

Regular Crime Task Force Meeting

Civic Center, 2 Park Drive South,  
Gibson Room 212, Great Falls, MT

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairperson Sandra Guynn called the meeting to order at 4:05 P.M.

**ROLL CALL:** Great Falls Crime Task Force Members (TFM) participated electronically via Zoom Webinar: Nicole Griffith, Jeff Newton, Jesse Slaughter, Shane Etwiler, John Parker and Ex-officio TFM Rick Tryon. Dugan Coburn joined at 4:30 p.m. Sandra Guynn and Sara Sexe were present in the Gibson Room.

**RECOGNITION OF STAFF:** City Staff present in the Gibson Room were: City Manager Greg Doyon and Deputy City Attorney Jeff Hindoien, and Deputy City Clerk Darcy Dea was present in the Commission Chambers.

#### **TASK FORCE AGENDA ITEMS**

1. **APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES, AUGUST 9, 2021, GREAT FALLS CRIME TASK FORCE.**

**TFM Etwiler moved, seconded by TFM Sexe, that the CTF approve the meeting minutes of August 9, 2021.**

Chairperson Guynn asked if there was any discussion amongst the TFM or comments from the public. Hearing none, Chairperson Guynn called for the vote.

Motion carried 7-0.

2. **TASK FORCE DISCUSSION ON FOCUS AREAS.**

Chairperson Guynn reiterated that the four categories recommended by TFM at the August 9, 2021 meeting included the following:

1. Resources for Criminal Justice Systems
2. Consequences
3. Collaboration/ Partnerships
4. Education

Chairperson Guynn read from a prepared handout listing Ex-officio TFM Tryon's draft recommendations that included resources for local criminal justice system, communication and education, consequences and partnerships/collaboration.

TFM Sexe's recommendations for resources included the following:

- Continue supporting the Crisis Intervention Collaborative (CIC) through the Police, Fire and Legal Departments; Municipal Court; and other City staff.
- Have the City Grants Administrator assist the Legal Department to investigate grant funding for victim/witness assistance for the Legal Department Criminal Division.

TFM Sexe's recommendations for consequences included the following:

- Municipal Court consider utilizing the Cascade County Sheriff's Office program options to reduce jail numbers.
- Misdemeanor Pretrial Services and use of Public Safety Assessment (PSA).
- Reduction in multiple extensions with regard to payments and fines. Municipal Court evaluate reasons for fine collection reductions and corresponding effect on accountability for misdemeanors.
- County and City Judicial and other Departments work together with regard to changing the behavior of offenders and implementing more of an impact for first time, non-violent offenders.

TFM Sexe's recommendations for partnerships/collaboration included the following:

- Support or enhance the support of CIC and Violent Crimes Task Force.
- Utilize United Way resources.
- Continue to work with Veteran's, Mental Health and Drug Courts.
- Improve information sharing with emergency service providers.
- Enhance utilization of principles of crime prevention through environmental design by Planning and Community Development.

Vice-Chairperson Newton commented that hiring additional police officers could have impact on the City Attorney's office, Municipal, Justice and District Court Judges, as well as the Cascade County Sheriff's Office and Probation and Parole. The Police Department staff is actively looking into grant funding options.

Chairperson Guynn received clarification that reinstating the K-9 program could be an option; however, currently there is a lack of resources and finances.

TFM Slaughter mentioned that the Cascade County Sheriff's Office has a K-9 program and is a resource that is available for the City to utilize.

TFM Sexe explained that the Legal Department has evaluated, through the budget and CARES funds, hiring additional staff and obtaining software services.

TFM Parker suggested that the TFM consider discussing the Pretrial Services idea; however, he announced that he would abstain from submitting policy suggestions because of a constitutional standpoint.

TFM Etwiler received clarification that Jurors normally will not convict with regard to truancy matters.

TFM Sexe suggested that TFM send their draft recommendations to Chairperson Guynn for consolidation, to allow for public comment and posting on the City's website prior to the September 13, 2021 CTF meeting.

TFM Griffith suggested that the City conduct a Community Impact Study similar to Billings.

Vice-Chairperson Newton responded that he read the Billings Community Impact Study; however, he has not seen a breakdown with regard to the hours and costs.

TFM Etwiler received clarification that if a resource assessment is performed with regard to the initial and ongoing costs for implementing the recommendations, the City Commission and City Manager could determine whether to fund them and how to do so.

City Manager Doyon announced that he would provide the handout of Ex-officio TFM Tryon's draft recommendations to the TFM via email now so that they could follow along.

TFM Slaughter explained that the Crime Task Force is a Task Force created to address public safety needs for the City. He stated that the Cascade County Sheriff's office fully supports the Great Falls Police Department with anything that it needs; however, he cautioned that the County has limited resources and jail capacity with regard to supporting felony cases from the City. He commented that the recommendations should be scalable, actionable and implementable.

Ex-officio TFM Tryon reiterated that top priorities from his list of recommendations include Pretrial Services, as well as collaborating with County, State and Federal Law Enforcement.

TFM Parker commented that at some point the Cascade County Commissioners should have an advisory voice with regard to the recommendations from the Crime Task Force because enhanced City enforcement will lead to enhanced County incarceration funded by the County.

TFM Slaughter responded that this is the City's Crime Task Force and expressed concern that including too many other entities would not make it a City Task Force. He explained that the City is the largest consumer of resources in the community and suggested first

establishing the City's needs and later including the County Commissioners to determine how to implement those needs.

TFM Sexe reiterated that the idea of the TFM recommendations is to enhance collaboration so that there would not continue to be capacity issues for the County.

Vice-Chairperson Newton explained that the Neighborhood Watch Program is already in place and that five ambassadors are Neighborhood Watch Program Coordinators. He further explained that the education component is an ongoing process that the Police Department currently works on with other entities. He added that the City educates the public about information with regard to crime; however, citizens in the community also have a responsibility to educate themselves by seeking that information.

Ex-officio TFM Tryon received clarification that Vice-Chairperson Newton and TFM Etwiler are unaware of any government-funded grants that assist individuals with regard to purchasing security cameras for private residences.

Chairperson Guynn inquired if sending out public safety information to the community should be done by the City Communication Specialist Lanni Klasner or to consider another resource.

TFM Slaughter responded that the City does a good job with regard to communicating to the community.

TFM Etwiler reported that there is an Environmental Safety TIF Program for businesses in the Downtown Urban Renewal Districts to submit a TIF Grant application with regard to assisting with funding security cameras and lighting.

TFM Parker requested removing Ex-officio TFM Tryon's recommendation about the "one way bus ticket out of town." He explained that if other communities in Montana fund bus tickets to send individuals with life challenges to Great Falls, the City would not be happy about it. He added that sending individuals to other communities is not the solution and there are other productive ways.

Ex-officio TFM Tryon responded that he included the bus ticket recommendation as a consequence because citizens in the community reached out to him, inquiring about sending troubled individuals to other communities.

TFM Slaughter added that the bus ticket concept is controversial; however, worth public comment and that banishment from a community is an effective way of curbing criminal behavior.

Referring to Ex-officio TFM Tryon's recommendation about consequences for violations including drug paraphernalia, TFM Slaughter suggested that the City Commission create an Ordinance that prohibits needle exchange.

Vice-Chairperson Newton urged the TFM to consider resources and priorities with regard to its recommendations.

TFM Sexe explained that a few years ago, the City did enhance the nuisance ordinances and it may be worth exploring enhancing enforcement of those ordinances. She mentioned that some of the TFM recommendations might not be enforceable.

Ex-officio TFM Tryon explained that some of his recommendations with regard to consequences address the low-level violations, which could help prevent the higher-level violations.

TFM Etwiler suggested collaborating with the Montana League of Cities and Towns with regard to working with the legislature to address the unintended consequences of the 2017 Justice Reinvestment Act. He expressed support with regard to having consequences tightened for minor offenses.

TFM Parker responded that the legislature has already established several sentencing factors.

Vice-Chairperson Newton recommended having elected officials reach out to the legislators with regard to determining the effect bills passed by the legislature has on the community.

TFM Griffith commented that staying focused on partnerships and collaboration is important. She added that statistics indicate that if victims have access to services and support they are more likely to participate in the criminal justice process.

TFM Slaughter commented that since the recreational marijuana bill was passed, it is law and not going away. There are opportunities to make recreational marijuana safe by supporting Senator Steve Daine's Safe Banking Act, as well as exploring a local taxation for recreational marijuana and utilize the funds for the CTF proposed public safety efforts.

#### **MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM TASK FORCE.**

Chairperson Guynn reiterated that the TFM provide their list of draft recommendations to her so that she can incorporate them with Ex-officio TFM Tryon's list by August 30, 2021. The CTF will release the official draft recommendations on August 30, 2021, allowing for public comment two weeks prior to the September 13, 2021 meeting.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT.**

None.

**DISCUSSION ON UPCOMING MEETING DATES.**

Chairperson Guynn announced that due to Labor Day Holiday, the next scheduled CTF meeting would be on September 13, 2021.

**ADJOURNMENT.**

There being no further business to come before the CTF, Vice-Chairperson Newton moved, seconded by TFM Slaughter to adjourn the **regular meeting of August 23, 2021, at 5:45 p.m.**

Motion carried 8-0.

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Sandra Guynn, Chairperson

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Acting Secretary – Deputy City Clerk Darcy Dea

Minutes Approved: September 13, 2021