



Ad Hoc Committee to Study Police Oversight

March 24, 2004

The Ad Hoc Committee to Study Police Oversight met in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on March 24, 2004 at 4:05 p.m.

COMMITTEE PRESENT

Dennis Kavanaugh, Chairman
Lynda Bailey
Mike Campbell
Henry Castillo, Jr.
Sharon Corea
Linda Flick
Graciela Herrera
Michael Hughes
Kevin Kotsur
Phil Lowry
Patrick Pomeroy
Mary Lou St. Cyr
Janie Thom
Claudia Walters

COMMITTEE ABSENT

Ken Salas

STAFF PRESENT

Mike Hutchinson
Mary Berumen
Eric Norenberg
David Zielonka
Pat Granillo

Chairman Kavanaugh excused Committeemember Salas from the entire meeting.

1. Approval of minutes of the February 11, 2004 meeting.

It was moved by Committeemember Walters, seconded by Committeemember Thom, that the minutes of the February 11, 2004 meeting be approved.

Chairman Kavanaugh declared the motion carried unanimously by those present.

2. Hear and discuss report on feedback received from Town Hall meetings and the web-based survey.

Chairman Kavanaugh expressed appreciation to the Committeemembers who participated in the recent Town Hall meetings. He commented that a number of trends have materialized from

the initial data collected at the meetings and stated that Karen Kurtz, a consultant for the City, will provide the Committee with a brief overview of those trends.

Ms. Kurtz addressed the Committee and requested feedback/observations from those members who attended the Town Hall meetings.

The following comments were elicited from the Committeemembers:

- Less input was solicited at the community Town Hall meetings as compared to the Police Town Hall meeting.
- Citizens who attended the meetings did not have a clear understanding of the operation of the Police Department, its priorities and scope of work.
- A more effective marketing tool should be implemented to apprise a citizen of the process he/she must undergo when a complaint is filed with the Police Department.
- What type of training, if any, does the Police Department provide for its officers with regard to avoiding confrontations with citizens, as opposed to implementing the use of deadly force?
- The Police Department should be less intimidating and more “resident friendly” like the firefighters.
- A concurrent desire exists among the community and the Police to improve the Department’s process relative to manpower, funding and programs.
- The Police Department is often restricted in its ability to respond immediately to citizen concerns/questions regarding an officer-involved use of force incident due to various departmental procedures and protocols.
- No significant Police/community issues of concern arose during the Town Hall meetings.

Ms. Kurtz highlighted the preliminary survey results she has obtained from the Town Hall meetings and the web-based survey. She reported, among other things, that the City has received approximately 144 responses from community and Police participants (Town Hall participants and web-surveys); that the web-based survey is still available online for citizens to offer their comments; and that once she has completed her analysis of the survey data, she will submit a final report to the Committee for its review.

Ms. Kurtz outlined the following preliminary findings:

- A strong desire to have more effective communication between the Police Department and the community.
- A lack of cultural sensitivity exists on the part of the Police Department, particularly toward the Hispanic community.
- Positive community feedback relative to Police participation in neighborhood Block Watch meetings, school fairs, and the role of the School Resource Officer.
- Various non-specific comments of praise or criticism of the Police Department.
- The identification of community frustration regarding the Police Department’s lack of response to certain property and traffic issues.
- Police officers not always following their “own rules” (i.e., a police car rolling through a stop sign.).
- Inadequate Police follow-through after an incident has occurred.

- What has the Ad Hoc Committee learned from other communities during its tenure; the criteria being utilized to determine when a Police Review Board should be formed; the barriers for the establishment of such a Review Board; the required training for the prospective members; and possible reasons for not creating a Review Board.
- What is the Police Department's education and training process regarding its "officer-involved use of force" policy.

3. Discuss and consider future work of the Committee.

- a. Additional citizen/interested party input
- b. Additional presentations by experts

Chairman Kavanaugh requested input from the Committeemembers relative to the direction in which the Committee wishes to proceed with regard to its charge from the Council. He offered various suggestions such as conducting additional Town Hall meetings specifically focused on Mesa's Hispanic population; hearing presentations from experts who have participated in the citizen review board process in other municipalities; and becoming familiarized with alternative formats (i.e., the community advisory board model utilized in Boston and Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada).

Special Assistant to the City Manager Eric Norenberg commented that the web-based survey is still operational and stated that it may be appropriate for the Committeemembers to pick a date to terminate the survey and allow Ms. Kurtz a sufficient period of time to complete her analysis of the data and prepare a final report. He also suggested that City staff conduct a final "media blitz" to encourage citizens to respond to the survey before a specified cutoff date.

Discussion ensued among the Committeemembers relative to reassessing the Council's charge to the Committee. The Committeemembers reached consensus regarding the following issues: the data-based survey should terminate effective March 31, 2004; that it is unnecessary to conduct additional Town Hall meetings; that the Committee would like to hear presentations from representatives of Phoenix and Tempe relative to their police oversight committee process, as well as Boston's district model; that prior to the April 14th meeting, the City Attorney's Office is directed to provide the Committeemembers with a legal analysis regarding potential changes to the Charter or changes to procedures that could be implemented internally in order to establish a civilian review board; that the Committee assess the Police Department's current policy to determine whether the public and the Police are being served by the process; and that the Committee be provided clarification relative to the definition of "civilian review panel" as contained in the Charter.

Committeemember Kotsur, a former Tempe Assistant Police Chief, provided a brief comparative analysis of Tempe and Phoenix's Police Citizen Review Boards.

Chairman Kavanaugh expressed appreciation to everyone for their comments and suggestions.

4. Items from Citizens Present.

There were no items from citizens present.

5. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Ad Hoc Committee to Study Police Oversight meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Ad Hoc Committee to Study Police Oversight meeting of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 24th day of March 2004. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK

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