

WGIPOA and GAIN PUBLIC SAFETY TASK FORCE

Meeting with Police Chief January 11, 2002

Officers Present: Chief Bob Pierce; Captain Brian Riedel; Sergeant Joe Giusti

GAIN Members Present: John O'Connor, Georgina Eastmond

WGIPOA Members Present: Jerry Mohn, Wanda Greer, Sharon Turnley

The meeting began with the Task Force emphasizing more police patrols in the neighborhoods, more visibility, interaction with the community, and adding "substations". We emphasized the community would support the Chief and the department in obtaining the funds necessary to accomplish the necessary manpower and equipment. The Chief indicated the police department is now at full force of 158 officers as authorized by City ordinance. There are 117 patrol officers with 50% to 75% of them on the street at any given time.

Sixteen officers are currently assigned to the City jail and they will be back on the street when the new County jail is constructed. Future needs at the Jail should be staffed by Civilians wherever possible to free up manpower for other duties.

Nine officers are assigned to the West End but with sick time, vacations, etc, the Chief indicated they are working 50% of the time, which is also true for the entire police force. They have yet to install a fuel storage tank at the 12 mile road fire station because it was put on hold with the 9/11 terrorist attack. Chief Pierce will activate the project again and suggested that we also contact the person responsible in installing the tank: Dave Smith, 797-3929.

For the GAIN area there is a need an additional 18 to 24 officers for patrol. These officers would be dedicated to Neighborhood patrols and the firm establishment of a community based problem solving approach to law enforcement. The current structure does not allow the interaction that was envisioned between the Police and Code enforcement officers.

There will need to be a discussion of the mechanism required to insure that these officers remain in the same neighborhood for a reasonable length of time and not be allowed to transfer or rotate to other areas during their assignment. This is needed to build confidence and boost visibility with the public.

The situation for OCCP is more complex as this area is currently represented by more than three distinct groups. Each group has a different perception of what the problems are and how best to approach a solution. Additional investigation and discussion with community leaders in the current OCCP boundaries is needed.

The Chief would like as a major priority for the inner City five (5) additional bike patrol positions to have 4 pairs of riders.

The Chief would like over the next five years 40 additional police officers and hiring 8 to 10 each year to 200 officers total. They need 40 specific positions, 12 officers for patrol with a total of 30 officers per shift; 5 for bike patrol; 2 for traffic; 5 new positions; and, convert 16 officer positions to civilian positions in drug enforcement, burglary and theft.

Some budget constraints developed with new laws. A new requirement in racial profiling requires police

officers to collect data to prove no discriminatory action was present in any search or arrest. To come into compliance with law, the City will need \$424,000 for the necessary camcorders, equipment, etc.

In addition a new State law requires all misdemeanors offenders arrested without a warrant to be brought before a magistrate. This will require a municipal judge on call, 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, and a cost to the City of approximately \$26,000.

John O'Connor gave the Chief for review and comment the Community Policing Mission Statement that GAIN and the WGIPOA Board of Directors subscribed. This will be discussed in detail at our next meeting.

GAIN asked the Chief to look into the reestablishment of the "SPIN" reports and regular dissemination of same to the neighborhoods. This used to be an important tool to gage the overall activity in the various grids and is needed to monitor efforts by the community to improve the overall level of safety city wide.

Officer Joe Giusti indicated a Citizens Police Academy will begin starting February 27 and encouraged all interested people to attend. It is a 16 week course and involves 1 to 2.5 hour sessions each week, usually on Wednesday evenings. The volunteers become familiar with the operations of the police department.

The next meeting is targeted for February 15th, 10:30 am, at the 53rd street substation.

ACTION LIST

1. This will require increasing the tax cap. The Chief will prepare a five year budget to reflect the department's needs for officers, equipment, and facilities. We requested that the budget to include a substation on the West End and to staff the "substation" in the San Jacinto neighborhood. He will work with the Police Chief at Jamaica Beach in establishing a substation for the West End.
2. The Chief will assess what is needed for Galveston Island public facilities and main complexes such as additional security the 53rd street station and the airport. He estimates the costs to be \$500,000.
3. The Chief will have available for the next five years an action plan that will list the additional money for training, increase in equipment, adding "substations", and hiring 8 to 10 officers annually.
4. GAIN will define the specific needs of its members for the target area: East End., Kempner Park, and San Jacinto–
5. WGIPOA will work with its members to better define the expectations, placement and staffing of a West End "substation.
6. GAIN and WGIPOA will discuss the needs with Council representatives so that they are aware of our efforts and the monetary needs of the expanded program. This is Critical as the discussion of the Charter amendments and Budgets for the next years are discussed.

Council's input and support will be critical to the success of the project. Manpower levels at the Department will have to be addressed by a change in the ordinance limiting the number of Police Officers allowed in the Department.
