

C.A.R.E.S.

SHERIFF MARCOS R. LOPEZ



Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday, April 5, 2022

Time Scheduled: 6:00 P.M. **Started:** 6:00 P.M. **Ended:** 7:06 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 Manuel Ortega

Invocation: Chaplain Manuel Ortega

1. INTRODUCTION:

2. CALL TO ORDER:

A. Chairman McCrimon called the meeting to order at 6:02 P.M.

3. ROLL CALL: Completed by: Captain James Spain

Committee Members

Present:

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

Committee Members

Absent:

Mr. Hector Acosta

Speakers and

Presenters:

Detective James Forgey, Deputy Benjamin Coleson, Sergeant Joel
Nicholson

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- A. Mr. Couch made a motion to approve the minutes from the February and March meetings. Pastor Thompson seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

5. HOUSEKEEPING AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- A. Captain Spain requested approval of the Letter of Recommendation Memorandum from the January meeting.
- B. Captain Spain asked the board to discuss and review the Rivera-Aguilar Internal Affairs Investigation summary and Required Training for Sworn presentation from the February meeting.
- C. Chairman McCrimon requested a synopsis of the Rivera-Aguilar IA. Captain Spain explained the complaint pertained to a deputy harassing the complainant. Detective James Forgey advised the investigation was found to be exonerated.
- D. Mr. Couch asked what recommendations the board can make pertaining to Internal Affairs investigations. Captain Spain answered the board can offer suggestions or advise if they think we might have missed something.
- E. Mr. Couch expressed he doesn't understand why the board is presented Internal Affairs summaries. Captain Spain answered it is Sheriff Marcos Lopez's goal to maintain transparency with the public and show that deputies are held accountable for their actions.
- F. The board had no suggestions for Required Training for Sworn.
- G. Captain Spain asked the board to review and discuss the Internal Investigation summary on Supervisor Steven Gordon and Public Records Request and Redaction Process from the March meeting. The board had no suggestions to offer.
- H. Chairman McCrimon expressed there is no discussion because there was confidential information in the summary. So, the board cannot make recommendations without a full scope of the situation.
- I. Sergeant Nicholson clarified there was information redacted to not violate HIPPA.
- J. Chairman McCrimon commented that he saw on the news the Sheriff's Office is removing dashcams in the patrol vehicles. Captain Spain said he could look into this as he did not have accurate information and that if the board would like additional information, he would try to obtain it.

6. NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Captain Spain turned the floor over to Detective James Forgey to present IA 2022-0003 on Deputy Ortiz-Gotay.
1. On December 28, 2021, a complaint was received from a citizen against a deputy. The complainant alleged the deputy followed her to her residence in Orange County driving a civilian vehicle and wearing plain clothes.
 2. The deputy confronted her about her driving.
 3. She entered her residence to avoid confrontation and noted there were several Orlando Police officers outside. She then saw the same deputy (believed to be Deputy Ortiz-Gotay) present but in an Osceola Sheriff marked vehicle.
 4. The complainant alleged the deputy posted negative things on Nextdoor app with her personal information.
 5. The Orlando Police Department Program footage was reviewed.
 6. The administrative charge of Unbecoming Conduct was sustained. The deputy received an eight-hour suspension.
 7. Pastor Thompson asked if the complaint regarding the posts on the Nextdoor app was verified. Detective Forgey answered it was not. Pastor Thompson asked if the complaint had any effect on the discipline. Detective Forgey answered it did not.
 8. Mr. Bast added that the summary included that the complainant claimed she had video evidence but never produced it. Detective Forgey answered that footage was never produced, however there were several body worn camera videos. Mr. Bast asked if he was demoted. Detective Forgey answered he was not.

- B. Captain Spain turned the floor over to Sergeant Nicholson to conduct a presentation on the V.I.C.T.O.R. Board and the Outreach Services Unit. The unit is comprised of several programs including C.A.R.E.S., V.I.C.T.O.R., Elderly Services, Safe Place, Project E.A.S.E., Veteran's Outreach, Crisis Response, Project Lifesaver, and P.A.L.
1. We are currently working on Emergency Access Safe Entry (E.A.S.E.), a lockbox program to provide emergency personnel access to the residence of elderly persons and those with limited to no mobility in the case of an emergency.
 2. Mr. Bast asked if it includes apartments and condos. Sergeant Nicholson answered yes but they require the landlord's approval. Mr. Bast asked what if the landlord says no. Sergeant Nicholson answered they cannot be a part of the program.
 3. Mr. Couch asked who they can contact to be a part of the program. Sergeant Nicholson answered they can contact the Elderly Services Unit or call the non-emergency line and a deputy will refer them. There is also an Outreach Services email address.
 4. Safe Place- members of the LGBTQ can go to Safe Place businesses if they need assistance of Law Enforcement.
 5. Pastor Thompson asked whether this program targets the LGBTQ community. Sergeant Nicholson answered it doesn't target members of LGBTQ, but works in a partnership with those member. Pastor Thompson asked why any business wouldn't be a safe place. Sergeant Nicholson stated that some businesses may not be accepting to members of the LGBTQ community which is why the program was initiated.
 6. Ms. Campos asked why we are singling out that group. Sergeant Nicholson answered that the program was adopted from Orange County who established the program after Pulse.
 7. Mr. Bast asked what kind of criminal activity. Sergeant Nicholson answered any criminal activity. Members of the LGBTQ can face hostility based on discrimination.
 8. Pastor Thompson advised he believes this program further separates society and is more negative than positive.
 9. Mr. Bast added there is too much emphasis on separating each other.
 10. Pastor Thompson advised he does not believe the program is necessary. It is common sense that you can enter any business and ask for help.
 11. Mr. McCurdy added we already experience division in society, and he sees the value of the program. He added there is more to the program they aren't aware of.
 12. Mr. Thompson expressed that this is segregating members of society. He added that if someone needed help and ran into a business, they would not be aware if that person was part of the LGBTQ.
 13. Sergeant Nicholson advised members of the LGBTQ are hesitant to interact with law enforcement. For example, they spoke to a citizen from California expressed he felt his interactions with law enforcement were more positive in Osceola County. The goal is to create harmony between the LGBTQ and law enforcement. The sticker symbolizes those businesses are okay with LGBTQ members and helping them until law enforcement arrives.
 14. Ms. Campos believes the program creates more division in the community and is going back in history.
 15. Chairman McCrimon added that he understands the intent of the program but still believes it is divisive. You can't single out anyone. A safe place should be for anyone who needs assistance.
 16. Mr. Couch advised that the program does not include anything about race. He has extended family who are in that situation. They could go into a prejudice place and can potentially be discriminated against. The program costs little to no money and signifies that the business is a safe place. Anyone could go in there for help.
 17. Pastor Thompson added if one business has it and other next door doesn't, it creates idea that the other business is prejudice. It also created the idea the agency is specially catering to that group. There are people who are prejudice to Hispanics, so will Hispanics have

- one? Pastor Thompson advised to take out the colors and the wording should be inclusive to everyone. Why is there not a warning against criminal activity for everyone.
18. Sergeant Nicholson asked if they would like to include these suggestions in the Letter of Recommendation to the Sheriff.
 19. Pastor Thompson believes this is more for publicity. He does not think it is a good reason to implement this program just because Orange County has it. Sergeant Nicholson answered this practice not uncommon in Law enforcement. Agencies often adopt similar ideas from each other such as training programs, etc.
 20. Mr. Couch added that businesses without the stickers could be targeted for being prejudice and suggested they take out the colors.
 21. Ms. Campos added we need to create more unity in the community.
 22. Mr. McCurty asked how we can create more unity. Suggested more information be gathered on the program. Expressed he saw data on the news that shows the value of the program.
 23. Chairman McCrimon asked if the board can be provided the data.
 24. Mr. Bast asked if he runs into a business for help, what are they going to do. Sergeant Nicholson answered they will call 911 and some businesses will lock doors.
 25. Mr. Bast added more thought needs to be put into how to promote it.
 26. Pastor Thompson added that the Sheriff can read the minutes to see their recommendations.
 27. Chairman McCrimon made a motion for Sheriff to further review program. Ms. Campos seconded the motion.
 28. Chairman McCrimon advised he believed the school district has a similar program. Sergeant Nicholson advised that they have a Safe Haven program to make safe child exchanges.
 29. Pastor Thompson made a motion to send recommendation letter to the Sheriff and move onto the next topic.
 30. Mr. McCurty advised the program started in 2015 in Seattle and has been rolled out throughout the country.
 31. Police Athletic League (P.A.L.)- Intended to build and foster relationships with youth in the community through sports. It is a new program coordinated by Deputy Fournier.
 32. Ms. Campos asked what ages can participate. Sergeant Nicholson answered different ages depending on tournament. The basketball tournament they are planning for the summer will be for ages 11-14.
 33. Pastor Thompson asked if the program is run through the schools. Sergeant Nicholson answered no, it is run through the agency. Pastor Thompson asked where the youth are from. Sergeant Nicholson answered they are trying to get them from the schools. Anyone is welcome to join but they are currently using schools as avenue to advertise for the summer unveil. Pastor Thompson asked if it is open to every kid are those already involved in athletics. Sergeant Nicholson answered it is open to every kid. The idea is to foster relationships with law enforcement.
 34. Chairman McCrimon added from his understanding P.A.L. is a league of their own and asked if Kissimmee and Saint Cloud involved Police Department are involved. Sergeant Nicholson answered not now. A lot of P.A.L. programs are not run through the agency and are a separate entity.
 35. Pastor Thompson asked if the program is operated by the Sheriff's Office. Sergeant Nicholson answered yes.
 36. V.I.C.T.O.R.- Veterans Initiating Change Through an Organized Response- A board for veterans helping veterans. Sergeant Nicholson invited Deputy Ben Coleson to speak about V.I.C.T.O.R. and Veteran's Services.

37. Deputy Ben Coleson introduced himself as the Veteran's Service deputy. His responsibilities include taking calls from patrol and conducting follow up with them day to day using VA and Osceola County resources to help them.
 38. Chairman McCrimon asked if there are other Veteran's Service officers and if he responds to every veteran related call. Deputy Ben Coleson answered there are no other Veteran's Service deputies and if he can respond he will but if not, he will provide them with resources.
 39. Sergeant Nicholson advised of their Crisis Response Team composed of a deputy certified in Crisis Response and licensed clinician. Intended to build a rapport with citizens and conduct follow up.
 40. Pastor Thompson asked if the V.I.C.T.O.R. board similar and are all panel members veterans. Sergeant Nicholson answered yes, they are similar, and they are all veterans. The initial three members were selected and the other four were chosen by a panel of the three.
 41. Mr. Bast asked could a veteran be Baker Acted. Sergeant Nicholson answered yes, depending on the criteria. The VA will take them and get them to the proper resources.
 42. Elderly services- Composed of Lisa Heard and Thomas Rios. They investigate non-criminal elderly services cases. Can provide various resources and determine best avenue to assist elderly citizens.
 43. Mr. Couch asked if there is a mental health counselor for the deputies. Sergeant Nicholson answered yes, Nancy Rosado.
- C. Captain Spain took the floor and further explained the programs.
1. The V.I.C.T.O.R. board can review calls pertaining to veterans and they can provide resources we can use. They are looking into helping veterans through donations.
 2. We are creating a resource guide for patrol deputies. If the board has any resources, they can provide them
 3. He shared there were 111 substance abuse related deaths last year.
 4. If deputies deploy Narcan, the Crisis Response Team will be assigned the case for follow-up. Park Place clinicians' will be partnered with deputy. If they are out in the field they will respond. If not, they will do follow up.
 5. Mr. Bast asked for clarification about the drug related death statistics. Mr. Bast advised these statistics should be publicized to show that programs are successful. Captain Spain advised they keep track of statistics using a stat sheet.
 6. Chairman McCrimon asked to discuss whether they should change meeting schedule for every two or three months or quarterly.
 7. Pastor Thompson asked what the Sheriff's Office position is. Captain Spain answered according to policy the board is required to meet monthly.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- A. There were no members of the public who came forward for public comment.

8. OTHER BUSINESS:

- A. No other business.

9. ADJOURNMENT:

- A. The meeting was adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

10. NEXT MEETING:

- A. Tuesday, May 3, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

Chairman