

POLICE COMMITTEE MINUTES

August 25, 2005

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, 2005 at 9:30 a.m.

COMMITTEE PRESENT

Kyle Jones, Chairman
Tom Rawles
Claudia Walters

COUNCIL PRESENT

None

STAFF PRESENT

Mike Hutchinson

1. Discuss and consider authorizing the Purchasing Department to proceed with publishing a Request for Bids for City Vehicle Towing for Fleet Support Services.

It was moved by Committeemember Rawles, seconded by Committeemember Walters, to recommend to the Council that the Purchasing Department be authorized to proceed with publishing a Request for Bids for City Vehicle Towing for Fleet Support Services.

Chairman Jones clarified that the Committeemembers have read the Council Report and are prepared to vote on this item without the necessity of hearing a staff presentation.

Carried unanimously.

2. Discuss and consider the City of Mesa towing informational handout.

Police Chief Dennis Donna, Police Lieutenant Ben Kulina, and Materials Management Director Ed Quedens addressed the Committee relative to this agenda item.

In response to a question from Committeemember Walters, Lieutenant Kulina referred to the handout entitled "Towing Information" and said the page would be printed on the back of the standard tow form issued by the Mesa Police Department. He explained that the form would be issued to the owner/driver of a vehicle being towed by one of Mesa's current tow providers.

It was moved by Committeemember Rawles to recommend to the Council that the City of Mesa towing informational handout be approved.

Committeemember Walters requested that the sentence at the bottom of the "Towing Information" page which reads, "If you have any questions or complaints, please contact the

Mesa Police Department Traffic Division at (480) 644-3533” be printed in a larger font similar to the sentence that reads, “For current rates, visit our website at ...” She stated that it is important that the informational material be more visible on the page.

Committeemember Rawles concurred with Committeemember Walters’ comments and said he would incorporate her suggestion as part of his motion.

Committeemember Walters seconded the motion.

Carried unanimously.

In response to a question from Committeemember Rawles, City Manager Mike Hutchinson stated that the towing informational handout would be printed in English and Spanish.

3. Discuss and consider issues associated with the proposed Photo Safety Program:

- a. Design of proposed system.
- b. Recommendation to award contract to American Traffic Solutions.

Police Chief Dennis Donna introduced Police Lieutenant Ben Kulina and Materials Management Director Ed Quedens and stated that they were prepared to respond to any questions the Committee may have regarding this agenda item.

Lieutenant Kulina provided a brief historical chronology relative to the City of Mesa’s Photo Safety Program. His comments included, but were not limited to, the following: that the program initially began in 1996; that the current contract with Affiliated Computer Systems was to expire April 30, 2005, but was extended by the Council through October 31 of this year; that in August 2004, the Committee authorized staff to proceed with a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a new Police Department Photo Safety Services Contract; and that in December of 2004, staff returned to the Committee with various recommendations for the new RFP including extending the current contract for six months, a five-year contract, expanding the number of intersections from 17 to 30, implementing “speed on green,” four photo radar vans, and utilizing flat fee pricing versus per citation.

Lieutenant Kulina reported that during the RFP process, staff learned that technology has been significantly updated and said that the estimated build-out time of all monitored intersections is not two years, as previously estimated, but 180 days. He indicated that the existing contract takes approximately 30 days from the date of violation for registered owners to receive their citations, but said with the new contract, staff anticipates service in approximately 48 hours, plus mailing time.

Lieutenant Kulina further commented that the photo radar vans can be placed off the main roads and onto larger residential streets and said that even if a road is slightly curved, the new vendor has the ability to remove the camera systems and place them onto a tripod in special circumstances for selective enforcement. He noted that with digital image technology and new quality cameras, violations captured on film should increase, and thereby increase the number of citations the City could issue. Lieutenant Kulina added that there would be a combination of technologies to implement the new program including lasers, inductor loops, pressure pads, and a narrow beam radar to be used in the vans.

Lieutenant Kulina referred to the August 25, 2005 City Council Report and highlighted a variety of statistical data regarding Mesa's Photo Safety Program. The pertinent data included the following:

- A ten-year traffic volume study revealed a 79% increase in traffic volume east of Gilbert Road.
- There will be continued growth in east Mesa as a result of the extension of the 202 Freeway and the expansion of Williams Gateway Airport.
- The Photo Safety Program does reduce collisions, and in the last three years, monitored intersections have shown a 15% decrease in total collisions and a 30% decrease in injury collisions. (Non-monitored intersections showed a 5% reduction in total collisions and a 0.4% increase in injury collisions.)
- To date, there have been no deaths at Mesa's photo safety monitored intersections.
- The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) indicates that 30% of all drivers killed in collisions were speeding.
- Over the last five years, 43% of all collisions in Mesa involved speed.

Lieutenant Kulina indicated that an evaluation team, consisting of staff from Purchasing, Transportation, the City Court, and the Police Department, obtained and evaluated proposals and unanimously recommended awarding the contract to American Traffic Solutions, Inc. at a cost of \$2,716,012 annually. He explained that the Police Department recommends that the future program include:

- Red light cameras with the ability to expand up to 30 intersections based on accident analysis.
- "Speed on green" at one to five moveable locations as dictated by collision analysis. (Can be used for short periods of time as a selective enforcement tool.)
- Four photo radar vans staffed by City personnel. (Note: There would be an additional \$40,000 cost to staff the vans with City personnel as opposed to vendor personnel.)

Discussion ensued regarding two documents entitled "Photo Safety Cost Comparison" and "Photo Safety Cost Analysis Options" (See Attachments A and B.); that in response to questions posed by Committeemember Rawles, Mr. Quedens clarified that on Attachment A, under the "Proposed Contract," the \$93,000 "speed on green" vendor payments represent the cost for five units; that the \$2.8 million Projected Revenue includes the revenue from only one of the five "speed on green" units; and that if all five units were operational at one time, it would result in an additional \$250,000 in revenue per unit to the City.

Committeemember Walters commented that she would prefer the Photo Safety Program move toward a flat fee because she does not want the vendor to receive incentives as a result of the City issuing more citations. She stressed that the primary purpose of the program is to reduce collisions and make the streets safer. Committeemember Walters acknowledged that the City does lose money on the program and said she would like to see it get to a breakeven point.

In response to a series of questions from Committeemember Rawles, Lieutenant Kulina explained that the "speed on green" program would entail adding additional software to the red light camera equipment to calculate a driver's speed traveling through an intersection. He advised that if an individual was speeding through a green light, a citation would be issued as a result of the "speed on green," but if the same person was running a red light and speeding

through an intersection, staff is recommending that only a ticket for running the red light be issued.

Committeemember Rawles referenced staff's statistical data that reflected over the last five years, 43% of all collisions within the City involved speed. He requested additional research regarding the number of collisions that were intersection versus non-intersection accidents. Committeemember Rawles also suggested that it would be appropriate for the current vendor and the new vendor to coordinate their efforts with regard to the removal and installation of the photo safety camera equipment at each intersection to ensure a smooth transition.

Chairman Jones questioned what effect, if any, there would be on American Traffic Solution's proposal if the Council wished to modify the number of photo radar vans to be included in the program.

Responding to Chairman Jones' inquiry, Mr. Quedens clarified that during the bid process, staff conducted a pre-proposal conference with the potential vendors and informed them that the Council was unsure regarding the specific components of the Photo Safety Program and may make modifications as the City moves forward in the approval process. He stated that he did not know if Council modifications would necessarily impact the costs, because the vendors calculated their costs per intersection.

Chairman Jones questioned the effectiveness of the photo radar vans in comparison to their cost. He stated that this is especially true when the vans are located on major arterial streets and motorists slow down when the vans come into view, and then resume their higher speed once they have passed by the vehicles. He also said he would prefer limited usage of the vans on arterial streets and suggested that the units may be more useful, for example, in residential areas or school zones.

In response to Chairman Jones' comments, City Manager Mike Hutchinson stated that although the photo radar vans have been the most controversial component of the Photo Safety Program, they have been useful tools in deterring motorists from speeding. He stated that the Police Department proposes to utilize the vans in neighborhoods, but also asked the Committee to give staff, at their discretion, "some general leeway" to use the vans on arterial streets.

Chief Donna concurred with Mr. Hutchinson's comments and added that when the Police utilize the vans on arterial streets, they are able to send a message to the public that driving above the speed limit is dangerous, especially as one approaches major intersections. He added that most arterial streets have speed limits of 45 miles per hour and said that the City's standard has been to issue citations for speeds 11 miles per hour over the limit, except in school zones.

Committeemember Walters stated that in her opinion, the photo radar vans are good reminders throughout the community not to speed and said that she supports the concept of utilizing them in Mesa's neighborhoods. She also voiced support for the "speed on green" program and indicated that she likes the notion of the software being moved to various intersections for selective enforcement.

It was moved by Committeemember Rawles, seconded by Committeemember Walters, to recommend to the Council that the design of the proposed Photo Safety Enforcement Program system and the recommendation to award the contract to American Traffic Solutions, Inc., be approved.

Carried unanimously.

Mr. Quedens reminded the Committee that the contract contains an anti-lobbying clause, which precludes the vendors from speaking directly with Councilmembers to “sway” their votes regarding this matter. He invited the Committeemembers to contact him or City Attorney Debbie Spinner if they have any questions in this regard.

Chairman Jones thanked staff for the presentation.

4. Hear a report, discuss and consider issues associated with Police Department responses to loud party and noise complaints.

Police Chief Dennis Donna, Police Lieutenant Steve Farago, and Police Staff Attorney Pete Thompson addressed the Committee relative to this agenda item. Chief Donna reported that as a result of the adoption of Ordinance No. 4429 (concerning disruptive parties, gatherings or events), the Police Department has drafted, as part of its Police Field Manual, Field Order No. 894 which provides guidelines for first responders to such incidents. He explained that the policy contains language taken directly from the ordinance to ensure that when an officer documents such an incident, it is done consistently with said policy.

Committeemember Rawles commented that although he is not “a big fan” of the ordinance, in his opinion, Field Order No. 894 is well defined and well delineated.

An extensive discussion ensued between staff and the Committeemembers regarding various scenarios concerning serving notices to property owners and renters; enforcement procedures for the initial response and also second or subsequent responses; and that if appropriate, the responding officers may consider issuing a citation for various violations (i.e., disorderly conduct, public nuisance, liquor violations) in conjunction with the issuance of the disruptive party notice.

In response to a question from Committeemember Rawles, Chief Donna clarified that the Council typically does not approve the text contained in the Police Department’s Field Manual and said that although the agenda item indicates “discuss and consider,” the presentation was merely for informational purposes.

Committeemember Walters stated that she would be interested in obtaining information relative to the manner in which Tempe and Phoenix, who have similar ordinances, address the issue of serving notice to the responsible parties, and in particular, property owners.

Chairman Jones thanked staff for the update.

Chairman Jones excused Committeemember Rawles from the meeting at 10:26 a.m.

5. Hear an update on crime in Mesa.

Police Chief Dennis Donna referred to a document entitled "Crime Analysis Unit Scorecard" and provided a short synopsis of various "Part 1 Crimes," which have occurred in Mesa between calendar year May 2004 and May 2005.

The statistics included the following items:

- Property crimes are down by 1% (for the third straight year), which is driving the decrease in the overall Part I Crimes rate.
- The implementation of the Burglary Reduction Program has resulted in the capture of 43 out of 79 individuals placed on the program list.
- Residential burglaries have decreased 18%.
- Commercial burglaries have increased 24%.
- Motor vehicle theft is down by 4%, in part due to VIN etching, the BAIT car program, and public education programs.
- There were 215,619 calls for service in the first seven months of 2005, which, if the average monthly trend holds for the year, would be a 1% decrease from 2004.
- Felony arrests have increased from June to July by 2.25%.
- Between July 2004 and July 2005, DUI cases have decreased 12%.

Chief Donna also recounted several incidents in which one unit within the Police Department assisted another unit, for example, in apprehending suspects, collecting evidence, and resolving cases. He introduced Assistant Police Chief David Zielonka who addressed the Committee.

Chief Zielonka discussed the following trends occurring within the Police Department:

- The Center Against Family Violence's Computer Forensics Unit is now fully staffed and is working on a variety of cases including child exploitation, child pornography, sex crimes against children, identify theft, and financial crimes.
- The Sex Offender Notification Enforcement Tracking (SONET) Unit is actively tracking 810 sex offenders located in Mesa.
- The Persons Crime Unit (Homicide and Assaults) has worked on 18 homicides this year. The unit has also implemented a "cold case detective," whose primary duty is to investigate unsolved cases as far back as 25 to 30 years.
- The Special Investigations Division (SID), which performs undercover and gang-related activities, has transitioned from single-event to long-term conspiracy cases.

Discussion ensued relative to the current backlog in the Crime Lab; and the fact that the "hot addresses" for auto theft are primarily located at apartment complexes.

Committeemember Walters stated that she would be interested in learning more about why there is a statute of limitations on sex crimes.

Chairman Jones expressed appreciation to staff for the informative presentation.

6. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Police Committee meeting adjourned at 10:45 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 25th day of August 2005. 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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attachments