

POLICE COMMITTEE MINUTES

May 16, 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 May 16, 2002 at 9:00 a.m.

COMMITTEE PRESENT	STAFF PRESENT	OTHERS PRESENT
Dennis Kavanaugh, Chairman Jim Davidson Pat Pomeroy	Mike Hutchinson	Others

1. Discuss and consider submitting the 2003 Governor's Office of Highway Safety Budget Proposal.

Commander Steve Toland addressed the members of the Committee relative to this agenda item and advised that the 2003 Governor's Office of Highway Safety Budget includes funding for equipment, training, and overtime reimbursement for various projects. He explained that the funding allows the Traffic Division to purchase state of the art equipment and allows Staff to work closely with Mesa Public Schools to provide training. He added that the funding also allows the department to continue its efforts to educate the general public regarding traffic related issues and ensures the continuation of selective enforcements in targeted neighborhoods.

Additional discussion ensued relative to the fact that the funding also supports DUI enforcement, Task Force operations, and allows Staff to conduct Child Safety Seat Fairs on Saturdays once a month as well as seatbelt inspections.

Commander Toland advised that there is no requirement for a match on any of the grant funding and the City of Mesa Traffic Division would administer the grant funds. He reported that the total budget amount being submitted for 2003 is \$296,625.

In response to a question from Committeemember Davidson, Commander Toland stated that the Aggressive Driving Vehicle is a semi-marked vehicle that has logos on its side. He said that it does not have overhead lights but has deck and grill lights. The vehicle allows Traffic Safety staff to go out and work in traffic to spot aggressive driving behaviors. He added that the vehicle blends in a little easier and allows closer inspections. Commander Toland said that funding is included in the budget for the purchase of a second aggressive driving vehicle and said that a need exists for the additional unit.

Committeemember Pomeroy said that he supports staff's recommendations relative to the submission of the 2002 budget.

In response to a question from Chairman Kavanaugh, Commander Toland advised that the funding would allow the department to supplement and send some additional officers for Drug Recognition /Expert Training and Collision Reconstruction Training. He added that although the department's budget typically contains funding for these purposes, new classes and training are constantly being offered and staff attempts to send as many officers as possible to the new classes.

Chairman Kavanaugh commented on the fatal vision simulated goggles and commented on the importance of utilizing important safety tools such as these.

It was moved by Committeemember Davidson, seconded by Committeemember Pomeroy, to recommend to the Council that staff's recommendations relative to the submission of the 2003 Governor's Office of Highway Safety Budget, be approved. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

2. Discuss the results of the Mesa Police Department Citizen Survey.

Police Lieutenant Mark Wesselman with the Professional Standards Unit and Planning Analyst Ilona Guzman addressed the members of the Committee relative to this agenda item. Lt. Wesselman stated that several months ago his unit was assigned the task of developing this community survey to find out what Mesa residents think about the Department. He added that Ms. Guzman was responsible for actually developing the survey and spent several weeks analyzing the data that was collected. He said that Ms. Guzman compiled a report and submitted it to Chef Strauss and the members of the Committee have been given Executive Summaries of the results of that survey.

Ms. Guzman provided a brief overview of her background and qualifications and outlined the objectives of the study which included:

- To assess the overall performance of the Mesa Police Department as a whole;
- To determine how victims, witnesses, and suspects feel they are being treated by officers;
- To find out how officers are perceived by the citizens of Mesa;
- To assess community concerns about safety in their neighborhoods;
- To identify any possible training needs for police officers to improve customer relations skills when making public contact; and to
- Identify any areas for public education.

Ms. Guzman reported that 85% of Mesa citizens feel that, overall, the Police Department is doing a good or an excellent job. She added that ratings are higher in the Superstition District where 35% award the rating of "excellent" compared to 29% in total; the Central District provides a lower overall rating. She noted that overall ratings decrease as length of Mesa residency increases.

Discussion ensued relative to the makeup of the survey respondents, the fact that 94% of the residents feel safe during the day (64% very safe) as opposed to 79% feeling safe at night (38% very safe); the fact that the 18 to 34 age range and the Hispanic community report lesser degrees of safety both during the day and night; the fact that the three top items the citizens listed as things the Police Department

does especially well included policy visibility (22%); response to calls (16%); and cracking down on traffic violators (10%).

Ms. Guzman reported that the top five issues citizens believe need to be addressed are:

1. Enforcing traffic laws
2. Crime and violence
3. Fighting drugs
4. More visibility
5. Fighting gang activity

Additional discussion ensued relative to the fact that 85% of the respondents gave the Mesa Police Department an overall rating of excellent or good; the fact that the lowest rated activity was reducing stolen vehicle incidents and the second lowest was reducing illegal drug activity; positive responses from citizens who have had contact with the Police Department; and the positive impacts of community policing.

Ms. Guzman stated that in conclusion Mesa citizens are asking for:

- More police visibility
- Traffic safety, particularly speeding and red light violations
- Citizens are concerned about thefts, particularly auto thefts
- Community involvement of police is viewed very positively
- Citizens feel very favorably about focusing on youth issues

Ms. Guzman informed the members of the Committee that based on the results of the survey, she has compiled a few recommendations for consideration:

- To enhance community involvement and address low rated areas, targeting vehicle reduction theft first
- Increase public relations efforts on traffic safety
- Continue efforts to work with youth, target high risk children and identify programs that would be beneficial
- Regularly reinforce the importance of quality customer service and positive interaction with the public and to all department members.

Committeemember Pomeroy commented on the positive results of the survey and thanked staff for their input.

Chairman Kavanaugh and Committeemember Davidson also commended the Department on the results of the survey and thanked staff for their presentation.

3. Hear an update on the implementation of the new Mesa Police Department Transfer Policy.

Police Commanders Gilbert Otanez and David Zielonka addressed the Committee relative to this agenda item. Commander Otanez said that he has been working on the Transfer Policy for a little over 2.5 years and stated that the goals are to provide an objective, consistent process for transfers of sworn members below the rank of Commander; to establish an objective process for career path

planning; and to encourage members and supervisors to enhance their careers by accepting the challenges of different department assignments.

Commander Otanez said that former Assistant Police Chief Mike Whalen first proposed this policy and thanked him for his foresight.

Discussion ensued relative to the formation of a task force in January 2000, transfer eligible positions (TEP's); the development of a pilot program; patrol transfer's intra-TEP transfers; eligibility requirements to request a transfer; the TEP testing process; TEP transfer limitations; requesting a transfer to a TEP and TEP opening announcements; the compilation of an actual transfer list; the transfer process itself; input that was solicited in developing the policy; and seniority and technical assignment points.

Commander Otanez emphasized that the policy, once implemented, will be reviewed on an annual basis and staff will continue to make adjustments.

Committeemember Pomeroy commended staff on their efforts and hard work to develop the policy.

Committeemember Davidson stated the opinion that the policy appears to be fair and reasonable and congratulated staff on their accomplishment.

Chairman Kavanaugh also spoke in support of the proposed plan and thanked staff for the update and presentation.

Councilmember Whalen thanked Staff for their efforts to develop a plan that can begin to make improvements throughout the department.

4. Hear an update on the Neighborhood Drug Interdiction Team program.

Commander David Zielonka also addressed the Committee regarding this agenda item and introduced Lieutenant Ron Kirby who is in charge of the Narcotics Section in Special Investigations Division, which includes the Neighborhood Drug Interdiction Team (NDIT) and the Narcotics Squad. Commander Zielonka said that the NDIT was started by now Assistant Chief Greg Fowler, who at the time was the Commander of the Special Investigations Division. He said that the squad was brought into being to be part of Mesa's Community Policing Outreach for citizens who had problems in their neighborhoods relating to drug houses, drug sales, and similar crimes. He stated that the NDIT squad is made up of a Sergeant and six detectives in addition to one Civilian Police Investigator. He explained that they work in conjunction with all the other squads and units in the Special Investigations Division and are tasked with three main issues: 1) manning and responding to the hotline calls on narcotics; 2) responding to drug labs and clandestine meth labs; and 3) filing complaints and reviewing narcotic cases from patrol.

Commander Zielonka referred to overheads displayed in the Council Chambers and outlined data contained in a report distributed to the members of the Committee. He informed the members of the Committee that NDIT activity for 2001 included 32 search warrants related to narcotic activity in the City, 116 felony arrests, filed just under 1,200 drug complaints that were sent to the prosecutor for prosecution, seized over 85 pounds of marijuana, 6 pounds of methamphetamines, 1.5 pounds of cocaine and 171 ecstasy pills and responded to 47 clandestine labs.

Discussion ensued relative to additional facts and figures, the fact that OSHA requires City crews and lab dismantlers to attend DEA Clean Lab Schools and they become certified in this area; and efforts with the Demand Reduction Group to address the ecstasy problem.

Chairman Kavanaugh and the members of the Committee thanked staff for the update.

5. Hear an update on the School Resource Officers program.

Assistant Police Chief Dennis Donna addressed the Committee relative to this agenda item and explained that the School Resource Officers Program (SRO Program) is a collaborative effort amongst many different agencies, including Mesa Public Schools. He noted that feedback regarding the program has been extremely favorable and discussed the pressure that is placed on the officers to become involved in many different areas on the school campuses and to foster relationships, not only with students but with administrators as well. He advised that the program is funded from State and Federal dollars and allows the department to offset the cost of the officers as they work in the 6 high schools, vocational schools, the 17 junior high schools and the alternative schools. He reported that next year the program will increase from 24 to 25 School Resource Officers with the addition of the Gilbert High School.

Discussion ensued relative to the success of the program, the fact that felony and assault cases are down from 13 in the first year of the 1999-2000 school year to 1 to date, decreases in acts of vandalism, decreases in drug offenses from 67 to 21, and the fact that traffic related injuries and fatal accidents are significantly lower, with no fatal accidents being reported in and around the schools in over two years.

Chief Donna said that next year staff involved in this program intends to continue to monitor the law enforcement related education classes that the officers teach in order to improve upon them and ensure that they continue to meet grant requirements. He added that staff is also working on the development of a database that will help emergency response not only for the Police Department but for the Fire Department as well.

In response to a question from Chairman Kavanaugh, Chief Donna said that there are concerns that funding may decrease and said that this area is monitored very closely.

Chairman Kavanaugh recommended that City Manager Mike Hutchinson provide the members of Mesa's Congressional Delegation with copies of the report on this issue and stressed the importance of maintaining their support for programs such as Community Oriented Policing and School Resource Officers.

Chairman Kavanaugh and the members of the Committee thanked Chief Donna for the update and wished him good luck with this worthwhile program.

Chief Strauss thanked Chairman Kavanaugh and the members of the Committee for their ongoing support.

6. Adjournment.

It was moved by Committeemember Davidson, seconded by Committeemember Pomeroy, that the Police Committee meeting adjourn at 11:13 a.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 16th day of May, 2002. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this ____ day of _____ 2002

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK

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