

Mayor's Blue Ribbon Crime Advisory Committee

October 15, 2018, 12:30pm

Missouri Highway Patrol, 3525 North Belt Highway

Committee Members Present: Michael Meierhoffer, Chair, Bob Eaton, Vice Chair, Mayor McMurray, Bruce Woody, Chief Connally, Brad Kerns, Ron Holliday, Dr. Bob Corder, Drew Brown, Linda Dotson, Pat Grove, Mike Cazal, Joey Austin, Derek Conz, Janie Findley, Captain James McDonald, Sheriff Puett, Seth Wright, Marty Novak, Nicole Poirer and Mickey Roberts

Chair Michael Meierhoffer called the meeting to order at 12:30pm. He introduced new guests/members for Dr. Laney, PIO Joey Austin and Director of Security at Mosaic Life Care Derek Conz. He also introduced Nicole Poirer of the ATF.

Chair Michael Meierhoffer shared famous quotes by Abe Lincoln. He also suggested reading the book "Dreamland" The True Tale of America's Opiate Epidemic by Sam Quinones to the group.

3. **Drew Brown** motioned to accept the minutes of the last meeting submitted by Whitney Lanning. The motion was seconded.

4. **Ron Holliday, Buchanan County Prosecuting Attorney (Elect)** presented to the committee: Crime in St. Joseph from the perspective of the Prosecutor. Ron discussed his work history. He discussed the increase in gun related crimes during his time in Buchanan County. Crime goes up and down and is a complicated issue.

- Statistics cited: 300% increase in reported domestic violence since 1980. But not many reports were written during the 1980's, so while reporting is way up, violence is probably not.
- Gun violence is up.
- Prosecute about 50% of cases submitted to them.
- 17 1st class counties.
- Buchanan County is #1 in the state for sending people to prison.
- #1 for efficiency of handling cases (speed).
- Each case is only as good as the facts, the witnesses and evidence.

Needs within the prosecuting attorney department:

- Need a full-time investigator to help prosecutors prepare for trial.
- Would like to establish a "career criminal" division, to better target career criminals and give them longer criminal sentences using the additional research needed to prove their guilt.
- Many felony convictions result in probation, not prison time.
- Our "rights" help protect the innocent citizens, but also makes prosecution more difficult.

Question posed by Chair Mike Meierhoffer: What about PEW Trust grant that Gary Hammond of Family Guidance receives? Three counties in Missouri have early release programs.

Answer: It costs \$35-40K a year to house a prisoner. This is yet another alternative treatment program to help prisoners get help and stay out of prison.

5. **Captain Jim McDonald, Missouri Highway Patrol** discussed his work history and also the main mission of the highway patrol which is traffic enforcement on the highways. He feels the highway patrol has an outstanding working relationship with local law enforcement agencies in NW Missouri. He provided the following information regarding Troop H:

- 139 total staff – 62 civilians, 77 officers
- Area covered – 10 zones, 15 counties
- Commercial Scale enforcement – 3 scale houses, 2 portable scales
- Marine enforcement – 4 boats
- PIO - Communications
- Division of Crime and Drug Control
- Special enforcement division – criminal (includes canine)
- Driver Examinations
- Motor Vehicle Inspections
- Joint operations with local agencies (helicopter operations with SJPD)
- 2018 Entire Patrol: 20,000 citations, 40,000 warnings and 1,200 arrests, 33 fatal crashes in 2017 (lack of wearing a seat belt is the common issue.)

Question: Does the highway patrol use drones?

Answer: Yes, for traffic accident scene evaluation.

6. **Vice-chairman Bob Eaton** informed the committee the Communications Subcommittee has met every other week for the last month led by Tama Wagner and Bridget Blevins. October 25 is the next meeting and the plan is to craft 3-4 messages covering the whole community.

7. **Chair Michael Meierhoffer** advised the committee this is the seventh meeting and asked what ideas do you have based on what the committee has learned so far?

- Drug Take Back Event is scheduled for October 22 by Sears in the East Hills Mall, 10am – 2pm
- Opioid Task Force has a new website: www.addictionhelpnow.com

8. Next Meeting: Monday, November 19 – Law Enforcement Center at 12:30pm, enter on STJPD, Eastside.

9. Meeting adjourned at 2pm

Prepared by: Cindi Meers through Bruce Woody