that he is currently in the process of pursuing the matter.

(Mayor Hawker left the Police Committee meeting at 3:55 p.m.)

Committeemember Thom voiced support for the upcoming Arizona Police/Fire Games and stated that they are an exciting event which can be enjoyed by the entire community.

5. Adjournment.

It was moved by Chairman Griswold, seconded by Committeemember Thom, that the Police Committee meeting adjourn at 3:58 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 9<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2002. 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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Attachment