

**San Marcos Police Department
Chief's Combined Advisory Panel Minutes
10/25/18**

SMPD Members

Eric Charleswell
Brenda C. Pisana
Jesse Saavedra
Chase Stapp
Jessica Todd
Karen Zavala

Citizen Members

Meghan Hollis
Olivia Juarez Reid
Nathaniel Kindred
Marianne Moore
Gary Pack
Antonio Palacios

The meeting of the San Marcos Police Department Chief's Combined Advisory Panel was called to order at 5:40 p.m. on October 25, 2018. Karen Zavala and Jesse Saavedra were absent.

Chief Stapp opened the meeting with an introduction of Detective Patrick Aubry who presented a case briefing on a series of bank robberies in San Marcos and the surrounding area. The most recent robbery was of the Bank of America on April 28, 2018. The briefing included discussion and question/answer period about how detectives and FBI agents were able to solve several of the robberies.

Chief Stapp provided information on the following:

- Building renovation project continues to move forward with the selection of an architect firm near. The selection committee reviewed 10 quotes, reduced the pool to four, and hopes to hire the firm in December. Ground-breaking should be in late spring.
- The FY19 budget included two new positions for the PD: one School Resource Officer (SRO) assigned to Lamar campus and one Narcotics detective. The SRO position was funded to begin October 2018 and the Narcotics detective was funded mid-year (April 2019). Chief Stapp explained the operational benefit of adding a new Narcotics detective since almost all homicides in San Marcos have been related to drug crimes.
- The Fourth Quarter FY 2018 management report was distributed and discussed. Calls for service were on a downward trend which seemed unusual with the population increase. Dr. Hollis explained that she had reviewed the data and it seemed to be on a normal trajectory and was likely a statistical anomaly. Members of the committee found this report informative and helpful.

- Blue Santa wrapping sessions will begin on Tuesday, November 13, 2018, at 7:00 p.m. and will continue each Tuesday until Christmas. This is a very popular PD program as we served 1,800 families last year.
- The Parking Mobility program will begin in the near future. This program allows citizens to report handicap parking violations which will then be reviewed by the PD. If the violation is legitimate, the PD will issue a citation. Citizens who participate in the program must first complete a brief training program and they are not permitted to interact with drivers. They can only document the violation. Update – this program is now live.
- Chief Stapp explained Senate Bill 4 (more commonly known as “anti-sanctuary cities”) and discussed the PD’s policies. We have been active in the community by conducting public meetings in an effort to reach the immigrant population. We believe we have been successful in alleviating some of the fear among immigrants. Our message is simple: if you are here illegally *and are a threat to the community*, you should be afraid. Otherwise there is no immigration threat to law-abiding residents. Olivia commended the department for being so active in the community and believes it has been helpful in reducing fear.

Neighborhood Issues

Antonio discussed two concerns:

- Unrestrained animals in vehicles. He had observed a dog in a driver’s lap that jumped or fell from the vehicle. Chief Stapp advised that this is not a violation and the only way to make it so is to address the concerns through the legislative process.
- Requirements for license plates and enforcement of those requirements. Chief Stapp explained that our state requires front and rear license plates to be mounted on the vehicle. This is a violation that officers often stop a driver for but seldom cite. Eric agreed to provide the group with the exact code.

Olivia asked about the License Plate Reader program. Chief Stapp explained how our program works, in that City Council has only approved our using it for parking enforcement at this time. We hope to be able to expand that in the future.

Gary Pack asked how much the PD budget was, and Chief Stapp advised that it was approximately \$15 Million.

Marianne asked about using mobile phones while operating a motor vehicle. Chief Stapp explained that the city had implemented an ordinance that prohibited phone use while a vehicle was in motion. Policies varied from city to city. However, the state legislature enacted legislation which conflicted with the city’s ordinance so the city is unable to enforce much of their ordinance.

Marianne also asked about how the traffic situation was on Hopkins since the speed limit had been reduced to 30 MPH. Chief Stapp advised that it was “a mess”, particularly between Wonder World and San Antonio. The PD had given a 30-day grace period before writing tickets. It seems that 30 MPH is too slow for the flow of traffic. Additionally, complaints of tailgating have increased

significantly. Chief Stapp related that he was driving a marked vehicle at the appropriate speed when someone passed him. Because there have been so many complaints (about the slow speed, not about citations), the city will be conducting a speed study to determine if 30 mph is appropriate.

Internal Issues

Chief Stapp provided summary information on two complaints that had been resolved since the last meeting. No employee identifying information was released.

Chief Stapp discussed an on-line complaint he had received against an officer for racial profiling. He explained the general process of investigating allegations. When complaints come in to the department, they are logged and assigned to the appropriate supervisor for investigation. Often complaints go no further because he can gather enough information to respond. Chief Stapp was able to review the body camera video and determined that racial profiling had not happened. He then responded to the complainant about his findings.

In another incident, after a thorough investigation, an officer was suspended for 30 days for releasing sensitive information outside the department. The officer cooperated with the investigation and admitted fault. Although no one was harmed because of the breach of information, they could have been. The officer's actions showed a serious lack of judgment but did not amount to malicious behavior.

The next meeting was scheduled for 5:30 p.m. on December 20, 2018.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:55 p.m.