

# JACKSONVILLE CITY COUNCIL

**RESEARCH DIVISION**

**Task Force on Safety and Crime Reduction**

**Meeting Minutes**

**January 25, 2019**

**9:00 am**

**Council Chambers**

**First Floor, City Hall**

**117 W. Duval Street**

**Topic:** Task Force on Safety and Crime Reduction

**Attendance:** Council President Bowman; Council Members Newby, Boyer, Freeman, Ferraro, Gaffney and Love

For all Task Force Members and other attendees please see the sign in sheet

**Meeting Convened:** 9:00 am

This was the first meeting for the Task Force on Safety and Crime Reduction. The Task Force Chair, Pastor Mark Griffin, called the meeting to order and extended appreciation for all of the members who will be dedicating their time to addressing safety and crime reduction. Chairman Griffin also noted that finding city-wide solutions to safety concerns is the priority and that the process will be more like a marathon than a sprint. Co-Chair Newby extended his appreciation as well. Council Member Boyer welcomed the members and commented on the diversity of backgrounds and perspectives provided by the Task Force and how those qualities will be an advantage to the Task Force’s mission.

Council President Bowman welcomed the group and thanked everyone for being a part of the Task Force. CP Bowman mentioned that more than 150 applications were received and that selecting members was a challenge due to the volume of qualified applicants. CP Bowman talked briefly about upcoming legislation which will make the Task Force a permanent body for the extent of time needed for the mission to be completed. CP Bowman also informed the body about the complete support from the Mayor’s Office for the Task Force mission. Task Force member, and the Mayor’s Director of Community Affairs, Charles Moreland reiterated the support from the administration.

Sheriff Mike Williams was in attendance to offer any assistance from his staff and expressed optimism about the role of the Task Force in elevating the conversation about public safety. Sheriff Williams also said that law enforcement is not sufficient to tackle the root causes of crime, which need to be addressed by the whole community. Steve Siegel, from the State Attorney’s Office, conveyed the support of State Attorney Melissa Nelson. Public Defender Charles Cofer spoke about perceptions of safety and how even though crime is trending downward, people believe the opposite is occurring. Mr. Cofer noted that while an increased police force size may be helpful for enforcement, long term success in crime reduction can only come from addressing the root causes of crime, such as poverty and prison re-entry.

Carla Miller, Ethics Director, offered a presentation about Florida’s Government in the Sunshine Law, public records and conflicts of interest. Task Force members are subject to the same Sunshine Laws as elected officials regarding communication among members and public meetings. All Task Force meetings must be publically noticed, recorded with written minutes and open to the public. Furthermore, all documents, emails and text messages produced by Task Force members are public records and as such must be preserved. Ms. Miller advised the Task Force to use Council staff as a conduit for any information exchange and requested that Legislative Services create a repository for documents, text messages and emails. Ms. Miller also explained how conflicts may be problematic as related to family, business and City-related contracts. Councilman Newby then asked all of the Task Force members to introduce themselves and provide a brief background of their experience and expertise. After the introductions, the meeting recessed for a ten minute break.

After the break, Chairman Griffin reviewed the Task Force goals as described in Ordinance 2018-846. According to the legislation, *the Task Force will undertake an in-depth review of the various programs within the city which have been deemed successful and contribute to safety and crime reduction, investigate the efficacy of these programs and make recommendations for how the City can leverage existing resources and expand successful programs to create a comprehensive community-wide anti-crime initiative, and establish metrics and goals reducing crime and creating a safer community.*

Celbrica Tenah, Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office Crime Analysis Unit Administrator, offered a presentation on Duval County crime statistics and trends. Overall, crime in the city is trending downward. Ms. Tenah explained the difference between homicides and murders, as well as some of the various measurements JSO uses to track crime data. Ms. Tenah said that an analysis of 2017 murders indicate that one third of victim were in JSO Zone 5, and the majority of the murder victims were male, African American and under the age of 40. Eight percent of murder victims in 2017 were under the age of 17. The Task Force members asked several questions about specific recent crimes and requested additional data about those who committed the murders. CM Boyer suggested including aggregate data from all of Duval County to incorporate data from the Beaches cities, Duval County Public Schools and the Town of Baldwin.

Chairman Griffin asked the Task Force members to review the copy of a JCCI report from 2006 which examined crime in Jacksonville. Some of the members noted the outdated nature of the report as it is more than a decade old. Chairman Griffin agreed, but pointed out that the root causes and risk factors identified in that report are still present even after the passage of time.

According Ordinance 2018-846, *the Task Force Chair shall establish subcommittees to focus on specific issues, which will include Workforce Training Programs (address areas of our City that have high unemployment), Community Engagement (develop community action groups), Mentoring Programs (create programs involving businesses and community volunteers) and Business Partnerships (increase business partnerships including funding sources). The Task Force Chair may establish additional subcommittees as needed*. In addition to the four subcommittees listed in the legislation, Chairman Griffin identified several other areas which may be looked at by subcommittees. These included: youth development, re-entry programs, family engagement, neighborhoods, and mental health. Each of the subcommittees will be tasked with creating an inventory of existing programs in the city which address each specific subject. It was suggested by a member that there be a subcommittee which focuses on the public schools, another member said that substance abuse and trauma should be included as well. One Task Force member emphasized the need for the voices of youth in the mission of the Task Force, with perhaps focus groups or youth forums. The floor was then opened for public comment and three attendees spoke about violent crime in the city and how it impacts their communities.

With no further business, the Chair adjourned the meeting. The next Task Force meeting will be February 8, 2019 at 9:00am.

**Meeting Adjourned:** 12:09 pm

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research

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Tape: Task Force on Safety and Crime Reduction- Legislative Services Division

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