

POLICE COMMITTEE MINUTES

October 2, 2000

The Police Committee of the City of Mesa met in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on October 2, 2000 at 3:00 p.m.

COMMITTEE PRESENT

Dennis Kavanaugh, Chairman
Jim Davidson
Pat Pomeroy

COUNCIL PRESENT

Mayor Hawker
Mike Whalen

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mike Hutchinson

1. Hear an update on DUI checkpoints.

Police Lieutenant Steve Farago addressed the Police Committee relative to this agenda item. Lieutenant Farago explained that on Labor Day, September 4, 2000, the Mesa Police Traffic Unit conducted a Sobriety Checkpoint in the southbound lanes of the 2900 block of north Power Road. Lieutenant Farago stated that at the checkpoint stop signs, officers distributed approximately 1500 brochures which contained DUI information and also a questionnaire regarding the checkpoint. Lieutenant Farago noted that of the 249 respondents to the questionnaire, only 8 were opposed to the checkpoint. Lieutenant Farago commented that the Labor Day Sobriety Checkpoint process was a success due to the fact that the majority of the vehicles which were stopped had designated drivers. Lieutenant Farago reviewed the five questions delineated on the survey and the corresponding responses.

In response to a question from Committeemember Pomeroy, Lieutenant Farago clarified that of the 2,912 vehicles which passed through the checkpoint, approximately 1,500 vehicles were detained and checked, and of that number, approximately one percent were arrested for Driving Under the Influence (DUI).

Committeemember Davidson expressed appreciation for staff's concise and succinct report, but noted that he does not support Sobriety Checkpoints. Committeemember Davidson added that although the results of the questionnaire reveal that a majority of citizens are in favor of Sobriety Checkpoints, he has concerns regarding the utilization of such a process to enforce Arizona's DUI laws.

Committeemember Pomeroy spoke in support of the Sobriety Checkpoints and emphasized that it is an effective tool to remove impaired drivers from the City's streets and highways.

Chairman Kavanaugh commended Lieutenant Farago for his presentation. Chairman Kavanaugh also acknowledged that despite the fact there was a limited amount of man-hours expended on the project, the results were significant in terms of DUI arrests.

In response to a question from Chairman Kavanaugh, Lieutenant Farago stated that at the present time, Mesa is a participant on a Holiday Task Force, but added that he does not envision the Department's utilization of Sobriety Checkpoints on a regular basis.

Chairman Kavanaugh thanked Lieutenant Farago for his presentation.

2. Hear an update on a proposed location and design for the relocated Falcon Substation.

Assistant Police Chief G.T. Fowler and Bob Saemisch, a representative of the architectural firm Saemisch, DiBella, Murphy, LLC, referred to graphics displayed in the Council Chambers and provided a brief overview of this agenda item. Chief Fowler explained that the City is currently in negotiations with the property owner to obtain land, located at Greenfield Road and University Drive, for the proposed site of the Falcon District Substation. Chief Fowler stated that the facility, which is slated for construction in two phases, will provide a unique opportunity for the Police Department to expand to meet the needs of a growing District.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that the proposed Falcon District Substation will accommodate additional patrol officers, bike officers, community action team officers and the command staff; the fact that once the Substation is operational, the Department will change the District boundaries to enable a greater complement of officers to service an expanded geographical area, and the fact that the Substation will be located in the center of the District, thereby providing easier access to officers and citizens and also providing quicker response time.

Chief Fowler commented that it is anticipated that the Falcon District Substation (Phase 1) will service its assigned District for a period of five to seven years, and as the City grows and there is an increase in calls for service, Phase 2 will become a "mirror station" which would allow for an additional 200 patrol officers and also a separate commander and lieutenant. Chief Fowler added that the primary benefits for such a configuration would include the need for one community room and also the ability to incorporate adequate CNG refueling on site.

In response to a question from Chairman Kavanaugh relative to public accessibility to the Falcon District Substation CNG refueling site, Chief Fowler expressed concerns relative to the limited availability of compressed natural gas at that location. Chief Fowler also commented on the fact that in order to create a dispensing station large enough to accommodate City and public CNG vehicles, the creation of a mammoth CNG farm and additional storage tanks would be required.

In response to a question from Committeemember Davidson, Chief Fowler explained that the number of calls for service (which is reevaluated on a yearly basis) dictates the District's geographical boundaries and the resources assigned to each station.

Committeemember Davidson spoke in support of the proposed Falcon District Substation, but stated the opinion that the officers should be provided additional training to meet the needs of the population diversity in a large geographically encompassing District.

In response to a question from Chairman Kavanaugh, Chief Fowler clarified that funding for Phase 1 will be derived from currently authorized bonds and that construction of Phase 2 will require future voter authorization.

In response to a question from Councilmember Whalen, Chief Fowler clarified that the projected cost of Phase 1 is \$3.8 million, including \$1.285 million for land acquisition and \$2.6 million for the actual

construction costs, but said that this amount does not include \$760,000 for the installation of the CNG refueling site.

Chairman Kavanaugh thanked staff for their presentation.

3. Hear a report on the Police Memorial Monument to honor Mesa's fallen officers.

Chief Fowler provided the Police Committee with a brief synopsis of this agenda item. Chief Fowler explained that W. Steven Martin, a local radio personality, sponsors an annual Christmas toy drive which enlists the services of police "Santas" from various State agencies to collect and distribute toys to needy children. Chief Fowler stated that as a tribute to Department of Public Safety Officer Bob Martin, who was killed in the line of duty, Mr. Martin conceived of the idea to construct a Police Memorial Monument to Officer Martin who was a police "Santa." Chief Fowler indicated that the project has now expanded to include all fallen officers, and that the City has been selected as a site to honor Mesa Police Officer Steven Pollard. Chief Fowler commented that donations have been and continue to be received to fund the construction of the proposed monument located at the southeast corner of the Police Department's main station at 130 North Robson. Chief Fowler referred to graphics displayed in the Council Chambers and provided a brief description of the configuration of the proposed monument.

Chief Fowler said that donations continue to be received from the entire community and that special recognition goes to Target and Wal-Mart for their generous donations. Chief Fowler noted that it is anticipated that the memorial will be completed by November 27, 2000, which is the anniversary of Officer Pollard's death. Chief Fowler commented that the memorial will also honor Hiram Peterson, Mesa's only other law enforcement officer killed in the line of duty.

Committeemember Pomeroy commended Chief Fowler for his presentation and spoke in support of the project.

Chairman Kavanaugh thanked Chief Fowler for his input and also encouraged citizens in the community to contribute to this worthwhile project.

4. Hear a report on revised investigation and arrest procedures.

Assistant Police Chief Ron Poulin addressed the Police Committee relative to this agenda item. Chief Poulin explained that due to recent negative publicity regarding the Police Department's misidentification of suspects arrested in narcotics cases, the Professional Standards Unit has recommended that arrest and identification procedures be modified not only in the Special Investigations Unit but Department-wide.

Chief Poulin said that the Professional Standards Committee also made additional recommendations including: 1. Increased suspect identification training, commencing with the next academy training class; 2. The implementation of new strategy whereby the first contact with an individual will result in the immediate physical arrest of the suspect, thereby eliminating the need to identify the suspect at some later point in time. Although there may be exceptions to such strategy, those exceptions will be articulated by the officer's supervisor, and 3. Should a case arise in which identification is made from means other than an immediate

physical arrest, such cases will not be forwarded to the County Attorney until at least two forms of identification have been confirmed by a unit supervisor. Chief Poulin added that the above-listed strategy is in place at this time.

In response to a question from Committeemember Davidson, Chief Poulin clarified that the immediate arrest of a suspect will place the undercover officer at a higher degree of risk, but added that such procedure would not be attempted without appropriate backup officers and adherence to proper police procedures.

Committeemember Pomeroy spoke in support of the recommendations of the Professional Standards Unit.

In response to a question from Chairman Kavanaugh, Chief Poulin explained that staff is currently conducting a Department-wide review of cases dating back four years in an effort to determine whether there have been any other suspect misidentifications.

Chairman Kavanaugh expressed appreciation to Chief Poulin for his input.

5. Hear a report on the City of Mesa's participation in the Auto Theft Authority.

Police Lieutenant Greg Hargis provided a brief overview of this agenda item and explained that the Arizona Automobile Theft Authority was established in 1997 by the State Legislature. Lieutenant Hargis stated that one of the programs funded by the Automobile Theft Authority is a Statewide multi-agency task force, of which the Mesa Police Department has been an active participant since its inception. Lieutenant Hargis noted that another innovative program which is sponsored by the Automobile Theft Authority is the "Watch Your Car" program, which is designed for vehicle owners who rarely operate their vehicles between the hours of 1:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. Lieutenant Hargis said that the vehicle owner signs a consent form allowing any law enforcement agency to stop such a vehicle and request proof of ownership if the vehicle is seen on the road during the above-mentioned hours. Lieutenant Hargis added that the vehicle is identified by a "Watch Your Car" sticker affixed to the lower front and lower rear windows which alerts law enforcement that the vehicle should be stopped.

Further discussion ensued relative to the fact that the Mesa Police Department is currently the only Arizona law enforcement association with a written policy on the "Watch Your Car" program and also an approved lesson plan by the Arizona Peace Officers' Standards and Training Board; the fact that the Automobile Theft Authority is currently utilizing the Mesa Police Department as a model for other agencies to emulate relative to the education of their officers regarding the aforementioned program; the fact that Police Detective Liz Trujillo is the City's liaison with the Automobile Theft Authority regarding the "Watch Your Car" program and has participated in numerous projects and committees in an effort to educate the public regarding auto theft prevention, and the fact that Detective Trujillo has created an informational video relative to auto theft prevention which could be utilized as an educational tool by other law enforcement agencies and State organizations.

Lieutenant Hargis commented that a grant is currently offered by the Automobile Theft Authority which must be utilized exclusively for educational programs and added that the Mesa Police Department is exploring options to take advantage of such an opportunity.

Chairman Kavanaugh thanked Lieutenant Hargis for the presentation.

6. Adjournment.

Without objection, the meeting of the Police Committee adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

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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 2nd day of October 2000. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this ____ day of _____ 2000

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK