



Law Enforcement Ad-Hoc Committee Meeting Minutes January 13, 2022

Council Members Present: Mike Caughey and Kim Downey
Citizen Members: Don Messick
Members Absent: Chairperson Mayor Robert Duncan, Councilor Charlotte Thomas and Citizen Travis Crosman
Staff Present: City Administrator, Michele Eldridge and City Recorder, Lori Ross
Law Enforcement Present: Sheriff Duncan, Chief Larson, and Undersheriff Smith
Meeting Location: Harrisburg Municipal Center Located at 354 Smith St

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL by Caughey, sitting in for Chairperson, Mayor Robert Duncan at the hour of 6:30pm.

CONCERNED CITIZEN(S) IN THE AUDIENCE. All present were there for items on the agenda.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR THE DECEMBER 2, 2021 LAW ENFORCEMENT AD-HOC COMMITTEE MEETING

- Downey motioned to approve the minutes for the December 2, 2021 Law Enforcement Ad-Hoc Committee meeting and was seconded by Messick. The Ad-Hoc Committee then voted unanimously to approve the minutes for December 2, 2021.

THE MATTER OF THE CONTINUANCE OF A DISCUSSION IN RELATION TO LAW ENFORCEMENT OPTIONS FOR THE CITY OF HARRISBURG

STAFF REPORT: Eldridge read a statement from Chairperson, Mayor Robert Duncan who was not able to attend (**Addendum 1**). She stated that this would most likely be our last meeting. We have learned how much it would cost to have a police department and we were able to learn more about our current law enforcement contracts. The committee learned that a police department would be cost prohibitive and would require additional funding from the City and tax revenue.

- Eldridge stated that during the last meeting, the committee decided to send out a survey to the residents. She then reviewed the results from the 75 surveys received as shown in **Addendum 2**. Written comments were discussed as shown in **Addendum 3**.
- Eldridge reviewed the 4th quarter crime comparison as shown on page 17 and the crime statistics shown on page 18. She stated that between 2018 and 2021 there

was only a difference of about five crimes. In 2018 there were 190, in 2020 there were 185 and in 2021 there was 187. Property crimes increased and drug and alcohol, traffic and the “other” crimes were about the same. In person crimes were cut in half, and when compared to other contracted counties, we have a lower crime level. There was an increase in property crimes that occurred in the fourth quarter due to “porch pirates” during the holidays.

- Eldridge reminded the committee that it was assembled to provide direction to Council in how the City would budget for law enforcement services. Over the years, the City has been steadily dropping hours for law enforcement services. After reviewing the response of the citizens, she asked if we feel that we need more services added back into the schedule or leave it as is. If we add more hours, we are making an adjustment from somewhere else in the budget. City Council will take any committee recommendations into advisement, but it will be City Council who decide if and what kind of changes are to be made.
- Downey commented that citizens feel crimes are getting worse and she thinks if the City would have quarterly crime prevention seminars, in which LCSO would attend, it would help residents be advised of what they need to do to prevent these crimes from happening. Downey also commented that when the previous substation was here, it was staffed by S.A.L.T Volunteers so it appeared that there was always someone at the station. She was also concerned that some residents don't know we have a substation and thought we could communicate more about it and have more signage. Ross commented that there use to be a sign out front at the old City Hall, were residents could see it from the road. At the new City Hall, unless you pull into the parking lot, you can't see the sign on the Substation door.
- Sheriff Duncan commented that a lot of the volunteers LCSO has are elderly and most have chosen not to work during the pandemic. She stated that Michael Mattingly, with Neighborhood Watch, sent out a Facebook post asking about restarting or if there was any interest in Neighborhood Watch and received no responses. She stated the next step would be to have a Neighborhood Watch Council, where area programs get together and speak about it in a county forum. She stated that in the past, we would have a local representative attend those meetings.
- Downey thinks crime forum meetings are very important and when we had them before, we didn't have complaints, and now we do. Sheriff Duncan responded that she would have Michael Mattingly reach out to Councilor Downey.
- Undersheriff Smith commented that it has been discussed with City Staff, that LCSO may not have been providing the City with the information they needed for the community and the City didn't have a dedicated place to provide it. He suggested letting the residents get to know the deputies that are assigned to Harrisburg, by mentioning them on Facebook or the City Newsletter. Downey thought it was a great idea and suggested they could appear at the quarterly forums so people could meet them.
- Undersheriff Smith also stated that LCSO is here at night, and to show that, they could breakdown the statistics in the crime reports to reflect hourly activity.
- Caughey commented that we have had problems with effective communication. The City has Facebook, a webpage, and utility bills and unfortunately people don't turn over the bill to read it. Sheriff Duncan replied that the best communication is face to face and the more engagements the City has, will get the community involved and give them the opportunity to ask questions.
- Caughey commented that he likes to see reports that show the interaction between deputies and the community, especially the children. Sheriff Duncan commented that

LCSO has always had that but never reported it in the past until recently when they saw the positive reactions. She also said they weren't indicating the extra patrols until recently.

- Eldridge stated that all LCSO reports are available online and the statistic reports will be soon. There are some events this year, with local business, that she would like to have officers present at. One of the goals for the Strategic Plan, is making more information available for the residents and to try to get more people involved.
- Resident Bob Bronson, of Sommerville Lp and Board Chairman of Directors for Harrisburg Fire Department, commented that HFRD has had a long relationship with LCSO as they assist with calls. One thing he thinks can help with crime, is motion sensor lights. He has never had anything taken except for once when he forgot to lock his car. He also commented that when driving through Harrisburg, there is no direction as to where City Hall or the Substation are located, and that people need to be reminded we are here. He suggested mentioning video cameras in the newsletters as they are effective and suggested having a lucky number on the page of the utility bill to get people to read it.
- Undersheriff Smith stated that providing crime prevention tips is part of the quarterly meetings. He liked the lucky number address idea and suggested to have a prize of a LED motion light and joked about having Sergeant Frambes deliver it.
- Bob Bronson stated that yard lights just say that you are home, they don't do anything to scare people away. The motion lights will alert and make them go somewhere else.
- Caughey commented that on the survey, it was mentioned that nobody is patrolling at night, when most thefts happen, and he knows that both LCSO and Coburg are patrolling at night. He stated if you have something of value, don't leave it out or leave it unlocked. All citizens need to do their part not to make things look so attractive.
- Downey stated that as a City Council member, she is here to represent the citizens and she thinks LCSO, and Coburg are doing a great job.
- Messick stated that there are always people who think we should have our own police department and if we did, we would still not have people happy with the department. Residents will always have a sense that we can do more, especially when someone's been victimized. The question is, do we add hours and what would that look like. If we do, where would that money come from and how many hours? If we were to add hours, would LCSO be able to fill those hours with their staff shortages. Looking at the numbers from 2018-2021, it doesn't appear that we need more law enforcement as that slight increase of five crimes, could happen in one night. Messick also stated that this was one of the first communities to have Neighborhood Watch as he was involved, and people need to understand that it is something that a community does, not necessarily law enforcement. The City could help form their own. It doesn't have to be people driving around the neighborhood anymore as Neighborhood Watch now is about phone trees, connecting neighbors with neighbors and getting the community to know each other. These are steps the City could take and he thought LCSO would be happy to give guidance if needed.
- Downey stated that she doesn't want to add hours unless it's going to be productive. Messick replied that he doesn't want to add hours if there is not a need and if there is going to struggle to meet those hours.
- Downey also stated that with her camera she is also alerted as to what is going on across the street. She feels this is the type of thing that she wants to talk about as a community as to how we can help each other from becoming a victim. Messick stated this is how Neighborhood Watch has provided that strength over the years. It's

neighbors knowing neighbors. Downey asked Chief Larson if Coburg PD had Neighborhood Watch and he replied they did not.

- Bart Griffith, of Red Clover Ct and the Harrisburg Fire Department Chief, commented that as a resident he doesn't want to see the City go backwards and to keep the level that we have or increase if it's sustainable. As a professional, he feels things have improved three Sheriffs later, and he wants to see that relationship to continue with LCSO. He would also like to have Coburg PD stop into the Fire Department so they can get to know each other.
- Eldridge stated that we are looking for a recommendation to the City Council. She will be providing Council with the latest results from the survey as well as what is in the agenda tonight. We can make a recommendation to not make any changes, or we can make recommendation to add more hours if it's affordable to the budget. Downey stated that if adding more hours, keeps our community safer than she would but she doesn't feel that has been established at this meeting. She feels that's the question that should be taken to Council.
- Downey asked Sheriff Duncan if adding hours would mean having deputies here more and she replied yes, however, LCSO is currently almost nine deputies down on the patrol side. She would need to know what those hours looked like and what their projected staffing looks like as well. She thought having it as a topic at the time of contract negotiations this year would be best as she will have a better idea what their staffing situation is. She doesn't want to make any false promises if they are not able to provide more services.
- Downey asked Chief Larson about Coburg PD staffing and Chief Larson answered if it was a slight increase, it would be easier, but more would require hiring more personnel and training.
- Eldridge said she wanted to thank everyone for being a part of this committee and how much she appreciated them. It's been very constructive, and she feels she has good information to take to Council.
- Sheriff Duncan thanked Eldridge for all the information.
- Downey commented that this is a topic that comes up over and over and she now feels, after looking at the data, that as a City Councilor, she can talk to the community about it.
- Caughey stated that we have learned a lot at these meetings and especially the information we received from LCSO. He thanked everyone for participating.

ADJOURN at the hour of 7:30pm

Chairperson

City Recorder

Michele Eldridge

From: Robert Duncan
Sent: Thursday, January 13, 2022 4:02 PM
To: Michele Eldridge
Subject: Law enforcement

Hi Michele,

Of course wishing I could be there tonight but wanted to, as I should, speak into the issue at hand.

So we've had three very informative meetings. As citizens and as civic leaders our admiration and respect for all of our law enforcement agencies has at the least not changed and in fact as we have spent time listening and learning from them my guess would be those feelings have grown as we hear and see them as caring dedicated people seeing beyond the uniforms and I could drone on tirelessly my admiration.

Having said that, there is and probably always will be the ubiquitous financial issues that plague our civic institutions. It's those obvious financial issues coupled with the fundamental need to make sure we have not only been good stewards of the funds allotted to us by our citizens but to make sure those funds are utilized to the fullest extent possible to bare the best possible outcomes.

During the last meetings we heard and shared quite a bit about Harrisburg and LCSO finances. We asked and answered a lot of questions of each other, however one of the questions I asked was never really answered to my satisfaction, when was the last time Linn County increased a significant amount of funds to LCSO.

Every few years we as citizens of Linn County dutifully vote yes on the LCSO levy and then the cities that have asked for enhanced services have dutifully paid ever increasing amounts for those services I would mention our property taxes here as well. Looking forward that trend is not sustainable or could even remotely be considered good stewardship of said funds.

While I can't see into fiscal workings of Linn County and my statements hear-in are based on that lack of understanding I however do understand that small cities in Linn County like ours are wedged between being good stewards of our citizens funds, good citizens of Linn County and keeping the citizens of Harrisburg and the surrounding areas safe, secure and keeping the Mayberry that Harrisburg has become these many years.

So council again I wish I could be there and not sure yet if my wife and I have a cold or Covid but the info is before you and I will stand beside your decision and I will always and honorably so stand beside, if they would allow me our amazing men and women who chose each day to stand between us and broken windows or anarchy.

Respectfully submitted
Mayor Robert (Bobby) Duncan.

Sent from my iPhone

Harrisburg Law Enforcement Survey

Survey Results

Survey Notes: As of January 13, 2022, 75 survey's were received; three respondents did not answer any questions, and provided comments only.

1. Are you pleased with the level of law enforcement services that the City currently provides?

72 Total Answers:

48 Yes 67%

24 No 33%

2. Do you want more or fewer law enforcement services in Harrisburg?

72 Total Answers:

36 More 50%

4 Fewer 6%

32 No Changes 44%

3. Are you willing to pay more for enhanced law enforcement services?

68 Total Answers:

39 Yes 57%

29 No 43%

4. Over the last 12 months, do you feel safer in your community?

60 Total Answers:

25 Yes 42%

35 No 58%

5. What do you feel are the types of services most needed in the City of Harrisburg?

Please see the comments made that are part of the agenda, and those received after print are being handed out.

Harrisburg Law Enforcement Survey 2022: All Comments received

Question 5 Answers -

"We called for help twice this year for true emergencies. One was an angry man in domestic dispute with a woman in front of our home. When she left, he became erratic, got what appeared to be a gun out of car, & blocked road with his car. Multiple calls to dispatch. An hour later deputy called saying he was in another town; would be another hour. NOT SAFE!!!"

"Law enforcement, Public Works, City Hall."

"Traffic enforcement, visible patrol."

"City used to have Sheriff substation here. Would like to see Sheriff substation again with permanent staffing."

"Road repair and maintenance. Traffic light at LaSalle and Hwy 99E."

"Harrisburg needs more nighttime patrols. It appears that we as residents have to protect ourselves, property and neighbors (which we should) but the criminals seem to have figured out the law enforcement patrol cycles (if there is one)."

"Better water!! Focus on what you are already failing at..."

"24 hour patrol"

"I would like to see more hours be given to LCSO and not renew the Coburg PD contract. I feel Coburg isn't fulfilling their obligation especially with code enforcement."

"Street repair, broken pavement, sunken manhole covers, pot holes."

"We have had an uptick of stolen property and vehicles in the last year – we need more patrol time around the city and not in their office."

"I think we are paying too much money for the limited services that Coburg PD is providing. They do not seem to be fulfilling their contract. Is there accountability for the time they are supposed to be in Harrisburg patrolling? I would rather give more money to LCSO to increase their presence in Harrisburg, than give the money to Coburg."

"Street improvements. Overlay Hwy 99 from LaSalle to Peoria Rd, not just patch it. Upgrade the RR crossings on Territorial St. Thank you for the improvements the last couple of years!!"

"Animal control – stop the barking dogs!"

"Higher priority to public safety. Reassign Coburg funds to public safety."

"Increased petty theft, car break ins, people on video looking around the exterior of homes are very alarming. Nighttime patrol would be reassuring."

"More frequent patrols through neighborhoods especially at night. Thieves seem particularly effective during early morning hours."

"We don't know. The current services seem to be fine. We have noticed an occasional problem with people passing on the yellow lines leading up to the bridge."

"Response to calls for service, crime investigation and follow-up, traffic control at peak times, general presence in the community. We have real concerns about having a local Harrisburg city police force. Expense aside, we believe that such police departments are fraught with problems including, but not limited to: potential for inadequately trained and skilled supervision and oversight; questionable ability to attract high quality and highly qualified officers (will we be able to attract officers who are capable of split-second, well balanced, and appropriate potentially life-threatening decision making in the face of a quickly deteriorating situation?); adequacy of ongoing training, including criminal investigation, interventions, and follow-up; in a small force, the tendency toward a level of familiarity with residents that can reduce impartiality and promote favoritism. We appreciate this important discussion and do see via posts on the NextDoor App that there are somewhat regular reports of suspicious activities that take place in and around our community. However, we don't know whether or not this represents an increase in crime rate. At this juncture, we are tending towards modifying the existing services as necessary to cover the growing population in Harrisburg based on statistical data and with consideration to how other members of the community feel. Based on our personal experiences, we believe that the Linn County Sheriff deputies provide very adequate services. We have had several interactions with different deputies over the years that we have been in Harrisburg and have been impressed."

"Night patrols and crime enforcement instead of traffic stops."

"Enforce the laws we have now."

"Speed enforcement on Territorial specifically. It's a freaking racetrack!"

"Driving Hwy 99 thru town is ugly, not inviting or showing love."

"Stay with Linn County. Don't see a need for Coburg."

"Speed limit slowed. A pedestrian light on Smith St."

"Drop the Coburg coverage and increase LCSO. There are 720 hours in a month, we are getting coverage only 43% of the time and usually not during the hours of high crime. We don't need rent-a-cops."

"More patrolling – visible."

"Stop the constant speeders on 3rd St. They can't even do that one small thing."

"More speed control on 7th street."

The above comments were shared on the agenda for the Committee Meeting.

These comments were received after the agenda was created and weren't previously shared.

"Feel just as safe as ever. Less traffic duty from Coburg. Less taxes. Better and drinkable, healthy water! That costs less! It's water, not gold!"

"Voter just passed in Nov Linn County law enforcement levy to maintain current services. Increased prop tax each time. Don't feel safer in this state as a whole. Homeless camps formed on river in Harrisburg and with it crime/car break-ins. Feel there is a connection. It's a small community. You think it wouldn't be hard to determine those making trouble. Maybe Sheriffs that live locally know or have an idea whom but can't do nothing unless criminals are caught firsthand. But then our courts would just let them go w/pandemic and jail space limitations. It's a no win situation for law enforcement and the public. Paying more for enhanced law enforcement service is not going to fix the catch and release policy of courts which policies are handed down by the state."

"Amenities, entertainment, restaurants, better grocery."

"Keep Lane County (Coburg) thugs out of Harrisburg."

"Bigger government (not Harrisburg) needs to give more of our money back to our community, not waste it on their own agendas/wallets. Outreach, activities/businesses for children/teens."

"Theft is a big problem, not violent crimes and not drugs (yay!). Programs could be added to support youth to make them community supporters and give them purpose. Support welcome for neighborhood crime groups."

"I hear about a lot of theft from my neighbors. Also I am concerned about long response times from LCSO. I would like more neighborhood patrols and traffic enforcement, especially when my children are walking to/from school."

"We feel the same amount of safeness, but we do feel safe."

"More police presence is needed. Not just for traffic violations."

"Patrol, a constant visual of law enforcement. My taxes are almost \$4000 a year living in Harrisburg! We just passed a Linn Co. bond for law enforcement! Where is my money going?!"

"More patrol at night – river area."

"Officer available 24 hours if needed."

"I would like law enforcement to give training for neighborhood watch. Let us help them improve out town. This should be everyone's responsibility. I would like information on who to contact when you encounter abandon cars, trash, suspicious people on your street or in your neighborhood. They just passed the bond so why are you asking for more money?"

(City Administrator notes that she answered the questions for this person; there were no replies.)

"Enforcement of speed limit. We live at 1015 Territorial Street. Speeders entering the city limits on Territorial St (from Powerline) do not slow until after 10th and near stop sign at 9th. Those heading out of town accelerate hard prior to 10th. When police have monitored area they stay minutes, never enough to do any good. I'm afraid to cross my street when I see cars a clock or more away because of the rate of speed they may be traveling or getting ready to accelerate."

"More officers everywhere. Defunding police belongs nowhere in our U.S. I don't know what else to say – support your local police!"

"Concerned about property crimes; like the sign that says lock it or lost it; also like the signs displaying cars' speeds. Sheriff parked in school zones before and after school. Presentation to school children about predators on social media/internet, and water safety."

"I think city services have a good balance. Not so concerned about parks, but we don't have kids anymore. Street maintenance is a concern."

"Fire and rescue not hindered by vaccine mandates. Law enforcement not hindered by vaccine mandates."

"Night patrols to prevent tweakers from steal from cars, driveways, etc."

"More patrols at night."

"We're good. Don't need to waste our money."

"More regular patrols. Working neighborhood watch. Encourage better lighting."

"Patrolling the neighborhood. Not sitting at the base of the bridge or parked between buildings and alleys to catch someone speeding. Actively drive the streets to prevent possible situations – not speeding vehicles."

"People roaming and going onto people's property and getting in cars/garbage at night."

"Patrols at night, not just traffic citations."

"Current level provided is adequate."

"If the city had its own police dept it would be much more effective than contracted services. I don't believe that throwing more money at an ineffective system is the answer. We need change."