

C.A.R.E.S.

SHERIFF MARCOS R. LOPEZ



Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday, March 1, 2022

Time Scheduled: 6:00 P.M. **Started:** 6:03 P.M. **Ended:** 6:46 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: Chaplain Carl Foster

Invocation: Chaplain Carl Foster

1. INTRODUCTION:

A. Sergeant Nicholson turned the floor over to Chairman McCrimon to call the meeting to order.

2. CALL TO ORDER:

A. Chairman McCrimon called the meeting to order at 6:03 P.M.

3. ROLL CALL: Completed by: Sergeant Nicholson

Committee Members

Present:

Mr. Ronald "Fred" McCrimon, Mr. David Couch, Mr. Owen McCurty,
Pastor Leonard Thompson, Mr. Hector Acosta

Committee Members

Absent:

Ms. Lissette Campos, Mr. Michael Bast

Speakers and
Presenters:

Sergeant Michael Hernandez, Detective Jason Herrman, Ms. Michelle
DiStefano

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- A. Chairman McCrimon asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the February 1st C.A.R.E.S. meeting. He chose to postpone approval of minutes for the next meeting due to the absence of some board members.
- B. Sergeant Nicholson asked if Chairman McCrimon would like to wait to sign the Letter of Recommendation for January's meeting. The Chairman chose to wait until the next meeting.

5. HOUSEKEEPING AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- A. Chairman McCrimon turned the floor over to Sergeant Nicholson to cover any housekeeping items.
- B. Sergeant Nicholson turned the floor over to Sergeant Michael Hernandez to present S.T.E.P. Enforcement data that was requested in the previous meeting.
- C. Sergeant Hernandez reviewed the data from previous S.T.E.P. Enforcement Operations.
 - 1. Nine deputies conducted an operation on Pleasant Hill Road December 13th and 14th, 2021. They conducted 166 traffic stops, wrote 69 speeding citations, 21 aggressive citations, nine seatbelt citations, five uninsured vehicle citations, 34 non-moving citations, 11 moving citations and 70 written warnings. They had a total of 226 citations and 3 felony arrests.
 - 2. On January 12th and 14th, 2021 deputies completed a traffic operation with the assistance of Saint Cloud Police Department. They conducted 260 traffic stops, wrote 116 speeding citations, one aggressive citation, 11 seatbelt citations, two uninsured vehicle citations, 48 non-moving citations, 16 moving citations, five criminal citations, and 139 written warnings. They had a total of 391 citations and one felony arrest. Additionally, they seized a motorcycle.
 - 3. Chairman McCrimon asked why the motorcycle was seized. Sergeant Hernandez answered the motorcycle was seized because the offender was fleeing to elude.
 - 4. On February 15th and 16th, 2021, deputies completed a traffic operation on Nova Road in conjunction with Saint Cloud Police Department. They wrote 204 citations, 136 warnings, and made one arrest.
 - 5. 14 S.T.E.P. operations were conducted on Poinciana Boulevard from January 1st to February 20th, 2022. They wrote 67 citations and 30 warnings.
 - 6. 7 S.T.E.P. operations were conducted on Narcoossee Road. They wrote 29 citations and nine warnings.
 - 7. Six S.T.E.P. operations were conducted on Great Oaks Boulevard. They wrote 50 citations and gave 8 warnings.
 - 8. 13 S.T.E.P. operations were conducted on Nova Road. They wrote 15 citations and gave four warnings.
 - 9. Chairman McCrimon asked what S.T.E.P. is? Sergeant Hernandez answered it stands for Selective Traffic Enforcement Program.
 - 10. Mr. Couch asked what the violation is when the kids are racing in and out of traffic. Sergeant Hernandez answered racing is a separate offense. If they are the owner of the vehicle, the driver can be arrested for racing or have their car seized or towed after 30 days. Constitutes as aggressive driving.
 - 11. Mr. Couch asked what constitutes as reckless driving. Sergeant Hernandez answered aggressive driving must meet two of at least six elements to constitute as reckless driving. Reckless driving includes a complete disregard for civilians, not just speeding itself.
 - 12. Pastor Thompson asked whether these operations are conducted during the daytime. Sergeant Hernandez answered not all of them are. The times vary. For example, they have an upcoming operation that will take place from 4:00 P.M. to midnight.

13. Pastor Thompson asked if there were any DUIs. Sergeant Hernandez answered the data he presented did not include any DUI arrest.
14. Mr. Couch advised that Liberty High School has an issue with speeding. Sergeant Hernandez responded they receive many complaints from schools, however, it is difficult to address the number of complaints therefore they work with patrol.
15. Sergeant Nicholson advised that another method they utilize to collect data are speed trailers.
16. Chairman McCrimon asked what the difference between Zero Tolerance and S.T.E.P. enforcement is. Sergeant Hernandez answered Zero Tolerance operations include multiple units including CID, K9, Traffic, and Motors. Zero Tolerance operations look for any criminal activity whereas S.T.E.P. focuses on traffic.
17. Sergeant Nicholson asked whether the board wanted to review Old Business from the previous meeting. Chairman opted to review during the next meeting.

6. NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Detective Jason Herrman presented a review of Internal Investigation 2021-0038 on Communications Supervisor Steven Gordon.
 1. Supervisor Gordon failed to enter a fire alarm call due to the fire alarm company having the incorrect address for the property.
 2. He exhibited unacceptable behavior such as inappropriate outbursts and yelling and cursing toward coworkers.
 3. There was an instance where Supervisor Gordon spoke negatively toward a coworker in front of other team members.
 4. The allegation of unsatisfactory performance and unbecoming conduct was sustained. Supervisor Gordon received a written reprimand and declined the appeals process.
 5. Chairman McCrimon asked what the punishment was. Detective Herrman answered supervisor Gordon received a written reprimand.
 6. Mr. Acosta advised that from his military experience, while reading the Internal Investigation summary he noted that Supervisor Gordon exhibited behavior consistent with PTSD. Detective Herrman answered there are lines in the summary that are redacted, and they cannot release medical information.
 7. Chairman McCrimon asked if Supervisor Gordon received any additional training being that it was not his first time exhibiting negative behavior.
 8. Chairman McCrimon added that when a supervisor is causing problems from outside the agency and inside the agency, they should receive additional training and follow up for the benefit of himself and his coworkers. Sergeant Nicholson advised that this suggestion should be included in the Recommendation Letter to the Sheriff.
 9. Detective Herrman answered those issues were addressed with his supervisor.
 10. Chairman McCrimon added that after constantly receiving that treatment employees might believe that it is normal to be treated that way by a supervisor.
 11. Mr. Acosta noted that the unit was short-handed and asked if that was addressed. Detective Herrman answered that he cannot speak to the recruiting and hiring process. Mr. Acosta noted that from his experience he has witnessed similar behavior from supervisors as a result of being short-handed and the tension would be eased if the issue were addressed.
 12. Mr. Couch added that Internal Affairs cannot address that issue.
 13. Sergeant Nicholson advised that they are recruiting dispatchers, but due to the typing tests, training, and other factors during the hiring process, often they choose not to stay. He also advised that the Sheriff has deputies that have been trained in dispatch providing assistance. Additionally, they have hired Nancy Rosado who is initiating a Peer Support Program to help employees through difficult times and experiences.

14. Mr. Couch asked whether dispatchers are still doing 12-hour shifts. Sergeant Nicholson answered yes, and their shifts rotate every four months.
 15. Mr. Couch added that he read a study on the stress these shifts cause dispatchers. Sergeant Nicholson advised that the dispatchers were given the option to change their shifts, however they voted to keep rotating shifts.
- B. Sergeant Nicholson turned the floor over to Michelle DiStefano to present a PowerPoint on how to submit a public records request:
1. All records are open to the public however, there are exceptions since they are working with active criminal records.
 2. Any person may request a public record.
 3. In the state of Florida, there are 1,159 exemptions that range from information in personnel files, active investigations, and information pertaining to juveniles. Florida has the most open access to records compared to other states aside from California.
 4. There are multiple reasons records are redacted. As per Marsy's Law, victims of any crimes have the right for their information to remain private. Additionally, the information of victims of child abuse, sex crimes, juvenile records, active investigations, and emergency 9-11 records remain private. However, if it is a felony, the juvenile's info can be released.
 5. This past January, the Sheriff's Office implemented a portal for residents to request and receive public records. Residents can make payments online. Since the beginning of the year 1,570 requests have been made, including 35 just today. Most requests are made through the portal.
 6. There is an option to register an account or make an anonymous request through the Public Records Center. Residents can communicate through email if they make an account. If they are anonymous, they still can communicate but they must remember their reference number and continue to sign in periodically.
 7. Mr. McCurdy added if someone makes an anonymous request but pays with a card, they're no longer anonymous. Ms. DiStefano advised that anonymous requestors could use a prepaid card, send someone else to pay, etc.
 8. Requests may be closed without the requestor receiving info. This is because no records exist, the requestor has failed to make a payment within the 30-day window, or clarification was requested, and the requestor failed to respond within the 30-day window. Once a request is closed, the requestor must make a new submission.
 9. Chairman McCrimon asked how many employees are working on public record requests. Ms. DiStefano answered there are four with one working on videos.
 10. Another reason a requestor may not receive a record is because it does not exist. It may be from another jurisdiction or agency.
 11. There are fees to obtain a public record. Florida State Statute 119.07 allows them to charge service fee for public records. If they are paper copies, they can charge up to 15 cents per page. They may charge \$1 per certified copy. Time consuming requests such as Body Worn Camera footage are charged at an hourly rate.
 12. The timeframe to complete a request depends on the request being made. Additionally, by standard they can decline standing requests if the request is for a future event that has not been reported.
 13. If a staff member requests ID, you are not obligated to provide it.
 14. Requests can be made in person, over the phone, through the mail, or through fax, however, it is recommended to use the new portal on osceolasheriff.org.
 15. Mr. Acosta asked how many reports were processed last year. Ms. DiStefano answered that question would be better suited for Process and Coding. To her knowledge there have been

1,300 incident numbers through the agency. *Correction to the number of incident reports received by the agency, there were over 130,000 incidents received. *

16. Mr. Acosta asked if they have seen an increase in requests since using the new portal. Ms. DiStefano answered that there has not necessarily been an increase. They received many requests through email prior to implementing the new portal. Now residents have more options.
17. Chairman McCrimon asked if they receive requests from attorneys, or unreasonable requests. Ms. DiStefano answered they will receive the redacted version if they request from the Sheriff's Office however, the defense can make requests from the State Attorney's Office.
18. Chairman McCrimon clarified he was asking what is considered reasonable or unreasonable. Ms. DiStefano answered if there are no exemptions, they are obligated to release it.
19. Pastor Thompson asked for clarification whether there were 1,573 requests. Ms. DiStefano answered yes there were.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- A. No members of the audience wanted to come forward for public comments.
- B. Sergeant Nicholson advised there was a member of the audience during tonight's meeting who attended as a result of advertising during the Fair and Rodeo. He advised the board that there have been numerous endeavors to advertise CARES meetings.

8. OTHER BUSINESS:

- A. There was no other business to address.

9. ADJOURNMENT:

- A. The meeting was adjourned at 6:46 p.m.

10. NEXT MEETING:

- A. Tuesday, April 5, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

Ronald "Fred" McCrimon
Chairman

OCSO Staff Member