

Fresno Police Department Chief's Advisory Board Minutes

November 17th, 2011

Present Roz Clark, Harry Gill, Zeeva Hammack (for Judy Holm), Lynn Ikeda, Elias Loera, Jesse McDonald Jr., Carol Mills, Jim Poptanich, Rebeca Rangel, Mario Gonzalez/Melanie Castro (for Margarita Rocha), Bill Simon, Gary Moore (for Don Weaver).

Absent Kevin Assemi, Dough Broten, David Cowin, Paula Farris, Pamela Kallsen, Blair Looney, Luke Raughley, Enrique Reade, Kenneth Ryan, Bob Willis.

Guests Chief Jerry Dyer, Lt. Don Gross, Serop Torossian, Lawrence Brookter, Pamela Young King, Officer John Hall, Officer Martin van Overbeek.

Call to Order

The meeting, held in the City Hall Annex Room 210, was called to order at 5:40 pm.

Minutes

Minutes from September 22nd, 2011, were approved without correction.

Opening Remarks

None

Chief Dyer's Decision to Remain for Two Years

Chief Dyer – Spoke on the relief of job pressures once he made the decision to retire, and the release of duties to certain staff members in preparation. This provided a new found perspective similar to when he first assumed the role of Police Chief. It once again became exciting and fun to come to work again, even with the recent challenges the Department has faced with the budget, lawsuits, and personnel matters to name a few. City Manager Scott asked him to consider staying on a couple more years and after much consideration, he agreed. During the upcoming two years, it is his goal to place a greater emphasis on developing leaders within the Department from all ranks. This will provide greater promotional opportunities within the organization from officer all the way to Chief of Police.

Homeless Movement from Encampments

Chief Dyer – Discussed the re-location of the homeless citizens by CalTrans crews. The Department had non-uniformed officers present to monitor, make advisements, and assist any way they could in facilitating the process. Issues facing the homeless include undiagnosed/treated mental illness, drug abuse, the real need for outside help, and the predators within the homeless that victimize those perceived as weak.

Simon – Relocation efforts was the worst thing he's seen in his life – referring to the dismantling of the encampments and destruction of their homes. Gave a lengthy account of his observations.

DC Foster – Discussed the reasons why the tents and other temporary structures were demolished, citing hazmat conditions from feces, urine, maggots, and mold to name a few. Some tents that appeared okay on the outside were contaminated to the point of being a serious health hazard.

Clark – Went beforehand and provided handouts listing local resources and the efforts being taken to store belongings for a period of time until homeless could retrieve their belongings.

General discussion on the estimated number of homeless lining in encampments in Fresno, issues regarding predators, issues facing homeless women (unreported rapes, domestic violence) and similar experiences seen in the 1980's.

Chief Dyer – Stated that approximately 1/3 (33%) of the robberies in the Southwest District alone involve a homeless person as either a victim or a suspect.

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MacDonald – Believes the Poverello House acts as a magnet for the homeless to stay downtown and that it indirectly contributes to encampments popping up in the area.

Chief Dyer – Although difficult, the move was necessary to facilitate the demolition of the Monterey Street Bridge which is no longer safe for vehicular travel.

Gill – Spoke on the Indian community's involvement in feeding the homeless during the month of November.

Simon – Is working on trying to bring together the houses of worship to bring services to the homeless.

Loera – Provided an example of assistance provided to a homeless individual which took two years to make a difference, and that was for just one person. Believes it will be challenging especially for those that don't want to be helped.

Improved Services in the Records Lobby

Chief Dyer – Discussed the challenges in Records Bureau after downsizing from 75 civilian employees to 18 civilian employees as a result of cuts to personnel. This has required the reduction of hours the lobby was open for public service. A majority of citizens that come to the Records are for vehicle impound releases, resulting in lines and delays. This process has been decentralized with the implementation of new software, allowing citizens to go directly to the tow yards for their releases. The hope is to have the procedure in place within 30 days, and this should free up a majority of the lobby traffic. This process has taken approximately 14 months to get tow company regulation in place along with the necessary background investigations of tow drivers.

Loera – Will that reduce lines?

Chief Dyer – Yes. Additionally they are looking at moving the sex registrant process off-site as well. Once in place, Records will look at expanding the hours the lobby is open for public services.

Gonzales – Asked about people waiting for police reports.

Chief Dyer – Reported that the second phase of this will be the access of unrestricted police reports online, thus further reducing lines and wait times. Restricted reports, such as those involving minors and of a sensitive nature will still need to be requested in-person.

Rocha – Spoke on update to CA law regarding towing of cars at DUI checkpoints.

Chief Dyer – Spoke on how the law affects the impounding of vehicles, along with the requirement that vehicles be released to the registered owners.

Concealed Weapons Permits

Chief Dyer – Discussed that City Council passed the resolution, essentially giving more authority to issue a carry concealed weapons (CCW) permits in-line with state law. This will allow for more flexibility in issuing permits to residents. Described the process of obtaining a CCW, including the background checks and necessary training certification once background is approved.

Roundtable

Chief Dyer – The Downtown Policing Unit will remain, and starting in January will be staffed by six officers year-round during daytime hours.

Clark – Showed a sample of the vehicle anti-theft club selling for \$15. Mentioned upcoming events including the Officer of the Year Awards February 24th, 2012; Santa's Village is open seven nights a week during Christmas; and the Southwest District open house is December 6th from 5 to 7 pm. Asked about darkened streetlights throughout the City as a result of the copper wire thefts.

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Chief Dyer – A copper wire taskforce has been created to address these costly thefts which also is affecting public safety with dark streetlights.

Rangel – Recommended a good book titled, “The Abundant Community” which discusses awakening the power of families and neighborhoods and how it takes more than a village to raise a child.

Loera – Asked why the City would spend money to find the Chief's successor instead of hiring within.

Chief Dyer – One reason is to have a greater pool of qualified people. New goal is to refocus on leadership within the Department at all levels to promote leaders within. Chief has also seen the Independent Auditors report and believes it is almost ready for release. One of the things being looked at includes officer involved shootings at moving vehicles. They are being examined for commonalities.

King – Introduced Retired Fresno Police Officer, Larry Brookter, as the new NAACP representative.

Closing Remarks

None

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 6:43 p.m.

Next Meeting

January 26th, 2012

Future Meetings (tentatively scheduled)

March 29th, 2012

May 31st, 2012

July 26th, 2012

September 27th, 2012

November 15th, 2012