

Mayor's Blue Ribbon Citizens Crime Advisory Committee Meeting

Monday, June 14th at 12:30pm

Meeting at City Hall, 1100 Frederick Avenue, St. Joseph, MO

Committee Members Present:

Mike Cazal, Bill McMurray, Chief Chris Connally, Bill Puett, Ron Holliday, Bryan Carter, Lt Ott (MHP), Drew Brown, Brad Kerns, Dr. Robert Corder, Linda Dotson

Call to Order:

Committee Chair, Mike Cazal called the meeting to order at 12:34 p.m.

Mission Statement:

Mike Cazal restated the mission statement of the Crime Committee.

Minutes of Last Meeting: June 14, 2021

Mike Cazal reminded the Committee that the minutes of the last meeting had been sent out with the meeting invitation. Mike asked if there were any questions or recommended revisions to the meeting, there were none. Mike Cazal made a motion to approve the minutes; Brad Kerns seconded – the motion passed unanimously.

Updates from Law Enforcement and County Prosecutor:

Chief Chris Connally (Chief of Police) – Big increase in aggravated assaults. First 5 months in 2020 – 22. First 5 months in 2021 – 122. Robbery down 31%. Burglary down 20%. Stolen vehicles down by a third. Shoplifting trending down. Calls for service have gone up. One Family Guidance worker at police department. One CAP worker 4 days a week working with homeless and panhandlers. Helicopter operations. Motorcycle and bicycle safety programs. Need recruits for police officers. Bad media isn't helping. 5 new officers graduating this month. 3 start next month. Night out – Ashland in August. Youth programs 7-14. Academy 13 and up. PSA announcements on social media. Family Guidance 8 – 8 Urgent Care for Mental Health.

Drew Brown – Bad press on KC Strickland case. Innocent, but Governor refuses to pardon him. Drew asked about real time GPS tracking for dementia and Autism.

Sheriff Bill Puett – (Buchanan County Sheriff) Working partnerships with law enforcement. Very happy to meet with local media when asked. Excited about Citizens Academy. Law Enforcement Academy with Dr. Kennedy. New leader coming to direct. Staffing huge issue. 23 staff members short. No qualified applicants. Some are working 60 – 65 hours a week. Working with state highway patrol on investigations. If the \$3.6 million sales tax passes it will allow for a pay raise and step increases, education, and enforcement positions. Currently, county officers are paid less, no step increase and flat salaries. Safety cells and padded cells open July 1st. Mental health caseworker helps. Body scanner found concealed heroin (2 oz). Drug Strike Force and US Marshall's arrested fugitives. Drug/needle boxes are being used. Safety town still running. Requested from Mosaic developing program for inmates about to paroled – homelessness, etc. Police can be requested to do Buchanan County duties.

Brad Kerns – No one hates a bad cop more than a good cop.

Lt Ott (MO Highway Patrol) – Short staffed. New Canine drug dog for NWMO. Good tracking dog. Fatal crashes up 65% for the year. Fatalities 24 so far for the year. Fatalities 11 in Buchanan County so far this year. Usually rollovers. Possibly have over 1,000 fatalities in 2021. Helicopters – very useful. Mobile field forces – have one at Troop H. Always helping. Training with other agencies.

Ron Holliday (prosecuting attorney) – “Crime of the Century” a 4 hour HBO documentary about Opioid problem. Mental health cases way up. Crisis mode. Competency hearing. If found incompetent, goes to competency training. This can take up to a year to determine. Most have to wait months to go. Possible 12 months to go to Fulton. 3 Jury trials in last 2 months. Courts are back. During pandemic cases plea bargained or guilty pleas.

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Career criminals are at least 2 felonies – their case can be enhanced. Need to promote good things law enforcement accomplishes.

Committee Priorities for 2021 – Discussion & Suggestions

Public Comment

Next Meeting: Monday, September 13th at 12:30pm

Adjourn: 2:00 p.m.

Prepared by: Notes taken by Ms. Linda Dotson and prepared by Ms. Tina Cotton