

POLICE COMMITTEE MINUTES

September 24, 2001

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 24, 2001 at 3:15 p.m.

COMMITTEE PRESENT

Dennis Kavanaugh, Chairman
Jim Davidson
Pat Pomeroy

COUNCIL PRESENT

Mayor Keno Hawker

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mike Hutchinson

1. Discuss and consider a recommendation to define, record and formalize neighborhood partnerships.

Chairman Kavanaugh provided a brief overview of this agenda item and said that after attending a National League of Cities presentation last winter regarding neighborhood interaction with Police Commanders, Councilmembers Whalen, Walters and he requested that staff evaluate programs in other communities that address heightened neighborhood involvement with command staff.

Police Chief Jan Strauss introduced Commander Hector Federico and stated that Commander Federico is the Falcon Field Patrol Division Commander who drafted the proposed recommendation that is currently before the Committee.

Commander Federico reported that the City is divided into four patrol districts and that each district conducts a number of community meetings and events throughout the year to promote communication and interaction with residents. He further reported that staff proposes a program which will formalize open meetings involving Block Watch captains, interested citizens, District Commanders and Community Action Teams (CAT).

Commander Federico discussed the proposed program and said that the District Commanders would divide their respective districts into an appropriate number of manageable areas, depending on the specific needs of neighborhoods; that meetings would be conducted semiannually in each area and minutes recorded; that problems, concerns, responses and approaches to problems would be archived for historical benefit; and that the meetings would be held at substations, schools or other public facilities within the defined areas. He stated that staff's goals are to provide residents an opportunity to ask questions and voice their concerns and opinions, to provide feedback and follow-up on issues and concerns, to strengthen existing neighborhood partnerships and create new neighborhood partnerships.

Commander Federico commented on the proposed meeting format and stated that staff would discuss major and relevant crime trends and concerns as well as crime statistics and major events specific to the respective area; that guest speakers would be utilized to help educate residents

regarding public safety issues and public awareness issues; and that a question/answer period would be encouraged to promote interaction.

Commander Federico reported that the financial impact of the program is anticipated to be minimal due to the fact that staff presently participates in approximately 100 meetings/events per Division per year, which is not expected to significantly increase as a result of the proposed formalized meetings.

In response to a question from Chairman Kavanaugh regarding the possibility that the proposed program may conflict with the Charter provision which prohibits the establishment of a civilian police review board, Commander Federico advised that the program is only intended to bring crime issues and concerns forward and provide statistical and educational crime-related information.

Committeemember Davidson voiced support for the program and said that it will enhance the profile of the Police Department in the community.

In response to a question from Committeemember Davidson regarding the possibility of increased overtime expense, Chief Strauss stated that staff does not anticipate that the program will result in increased overtime. She explained that Commanders and CAT staff members are on a flex-time schedule and that the nature of their work dictates flexible schedules. Chief Strauss noted that staff expects that providing refreshments at the meetings will create more of a financial impact than overtime expense.

In response to a question from Committeemember Davidson regarding staff's proposal to conduct semiannual meetings in each area, Commander Federico advised that although only two meetings per year are proposed, staff would contact Block Watch Captains to provide immediate follow-up to specific concerns raised during meetings. He added that a number of problematic areas of the City would require more frequent meetings and interaction.

In response to a question from Committeemember Davidson regarding involving schools in the program, Chief Strauss advised that staff would encourage interaction with schools and hopes to combine neighborhood meetings with other school or neighborhood events.

Committeemember Pomeroy voiced overwhelming support for the program. He stated the opinion that response to the program may dictate more than two meetings per year and requested an invitation to attend one of the meetings.

In response to a question from Committeemember Pomeroy, Commander Federico said that the target start-up date of the program is November 1, 2001.

It was moved by Committeemember Pomeroy, seconded by Committeemember Davidson, to recommend to the Council that staff's recommendations to define, record and formalize neighborhood partnerships, be approved.

Chairman Kavanaugh stated support for the motion and expressed the opinion that the program will coordinate well with the City's Council district system.

Carried unanimously.

2. Hear an update on the Police Department's accreditation process.

Chief Strauss reported that the Department's on-sight accreditation assessment was conducted August 18 – 21. She introduced Lieutenant Mark Wesselman and Detective Jodie Martinez and said that Lieutenant Wesselman and Detective Martinez excelled in their efforts to prepare the Department for the on-sight assessment.

Lieutenant Wesselman addressed the Committee and provided an overview of the assessment process. He advised that the assessment included a tour of Police facilities and inspection of the evidence section and files. Lieutenant Wesselman reported that the two assessors were extremely impressed with the evidence section and commented that it was the best they had ever seen. He further reported that the assessors were also impressed with the communications, training and air units, and the organization of the files. Lieutenant Wesselman noted that as a result of the inspection, the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA) requested a sample copy of a file to use as a model. He also noted that Detective Martinez was responsible for preparing the files for inspection. Lieutenant Wesselman stated that the assessors determined that the Department was 100% in compliance for accreditation and received an A+ rating.

Lieutenant Wesselman advised that as a result of the excellent on-sight assessment, key personnel were rewarded with Star Awards and the Professional Standards Unit received a unit citation. He said that staff members will attend Accreditation Commission hearings in San Diego during November and receive the Department's accreditation certificate at that time.

In response to a question from Chairman Kavanaugh, Lieutenant Wesselman advised that the accreditation term length is three years.

City Manager Mike Hutchinson commended the Department as a whole and the staff members involved in the process for their superior performance.

Committeemember Pomeroy also commended the Department and suggested that the public be apprised of the Department's superior accreditation rating.

Committeemember Davidson voiced appreciation to staff for their efforts and stated that the accreditation rating is consistent with the Department's reputation.

Chairman Kavanaugh congratulated the Department and said that the excellent accreditation rating is a reflection of the Department's continuing level of quality service.

Chief Strauss thanked the Committeemembers for their comments and voiced appreciation to staff members for their efforts in this matter.

3. Hear an update on GAIN 2001.

Police Commander Rick Clore addressed the Committee and reported that the Getting Arizona Involved in Neighborhoods (GAIN) event will be held on October 20th and that this is the fourth year Mesa has participated in the event. He noted that GAIN is Arizona's equivalent to National Night Out, which is held in August. Commander Clore said that GAIN provides an opportunity for Police

staff to interact with residents and initiate dialogue regarding crime in their neighborhoods. He stated that Crime Prevention Specialist Lindy Merino does an excellent job of managing the GAIN program. He also commented on the recent GAIN kick-off event, which was attended by approximately 400 active Block Watch Captains throughout the City.

Commander Clore reported that the program has been expanded this year and will also include the Fire Department, the Streets Maintenance Department and Parks and Recreation. He said that it is anticipated that staff will contact approximately 20,000 Mesa residents during the event, which will start at 6:00 p.m.

In response to a question from Chairman Kavanaugh, Commander Clore advised that staff anticipates approximately 300 neighborhood parties this year.

4. Hear an update on the Sex Offender Notification program.

Chief Strauss advised that the Police Committee and the Council approved modifications to the Sex Offender Notification program in April 2001 and requested a six-month assessment report regarding the effectiveness of the modifications.

Police Commander David Zielonka addressed the Committee and reported that the prior method of conducting door-to-door notifications in neighborhoods where sex offenders reside was replaced with an informational mailer to all households within the affected neighborhood. He reported that the first notification by mail was conducted in August, that six notifications by mail have been conducted thus far, and that approximately 25 additional notifications will be conducted this year.

Commander Zielonka reported that telephone inquiries from residents regarding the mailers have been minimal and that no complaints have been received regarding the mailer method. He added that the prior door-to-door method normally resulted in 50 to 75 telephone inquiries from residents who were not home when the door-to-door notification was conducted. He stated the opinion that the mailer method of notification appears to provide sufficient information regarding the whereabouts of sex offenders to all households within the neighborhood targeted. Commander Zielonka further reported that a telephone survey is planned to solicit input and assess reaction from residents who have received mailers.

Committeemember Davidson voiced continued opposition to conducting sex offender notifications by mail and stated the opinion that the lack of response from citizens following notifications by mail, as opposed to the response received following door-to-door notifications, indicates that the mailers are not being read and are having minimal impact. He stated support for conducting door-to-door notifications.

Chairman Kavanaugh voiced approval of conducting the telephone survey and stated that the survey will help to assess the effectiveness of the mailers.

5. Hear an update on the process of acquiring an additional Police helicopter.

Police Commander Steve Toland addressed the Committee and said that Police staff has worked closely with Purchasing Director Sharon Seekins to develop the RFP for the Department's third helicopter. He noted that the RFP also includes avionics and communications equipment for the helicopter. Commander Toland reported that as part of the process of developing the RFP, staff

reviewed helicopter RFP's from the Arizona Department of Public Safety, the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office and the Phoenix Police Department.

Commander Toland outlined the timetable concerning the RFP and said that staff intends to return to the Police Committee and the Council during January 2002 to present their recommendations and seek approval of a proposal.

In response to a question from Committeemember Davidson, Commander Toland advised that the RFP is not a sole source RFP, that all manufacturers will be considered and that staff anticipates receiving several proposals.

In response to a question from Committeemember Davidson regarding financing, City Manager Mike Hutchinson stated that staff would evaluate both purchasing and leasing options to determine the most economical method of acquiring the helicopter.

Committeemember Pomeroy commented on the aircraft currently operated by the City and the importance of considering maintenance issues when evaluating proposals from manufacturers other than what is currently in service.

Commander Toland stated that issues relative to maintaining aircrafts from multiple manufacturers were considered during the RFP process and will be considered when evaluating the proposals.

6. Adjournment.

Chairman Kavanaugh said that Committeemember Davidson's request for an update regarding photo radar would be addressed at the October Police Committee meeting.

Without objection, the Police Committee meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.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 September 24, 2001. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK