

Fresno Police Department Chief's Advisory Board Minutes

May 28, 2009

Present: Kamal Abu-Shamsieh, Roz Clark, David Cowin, Morgan Doizaki, Paula Farris, Tom Gentile, Harry Gill, Judy Holm, Pamela Kallsen, Jesse McDonald, Carol Mills, Edward Moreno, Lorraine Person, Jim Poptanich, Rebeca Rangel, Freddy Treminio (for Luke Raughley), Pastor Alicia Vasquez (for Enrique Reade), Margarita Rocha, Don Weaver (for Peter Summers)

Absent: Doug Broten, James Evans, Brian King, Kelly Nellum, Mui Mindy Vuong

Guests: Chief Jerry Dyer, Lieutenant Dennis Montejano, Sergeant Brian Rogers, Officer Martin van Overbeek

Call to Order:

The meeting, held in the City Hall Annex Training Room, was called to order at 5:32 pm.

Minutes:

Minutes from March 26, 2009 were approved without correction

Opening Remarks:

Chief Dyer thanked all members for their continued participation on the board and introduced Officer Michael Scholl, Terrorism Liaison Officer for the Department.

Agenda Items:

Presentation by Officer Mike Scholl (Homeland Security Bureau)

Officer Scholl discussed drug & weapons related violence in Mexico and bordering U.S. towns and how this affects Fresno.

Rangel: What is the Department doing to curb the flow of guns & drugs?

Officer Scholl: Currently there are more than 17,000 points of entry for guns & drugs to enter the U.S. through its southern borders. As a result, law enforcement resources are too limited to effectively combat this problem.

Gill: Has learned that kidnap insurance has become a big issue with business people working & traveling in the southern border regions.

Officer Scholl: Added that kidnap for ransom has become big business to the Mexican drug cartels. This goes along with racketeering and other related crimes.

Rangel: Are presentations available to other groups regarding the information you (Ofc. Scholl) presented today?

Officer Scholl: Certainly. (Officer Scholl proceeded to distribute business cards w/ his contact info)

Budget/Department Re-organization

Chief Dyer: Gave an overview of the budget including projected shortfalls. Added that all City departments facing shortfalls and the City has been making strategic cuts over last 3 yrs to get a \$17 million cushion. Department alone facing 9% cut to General Fund budget monies to help makeup the \$14.5 million shortfall. Personnel cuts make sense only if it can be done without affecting service to citizens. This is done through eight employees being relocated, 45 temporary positions being cut, removal of all vacancies, and the removal of all nine LifeSkills instructors. This

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preliminary budget projection is based on the Department receiving all grants applied for and approx. \$4 million in concessions by the labor groups.

Current plan is to institute at least 25 demotions consisting of two Deputy Chiefs', three Captains', nine Lieutenants', and 11 Sergeants'. The plan is to have a two-day strategic planning session with the command staff in the middle of July to discuss reorganization of the Department based on these demotions. The Department will be restructured from the ground up to focus on core services to the community. The #1 goal will be to respond to crimes in a timely fashion while maximizing officers on the street. As a result, lower priority calls will take longer for response and some may not be handled at all. The #2 goal will be to deal with the rise in crime as a result of cuts to mental illness services, early release of prisoners, and social service programs being cut.

Person: Is the population increasing?

Chief Dyer: It is increasing, and the City is looking at annexing certain County islands.

Cowin: Great job. What about after the 12 month budget plan, any thoughts on consolidation of services?

Chief Dyer: The Department has been planning a 24 month budget picture. The planning is for a longer term looking to FY12 budget, hoping for a turnaround in the economy. Some of the savings may come through annexing County island but a detailed cost analysis needs to be performed to know the savings. We are working with the Sheriff's Dept. on a one-stop prisoner processing to eliminate duplicated procedures but currently the jail booking facility is too small and booking processes are slow.

Person: Where would this be done?

Chief Dyer: At the jail, but there is still a bottleneck due to limited staffing in the booking area. Our Crime Scene Bureau processes 55,000 offenders annually, of which 15,000 are for felonies.

MacDonald: Has the City considered a 'Golden Handshake'?

Chief Dyer: Not yet, but the Department is working with the City on all options through the labor groups.

Rangel: What's going to happen to the Mayor's Gang Prevention Initiative (MGPI)?

Chief Dyer: It is still in place but will see significant cuts. Currently seeking grant funds to cover several programs which include LifeSkills, P.A.L., and Video Policing. The Dept. airplane is currently grounded due to funding.

Rangel: How about the K-9's and horses?

Chief Dyer: The program is still okay but the last horse officer will be removed soon. It will be staffed by reserve officers.

Rangel: Without playing a violin, what is morale like?

Chief Dyer: Brian? (Sgt. Rogers)

Sgt. Rogers: The majority of people he knows are happy to be here and be employed. He knows friends who are jobless right now and not so fortunate.

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Chief Dyer: It is time now not to complain but to work harder.

Rangel: Mental health issues need addressing for officers who may be laid off.

Rocha: What impact will demotion have on benefits?

Chief Dyer: Significant, if in the last three years of an officer's career.

Clark: Demotion term is concerning to her due to the negative connotation it often brings with it. Loss of LifeSkills instructors concerns her, could they volunteer until the economy gets better?

Chief Dyer: There are no good solutions when deciding which services to cut.

Person: Regarding P.A.L., I see the program as a positive way to foster better aspirations such as college for the kids involved.

Mills: Discussed furloughs for state employees which purportedly do not affect retirement.

Chief Dyer: I am optimistic about FPOA agreements, grant acquisition, and Department restructuring. We may be able to avoid demotions.

Crime Increases

Rangel: Recently had a handyman stopped at her residence in the middle of the day because officers thought he was a possible burglar after neighbors reported him to police.

Chief Dyer: Approx. 70% of burglaries occur during the day while people are at work. The Department has seen an 11.4% increase in violent crime, 17% increase in domestic violence related crimes, and a 50% increase in rapes.

Farris: Do you see child abuse rising?

Chief Dyer: Yes, we do.

Kallsen: I have been meeting with CPS due to a link between domestic violence and child abuse cases.

Chief Dyer: We have seen street robberies and vehicle burglaries on the rise, however auto theft is down 8%, and murders/fatal traffic collisions are down as well. Additionally, we believe the homeless encampments affect crime in the downtown area.

Rangel: Are there undercover drug dealers working homeless camps?

Chief Dyer: Yes, and we have been making arrests.

ROUND TABLE:

Abu-Shamsieh: Can you share info regarding lawsuits and what they are about?

Chief Dyer: By law I am unable to release info during the investigation and disclose names of the officers involved.

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This weekend there will be a Prop. 8 march starting in Selma and ending in Fresno. There is also expected to be the 'Rev Fest' motorcycle show on Friday/Saturday at the Fulton Mall.

MacDonald: What is the mayor's position on Prop. 8?

Chief Dyer: Believes she supports the recent Supreme Court decision.

Sgt. Rogers: Discussed the Fresno Survivors of Suicide, noting that suicide is on the rise. Offered the availability of possible future presentations by the group.

Rangel: Thanked Lt. Montejano for his assistance with the parents of a troubled teen dealing with suicide attempts.

Clark: Advised of a new newsletter and website link to www.fresnoonwatch.org. Stated the site is interactive and users can input addresses to see what crime is going on in their neighborhoods.

Rangel: Distributed flyers with community resources available and she stated clothing donations are needed for the Blue Sky Wellness Center.

Closing Remarks:

None

Adjourn:

Meeting adjourned at 6:48 p.m.

Next Meeting:

July 30, 2009