

## PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

October 2, 2008

The Public Safety Committee of the City of Mesa met in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on October 2, 2008 at 1:33 p.m.

### COMMITTEE PRESENT

Dennis Kavanaugh, Chairman  
Dina Higgins  
Scott Somers

### COMMITTEE ABSENT

None

### STAFF PRESENT

Christopher Brady  
Alfred Smith  
Trisha Sorensen

1. Items from citizens present.

There were no items from citizens present.

2. Hear a presentation, discuss and make a recommendation on the Victim Services Program.

City Prosecutor John Pombier addressed the Committee and said that he and Victim Services Volunteer Coordinator Amy Duvall of the Police Department were present to provide information on victim services provided by the City of Mesa. He displayed a PowerPoint presentation (a copy is available for review in the City Clerk's Office) and noted that the City initiated the program in 1991 in response to Victims' Rights legislation that mandates direct and court-related services to victims of misdemeanors prosecuted in the Mesa Municipal Court and victims of felony crimes committed in the City. Mr. Pombier reported that a recent court decision expanded the number of individuals who qualify for victim services. He advised that the services provided include personal advocacy, referrals to social service agencies, and other services related to the criminal justice system, including accompanying the victim to court if requested by the victim.

Mr. Pombier stated that the Prosecutor's Office deals with misdemeanors and provides victim notification and advocacy, and he added that the Police Department addresses victims of misdemeanors and felonies and provides notification, advocacy and the Victim Assistance Program (VAP).

Ms. Duvall explained that the Police Department provides victim services prior to prosecution of felonies and misdemeanors in addition to providing services to victims of non-criminal crisis events, such as serious injuries and fatalities resulting from accidents.

Mr. Pombier advised that victim notification is a mandated requirement for both the Police Department and the Prosecutor's Office, and he explained that victim notification creates the need for victim services.

Ms. Duvall stated that legislative directives, the State Statutes and the Constitution mandate providing victim's rights information (see Attachment 1) from the point of initial contact through the initial court appearance.

In response to a question from Chairman Kavanaugh, Ms. Duvall advised that a State law, *The Victim's Bill of Rights*, guarantees certain rights to victims of any crime in the State of Arizona, and she said that State Statutes define who is a victim of a criminal offense. She noted that the definition was expanded in 2006 to apply to felony and misdemeanor cases, which includes crimes that range from homicide to shoplifting or trespassing. Ms. Duvall reported that the number of cases increased from 745 in 2007 to 1,984 in 2008 as a result of the expanded definition, and she added that the additional services have been provided without increasing the staffing level.

Ms. Duvall outlined the responsibilities of the Victim Services Advocate (see Attachment 2). She said that the Police Department provides advocacy services to victims of felonies or misdemeanors until the case is prosecuted, at which time the responsibility for advocacy is transferred to either the County Attorney's Office or the City Prosecutor's Office. She noted that the Police Department is solely responsible for cases that are never prosecuted, such as when a suspect is not identified.

Ms. Duvall reviewed the activities of the Police Department's Victim Assistance Program (see Attachment 3). She noted that each volunteer undergoes a detailed background check and receives extensive training.

Mr. Pombier stated that the Prosecutor's Office provided services to more than 6,000 victims in fiscal year 2007/2008 compared to 5,000 in 2006/2007. He reported that domestic violence accounted for 34 percent of the cases and DUI (Driving Under the Influence) accounted for 12 percent. He said that although the number of victims served and services provided has increased, there has been no corresponding increase in staffing levels. Mr. Pombier advised that the primary source of grant funds are the Federal and State governments, such as "pass-through" funds from the Department of Public Safety and funds from the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission. He said that although service levels have increased, grant funding has remained level or has decreased.

Responding to a series of questions from Committeemember Somers, Ms. Duvall said that Federal grant funds were cut across the board last year. She added that State grant funds are also subject to budget considerations, and she noted that the City received funding from the Governor's Office this year for victim notification in an amount that was similar to the prior year.

Mr. Pombier stated that at some point in the future, there would be insufficient funding available to provide the necessary services. He said that his office has been working with the City Manager's Office to address this issue.

In response to a question from Committeemember Somers, Mr. Pombier clarified that the only service mandated by law is victim notification. He explained that if victim advocates were not

available, staff time would be utilized to answer questions posed by victims when they receive notification. Mr. Pombier added that the City would continue to provide victim notification as required by law.

Responding to a question from Committeemember Higgins, Ms. Duvall stated that the three Victim Advocates provide as many services as possible regardless of an increase in the crime rate. She advised that the increase in the number of services provided also reflects a greater level of efficiency resulting from refinements to the referral process and automation improvements.

Mr. Pombier said that the increased number of victims served by the Prosecutor's Office reflects the expanded definition of victims eligible for services and does not represent an increase in the number of crimes.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that there are presently 25 volunteers, 15 of which are active participants; that the participation of some volunteers is limited by the fact that several are winter visitors and others have full-time jobs; that volunteer recruitment is an on-going process; and that paid staff members perform the more complex duties.

Mr. Pombier said that staff was seeking Committee direction to explore the types of services provided by other cities and the manner in which the services are funded.

Chairman Kavanaugh recommended that staff be directed to research the criminal fines levied by other cities in order to address the expense of providing victim services.

Mr. Pombier said that staff would collect data on the practice of other cities, and he noted that increasing the criminal fines may not address the problem because many fines are not collectable.

It was moved by Committeemember Somers, seconded by Committeemember Higgins, that staff be directed to continue to explore the available funding options for financing the Victim Services Program in the City of Mesa.

Carried unanimously.

Chairman Kavanaugh stated that the Committee is in support of staff's efforts to identify other funding options. He also suggested that staff discuss the issue with Vice Mayor Jones, who serves on the Public Safety Committee for the National League of Cities.

3. Hear a presentation and discuss the need of a trauma center in the City.

Chairman Kavanaugh advised that this item, an issue that he has addressed for five years, is on the agenda at his request. He noted that presently no plans exist for a Level 1 or Level 2 trauma center in the East Valley, and he stated the opinion that this is a critical issue.

Fire Chief Harry Beck addressed the Committee and advised that the presentation is designed to provide an update on the current status of trauma services. He noted that the "Golden Hour" refers to the fact that trauma patients have a greater chance of survival when they are transported to a trauma center within one hour of being injured. Chief Beck stated that the lack

of a trauma center in the East Valley places the area at a significant disadvantage. He said that there have been ongoing efforts to increase public awareness of the issue and the department has worked with the Arizona Department of Health Services to identify possible alternatives, in addition to discussing the issue with the hospitals.

Assistant Fire Chief Mary Cameli displayed a PowerPoint presentation (a copy is available for review in the City Clerk's Office) to provide statistical data and an overview of the different levels of trauma services. She reported that data for the State of Arizona indicate that a trauma patient arrives at a Level I trauma center within the "Golden Hour" only 41 percent of the time. Chief Cameli advised that the statistics for Maricopa County are somewhat better in that patients arrive at a Level 1 trauma center within the "Golden Hour" 63 percent of the time. She reported that trauma is the third highest cause of death in Arizona after heart attacks and cancer compared to trauma being the fifth highest cause of the death in the United States.

Chief Cameli noted that the typical standard is that a trauma center is required for every one million in population. She advised that there are five trauma centers in the Valley, four in Phoenix and one in Scottsdale, and none in the East Valley, which has a population in excess of one million. Chief Cameli reported that last month the Governor signed an Executive Order authorizing the Department of Health Services to investigate the possibility of increasing the number of trauma centers in the State. She emphasized that the need for a trauma center in the East Valley is critical, and she outlined the following services provided by each level of trauma center:

- Level I: Provides highest level of surgical care 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.  
Trauma education program; residency program.  
Preventive and outreach programs.  
Research program.
- Level II: Provides highest level of surgical care 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Level III: Resources for emergency resuscitation and most medical emergencies (not life threatening trauma).

Chief Cameli stated that all facilities in Mesa are Level III trauma centers. She reported that in 2007, the Mesa Fire Department transported 769 patients to Level I trauma centers in Phoenix and Scottsdale (669 by ambulance and 100 by air). She explained that a potentially dangerous situation exists when an ambulance travels an average of twice a day at a high rate of speed with lights and sirens from Mesa to one of the Phoenix or Scottsdale trauma centers. Chief Cameli advised that a monthly average of 1,000 patients experiencing various levels of trauma were treated in the City of Mesa during 2007, and she noted that the number is likely to increase as the population increases. She referred to a chart (see Attachment 4) that lists the availability of trauma centers in cities that are comparable in size to Mesa.

In response to a question from Chairman Kavanaugh regarding the priority given to a trauma center by other East Valley agencies, Chief Beck stated that in terms of emergency service delivery, response times and access to a Level I trauma center are the top two priorities for all departments. He explained that the patient survival rate improves significantly when a Level I trauma center is available. Chief Beck reported that although he and other East Valley officials

have met with the management of local hospitals over a period of years in an effort to develop a plan for a future Level I trauma center, their efforts have been unsuccessful.

Responding to a question from Committeemember Higgins, Chief Beck stated that the City plays the role of a patient advocate with regard to establishing a Level I trauma center, and he explained that a hospital's decision regarding a trauma center is profit driven. He stated the opinion that Public Safety officials have a responsibility to identify the community's need for these services.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that there are no State or Federal barriers to establishing a Level I trauma center; that the preferred location for a trauma center would be in the area of Power Road and the U.S. 60; that Banner Desert Hospital is the largest hospital in the area with the greatest number of staff available; that Banner Baywood Hospital has applied for stroke center certification; that Level 1 facilities have a higher patient survival rate; and that both Level I and II centers provide surgical care 24 hours a day.

In response to a question from Chairman Kavanaugh, Chief Beck reported that the landing and lift off of a helicopter are extremely dangerous operations for the Fire Department. He explained that after a patient is stabilized on the ground, the aircraft staff is briefed on the patient's condition and the patient is placed on board. Chief Beck noted that limited space on an aircraft and requirements that staff and the patient be belted during flight inhibits treatment while en route to the facility. He explained that ground ambulance transport is more suitable within a metropolitan area because medical intervention can occur while en route, which improves patient survivability.

Chief Cameli responded to questions from Committeemember Somers by advising that a paramedic accompanying an ambulance to Scottsdale or Phoenix results in an engine company being unavailable for at least 90 minutes, which in the course of a year amounts to downtime of approximately one thousand hours.

Chief Beck advised that in the event of an air transport, a unit on the ground is required to clear and manage a landing zone for the helicopter. He stated that air transport of patients is more effective when long distances are involved. Chief Beck reported that active discussions with Arizona Health Services are ongoing in an attempt to obtain Level II facilities, which are certified by the American College of Surgeons.

Chairman Kavanaugh recommended that a dialogue continue with other East Valley cities and the medical centers in order to encourage development of Level II facilities.

Responding to comments from Chairman Kavanaugh, Chief Beck concurred that elected officials could provide valuable assistance in promoting these types of facilities.

Chairman Kavanaugh thanked staff for the presentation, and he stated that the Public Safety Committee would continue to address the issue of trauma centers.

#### 4. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Public Safety Committee meeting adjourned at 2:19 p.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Public Safety Committee meeting of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of October 2008. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

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LINDA CROCKER, CITY CLERK

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Attachments (4)