

**Mayor's Blue Ribbon Crime Advisory Committee Meeting**

Monday, September 16 at 12:30pm

Missouri State Highway Patrol – Troop H, Lower Level

**Committee Members Present:** Michael Meierhoffer, Chairman, Bob Eaton, Vice-Chairman, Whitney Lanning, Secretary, Mayor Bill McMurray, Drew Brown, Mike Cazel, Chief Christopher Connally, Dr. Bob Corder, Linda Dotson, Janie Findley, Ron Holliday, Sherriff Bill Puett

**Call to Order:** Committee Chair, Michael Meierhoffer called the meeting to order at 12:40pm and reviewed the mission statement with the committee.

**Minutes of Last Meeting:** The minutes of the September 16, 2019 meeting were reviewed. Bob Corder made the motion to approve the minutes, Bob Eaton seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

**Lieutenant Shane Sims** – Lt. Sims gave an update regarding Troop H of the Missouri Highway Patrol. Lt. Sims reported that six new officers had been hired and there is a current class in training. Lt. Sims gave an update on roads that had been affected by flooding. Members of the committee inquired as to the training process for new officers, which Lt. Sims then described.

**Chief Chris Connally** – Chief Connally provided an update regarding the St. Joseph Police Department; he stated that public service announcements had been published regarding parent responsibility in knowing the whereabouts of teen children, as well as preventing auto theft. Chief Connally gave a brief update on crime statistics: part 1 crime is down, aggravated assault is down 27% for the year, but simple assault is up 5%, burglary is also down. Chief Connally described how those statistics compared both state and nationally. He explained the complexity of comparing St. Joseph with other communities and the importance in knowing whether a statistic encompassed the St. Joseph metro area or just the City, which often skews ranking information. Chief Connally informed the committee that CIT training will be taking place on Thursdays and that those interested in participating can enroll through City Hall.

The committee discussed how to address crime and discussed community initiatives. The use of the Ring security system was discussed. Whitney Lanning described the Ring community matching program, that provides ring doorbells to low-income areas that experience high crime. Chief Connally described how some criminals will watch the alerts on facebook and other apps such as Ring and Next Door, but stated that those apps create challenges but don't necessarily impede the work of the police.

**Bill Puett** – Sheriff Puett provided an update regarding his office. He described recent changes in personnel and position realignment and that there will be a position that deals with human trafficking open soon. Sheriff Puett described a focus on using technology to maximize law enforcement efforts. He stated that his office is partnering with Youth Alliance and Mosaic to provide needle drop-off boxes, which they hope to implement after the first of the year.

**Ron Holliday** – Prosecuting Attorney, Ron Holliday described the number of submissions that had occurred for the year in comparison to the previous year. As of 9/1/2018 there were 2,319 submissions compared 2019's 2,399 as of 9/1/2019. Mr. Holliday described the process for prosecuting individuals for a crime. He reported that the County has a Career Criminal Unit that is going to be hiring a criminal investigator that will hopefully streamline the investigation process; interviews are taking place this week.

**Urban Mission Project - Debra Bradley and Donna Wilson - Debra Bradley**, Health Department Director and **Donna Wilson**, Community Health Manager, Mosaic Life Care, gave a presentation on the new Urban Mission Project, a collaborative project aimed at providing emergency shelter for the homeless. Ms. Wilson reported that the shelter is scheduled to open on 10/1/19 and that several partners are receiving funding from Mosaic to make the project happen. CAPSTJOE is providing case management services through a Community Health Worker, Pivotal Point is providing transitional housing services, and St. Joseph Police Department are providing additional security. The City of St. Joseph, through the Health Department, is acting as the program administrator. Ms. Bradley explained the City's role in reporting outcomes to the City Council via weekly and monthly reports. She explained that this will be a three-year pilot program and is in response to Mosaic's findings from their community health needs assessment. The committee asked questions regarding the capacity and community needs. Ms. Wilson reported that there would be 60 shelter beds and that both men and women are able to stay at the shelter but that there is no capacity for children at this time. Ms. Wilson described the community's need for emergency shelter, to include the limited resources available due to the Salvation Army closing it's shelter in May, 2017.

**Crime Stoppers** - Gregg Lewis provided an update regarding Crime Stoppers call taking system, which was implemented in February 2019. Mr. Lewis stated that the new system allowed reports to be generated for detectives electronically and that there are app and web-based options with the new system. According to Mr. Lewis, Tuesday and Wednesdays are the most common times for calls to be received. He reported that numbers of tips have greatly increased and that Crime Stoppers receives 30-40 tips per month right now.

**Public Comment:** Chair Michael Meierhoffer announced that he would be stepping down as chairperson. He thanked the committee for their participation and expressed excitement for the future work of the committee in addressing crime in St. Joseph. Mr. Meierhoffer stated that he and Mayor McMurray had discussed who should take over as chair of the committee and that they recommend Whitney Lanning for the role of chairwoman and Bob Eaton as Vice Chairman.

Bob Corder made the motion to elect Whitney Lanning as Chairwoman and Bob Eaton as Vice Chairman of the committee for the upcoming year; Mike Cazal seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Corder thanked Mr. Meierhoffer for his leadership and guidance on behalf of the committee, the committee expressed their thanks through a round of applause.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 1:48pm.

Prepared by: Whitney Lanning