

POLICE COMMITTEE MINUTES

September 26, 1996

The Police Committee of the City of Mesa met in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on September 26, 1996 at 4:00 p.m.

COMMITTEE PRESENT

Jim Stapley, Chairman
T. Farrell Jensen
John Giles

COMMITTEE ABSENT

None

COUNCIL PRESENT

None

STAFF PRESENT

C.K. Luster
Lin Adams
Cindy Barris
John Brewer
Rick Clore
Fred Conway
Greg Fowler
Mike Hutchinson
Lars Jarvie
Mike Kalember
Richard Kelly
Earle Lloyd
Scott Martin
Ellen Pence
Bryan Raines
Leon Rawlings
Tom Remes
Denise Samuel
Robert Scantlebury
Glenn Shough
Kevin Snow
Jan Strauss
Mike Whalen
John Woods
Others

OTHERS PRESENT

Dan Nowicki
Others

1. Update on the handicap parking enforcement program and introduction of volunteers.

Assistant Police Chief Mike Whalen reported that training of six volunteers began September 23, 1996 for the City's handicap parking enforcement program. Chief Whalen

introduced the volunteers, who will begin enforcement on September 28, 1996 relative to handicap, fire hydrant, and red curb parking. Chief Whalen outlined the proposed operation of the program, noting that the volunteers will each work a minimum of four hours per week and that three individuals will operate east of Gilbert Road and three will operate west of Gilbert Road.

Police Chief Lars Jarvie commented that the program will incorporate both education and enforcement and that Patrol officers will additionally continue parking enforcement.

The Committee noted the value of the handicap parking enforcement program and expressed appreciation to the volunteers for their willingness to assist.

2. Update on the Sex Offender Notification Unit.

Captain Leon Rawlings advised that last year Council authorized The Center Against Family Violence, the new location for the Mesa Police Department Sex Crimes Unit which utilizes an interdisciplinary approach to the investigative process in an effort to improve efficiency and quality. Captain Rawlings stated that the Center has been fully operational since February 1996 and additionally houses representatives from the Department of Economic Security's (DES) Child Protective Services, Maricopa County Attorney's Office, City of Mesa Prosecutor's Office, Maricopa Medical Center, Center Against Sexual Abuse (CASA), and the Child Abuse Assessment Center (CAAC) at St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center. Captain Rawlings provided statistics pertaining to activities at the Center and expressed the opinion that the program has proven successful to date.

Captain Rawlings stated that two detectives at the Center are responsible for providing notification in accordance with State law concerning persons convicted of sex-related offenses who are released from confinement on or after June 1, 1996. Captain Rawlings explained the notification process and the classification of sex offenders into three categories representing varying levels of potential risk to the community: Level I (low risk), Level II (intermediate risk), and Level III (high risk). Captain Rawlings reported that since June, Mesa has provided notification pertaining to four offenders classified as Level II, and two classified as Level I. Captain Rawlings indicated that the City is unaware of any individuals scheduled for release in the near future who would be classified as Level III.

Discussion ensued concerning hours of availability of personnel at the Center, the development of the Center as a model to other Police Departments nationwide, an outside study to be conducted by Arizona State University from November 1996 to June 1997 to evaluate the effectiveness of the Center, discretion utilized by detectives in determining geographical boundaries for providing sex offender notification, and communication among agencies relative to convicted sex offenders and their locations.

The Committee commended staff for their initiative relative to the Center.

In response to a request from Committeemember Jensen, Captain Rawlings advised that he will provide statistics pertaining to changes in overall violent crimes in proportion to population growth.

3. Update on community policing.

Assistant Police Chief Jan Strauss presented an update regarding community policing efforts relative to Special Operations, Community Policing/Relations, and Criminal Investigations, including crime analysis, the City's crimefree programs, Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS), neighborhood/business watches, training/Citizen Police Academy, and victims assistance/notification. Chief Strauss outlined various grant programs and commented that the additional 12 officers provided through the COPS Universal program will result in a total of 634 sworn personnel.

The Committee and staff spoke concerning recruitment, Academy capacity, and the progression of community policing endeavors.

Lieutenant Mike Kalember outlined recent activities of the Community Action Team (officers provided through the original COPS Ahead grant), noting the establishment of an office in the Washington Park area; efforts to reduce crime in/near Reed Park; coordinated activities with the Boys and Girls Club; the development of community leadership programs, a residential managers' association, and a merchants' association; and various additional projects undertaken by officers in the Falcon Field District.

Chief Jarvie introduced members of the Community Action Team present at the meeting.

Discussion ensued concerning the Powell Community School, bike patrols at schools, satellite offices, and decentralization as a key element of community policing.

Captain Lin Adams spoke regarding the Mesa Gang Intervention Project, the goal of which is to implement and test a comprehensive community-based model program for gang prevention, intervention, and suppression, focusing upon violent offenders and the reduction of violent gang activity. Captain Adams provided an organizational chart showing project participants and outlined federal grant funding. Captain Adams referred to a map and stated that three areas are currently under consideration for the project: Area 3 (Powell Junior High School), Area 4 (Carson Junior High School), and Area 5 (Mesa Junior High School). Captain Adams advised that efforts will concentrate on individuals who are residents of the targeted area, under 21 years of age, on probation, and involved in violent criminal activity. Captain Adams indicated that once an area has been selected, neighborhood leaders will be contacted and urged to support the program.

The Committee commended the Police Department and encouraged increased efforts pertaining to community policing.

4. Update on activity in Pioneer Park.

Neighborhood and Community Assistance Coordinator Debbie Driscoll advised that staff met recently to discuss problems relative to Pioneer Park and that the following were considered as potential measures to address the situation:

- a. Convert the existing pay phone (used for drug deals) to allow emergency outbound calls only;
- b. Designate residents as volunteer park rangers (to be accompanied by park rangers);
- c. Close LeSueur (Main Street to 1st Street);
- d. Work with hotel/motel owners to improve facilities;
- e. Erect a fence around the park (not well received);
- f. Encourage a local business to adopt the park;
- g. Establish a Drug-Free Park zone and provide greater penalties for crimes;
- h. Establish a Citizens-on-Patrol program;
- i. Investigate options to ban offenders from parks (temporarily or permanently);
- j. Renovate the park and increase visibility by thinning trees;
- k. Install sprinklers (flood irrigation does not work well);
- l. Remodel the rest rooms and possibly construct a second story with one-way glass as a Police observatory;
- m. Restructure the parking lot;
- n. Encourage citizens to utilize the park through programs such as the YMCA walking club (individuals to be escorted by park rangers).

In response to questions from the Committee, Police officers expressed the opinion that an impasse currently exists in the effort to combat crime in Pioneer Park. Officers spoke in favor of investigating the options proposed, particularly the suggestions to thin trees, ban offenders, construct a second-story Police observatory, and close LeSueur.

Discussion ensued concerning input from neighbors, problems of access to other properties should LeSueur be closed (consideration of a temporary closure via some type of barricade was additionally suggested), the decrease in park usage by families, and the possibility of temporarily closing the park.

The Committee expressed appreciation to staff for their efforts and encouraged further consideration and investigation of the proposed measures. The Committee requested a legal opinion from City Attorney Neal Beets concerning a measure to ban offenders from parks.

5. Review current crime statistics.

Chairman Stapley stated that this item will be continued to the September 27, 1996 Study Session.

6. Update on various projects.

Chief Strauss stated that members of staff have met with representatives of the Lehi Homeowners' Association and have subsequently contracted with a consultant to investigate options to abate noise at the Police range.

Assistant Police Chief Fred Conway advised that construction of the Superstition Springs substation began in August and is scheduled for completion in May 1997. Chief Conway said that Patrol will redivide the City into four districts.

Chief Conway reported that a contract has been signed with the educational community relative to operations at Williams Gateway Airport.

Chief Conway indicated that the move to the new photo identification and evidence facility is approximately one-half completed. Chief Conway stated that Phase II (remodel of the records/supply area) is currently underway and that Phase III (rest rooms, lockers, etc.) will begin soon.

Chief Conway advised that installation of the report-writing software (to be provided by PSI) for the Police Department laptop computer system has been delayed and is now scheduled for October 1996, with functional testing set for November, training of the "trainers" scheduled for December, and training of the general officer population planned for January through March 1997. Chief Conway stated that officers are presently utilizing WordPerfect software to prepare narratives.

Chief Conway reported that staff is additionally negotiating a contract with PSI for installation of the new CAD system but said that the City's Information Services Department is developing alternatives in the event the vendor does not improve performance relative to the laptop computer system. Chief Conway stated that staff is simultaneously negotiating with Motorola to develop radio infrastructure. Chief Conway anticipated full implementation of the program by March/April 1998.

Police Chief Lars Jarvie thanked the Committeemembers for their support of the photo radar pilot project. Chief Jarvie announced that the City will host an international conference this week for law enforcement firearms instructors and that approximately 300 people are expected to attend.

7. Adjournment.

It was moved by Committeemember Jensen, seconded by Committeemember Giles, that the Police Committee meeting adjourn at 5:58 p.m.

Carried unanimously.

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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 26th day of September 1996. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this 7th day of October 1996

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK