



C . A . R . E . S .

SHERIFF MARCOS R. LOPEZ

Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday, December 7, 2021

Time Scheduled: 6:00 p.m. **Started:** 6:00 P.M. **Ended:** 7:07 P.M.

Location: Osceola County Sheriff's Office Complex
2601 E. Irlo Bronson Memorial Highway
Kissimmee, FL 34744
Training Rooms: B & C

Welcome/Pledge of Allegiance: Captain James Spain

Invocation: Chaplain Carl Foster

1. INTRODUCTION:

- a) Captain Spain welcomed the board members.
- b) Captain James Spain turned the floor over to Chairman McCrimon to officially call the meeting to order.

2. CALL TO ORDER:

- a) Chairman McCrimon called the meeting to order at 6:07 P.M.

3. ROLL CALL: Completed by: Captain James Spain

<u>Committee Members Present:</u>
<u>Committee Members Absent:</u>
<u>Speakers and Presenters:</u>

Mr. Ronald "Fred" McCrimon, Ms. Lissette Campos, Mr. Hector Acosta, Mr. David Couch, Pastor Leonard Thompson, Mr. Owen McCurty, Mr. Michael Bast

Jocelyn Hawkins, Detective Jason Herrman

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- a) Chairman McCrimon asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the November 2nd C.A.R.E.S. meeting. Mr. Acosta made the motion. Pastor Leonard Thompson seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

5. HOUSEKEEPING AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- a) Chairman McCrimon turned the floor over to Captain Spain to cover any housekeeping items.
- b) Captain Spain advised that the dates for the upcoming C.A.R.E.S. meetings have been added to the agency's website. Additionally, the media team has posted advertisements for the C.A.R.E.S. meetings on the agency's social media accounts. Finally, a flyer has been created and they are looking into making a promotional video. He asked the board for suggestions for the video and advised members that they can invite people and ask those in their community about topics for discussion. He advised they are compiling a list of topics for upcoming meetings to be posted to the agency's website.
- c) Captain Spain turned the floor over to Chairman McCrimon to discuss Old Business.
- d) Chairman McCrimon asked the board if there is anything the board needs to discuss from the last meeting. All the board members agreed nothing further needed to be discussed about the previous meeting.
- e) Captain Spain asked the board if they would like to discuss or make any recommendations regarding the Sheriff Office's complaint process discussed in the previous November meeting.
- f) Pastor Thompson asked for clarification about the agency's policy regarding traffic stops and pursuits. Captain Spain advised there are certain procedures that deputies have to follow. Deputies do not pursue for misdemeanors.
- g) Pastor Thompson asked if a perpetrator is pulled over for a traffic stop and flees, are the deputies not supposed to pursue. Captain Spain answered that deputies have to weigh danger to the public and will not pursue misdemeanors, but can pursue for certain felonies.
- h) Pastor Thompson asked if a deputy conducts a routine traffic stop and the driver begins to flee, does the deputy let them go. Captain Spain clarified that pursuit can increase danger to the general public. Pastor Thompson posed a concern that if this is the policy, what stops a perpetrator from fleeing law enforcement to avoid consequences? Captain Spain stated that they will attempt to get someone ahead of the driver or set up stop sticks. However, it depends on the situation. If there are no indication of forcible felonies, the deputy has to let them go to avoid further danger to the general public.
- i) Mr. McCurdy asked if this has been a problem in the past. Also reflected the same concern as Pastor Thompson. Captain Spain informed the board that most agencies have the same policy regarding vehicle pursuit.
- j) Mr. McCurdy voiced his concern about whether this policy can get the deputy in trouble. Captain Spain advised that it is understood that the deputy is following policy, therefore they are not penalized.
- k) Major Yawn introduced himself as Patrol Major and advised that they do not engage in vehicle pursuit to ensure safety of the public. Major Yawn advised that the deputy has to fill out a vehicle apprehension form any time a vehicle flees or they are engaged in a pursuit. It was further noted that Commander Sowles can provide statistics for vehicle apprehension forms in a future meeting. Major Yawn informed the board that the agency is looking into other options to combat this issue such as issuing an innocent owner notice. The vehicle will be seized the next time they don't stop.
- l) Major Yawn responded to Mr. McCurdy's concern regarding our pursuit policy and deputies being held accountable. Major Yawn advised that the agency does not penalize the deputy and stated that every six months he ensures the deputies are well-versed in the pursuit policy. Deputies are only penalized when they go outside of policy.
- m) Mr. Bast referenced Captain Spain's earlier mention about stop sticks. Major Yawn gave an example about a pursuit in Kissimmee where stop sticks were used.
- n) Captain Spain turned the floor over to Detective Jason Herrman to present the Internal Investigation summary.

6. NEW BUSINESS:

- a) Detective Jason Herrman presented a review of Internal Investigation 20210025.
- b) On July 26, 2021, Deputy Kyle Gregory engaged in an unauthorized vehicle pursuit. He attempted a traffic stop on a male riding a motorized bicycle in the area of Old Vineland Road and U.S. Highway 192. He positioned his vehicles on the sidewalk and activated his lights to gain the attention of the driver. The driver fled from the traffic stop. He engaged in pursuit of the motorized bicycle on the sidewalk for 0.6 miles, inches away from pedestrians. The driver turned off the sidewalk onto the Shingle Creek trail and Deputy Gregory pursued on foot. He was unable to catch or arrest the perpetrator. Other deputies advised that this vehicle had fled several nights prior.
- c) On July 28, 2021, Deputy Gregory engaged in second unauthorized vehicle pursuit. He observed a vehicle driving recklessly and attempted to initiate a traffic stop but the vehicle turned down North Thacker Avenue. Deputy Gregory observed tail lights but was not sure if it was the same vehicle. He engaged in pursuit down residential streets without activating his emergency equipment in an attempt to identify the vehicle. Deputy Gregory failed to stop at three stop signs, drove through a steady red light, and reached a speed of 105 mph.
- d) On July 20, 2021 Deputy Gabriel Boyers observed a motorized bicycle in the area of Old Vineland Road and U.S. Highway 192. He attempted to catch up to the vehicle to initiate a traffic stop, but the bicycle moved onto the sidewalk before he could activate his emergency lights. Deputy Boyers pursued the motorized bicycle without using his sirens to gain the attention of the driver. The driver turned off the sidewalk onto the Shingle Creek trail, and Deputy Boyers was unable to arrest the subject.
- e) The findings of the internal investigation were sustained.
- f) Deputy Gregory received a suspension of 40 hours and Deputy Boyers received a verbal corrective counseling. Neither were appealed.
- g) Mr. Couch asked how the investigators know the exact time for these events. Detective Herrman answered that the body camera footage provides exact time stamps.
- h) Pastor Thompson inquired as to why the pursuit that took place on July 26th involving Deputy Gregory was not terminated after he called it in. Detective Herrman stated the reason is undetermined. Major Yawn stated that in these cases, the supervisor does not have sufficient information to be able to terminate the pursuit. In this case, the Major stated that Deputy Gregory called it in as "I'm chasing a bicycle eastbound on 192" which does not indicate that this pursuit was in violation of policy. He also clarified that Deputy Gregory received 24 hours suspension, not 40.
- i) Major Yawn added that Deputy Gregory was driving at a speed of 48 mph when going through stop sign. Additionally, as he drove through the stop light, Deputy Gregory accelerated to make it through the light at a speed of 86 mph.
- j) Mr. Acosta asked how long does disciplinary action remain on record. Major Yawn answered five years. Commander Sowles clarified that suspensions lasts on the record for five years, termination lasts for 25 years, and a sustained finding lasts for 3 years.
- k) Captain Spain introduced Jocelyn Hawkins to present a review on Project Lifesaver, an Outreach Services Unit program.
- l) Project Lifesaver Coordinator, Jocelyn Hawkins, presented a PowerPoint on the Project Lifesaver program.
- m) The Project Lifesaver program started at the agency in 2019 and is grant funded.
- n) It is a tracking program for those with cognitive disorders such as Autism Spectrum Disorder, Dementia, Alzheimer's disease, and other related conditions. It utilizes transmitter programming and specialized search teams to locate wandering and missing individuals. Mrs. Hawkins showed the board the bands that are used and explained they stay on the client 24/7.
- o) The bands emit a frequency that is unique to each client.
- p) The requirements to be enrolled in the program include:
 - a. Are an Osceola County resident.
 - b. Have a cognitive disorder.

- c. Show a history or propensity to wander.
 - d. Under 24/7 supervision of a caretaker.
 - e. Should not operate motor vehicles.
- q) In order to enroll in the program, citizens must contact the coordinator by phone or email. This contact information can be found on the Osceola County Sheriff Office's website. The caretaker must fill out an application. Then the coordinator meets with the client, has the caretaker sign an agreement, fits the client with a tracking band, takes their picture, and provides the caretaker with a battery log sheet so that they can test the battery daily to ensure it is working.
 - r) The coordinator changes the battery every 60 days.
 - s) The grant was awarded in January 2020 and will continue to fund the program until November 2022. The program is free of cost to the community. When the grant runs out, they are hoping to be able to collect donations in order to continue funding the program.
 - t) The goal for this program was to obtain 25 clients for the first year, 50 clients by the second year, and 100 clients by the third year. They are currently at 44 clients, with the first client being enrolled in April.
 - u) Numbers can drop due to challenges such as the client moving out of the county, passing away, being admitted into a nursing home, or not complying with program guidelines although they have not encountered this problem.
 - v) Mrs. Hawkins provided board members with contact information for Project Lifesaver.
 - w) The program does not use GPS because it cannot be kept on 24/7 and they can encounter dead zones which inhibit tracking. The benefits of this program are that the band is kept on 24/7.
 - x) Mrs. Hawkins showed the board the colored bands and disks that are used on children, the battery tester, and two types of antennas. She explained that in order to operate the antennas, they put in radio frequency numbers to track clients. She advised that the average search time is 30 minutes and that the agency has engaged in 4 successful searches since April. She informed the board that Project Lifesaver is throughout the United States, Canada, and Australia.
 - y) Pastor Thompson asked if they have closed the loophole with other agencies so that if there is a missing person in their jurisdiction enrolled in the Project Lifesaver program, they will be notified. Mrs. Hawkins advised she provides neighboring agencies with the contact information of clients who live in Kissimmee and Saint Cloud. She also informed the board that Saint Cloud Police Department is working toward buying equipment to conduct searches.
 - z) Chairman McCrimon asked, have the other agencies informed their deputies to contact the Sheriff's Office when there are missing persons apart of Project Lifesaver. Mrs. Hawkins advised that she sends pertinent information to other agencies so that they know to contact the Sheriff's Office.
 - aa) Mr. Bast asked who authorizes whether an individual qualifies for the program. Mrs. Hawkins advised that programs like the Council on Aging have assisted in referring clients. Other referrals come from deputies coming in contact with qualifying citizens.
 - bb) Mr. Bast added that he thinks it's a great program.
 - cc) Mr. Couch added that GPS devices are probably better known than radio frequency devices. Mrs. Hawkins informed the board that the agency conducted research and concluded that Project Lifesaver was the best program due to its benefits.
 - dd) Ms. Campos asked if because it's not GPS programming, the agency is not aware a client is missing until the family calls the Sheriff's Office. Mrs. Hawkins advised that this is why caregivers are required for enrollment and the client is under continuous care and observation. She added that she recommends that caregivers use additional safety measures such as cameras and security systems to monitor and prevent wandering.
 - ee) Mr. Acosta asked if there is a minimum age for kids. Mrs. Hawkins advised that as long as they are able to walk, they can qualify for the program. She added her youngest client is three years old.
 - ff) Captain Spain advised that there is a portal for different clients. If they were to go missing in Osceola County, the agency would be able to find them. He also added that when there is a call involving children or the elderly, the agency uses all resources to search and locate them. This ensures the individuals are found quicker, and that the deputies can get back to normal duties.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- a) No members of the public came forward for public comment.

8. OTHER BUSINESS:

- a) Captain Spain provided the board with a copy of the October 5th recommendation letter for their signature.
- b) Sergeant Nicholson added that Project Lifesaver shares their client tracking numbers and that when clients are on vacation in Osceola County, other agencies and programs can advise the Sheriff's Office. He added that Project Lifesaver uses the tracking code 216 exclusively for Project Lifesaver clients.
- c) There was no other business to address.

9. ADJOURNMENT:

- a) The meeting was adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

10. NEXT MEETING:

- a) Tuesday, January 4, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

Ronald "Fred" McCrimon
Chairman

OCSO Staff Member