

MINUTES

To: Charter Revision Commission Members
From: Richard Wishnie, Chair
Subject: DPS and DES Visitation
Date: September 22, 2011

Present: Jeff Binder, Chris Crane, Julie Killian, Anne McAndrews, Florence McCue, Jane Morgenstern, Paul Windels, Richard Wishnie, and Gary Zuckerman.

The visitation began at 2 PM in the Commissioner's conference room at the Department of Public Safety in Hawthorne.

Commissioner George Longworth welcomed the group and presented an overview of the department's history and services. He explained how the department was divided into service divisions that are staffed by 270 sworn officers and approximately 65-70 civilians. He was joined by first Deputy Commissioner Joseph Yasinski, and Chief Inspector Roger Rokicki. The Commissioner responded to questions from the commission members regarding operations, budget and efficiency issues. He offered to meet again in the future to continue the interesting and informative discussion.

Chief Rokicki introduced Sgt. James Genesi who led the group on a tour of some of the Detective Division Units including Ballistics Unit, Crime Analysis, Digital Evidence, General Investigations Unit (Lt. James Palanzo), Forensic Investigation Unit (Sgt. Michael Dowd), Narcotics Unit (Sgt. Pat Sullivan), Warrants Unit (Sgt. Michael DeFlorio).

The group toured the facilities including the dispatch area, holding cell area, garage and equipment storage areas. The general consensus was that the department is managed by competent professionals in rather cramped facilities. There is evidence of substantial investment in modern crime fighting tools and technically advanced equipment requiring highly trained and skilled professionals.

The group was then requested to relocate to the police training facilities at the Grasslands Campus where we toured the recently acquired armory facility and the new firing range, led by Sgt. Michael Cindrich. We saw the classrooms, administrative offices, equipment supply facilities and the very impressive heavy equipment storage area. Training for a variety of the county's police agencies are offered at the facility where hundreds of personnel participate throughout the year. The Firing Range is a relatively new and modern facility while the armory is an older building that needs additional resources including, roof, lighting, windows and modernizing to meet the needs of the substantial use it is receiving.

The Commission Members then moved across the complex to the Headquarters of the Department of Emergency Services. Acting Commissioner John Cullen who guided a tour of the classroom training area for firefighters and EMS personnel, the outdoor firefighter's training area, the dispatcher's unit, supported by the Computer Aided Dispatch System and Administrative support facilities. More than 21,000 emergency personnel received training at

this facility in 2010. A testimony to the professional level of the training staff and program content.

We then toured the newly constructed garage and storage area where we observed the emergency vehicle storage area and the warehouse filled with emergency response supplies, equipment and materials.

The Commission members were impressed with the sophistication of the emergency operations and preparedness activities at this facility. The original building needs upgrading including repairs to an obviously leaking roof and other upgrades as compared to the newly constructed additions attached to the original building.

Although we observed a substantial measure of the scope of these two critical county departments, we did not have the time to visit the Joint Emergency Operations Center housed at the State Police Headquarters in Hawthorne. A visit to this facility will be scheduled in the near future.

We did observe the duplication and overlap of equipment and services maintained by these two emergency services related departments and need to explore the possibility of the consolidation of resources for efficiency and enhanced services. This study will require the work and efforts of a sub-committee of the commission due to the complexity of the issues to be addressed.

The Annual Report of the DPS is attached to these minutes.