



**CITY OF SCOTTSDALE
COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SAFETY
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**Community Design Studio – Nave
7506 E. Indian School Road
Scottsdale, AZ 85251**

Wednesday, January 21, 2026

PRESENT: Councilwoman Jan Dubauskas, Chair
Councilwoman Kathy Littlefield

ABSENT: Vice-Mayor Adam Kwasman

STAFF: Greg Caton, City Manager
Luis Santaella, Interim City Attorney
Joe LeDuc, Police Chief
Tom Shannon, Fire Chief

GUESTS: None

CALL TO ORDER

Councilwoman Dubauskas called the meeting to order at 2:15 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members present as listed above.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no response to the call for public comment.

1. Approval of Minutes

There was no public comment on this item.

COUNCILWOMAN LITTLEFIELD MOVED THAT THE NOVEMBER 12, 2025, COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SAFETY MEETING MINUTES BE APPROVED AS WRITTEN. CHAIR DUBAUSKAS SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED 2-0 WITH CHAIR DUBAUSKAS AND COUNCILWOMAN LITTLEFIELD VOTING IN THE AFFIRMATIVE AND VICE MAYOR KWASMAN ABSENT. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

2. Department Overview – City Attorney’s Office (Prosecution Division)

Interim City Attorney Luis Santaella conducted a slideshow presentation, explaining that the mission of his division was to protect the community, pursue justice, and support victims. He discussed the ethical duties of prosecutors, noting they played a crucial role in public safety. He reviewed the number of different positions within his division and the responsibilities of paralegals and legal secretaries; the number of paralegals increased with the advent of body cameras and the need to redact information.

Mr. Santaella provided statistics regarding the number of criminal cases prosecuted in 2024 and the charges issued. Driving under the influence (DUI) cases were among the most complicated they prosecute. He discussed the number of DUI and domestic violence (DV) cases as well as the process by which DV cases were determined to be felonies or misdemeanors. He provided statistics on civil ordinance cases, traffic violation cases, the percentage of cases ending with plea agreements, and victim advocate interactions. He talked about the services provided by victim advocates and talked about the difference between orders of protection and injunctions against harassment. Advocates’ duties included helping with restitution, helping facilitate the address confidentiality program, and reading victim impact statements.

Mr. Santaella explained how cases came to the District Attorney’s Office and situations where law enforcement might use criminal citations instead of long-form complaints. The majority of violations heard by the Prosecution Division were state law violations, though the District Attorney’s Office only become involved if the officer requested a prosecutor. He detailed each step of the legal process, noting that diversion programs were available for first offenders without criminal histories, usually for minor offenses. Misdemeanors typically involved jail sentences of less than six months, and most offenders were not entitled to jury trials. Most juries took two to three days and involved a panel of six jurors with one or two alternates. Roughly two jury trials were held a month.

In response to member questions, Mr. Santaella said the timeframe for the legal process varied depending on how contested the matter was. Simple matters were often resolved within 60 days while DUIs could take several years; typical cases are resolved within around six months. He confirmed that Human Exploitation and Trafficking Unit cases and gang theft cases usually involved felony charges and were handled by Maricopa County. The thefts handled by this division were largely shoplifting incidents. He described the types of cases the City handled as largely public disorder and DV cases.

Mr. Santaella explained the different standards for proving something to a preponderance of evidence versus beyond a reasonable doubt. He said his division will not prosecute a case unless there is a reasonable likelihood of conviction. He stressed that his office was comprised of ministers of justice, not zealous advocates determined to win. He reviewed

the purpose of Domestic Violence Court, Community Intervention Court, and Veterans Court, the latter of which was through a partnership with the City of Tempe. All DV cases were heard by one court, which helped with consistency while allowing for specialization. He offered to give a presentation to the Veterans Advisory Commission about Veterans Court. He briefly described the jury trial process.

Responding to additional queries, Mr. Santaella discussed reasons for the reduction in the number of prosecutors and the professional history of some of the current staff. He suspected there would be challenges in finding qualified candidates in the future. The number of paralegals was due to the large volume of information that needed to be provided to the defense. Some of his prosecutors participated in Jail Court on the weekends, and they also took on conflict cases for other agencies throughout the state.

Mr. Santaella hoped consideration could be made in the future for compliance officers for people on probation and diversion. City Manager Greg Caton said he was receptive to proposals since the budget process was still underway. Mr. Santaella brought up a partnership with Youth and Family Services for diversion programs.

There was no public comment on this item.

3. Professional Staff Pay

City Manager Greg Caton reminded the Committee that during the process to consider compensation increases for first responders, chronic vacancies were identified, specifically in dispatch. While City turnover rates were around 10 percent, some of these vacancies had much longer durations and higher turnover rates. To help with recruiting, compensation was increased. Police Chief Joe LeDuc said that increase brought the City's standing as 14th in the market up to the top 3. There were 14 vacancies, three of which had been filled, and he expected eight more hirings. There was also more interest in lateral hires, he noted.

Responding to member questions, Chief LeDuc thought the next group with the most vacancies was the detention staff, but there was a plan to address that. Fire Chief Tom Shannon added that his department had regular success in fulfilling vacancies on both sworn and civilian staff. This should continue if salaries continue to be competitive.

There was no request for public comment on this item.

4. Recruitment Overview – Successes and Opportunities

Fire Chief Tom Shannon indicated they received interest from several hundred candidates for vacancies. He reviewed slides containing statistics about the number of new members onboarded and the avenues the department utilized to advertise vacancies. He said the City was competing with larger markets, and he described the process they used to obtain, pare down, interview, and assess candidates for its recruitments. He said there were 29 recruits in the Scottsdale Academy with another 10 from valley agencies, and he expected more hiring to cover the phase 3 ambulance and attrition-related issues later in the year.

In response to member questions, Chief Shannon confirmed there were 60 people on the waiting list that he anticipated using to fill the next batch of recruits. He noted the Academy can handle a maximum of 45 people. Councilmember Littlefield lauded the City firefighters who remained to help train people for the new fire station. City Manager Greg Caton noted that resources had been added to the fire and police departments' budgets in the current fiscal year, and staff was exploring continuing to do so next year. 44 new firefighters were added, as were 22 police officers. These firefighters helped address retirements and expansion. Chief Shannon indicated firefighters were retiring roughly as expected, though a large number of firefighters could retire at once.

Jill Boehm, Deputy Director of the Personnel Services Division, provided an overview of the police department's outreach efforts to expand the applicant pool, including job fairs, relationships with community outreach programs, social media, and the upcoming addition of a recruitment officer. She stated a recruitment team was organized in 2018, resulting in 70 sworn professionals attending job fairs and community events. She talked about the focus on military recruitment as well as attending many City of Scottsdale events to showcase open positions to visitors. She mentioned efforts undertaken with respect to youth outreach and the department's partnerships with Arizona State University and collegiate athletic programs.

Ms. Boehm talked about online marketing through Government Jobs, Google, LinkedIn, and Glassdoor, where both sworn and professional staff positions were advertised. She discussed how social media was used to highlight the daily life of public officers through testimonials. She said she would consider Chair Dubauskas' suggestion to start a separate LinkedIn account for the police department.

Ms. Boehm noted ongoing discussions regarding improving the selection process. The entire process takes between six to eight weeks once applicants reach the background investigation phase. She provided statistics related to the Mesa Academy timeline, the current number of full-time budgeted officers, the number of hires in 2025, the percentage of vacancies compared to field officers, and other areas of recruitment. She mentioned partnering with Human Resources to create an online portal which she hoped would expedite the process, and she remarked that the recruitment website was being updated. She thought a full-time recruiter would be beneficial.

Responding to additional questions, Chief LeDuc noted the police and fire departments sometimes engaged in joint recruitment efforts since there was some crossover in applicants' interest in the two departments. Chief Shannon believed the department's public information officers were trying to create collaborative opportunities. Chief LeDuc spoke about a recent initiative to expand beyond Scottsdale's previous branding to allow the two departments to link to each other's recruiting websites.

Ms. Boehm opined that applicants were drawn through all of the various recruitment efforts, including word of mouth. The police department also has a referral program, though it has not proved too effective. Chief LeDuc thought staff should be attempting to recruit viable candidates all the time. He noted Scottsdale receives the most per-capita applications of any regional agency, and it strives to hire only the best candidates. He said both proper training and the previous filling of 15 pipeline positions would provide some relief if multiple retirements were to take place at the same time.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

5. Update on Organizational Changes and Compliance Related to Homelessness Response

Lieutenant Jeromie O'Meara conducted a slideshow presentation. He felt the significant increase in the number of calls for service could be due to the focus on homelessness. He spoke about the number of unique contacts, how camp cleanups were accomplished, and how services were distributed. Lt. Dan Rincon explained that many police resources were dedicated to traffic complaints and complaints involving homeless individuals. One group of officers spent the majority of their shift performing homeless outreach by either offering services or providing enforcement.

Responding to member questions, Lt. Rincon said many homeless individuals were just people wanting to find places to sit, but around 20 percent were arrested for illegal activity. He noted many homeless individuals reject the services that are offered. Research was mentioned which showed that contact needed to be made 10 times to build trust.

Lt. O'Meara discussed the department's proactive approach to inform the public of resources available for homeless individuals. He talked about prioritizing the Community Intervention Court and continuing to work with business partners to get access to their properties to take action against trespassers. Chair Dubauskas relayed feedback she received about there being fewer panhandlers and safer streets. Lt. O'Meara said the City contracted with a third-party vendor to clean bus stops. He noted that a Scottsdale officer teams up with the Phoenix Rescue Mission (PRM) every three weeks, and officers are available as needed.

Community Assistance Manager Mary Witkowski distinguished between engagements and contacts with homeless individuals. Some of the services the Human Services Department provided included outreach, transportation to shelters, and enforcement in conjunction with the police department. She reviewed the terms of the department's contract with PRM and the individual responsibilities of each of the staff members. The City only utilized one full-time staff member for homelessness, and another who spent a quarter of their time in that arena.

Ms. Witkowski reviewed statistics related to the following: the Point-in-Time (PIT) Count, day relief center visitors, outreach engagements, and the number of people placed into housing. Discussion ensued regarding the national and local processes for the PIT Count. Lt. LeDuc provided specific PIT Count totals for some of the surrounding agencies.

In response to the Chair's question about potential recommendations, Lt. O'Meara stated the long-term solution would be human services, including housing and food assistance, as well as mental health and drug interdiction services, so he encouraged the Committee to help there however it could. Ms. Witkowski added that the PRM has been a huge help in connecting people with resources, though they did not handle mental health services. She spoke about the services provided at the day relief center at Vista del Camino, which was where relationships started to be strengthened with attendees. Councilwoman Littlefield suggested people who grew extra fruit on their properties could donate it to the center.

6. Public Comment

There was no response to the call for public comment.

7. Possible Items for Next Meeting

Chair Dubauskas asked for an item on the 2026/27 fiscal year budget, where requests like extra probation officers and recommendations for fire staff could be discussed. She wanted an item to discuss potential and ongoing United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement action in the area.

ADJOURNMENT

COUNCILWOMAN LITTLEFIELD MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. CHAIR DUBAUSKAS SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED 2-0 WITH CHAIR DUBAUSKAS AND COUNCILWOMAN LITTLEFIELD VOTING IN THE AFFIRMATIVE AND VICE MAYOR KWASMAN ABSENT. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

With no further business to discuss, being duly moved and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 3:48 p.m.

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