

Washington County Sheriff's Office Latino Advisory Commission
November 3, 2021
Meeting Minutes

Commission Members Present: Olga Acuña, Maria Caballero-Rubio, Pat Garrett, Joann Hoffman, Fernando Lira, Nansi Lopez, Ricardo Moreno, Fernanda Pantoja

Commission Members Absent: Daniel Guzman-Catarina, Pablo Valenzuela

Guests attending: Interim Jail Commander, Tristan Sundsted; Law Enforcement Technology Supervisor, Kevin Kane; Sr. Information Analyst, Chris Adzima; Undersheriff, John Koch

Held via Zoom

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Acuña called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

Introductions

Co-Chair Garrett welcomed everyone and thanked everyone for activating their cameras. He informed us that our work with T4T has come to a close and we thank Brandon Lee and Hun Taing for their help to get the Commission off to a strong start.

Approval Meeting Minutes

The members present constituted a quorum. Commissioner Caballero-Rubio made a motion to approve the October 6, 2021 minutes. Commissioner Moreno seconded and the minutes were approved.

Public Comment

No public comments.

The meeting was joined by community attendance.

Continuation of Jail Overview and Discussion: Presentation of "Bookings by Race"

Mr. Adzima presented Jail "Bookings by Race" statistical data. The data collected reflected adults-in-custody that have been booked into the Washington County Jail from January through September of 2021. The data represented all agencies that bring persons charged with a crime(s) to the Washington County Jail.

Commissioner Lopez asked about the difference between the general population of Washington County and those in custody. Specifically, about those that identify as mixed race. Co-Chair Garrett explained the Washington County Jail is confined to use the five race categories set forth by the National Crime Information Center (NCIC). The U.S. Census uses a larger number of categories to include a mixed race. Due to that, there can be some discrepancies between the two.

Washington County saw a change in population trends in 2016, with the largest increase in population being among Hispanics.

Commissioner Caballero-Rubio asked who decides how long people stay in Jail. Commander Sundsted explained that there are two parts to answering the question: the seriousness of the criminal charge and the Circuit Court's General Order that specifies release criteria. The General Order specifies circumstances when someone can be released under their own recognizance or post bail. The General Order provides guidance on overcrowding releases, known as a "Force Release." The Force Release Matrix is decision-making criteria used to scale and score those in custody to Force Release those with the least public safety risk first. Those which are force released are pre-sentenced adults only. The jail does not force release unless necessary.

Most arrests in the community are made in consult with another officer and in every case with probable cause. A Judge reviews all arrests and decides if the arrest was justified or not.

Co-Chair Acuña suggests that we partner with the different law agencies, the DA's office, and judges to begin to influence real change. WE have a lot of work to do.

Commissioner Moreno suggests we maintain our focus with the Sheriff's Office, with the command staff that is interested in listening to us.

Commissioner Lopez agrees that there needs to be partnership with other agencies. The Sheriff's Office doesn't have authority over other agencies within the county. We should also create a partnership with DPSST.

Our role as a commission is that we understand what the Sheriff's Office role is and what it is not. We need to better educate the community as to what the other various jurisdictions do.

The Sheriff's Office is planning a meeting with the presiding judge in early 2022 to review and update the General Order. Co-Chairs Acuña and Garrett agreed to have Co-Chair Acuña take a copy of the General Order to the Latino Policy Council (LPC) to have them offer suggestions.

Refine Purpose, Outcome, Process (P.O.P.) of the LAC

Co-Chair Acuña will send out the draft P.O.P. and we can respond via email. She briefly shared the draft on screen.

Sheriff's Office Updates

Co-Chair Garrett requests the opinion of the Commission. Should Mark Shah's commission vacancy be filled with a line-level deputy, commander, or lieutenant?

Commissioner Moreno approves of the concept of a Sergeant on the commission. He believes it is important to have multiple levels represented as long as line staff feel comfortable speaking out.

Next steps

Co-chairs will meet to plan next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 5:32 PM