

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

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**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE** Tuesday, April 22, 2008, 5:30 PM Genoveva Chavez Community Center 3221 Rodeo Road, Santa Fe, NM 87501

- 1. Roll Call
- 2. Approval of agenda
- 3. Approval of February 18, 2008 minutes
- 4. Old business:
  - A. NONE
- 5. New business:
  - A. Public Hearing on Santa Fe Police Department's Proposed Three Year Strategic Plan/ Proposal for Police Department Expansion
    - Introduction by Mayor David Coss a.
    - Three Year Strategic Plan presentation by Police Chief Eric Johnson b.
- 6. Matters/Questions from Committee Members
- 7. Communications/Questions from the Floor
- 8. Adjournment

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## PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

## April 22, 2008

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## MINUTES OF THE

## **CITY OF SANTA FE**

## **PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE**

## Santa Fe, New Mexico

**April 22, 2008** 

A regular meeting of the City of Santa Fe Public Safety Committee was called to order on this date at approximately 5:30 p.m. by Councilor Ronald Trujillo, Chair in the Community Room, Genoveva Chavez Community Center, 3221 Rodeo Road, Santa Fe, New Mexico. A quorum was present as follows:

#### 1. Roll Call

### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Mr. Herbert Harris, Vice Chair

Mr. Frank Stuto

Dr. Nancy Owen-Lewis

Mr. Henry Valdez

Mr. Michael Bowen

Councilor Ronald Trujillo, Chair

## **MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Mr. Pete Mizrahi (excused)

Dr. Mike Mier

## 2. Approval of agenda

Vice Chair Harris moved to approve the agenda as presented, Dr. Owen Lewis seconded the motion which passed by unanimous voice vote.

3. Approval of February 18, 2008 Minutes

Mr. Stuto moved to approve the minutes of February 18, 2008 as presented, Vice Chair Harris seconded the motion which passed by unanimous voice vote.

- 4. Old Business None
- 5. New Business
  - A. Public Hearing on Santa Fe Police Departments' Proposed Three Year Strategic Plan/Proposal for Police Department Expansion
    - a. Introduction by Mayor Coss

Mayor Coss introduced the Strategic Plan and thanked everyone for attending. He said the Chief and members of his department are here to answer questions about the plan and the financing. The basic objective is to move from reactive to proactive management in the policing of the neighborhoods, schools, parks, trails and businesses. The proposal increases the minimum from 9 officers per shift to 15 officers per shift within three years. He stated that he is proud to be the Mayor with this Police Department. They have hired an additional 33 officers and started 37 neighborhood watch groups. The statistics show that the Police Department holds their own, but

holding their own is not good enough. In his opinion the community deserves better as the basic building block of community success includes public safety. He knows that recently they won approval from the public to increase property taxes for parks and trails. This increase they are seeking is for approximately \$93 per year for a \$300,000 home which equals 25 cents per day. The parks bond issue was a very important step and now they are at a more important step to improve the Police Department so they can keep the rest of the City safe. He believed the community is behind this plan. He thanked the public for turning out and the committee for holding this special hearing.

Chair Trujillo acknowledged Councilors Dominguez, Chavez and Romero for their presence.

## b. Three Year Strategic Plan presentation by Police Chief Eric Johnson

Chief Johnson thanked his staff for all their hard work on this plan since October of last year. The City has continued to grow over the last few years with increases in growth of the residential and daytime population. As the City has grown, the Police Department has been a reactive environment rather than proactive. They are asking for the additional positions to move into a time to be proactive. The goal is to reach the point where officers are visible in the residential areas, schools, parks and businesses to prevent crime from happening. He said staff can answer questions in the specific areas. He introduced Deputy Chief Wheeler and said he would give a PowerPoint presentation and explain how the staffing is deployed throughout the department.

Deputy Chief Eric Wheeler gave a PowerPoint Presentation which was a summary of the 3 Year Strategic Plan incorporated herewith to these minutes as Exhibit "1." He said the intent is to make it clear what the needs and wants of the Department are. Essentially, they are asking for a total of 45 new officer positions and 9 civilian support positions over the next 3 fiscal years to meet the demands of the growth of the City. The day population has increased a great deal and these people are here participating in the community but live elsewhere so the Department is still providing service for them. He showed a graph illustrating an increase in almost 10,000 people over the last eight years in the daytime population of 99,488 in 2000 and now 112,386. He showed the 9 police districts on a map which are broken up based on the volume of calls in those areas. There are a total of 155 sworn office positions which includes the Chief, Captains, Lieutenants and command staff. The reality of what has to get done on a day to day basis cannot be met so often they have to allow overtime to meet the minimum staffing requirements. These 9 officers per shift respond to every kind of call that comes in from alarms, burglaries, robberies, minor accidents to more serious offenses. One officer is assigned to each area in reality. He showed how the officers actually end up getting distributed. It takes 27 officers per day with supervisors and support to cover the City. He reviewed the investigations staff, crime prevention unit and training and recruiting division. There have been 33 officers hired to fill the vacancies in the last year. Over the past year, 380 people have applied and tested, 121 passed the test, 75 failed or voluntarily withdrew from the process, 33 were hired and 13 are currently in the process. He said they have 9 vacancies today.

Deputy Chief Wheeler reviewed the increase in crimes related to the calls received from 1999 to 2007. There have been crime increases although the officers have not expanded. He explained that reactive time spent is time responding to calls for service, investigating calls, gathering evidence and identifying suspects. Proactive time is high

presence and visibility to prevent crimes before they are actually committed. The intent of proactive time would be to target areas of high crime and discourage the criminal activity. He said currently they have five minutes per hour for proactive patrol time and the goal is 20 minutes per hour. Police are responding as if to a fire, the current crime trend is to put out the fire with all their resources pulled to put out the fire. In the meantime a spike of crime occurs in another part of town and officers must regroup to react to the next hot spot. With limited resources they will continue to jump from one fire to another. The benefits of increasing proactive patrols will be an increased presence in the community, increased community interaction, reduction in response times, increased voluntary compliance of laws, safer neighborhoods for youth, citizens and visitors.

Deputy Chief Wheeler used a day in the past week as an example. The polite robber was caught downtown, and then at the same time there was an armed robbery at the mall and a car accident. The only people available to respond to the armed robbery were himself and the Chief. There were numerous burglaries on Mansion Ridge Road that day as well. He said these are day to day realities.

Chief Johnson stated that on any given day they have nine officers out there to meet the demand, so they usually have to call in 1-2 officers. He agreed that every single resource was deployed last week. He commented that every day they are three critical incidents away from being paralyzed. The goal they want to achieve is to lower the crimes, increase response times and a deliver a higher level of service for a safer community. He noted that the funding is always a question so they are looking at different ideas and programs. The goal with the red light cameras is compliance; the intent of this not as a revenue generator. He said there are several staff members present with expertise to answer questions.

Lieutenant Jerry Trujillo reviewed how the resources are stretched out. He explained that 55% of the officers are dedicated to patrol functions. Other agencies have 43-47% for the patrol function. Commanders and supervisors are 23% of the staff, investigations staff is 18% and the administrative staff is 4%.

### 6. Matters/Questions from Committee Members

Mr. Bowen stated that he heard they want to reduce the response time, but he did not see any numbers.

Chief Johnson said they wanted to be realistic. The goal is to decrease the response time and they are looking at different ways to do that. He said they have taken the alarm calls out of the priority one calls and that should increase the response time by about six minutes. He explained that they have to establish a baseline to come up with more accurate information. He reported that he would be meeting with Sheriff Solano to see how the calls are prioritized as he thinks this is an achievable goal.

Mr. Bowen stated that he supports increasing the number of officers, but expressed concern with the way they are looking at financing this. He was concerned that they are constantly going back with these property tax increases as many are on a fixed income. He noted that the tax a few years ago benefited those outside the city more than those in the city. They have recently increased taxes for the parks and have the highest gross receipts tax in the state. He understood the red light cameras may not be intended for

revenue, but the proposal is written up this way. He thought they might see a stop to the red light camera programs.

Chief Johnson stated that they currently have 18 people in the background check phase and if 9 meet the requirements they will be in the best situation ever. He said the reality is that officers retire, so it is a continual effort.

Mr. Bowen stated that the recruiting efforts have been outstanding. He said it is difficult to achieve, but he thinks it can be obtained.

Chief Johnson agreed that the higher visibility deters crime and if the officers were living in this community it would be a deterrent. He said they are looking at several strategies to address those issues although he understands the funding is an issue. He said they want to see how the public feels about his proposal as it has been a controversial issue especially in Albuquerque. He pointed out that they will not depend on the revenue. The last staff study done in 2005 showed close to the numbers they are asking for now. They have to continually look at it because if the annexation occurs it will be a whole new ballpark. The officers they are asking for now is just to bring them up to speed for the current areas. If the annexation occurs they will have to update the study. If the department does not keep up with the growth the resources will be stretched thinner and thinner resulting in more crime and issues.

Mr. Bowen agreed that the City needs to look at that. He said they charge to hookup to sewer, utilities, etc and so they ought to charge them for the police as well. He said 65% of the officers are living outside the city according to a report that was given to this committee a few years ago.

Chief Johnson said they have tried to get the new officers involved in initiatives to get the officers living in the community. He noted that 10 officers are working with Homewise. He commented that they need to get the officers involved in the community to make a difference so they are looking at different programs to bring the officers back into the community.

Mr. Bowen pointed out that once the funding source gets in place it is hard to get that to go away. He said departments get used to the funding in the budget and it becomes difficult if taken away. He used the drought fee as an example.

Vice Chair Harris stated that he is quite familiar with the police activity due to going through the citizen's academy. He agreed the more police the better off they are. He asked if this is 45 officers spread out over the shifts or more administrators to cover those.

Chief Johnson said these positions will be deployed to the patrol area. This would allow the street crimes unit to be up and running. He would be able to deal with the specific problems they are having rather than taking the resources from patrol or other investigative areas. He said they will best utilize the internal resources.

Mr. Valdez commented that relying on the red light camera funding is dangerous because if it works people will comply and there will not be as much revenue. At the legislative session the red light camera program was not a popular thing. With another program popping up the legislature will look at the legality and what should be done with

revenues. If the citation were issued by an officer some ends up in the state coffers. He said in his experience, if an officer makes an arrest that pretty much blows his shift. He guessed that 3-4 hours are tied up. If they arrest a juvenile the officer baby-sits for the rest of their shift if the probation office does not authorize detention. He said then in addition to that shift being tied up there are court hearings, pre-trial conferences and interviews. He said prosecutable cases can tie up several officers for several days and during this time other areas of town suffer. He stated that he has a lot of questions about financing and how it will work, but believes that is an issue for other committees. This is the Public Safety Committee and they need to look at this from a safety standpoint. There may be concerns about the financing for the Council and other committees to look at.

Chief Johnson agreed. He reported that 2007 was the most violent year for officers. He said if they keep up the trend somebody is going to get hurt. He added that he would not push the plan if it were not absolutely necessary. This is about the community.

Dr. Owen-Lewis expressed concern with drunk driving and the high rate of crashes. She said it seems when the proactive management goes up the arrests go up. She asked how the new resources will address DWI.

Chief Johnson said the DUI problem continues to plague the state and they only have two officers. The plan is to expand the DUI unit as well. The traffic unit is in place. He said when they have the patrols in place you do see the arrests increase.

#### 7. Communications/Questions from the Floor

Gloria Mendoza stated that she is ashamed of the Mayor and City Councilors that gave the Police Department only half of what they requested two years ago despite the community support. She said she is disliking more and more of the strategy of the Mayor and the Council to put parks and rivers for a vote before the safety, health and welfare of the community because they knew that if the public voted for whatever the police department wanted the parks and rivers would not get what the Governing Body wanted. She cannot believe the Mayor would put parks and rivers before the safety of the community. She cannot believe the priorities the Governing Body is putting forth. They are working more towards rivers for the tourists to walk by and the Police Department is begging for money for much needed police officers. She wanted to publicly tell the Mayor that she did not like his priorities. She said they keep taxing and taxing the people of this town. She is the founder of the Committee for Property Tax Relief. She said the reason the City needs more officers is because they approve every development that comes through City Hall. She said the City needs to give back to the services they deserve as tax payers.

Carol Horowitz, domestic violence and sexual assault liaison, stated that she takes seriously the gathering of statistical information. She has been in this position for a year, and in 2007 she collected data on domestic violence and there were 1220 child witnesses which will be the future clients of the Santa Fe Police Department. She has been trying to collect information on what is going on. For the first three months, over 600 cases were reported which is a 20% increase over last year including a 12% increase in female victims and 26% increase in child witnesses and a 32% increase in prior domestic violence incidents. She said the encouraging part of these numbers is that people are feeling like they can call and ask for help. The long arm of the law is the

best deterrent. She reported that at the beginning of July of this year, misdemeanor domestic violence cases are going to become a fourth degree felony. She feels it is unjust to complain about the burglaries when there are not enough officers.

Peter Koomis, President of Don Gaspar Neighborhood Association, thanked the police for the great job they are doing for the citizens. He wanted to speak about the problems within the boundaries of the Don Gaspar Neighborhood Association. They have had violent crimes, burglaries and robberies along with traffic infractions. There are continuing problems with graffiti and vandalism. There are four schools within the boundaries. He stated that he reported a vehicle that was speeding near the Waldorf School and Officer Chris Padilla responded. He said they need more officers like this. In his opinion, the numbers are staggering and those are the numbers that have been reported and he can only imagine the numbers not reported. He questioned what happens to these families when they pull officers to work overtime and he did not think most of them had much time with their families. He supported this and did not mind spending even more if he knows the money is going to Santa Fe Police. He said they need to come up with solutions to this issue.

Grace Mayer, teacher, expressed concern that the increase in new hires has not really changed or impacted the community. She said they need more community policing rather than some of the priorities. She has noticed there are cameras visible currently.

Chair Trujillo clarified that those cameras were placed by the DOT and are not red light cameras.

Ms. Mayer said there are numerous streets that have multiple speed limits and this will affect those going to work. Her other issue is the police officers on campus as she does not believe it is appropriate and there needs to be some communication to provide a different environment. She said they have a difficult time keeping the students in school and not dropping out and the presence of officers makes the kids and teachers uncomfortable. There are other programs that could help reduce some of the incidents of violence and gangs that flows into the schools. She commented that the pay for the officers is incredibly low for the amount of responsibility they have.

Dave VonHolstein, 1833 Arroyo Chamiso, reported that his wife wrote a play for Benchwarmer's and they were in rehearsal the night of the 30<sup>th</sup>. The morning of the 31<sup>st</sup> they heard a bang at the window and their door was beat down. He scared the intruder off and called 911 with the officer appearing in less than 20 minutes. He thought what if the intruder had not left because that would have been a long time to wait. Later in the day he found a cap that the intruder had lost in his haste, so he called the officer and Councilor Heldmeyer to turn the evidence in. An officer eventually picked up the cap and then the same day he received a letter reporting that they could not assign a detective to the case due to the shortage of staff. He supports the augmentation of the Police force because the crime rate has got to go down. This is a serious problem and it does not help the tourism business.

Mary Dykton stated that in California she worked with cops on drug issues as a school counselor. She said she is speaking on behalf of a number of people. She understands all the figures, but there was an omission of evaluation of the programs they plan to have. She is looking at what this will do for investigations because her understanding is that victims have to talk the police into even taking fingerprints. She said they feel perhaps

the officers are not that interested. She said even if they are stretched thin people have to feel they are important. A neighbor felt their home was being scouted with men walking on cell phones who say they are looking for an address. She said this story has been repeated. She gave an example of a burglary that happened in October of 2006 and they have yet to receive a copy of the police report to file with their insurance company.

Josina Campos, Galisteo Street, reported that her neighborhood is 85% elderly with 66% living alone. They have vacant houses. There are 186 houses that do not pay property tax. She said the City needs to look at what the county is doing in terms of the property tax. She reviewed all the property taxes that are being imposed. There are people that live on social security and they will be paying another \$4500 that they do not have. She did think the red light cameras would be great. She thought the gross receipts would be good if they stick it to the visitors and the short term rentals. She wished the City would make it mandatory for police department employees to live here. She said if they found Katrina victim's homes, then they can find homes for police officers. She commented that some of the machismo attitudes of the officers need to be left at home. The community needs to be able to reach out to the officers. She referred to the emotional police syndrome, the long hours, the family time is not there and it can force the officers to go code blue. She added that they need three command stations so the officers do not have to speed through the City.

Carmen Delgado, Agua Fria Community, reported that in the past year there has been an incredible increase in graffiti and vandalism. She said they have put together a petition for Nancy Rodriquez that she read into the record that will be forwarded to everyone. They have been increasingly alarmed to deal with the gang related activities in the neighborhood and feel it is imperative to address the problem. They request more attention to this problem through increased prosecution. There is a need for the community to be safe for the children and law abiding citizens. This is a great opportunity to have the police department more active in the schools. In her opinion, if children admire the officers as a mentors rather than an intimidating force it makes a difference. She said many kids come from multi-ethnic backgrounds.

Albert Duran, upper Canyon Road, stated that most of his neighbors have the resources to have a violent free environment, but do have a high burglary rate. He said he is not here tonight to ask for help with the six burglaries he has had this year. He thinks the proactive police force is important. It is evident that the crime epidemic is a result of a whole lot of dysfunction related to alcohol and drug abuse and ineffective parenting and poor education. There are many kids dealt the short straw in life. In his opinion, developing a proactive community should be supported. He believes they need to emphasize a major attack on the 50% dropout rate in high school with more mentoring programs, more effective drug and alcohol programs and dealing with issues like high teen pregnancy rates which result in dysfunctional families.

Joe Campbell, District Attorney's Office, stated that he is not speaking for Henry Valdez. He is speaking for the community and the officers. He knows the increases are low. There are officers every day in court and administrative hearings that have come off the midnight shift and come into hearings and have to go back out. He said they need to do better and this is a low allocation for the time spent. He does not care how much it costs they need to do this. They owe it to the officers for their safety and the safety of the community. He said in some places there is an income tax for those that

do not live in the city, but make money in the city and the tax is on the earnings made in the city. He said he would gladly pay for this. This would help pay for the officers and take care of the officers so they can take care of the citizens.

Jose Villegas, Police Chaplain, stated that he serves seven agencies. In 2006-07 he responded to seven in the line of duty deaths. He said the City is in danger; they have a shortage of staff and cannot take care of own. He thanked god that they have not had a death in the city, but added that they do not need another death. The citizens and Governing Body need to react to this because the statistics do not mean anything to him. He asked the following questions if the politics get in the way of this. Will you be there with me to give identification to the family if the officer is killed in the line of duty? Will you be there with me standing watch over the body and taking care of the family that is going through the grief? He said the officers are in danger. He stated that he will stand alone with god and will not leave that officer, but warned that they better have his back and have the same perspective.

Mark Barnett, President Santa Fe Police Officer's Association, said these statistics are seen, day to day, call to call. He said being proactive is the reality in lowering the crime. Some citizens do complain about the officers being hospitable although most are working 60 hours and they see most citizens at their worst times. He said they have families and have not had annual leave and cannot carryover hours which they had to enter a grievance with the City because they have not had a vacation in two years. He commented that the divorce rate is high within the police department and they have issues because of the negative stimulus that is seen day to day. He asked the public to have compassion for the officers. He agreed that 90% of the people live in Rio Rancho because they will go where they can raise their family better. He said to hold the officers and make them live here is not reality. He reported that 193 officers were killed in the line of duty in the past year in this nation. Law enforcement is not a safe job, but there are ways to make it safer and adding more officers is one of those ways.

Jim Stroke, lives on Don Juan Street, stated that a neighbor found a hypodermic needle in his driveway and his 13-year-old said he sees them every day when he walks to school near Alameda and Gonzales. He realized that 15 kids on the block see this when they walk to the school or the bus. He thinks the parks could be safer if they had law enforcement that could patrol the neighborhood keeping the drug activity down. He said when he called the police because he wanted to talk to someone abut this they said we are going call to call and do not have time to discuss this. His fear is that if citizens try to take on the issue it is even more dangerous. He hopes this makes a difference and they can get a neighborhood patrol to clean up the drugs. He expressed sadness that he has to direct his kids to only take a certain path to the park.

Mike Barnes, Cedar Crest Circle, appreciated the fact that the Committee and Police Department are present to meet with the citizens. He said they have talked about the increase in population with no commensurate increase in the police force. He does not want a commensurate proportion because he expects officers and training to be better. He said during the same period they have seen crime go up greatly. They need the officers commensurate to the crime. The Citizen's Academy has seen the load the department has. If they have to take somebody in they have to take officers off the street. He said when you are asked to meet for domestic violence it is not safe while waiting for an officer to get there. He said there are lots of issues driving this. He understands that the officers are important as well as parks. They need police officers in

the parks to keep the graffiti and needles out of the parks. He recommended the proposal be passed.

Holly Beaumont, most recently working on a task force to end homelessness and they have asked for approval of a one time 1% real estate transfer tax on homes over \$550,000. This has been helpful because they see how important it is to have affordable housing for the police, clergy, nurses and librarians. She urged everyone to investigate this proposal thoroughly as it is a one time tax that has been used in 27 states across the country and is a way to provide some relief.

**Mike Licehn, police officer,** said he lives in the City of Santa Fe. He agreed they work a lot of hours. He said although he works a lot of overtime, he gives 150% and supports the department wholeheartedly. He will gladly pay more because all the officers give so much to the community. He said he looks forward to going to work every day.

Victor Rios stated that it hit home that there were 118 police officers so that is one officer for every 1000 people. The time spent in court means that number should be cut in half so now there is one officer for every 2000 people. He said if they worked for the county or state or the city under those kinds of conditions, they would be sued left and right. This is a simple fact of life for the officers. It took years of battling to get the pay up for the officers and the homes cost more. Officers cannot afford to live here. He asked what more they can expect from those that put their life on the line every single day. When not on duty the officers have to make a call on their own and decide if they should intervene off duty. He challenged everyone that is present to ride with the officers at night and see what it is like to observe what they go through.

Chief Chris Rivera, Fire Department, stated that they respond daily to traffic collisions, stabbings, shootings, domestic violence and other violent calls but they cannot enter a scene until it is cleared by the police department. He said they rely on them for their safety. When there are no officers to respond they are forced to wait for the state police and Sheriff's. He said the Fire Department supports more officers to benefit the community and the safety of the firefighters.

Chair Trujillo asked how many officers are retiring in the near future.

Chief Johnson replied that 8 officers retired and in 2009 there are 6 officers eligible for retirement and in 2010 there will be 2 officers.

Chair Trujillo asked if the Department will be able to meet these retirements.

Chief Johnson said that would mean they need around 200 officers with the increase.

Chair Trujillo explained that he initiated the red light camera test not to make revenue, but to increase compliance. Some people think the yellow light means accelerate. Albuquerque did the leg work on this program already and it has been done in other communities because the officers cannot be everywhere. His belief is that this is a tool to help the Police Department. This will not fund all the police but they have red light runners which is a public safety issue. He agreed it will create revenue for breaking the law. He referred to drunk drivers in Santa Fe and said it is embarrassing that the news comes out that it is the 10<sup>th</sup> DUI of someone that was arrested. These are things the officers have to deal with every day. Many times he has heard Chief Johnson say he

had told the Council years ago and past Councils might not have thought this was a priority, but he believes they now have a Council that is addressing the issue. He said if 25 cents a day is going to protect his children that is nothing. The red light program will not cost the city anything the way it is structured. He thanked the Chief for the presentation. He commented that this is not the same City as it used to be because when he cruised downtown there were officers everywhere issuing tickets. Currently, it is a more dangerous city and they are seeing gang activity and drugs. He stated that they need to nip this in the bud now. He hopes if they go into the schools and educate the children they can stop some of the activity from escalating.

Vice Chair Harris moved to recommend the Council proceed with the three year strategic plan, Mr. Valdez seconded the motion which passed by unanimous voice vote.

## 8. Adjournment

Chief Johnson thanked the Committee for the support.

The agenda having been completed and no matters to discuss, this meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Approved by:

Councilor Ronald Trujillo, Chair

Submitted by:

Denise Cox, Stenographer