



**MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE TOWN OF CAREFREE  
PUBLIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

WHEN: WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 6th, 2021  
WHERE: VIA ZOOM \*  
TIME: 1:30 P.M.

*Members of the Public Safety Advisory Committee participated by technological or methods pursuant to §A.R.S. 38-431(4).*

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Chairperson - Leslie Hine  
Vice Chairperson - Philip Henn  
Sheila Amoroso  
Peter Burns  
Scott Peterson  
Kim Taha  
Jerry Wetta  
Anton Wilke

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

None

Chairperson Hine opened the meeting at 1:30 pm.

**AGENDA ITEM #1.** Approval of the Public Safety Advisory Committee meeting minutes dated August 2, 2021, minutes.

Committee Member Burns **MOVED TO APPROVE** the Minutes as amended with the discussed changes. **SECONDED** by Committee Member Henn. **CARRIED, 6-1**  
Chairperson Hine ABSTAINED.

Town Administrator Gary Neiss started the meeting by providing an update of Rural Metro project costs. Mr. Neiss explained that the original projection was approximately 1.95million dollars for each of the first three years and had the possibility of increasing in years four and five (due to future labor contract). Mr. Neiss asked Rural Metro to review the initial Carefree/Rural Metro fire agreement in efforts to determine a lower cost. Upon review, Rural Metro determined new figures and reduced the cost projections to 1.859 million during year one, with an incremental increase (with the inflationary index of two and a half percent), over a five-year period. In the final year of the five year contract the cost would be \$2,051,988.18.

Chairperson Hine stated for the record that numbers and figures are subject to change based on the contract negotiation process.

**AGENDA ITEM #2.** – Presentation of Carefree’s current Law Enforcement services and the Maricopa County Sherriff’s Office.

Town Administrator Neiss explained the presented material is intended to outline a high-level overview of Carefree’s Law Enforcement and on a later date, MCSO will provide an extensive presentation to the committee.

Mr. Neiss explained that there are multiple entities who contract with MCSO for law enforcement services (including Carefree and Cave Creek). Mr. Neiss stated that these communities’ contract out with MCSO to have access to the Department diverse law enforcement services at a fraction of the price if these communities independently created their own law enforcement service. For example, the Town of Paradise Valley, a community like Carefree has an operation budget which does not include capital improvements for their own police department of approximately \$9 million. Using this figure, based upon Carefree’s population that would equate to an annual operation budget for a Carefree police department more than \$2.3 million. By comparison, the current MCSO contract is for \$476,000 (or \$127.81 per capita).

Mr. Neiss explained to the committee, that the Public Safety Committee will not be tasked with the determination of who will provide law enforcement services to Carefree. Instead, the committee will be asked to determine if the current level of service is adequate for the

Town of Carefree and if not, what should the levels of services entail in the future and how will any increase in costs be covered?

Town Administrator Neiss presented the Committee with data depicting the highest service calls by initiated by the public which included false burglar alarms, welfare check, audible burglar alarms, and deputy-initiated responses such as, traffic violations, neighborhood patrol, traffic control etc.

Mr. Neiss continued to explain, that overall, the Town of Carefree is a safe community with a low criminal activity rate. Most Deputy response calls pertain to traffic violations, neighborhood patrols, and false alarms.

Concerned Carefree residents regularly complain about traffic speeds and express their desire for a greater patrol presence within the neighborhoods.

In conclusion, Mr. Neiss provided a series of questions and next steps to help the Committee prepare for the upcoming meeting.

Chairperson Hine invited the Committee to ask questions pertaining to the MCSO overview.

Committee Member Amoroso asked, how many Sherriff's Deputies are dedicated to Town of Carefree.

Mr. Neiss explained that the Town has a total of .3 Beats. Each Beat is comprised of 5 officers, therefore the Town had 1.5 officers per shift dedicated to the Town of Carefree. Additionally, Carefree receives 24-hour service through a variety of resources such as Lake Patrol, the Town of Cave Creek, and the County Island.

Committee Member Burns asked if there's a penalty in place for false alarm calls.

Mr. Neiss explained originally, the Town had a penalty for repeat false alarm calls. Many years ago, the Town Council at that time determined that false alarm penalties for repeat violators was not fair and therefore, at that time they chose to eliminate the penalty. Mr. Neiss continued to explain that it is common for communities to have commercial and

residential licensing requirements which encourages the residents to annually maintain their alarm systems and mitigate the numbers of false alarm calls which reduces the availability of Deputies that maybe responding to this false alarm. It is also common for a Town to charge more than \$15.00 fine per false alarm with a price escalation for multiple false alarms.

Committee Member Amoroso asked if the Town generates revenue from traffic ticket violations.

Mr. Neiss responded by saying that the judicial system is not set up to generate revenue. 2/3 of the revenue generated, from a citation goes to the state and the county to help offset the cost of the judicial system. The other third of the funds collected, covers the expenses associated with the software required to process the citations as well as the administrative staffing costs.

Committee Member Peterson asked Mr. Neiss, if the Town of Carefree discussed the option to add traffic bumps.

Mr. Neiss explained that the Town has experimented over the years with a variety of options, in efforts to address traffic concerns throughout Carefree. After numerous attempts to reduce speed, the Town concluded that speed bumps effectively reduce speed in parking lots and residential neighborhoods but create nuisances such as loud noises from delivery and service vehicles regularly traveling the public streets.

Chairperson Hine asked if the Town of Carefree had an Engineer who could study Traffic Calming Solutions.

Mr. Neiss explained, currently there is a consulting firm studying the downtown area as part of the redevelopment plan that was done in 2015. The study focuses on ways to reduce the traffic speeds to help the pedestrians safely across the street at Tom Darlington and Cave Creek Road.

Chairperson Hine asked Mr. Neiss to explain how the Town of Carefree funds the MCSO program.

Mr. Neiss explained that the funding for law enforcement comes from the General Fund, which is funded by sales tax and state shared revenue. Mr. Neiss continued to state that the price for law enforcement services is fixed but will continue to increase as the cost of staffing, insurance, equipment, vehicles, and the level of service continues to increase.

AGENDA ITEM #3 – Review and Discussion of the most recent draft of Committee Recommendations regarding Town fire services.

Chairperson Hine and the Committee discussed the most recent draft version of the Public Safety Recommendation Language to be presented to Town Council. Committee members provided insights and recommendations to further refine the draft document.

Chairperson Hine asked participants for insights on the most effective way to present the final recommendations to the Council. There was general agreement to proceed with recommended language as presented to Committee during the meeting. Comments were captured in the document and the next version will include this input.

Chairperson Hine asked the committee if they should pause the drafting of the recommendation document until they have a better understanding on the impact of the integration of law enforcement. Town Administrator Neiss confirmed that there was no urgent deadline for the Committee's presentation to Town Council and the specific content of the report can be determined at a later date.

Town Administrator Neiss suggested the Committee report to include a more specific recommendation for Carefree to apply Automatic Aid when it is financially and practically possible to do so.

Chairperson Hine asked the committee for final thoughts or requests for the next agenda.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:24 p.m.