

Safety & Justice Roundtable
Dec. 19, 2007, 7:30 am
921 Boonville Ave., Springfield, MO

MINUTES

Roundtable members present: Mike Ramon, Jill Elsey-Stoner, John Crow, Ron Baird, George Templeton, Bob Cirtin, Robert Spence, Jean Twitty, Jim Cook, Matt O'Reilly, Jim Huntsinger, John Holstein, Bernie McCarthy, Mark Skrade, Brad Stokes.

Roundtable members absent: Steve Ijames, Stephanie Montgomery,

Others present: Dave Coonrod, Harold Bengsch, Roseann Bentley, Tom Carlson, Bob Cumley, Evelyn Honea, Collin Quigley, Cindy Stein, Lynn Rowe, Johnnie Burgess, Jack Merritt, Darrell Moore, Don Burrell, Perry Epperly, Rod Hackathorn, Tom Van de Berg, Deana Farley, Jeff Reinold, Kathy McReynolds, Jenny Edwards, Mike Brothers, Maria Saavedra (KY3) and KY3 photographer.

1. Welcome from Dave Coonrod and Bob Cumley:

Dave Coonrod:

Stressed the importance of the subject at hand and thanked the group for its time today and during the process to come. There is no timetable. We are simply looking at the situation and determining what the best course should be for the system as a whole.

Bob Cumley: Mayor Carlson will be arriving late- thanks on behalf of city.

2. Proposed Charge to Roundtable

Roseann Bentley: This is why we originally thought we needed this group (read proposed charge:)

“The Safety & Justice Roundtable is charged with developing a comprehensive understanding of the community’s criminal justice system through studying the interconnectivity of all departments and offices within that system, identifying and prioritizing needs within the system and recommending solutions to address those needs. The Roundtable will coordinate with the public information offices of the City of Springfield and Greene County in posting meeting schedules and agendas, as well as fulfilling requests for documents and speakers, keeping minutes and preparing the final report to be presented to the Greene County Commission and mayors of Springfield and Greene County municipalities.”

3. Roundtable introductions

Robert Spence: Roundtable responsibilities will include prioritizing needs, and to try to offer a report for the entire committee, could recommend funding sources. But as we move through we are not working with a specific deadline.

Jean Twitty: Delighted to serve, hope we can help the community learn more about the issues and be educated about them

Self- introductions of Roundtable members

4. Introductions of public safety and criminal justice officials

Harold Bengsch introduced officials present

5. Comments from officials

Bensch speaking for Becky Jungman: Group may tour 911.

Chief Rowe: As city has grown it has resulted in tremendous demand for increase on part of SPD, double digit crime growth, above 10 percent over last year, more weapons, drugs, shootings involved which we haven't had in the past. Capital needs continue to increase, fleet is aging. 97 was last successful tax increase. In dire need of add staff and other resources.

Johnnie Burgess: Office of 4 attorneys process more than 50,000 cases each year. Addressed what he believes are quality of life issues: traffic, safety, drugs. While some think of them as minor crimes, they have a serious impact on comm. The MC facility is aging and cramped. Doing a lot with less funding.

Jack Merritt: Thanked the group for this review. Rise of crime along with population increase. Subdivisions are springing up, officers patrol these new areas. Personnel is the greatest cost for Sheriff's Dept. The jail is probably the most significant part. Booking more than 20k inmates a year. Welcomed group to come tour the jail, population averages between 520 and 550. When state funding has been reduced, it adds a burden to the jail and SD.

Darrell Moore: Case load since 1998 has increased 151 percent in terms of felonies. With 39 FT attorneys they are the largest law firm in the county. 2003 sales tax failed and had to look at case load because of this. Has taken on career criminals rather than smaller crimes, city taken over misdemeanors in the city. Welcomed group to tour their facility. Technology: next year they will go paperless. Laptops will replace piles of files. Would appreciate any public policy input this group might have because he has tried to make decisions based on what he believes the community would want.

Mayor Carlson: (arrived late) Welcome to the board. Problems are systemic and these issues start when kids are young and grow throughout their lives. Preventative measures can be key. This approach is a welcome one – looking at the whole system as a group and

understanding each of its parts. If we don't do this thoroughly, the public will be aware of that. Public safety is paramount in public service. Thanked the group for its service.

Don Burrell: Kalmanoff report showed that each part of the system is in its own compartment and doesn't always see the other parts and how it all works together. Greene County is right up there at the top of the need in terms of numbers. We have time and space problems. Takes too long to get cases through the system. Needs to be in the six-month range, but is way beyond that. Need more resources to provide defense council for everyone that needs it. Hope to hire a business manager (courts administrator) to help carry on the work of the courts.

Perry Epperly: Juvenile is in the process of a cultural change now. It's their intention and effort to build an excellent system. Deal with two types of behaviors: conduct of the child, and conduct of their caretakers. Currently there are 800 children in foster care because their parents were found to be unfit. 60 percent removed because of substance abuse problems. Programs are home-grown and designed for Greene County. Welcomed the group to look at their operations and facilities.

Rod Hackathorn: Office of the Public Defender: represents those who are indigent. Currently have 18 attorneys and 8 support staff, not only for cases in Greene but Taney and Christian counties as well. We are very well overwhelmed. Each attorney has 150 to 200 open cases – that is unmanageable. State funded, but important to get word out at local level because they are in bad need of resources. State does not intend to increase staff, which in this situation could affect people's rights and the speed of due process. Looking at a year to two years out for a trial in a serious felony case.

Harold Bengsch: Additional Resource staff available to the SJR includes:

Jeff Reinold_ County budget officer
Cindy Stein – County auditor
Evelyn Honea – Deputy City Manager
Collin Quigley – Assistant City Manager
Deana Farley – Municipal court
Jenny Fillmer Edwards – County PIO
Mike Brothers – City PIO

6. Played Greene County Law Enforcement video

7. Co-chair closing remarks

Mr. Spence: Information has shown the need for depth of research. Want the committee to look at the whole system. He wants the group to make visits to as many sites as possible to help drill down into the issue. Hope to convene again in January with a more focused direction. Communication will be done electronically. Stressed again that there is no time limit.

Ms. Twitty: A process like this, we come with our own views, opinions and biases. Encourage you to take your own notes and see the meetings through your own eyes. Please submit your own personal recommendations for how business should be conducted during the process.

Meeting adjourned.

(Minutes taken by Mike Brothers)