

City of Jacksonville

*1st Floor - Council Chamber
117 W. Duval Street*



Meeting Minutes - Amended

Friday, October 9, 2020

8:30 AM

Virtual Meeting

Safety and Crime Reduction Commission

Meeting Convened: 8:30 am Meeting Adjourned: 10:11 am

Attendance:

Chairman Mark Griffin; CM Newby, Vice Chair; Commissioners, Larry Cook, Richard Danford, Frank Denton, Tom Geismar, WC Gentry, Ellen Glasser, Constance Hall, Ronnie King, Timothy Sloan, Shamika Baker Wright, Vicki Waytowich and Shelley Grant

Also: Council Member Freeman

I. Call to Order – Chairman

II. Opening Remarks & Greetings

Chairman Griffin welcomed the group and roll was taken for attendance.

III. Review of Minutes – 9.11.20 Safety and Crime Reduction Commission Meeting

The minutes from the September 11, 2020 meeting were approved unanimously.

IV. Presentation – Assistant Chief Shawn Coarsey, JSO Violence Reduction Section

Assistant Chief Shawn Coarsey, JSO Violence Reduction Section gave a presentation about gangs in Jacksonville and intervention methods. Asst. Chief Coarsey said that there are 57 active gangs in the city, 4 of which are motorcycle gangs, with roughly 800 members. Gang members are identified through self confession, family members and sometimes clothing; there are also music videos posted by some members which are monitored by JSO as they include details about criminal behavior sometimes. JSO intervention methods have brought some success in diverting gang associated individuals away from gangs by providing them with an alternate option. Asst. Chief Coarsey said that the gangs are not centralized but are spread through the city geographically, with the highest concentration in patrol zones 1,4,and 5.

Commissioner Glasser asked about the percent of homicides committed by those in gangs, Asst. Chief Coarsey said he didn't have the precise figure but estimated it to be high. Ms. Glasser asked for a list of the most criminally active gangs and Asst. Chief Coarsey said he will provide it to the commission. Chairman Griffin asked about the gang member demographics, Asst. Chief Coarsey said most are between the ages of 15 and 22, are looking for a sense of family support through their gang membership and that they are not enrolled in school.

Commissioner Geismar asked about Cure Violence, a City funded violent crime reduction program targeting areas of Jacksonville's Northwest and Eastside, and Asst. Chief Coarsey said JSO does not work directly with them. Mr. Geismar also asked about Garland Scott and Hammer and Hope- a JSO gang intervention/de-escalation project wherein gang members and those who may be gang associated, are targeted, receive custom notifications and are offered an opportunity to change their life trajectory. Asst. Chief Coarsey indicated that the program has had a positive impact and that Mr. Scott is an invaluable asset to the Sheriff's Office and to the community, noting that he wished there was more than just one of him in order to help more of those who need it.

Commissioner Sloan asked about outreach in specific zip codes, particularly for young men. Asst. Chief Coarsey said that reaching them early is essential, in addition to helping their younger siblings. Jackie Simmons, DCPS, said that JSO and the schools should collaborate on intervention for gang at risk youth prior to them dropping out of school.

V. Presentation – Katoia Wilkins, KHA

There was a presentation by Mike Weinstein, KHA, about their programs and essential service categories, particularly as related to commission priorities like trauma and juvenile justice. The group also discussed a new software mapping tool being rolled out by KHA, which may be useful for the commission's work. Mr. Sloan asked about grants and noted the importance of awarding funds to smaller grassroots organizations. Ms. Wilkins, KHA, described a grant training program they recently had for small providers, as a requirement for grant applications. Saralyn Grass, KHA, spoke about performance measures and assessing effectiveness of programs. Commissioner Sloan asked about mental health in schools and noted that services are not being utilized as they should due to stigma. Commissioner Waytowich asked about funds for a stigma awareness campaign, CM Newby said it was included in the budget but may have been housed elsewhere and not with KHA.

Commissioner King requested the following data points from KHA: percent increase in reading and math scores for students participating in KHA programs as compared to the non-participating students; percent students participating in KHA programs as compared to the non-participating students arrested for violent crimes; average amount of hours spent by students in KHA programs; average KHA expenditure per student; income levels of the families served by KHA.

VI. Community Based Crime Reduction Program

Kendra Mervin, Community Based Crime Reduction Program Coordinator, talked about DOJ grant funds which are supporting a community based crime reduction program on the Westside. The program goal of CBCR is to reduce crime, increase trust, and improve community safety as part of a comprehensive strategy to rebuild and revitalize neighborhoods.

VII. Administrator Position Update

CM Newby said that many resumes were submitted and were vetted by COJ employee services. Two were selected for interviews, scheduled for Friday afternoon (October 9, 2020).

VIII. Appointment of Vice Chairperson

Chairman Griffin shared that he has appointed Commissioner Hall to be the new vice-chair. Dr. Hall expressed her enthusiasm to accept the position.

IX. Future Meeting Dates

October 23, 2020

November 6, 2020

November 20, 2020

December 4, 2020

The next meeting will be October 23, 2020.

X. Public Comments – 3 Minutes Each

Mr. Scott expressed his displeasure with commission leadership. Mr. Coleman talked about the workforce training and job placement his organization does.

XI. Wrap-Up and Adjournment

Before the meeting was adjourned, David Migut reminded the group that in person commission meeting will resume in November.

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research
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Posted: 10.13.2020 5:00 pm