



Minutes

Lakewood City Council

Adjourned Regular Meeting held
February 13, 2018

MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER at 6:30 p.m. by Mayor DuBois in the Executive Board Room at the Civic Center, 5000 Clark Avenue, Lakewood, California.

ROLL CALL: PRESENT: Mayor Diane DuBois
Vice Mayor Steve Croft
Council Member Ron Piazza
Council Member Todd Rogers
Council Member Jeff Wood

PUBLIC SAFETY UPDATE

City Manager Thaddeus McCormack stated that the intent of the meeting was to provide an update on the efforts of the Public Safety Committee, who had been meeting on a monthly basis, to make available to the City Council the information pertaining to crime trends, deployment and other law enforcement related activities. He added that the direction from the Committee had been to enhance public outreach on crime issues and to determine from the Council Members the detail to which the information would be provided to the public, ranging from raw data to more summarized accounts. He noted that the Committee had concurred that the information should include details in a narrative form that explained any upticks in crime, the reasons for their occurrences and the resulting actions.

Council Member Rogers explained that as a Committee, they wanted to make clear to the community that the City Council was being proactive on public safety issues despite some of the opinions expressed on social media. He also stated that the Committee had reviewed law enforcement actions taken, available tools and resources, and innovative ideas, such as the use of a private security firm, and had reached the point where they sought guidance from the City Council on the appropriate course of action.

Mr. McCormack introduced Lakewood Sheriff's Station Captain James Wolak, who would be presenting quarterly updates at City Council meetings. Captain Wolak stated that the Public Safety Committee meetings had been productive and appreciated the opportunity to learn about the public's perception on law enforcement based on comments received by the City Council.

Lieutenant Scott Hogle described the Lakewood Field Deployment Matrix identifying the three different shifts of the patrol force, who were basically responsible for calls for service and that in their free time, would be proactive with either traffic or criminal type activity.

Responding to Vice Mayor Croft's inquiry, Lt. Hogle stated that the motorcycle units were not included in regular deployment.

PUBLIC SAFETY UPDATE - Continued

Lt. Hoglund replied to Council Member Wood's questions pertaining to scheduling of the mall deputies by stating that having two deputies working the same hours allowed for coverage during busier times and greater visibility of law enforcement presence.

Carol Flynn Jacoby, Assistant City Manager, explained that the mall had recommended the scheduling based upon the volume of people at the mall.

In response to Council Member Rogers' questions, Lt. Hoglund stated that there had been no pattern and that crimes that had been committed were spread fairly evenly throughout the week.

Lt. Hoglund confirmed for Council Member Piazza that deputies were encouraged to maintain a visible presence by writing their reports in the mall parking lot and visiting the restaurants when dining. He noted that park patrol deputies in Lakewood were asked to drive through the mall when they left the station for visibility purposes.

Ms. Jacoby responded to Council Member Wood's inquiry regarding the cost for the deputies by stating that the mall and the City each paid for the cost of one deputy which she estimated at approximately \$300,000 per year.

Council Member Rogers asked Captain Wolak if there were any theories pertaining to the reasons for there being no reduction in crime at the mall despite the presence of two deputies. Captain Wolak stated that with the higher volume of visitors to the mall on the weekends, breaking down statistics on a per capita basis on those days might show that crime was down when the mall deputies were present.

Council Member Rogers suggested that looking at traffic counts might also provide valuable data regarding per capita crime statistics.

Captain Wolak proposed that the information pertaining to mall population and traffic counts could be obtained from the mall management to provide more specific crime data. He applauded Lt. Hoglund for running a great program focusing on the mall and the high schools as priorities.

Council Member Wood expressed concerns that while encouraging deputies to be more visible at the mall has benefit, it may be perceived as coming at the expense of not being visible in other parts of the City, such as schools, parks, and other business centers, which are of equal importance to the City.

Responding to Mayor DuBois' inquiry, Ms. Jacoby stated that there were no resource deputies at Mayfair or Lakewood High Schools and that the deputy at Artesia High school had been funded by ABCUSD for several years.

PUBLIC SAFETY UPDATE - Continued

Lt. Hoglund identified the members of the special assignment team, which consisted of himself, two sergeants and the patrol deputies. The four field special assignment deputies, with each one being given a minimum of two reporting districts, handled service requests for their area allowing them to build relationships with the community and to know who the residents were in their assigned neighborhoods. A special assignment detective as well as an abatement deputy rounded out the team. In addition to the patrol aspect, the Sheriff's Department also had dedicated detectives for the City and headquarters detective units assisting with larger scale cases which included such crimes as homicide, human trafficking, cybercrimes, special victims, and crimes involving children. From the City staff, there were the Community Safety Specialists, who recently attended basic traffic training, resulting in the patrol deputies and traffic units being freed up from having to handle non-injury traffic collisions thereby enabling them to investigate the major traffic collisions, reduce response times and be more visible.

Lt. Hoglund provided statistics on the traffic enforcement and motor program.

In response to Council Member Wood's question pertaining to citations, Lt. Hoglund stated that the majority of those issued were for speeding and running a red light or stop sign.

Lt. Hoglund reported on Part 1 crimes, focusing concern on robberies, aggravated assaults and burglaries, all of which had a substantial increase in 2017 from between 32% and 46% translating to roughly fifty incidents more during the year or four more incidents per month. There were a total of 138 robberies throughout the city, 70 of which were strong-arm robberies, which meant there were no weapons involved but rather someone just ripping property from another person. Of those robberies, thirty of them were Estes 211s, which were basically shoplift robberies and not a mall patron being robbed at gunpoint. There were a total of 141 aggravated assaults, 34 of which related to domestic violence incidents and 24 incidents involved a firearm. Only four of those incidents were gang related. There were a total of 240 residential and 170 commercial burglaries totaling 410 in 2017.

Captain Wolak explained that aggravated assaults statistics were enumerated per victim and provided the example that if somebody were to drive by and point a gun at five people, that counted as five marks.

Lt. Hoglund stated that in 2017, there were 139 victims but 111 incidents and that out of those 111 incidents, arrests were made in approximately 45 of the cases. Approximately 63 involved known suspects.

In response to an inquiry from Council Member Wood and Council Member Rogers, Lt. Hoglund stated that he would have to get back to them with a response as to why there were only 45 arrest when there were 63 known suspects.

Lt. Hoglund responded to Vice Mayor Croft by stating he would obtain the information pertaining to the number of incidents from previous years and could provide it in the future.

PUBLIC SAFETY UPDATE - Continued

Lt. Hoglund explained that with the rise in robberies, aggravated assaults and burglaries, a suppression car had been deployed and the two deputies handpicked for the assignment were proactive in addressing such crimes. Since their deployment, they had made 11 felony arrests and 15 misdemeanor arrests, totaling 26 arrests over a 17-day period. Two were for commercial burglary, three for possession of loaded firearm, one for transportation of a controlled substance, one for dirk/dagger, one for resisting a peace officer, and three felony warrants. In addition, misdemeanor arrests were made including 11 for possession of narcotics, one for burglary tools and three misdemeanor warrants.

Mayor DuBois, Council Member Wood and Council Member Rogers raised questions and concerns regarding whether the Community Safety Commission charge would be expanded to include such public safety issues. Ms. Jacoby stated that the Commission dealt more with traffic and parking issues.

Vice Mayor Croft concurred with Council Member Piazza, who stated that the Public Safety Committee had worked diligently to provide crime data to the entire City Council and felt that it might be a bit early in the process to enjoin the Community Safety Commission to interface with the Sheriff's Department at this time.

Steve Skolnik, Office of the City Attorney, indicated that the Commission functioned as an advisory body and would not set policy issues as the City Council did.

Mr. McCormack suggested that public outreach efforts could include providing information to and soliciting information from the neighborhood watch block captains.

Lt. Hoglund reported that the two deputies on the burglary suppression unit had been deployed and had made 17 arrests with five felonies and twelve misdemeanors over the last weeks.

Council Member Rogers inquired whether any burglars had been caught. Lt. Hoglund responded that many arrests had been made and that more arrests were for people that were wanted for residential burglaries.

Lt. Hoglund concurred with Mayor DuBois' view that the successes of the suppression units served as a deterrent.

Council Member Piazza asserted that the Committee had discussed public information and outreach efforts to include suggestions on crime prevention and education.

Public Information Officer Bill Grady provided samples of recent e-magazine articles including advice to residents on how to be as crime free as possible and how not to be a victim of porch pirates; a story about deputies doing good deeds; tips on burglary prevention; a presentation on crime trends; facts regarding Prop 47; and information about extra investments Lakewood had made in crime fighting efforts.

PUBLIC SAFETY UPDATE - Continued

Council Member Wood stressed the importance of the Volunteers on Patrol program and suggested promotion of the program to encourage residents to participate.

Lt. Hogle provided a breakdown of Part 1 crimes at the mall for 2017 showing increases from the previous year in robberies, from 16 to 28, and in aggravated assaults, from four to nine. He stated that overall, crime at the mall was down 12%. He explained that many of the aggravated assaults were either domestic violence, where a known suspect was involved, or a situation that involved security which evolved into aggravated assault. A total of 26 robberies occurred during the same time period with 19 of them considered to be shoplift/Estes robberies, where the victim had been a security officer; four were strong-arm robberies, where someone may have had jewelry or a purse ripped from them; one involved a firearm and appeared to involve drugs or scandalous activity in the mall parking lot and one person robbed another person, not a patron visiting the mall; and three cases involved the use of pepper spray and the majority of them just had weapons being hands, feet or fists. Of the commercial burglaries in mall property, two included a cash register being broken into during store hours; two were at a kiosk and one involved a break in at a ticket machine at Round1 bowling center.

Captain Wolak stated that 2018 statistics so far indicated that Part 1 crimes were down more than 18%. He noted that as of February, there had been no homicides in Lakewood and that there had been two in each of 2016 and 2017. He stated that three rapes had been reported in the current year with twelve occurring in 2017, all of which were acquaintance rapes. Robberies had increased slightly with four of the twelve so far being of the Estes type. He reported that aggravated assaults were down 67% and burglaries were up 7%.

Council Member Piazza suggested that obtaining crime statistics from cities of similar size and population might be helpful to indicate how Lakewood compared to its neighbors.

Captain Wolak indicated that a weekly meeting, which was attended by the service area lieutenants for all five cities, and included the detective bureau and two crime analysts, provided for the discussion on the breakdown of the crimes that occurred in the previous week and identified crime patterns and notable arrests.

Mr. McCormack stated that he met with the Captain and the city managers from the station cities on a quarterly basis and found the meetings to be productive.

Council Member Piazza spoke on the merits of the Ring floodlight security system and suggested that residents be made aware of such systems.

Mr. McCormack reported that the objectives of the study session had been to provide an update on crime statistics, to demonstrate how such issues were being handled proactively and to respond to questions and concerns from the City Council as well. He indicated that staff was seeking to obtain from the City Council consensus on how the crime data should be provided, whether they should be given in raw data form or in a narrative context.

PUBLIC SAFETY UPDATE - Continued

Mr. McCormack concurred with Mayor DuBois, who cautioned against going to extremes with regard to how the materials were provided. He stated that it was important to be forthcoming about crime occurrences in the City but it was also important to demonstrate the proactive responses by the Sheriff's Department and City staff.

In response to Mayor DuBois' questions pertaining to the format of the reports to the City Council, Mr. McCormack replied that the information and materials on crime statistics could be provided in a format that would allow for public comment and questions from the City Council.

Vice Mayor Croft commended the Committee on their efforts to focus on and deal with the law enforcement issues. He expressed appreciation that the expanded narrative not only included the crime data but also provided the specifics of each incident. He added that such information might be used in future outreach and educational programs.

Council Member Wood noted that despite the adaptability of the statistics, crimes still occurred in the City and he intended to ask the difficult questions and act on behalf of the residents.

Council Member Piazza explained that the study session presentation had been a result of the Public Safety Committee's efforts to make the crime data available to the entire City Council and to determine future actions.

Mr. McCormack requested that any further questions be submitted to him in order to provide responses to be brought back to the entire City Council and any additional sessions could be scheduled as needed.

Council Member Rogers expressed a commitment to providing reports to the City Council with quarterly presentations on public safety at the regular meetings.

Captain Wolak commended Management Aide Isabelle Diaz on providing detailed and comprehensive minutes on the Public Safety Committee meetings.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to be brought before the City Council, Mayor DuBois adjourned the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jo Mayberry, CMC
City Clerk