

EL PASO COUNTY

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&
DAVE ROSE, CHIEF PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

Citizen Outreach Group – June 18, 2018

- Members Present:** David Couch, Kelvin Dean, Ed Dills, Lacey Fugleberg, Annette Hagopian, Creed Spillane
- Members Absent:** Stephanie Adams, Jeff Aldrich, Theresa Carter, Arthur Glynn, Roland Rainey
- County Staff Present:** Sherri Cassidy, Dave Rose, Nicola Sapp, Nikki Simmons, Henry Yankowski, Deanna Ruschioni
- Guests:** Sheriff Bill Elder, Larry Borland
- Commissioners Present:**
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The meeting was called to order at 9:35 a.m.

Sherri Cassidy, El Paso County Chief Financial Officer introduced and welcomed Annette Hagopian, the newly appointed At Large member to the Citizen Outreach Group.

Administrative Items

- 1) The approval of the April 16, 2018 meeting minutes have been postponed until the next COG meeting scheduled for August 20, 2018, due to a lack of quorum at the start of the meeting.

Sheriff Bill Elder gave a presentation on the Public Safety Initiative and the 2017 Annual Report.

El Paso County Sheriff's Office Public Safety Tax Update (PST)

- Public Safety Tax (.0023% tax, modeled after the regular sales tax). Initiated in 2012 – expires December 31, 2020. Expected to generate about \$17M per year – fluctuates with the state of the economy.

In 2012, critical needs were identified in the Law Enforcement Bureau, Detention Bureau and Emergency Response. With the passing of the Public Safety Tax, 192 employees within various bureaus of the El Paso County Sheriff's Office have been funded as of April, 2017. Originally, in 2012 it included the increase of about 148 personnel; sworn & civilian to the Sheriff's Office staff. This number increased due to many factors including; increased inmate population and the mandated contracts/services needed for them; and the significant growth in the general population over the past five years which is approximately 700,000 people today. Colorado Springs is the 38th largest city in the country, and the 2nd largest jurisdiction in Colorado, only by a few behind Denver.





- The El Paso County Criminal Justice Center is the only criminal justice center in El Paso County serving all seven municipalities; the inmate population is larger than most state prisons and is effectively at capacity. The inmate population in 2012 was approximately 1,200; today it is approximately 1,700 every day. Increase in staff was needed to handle the inmate population (about two thirds of the Sheriff's Office employees work in Detentions), and they adjusted some of the staffing models to get the help they need.
- To construct a new tower to handle the over crowdedness, it could cost approximately \$100M and possibly \$15M in personnel (which is double the budget the Sheriff's Office presently has).
- Approximately 60% of inmates in the El Paso County Criminal Justice Center suffer from mental illness, and although they receive counseling and proper medications, they should be treated in other ways rather than being warehoused in the jail.
 - There are approximately 2,500 homeless people in El Paso County and there is a dire need to figure out a community-wide way to solve this.
- Price increases continue to occur for inmate care regarding the medical contract, food services contract, and transportation costs regarding the number of inmates being transported to health facilities, doctor appointments, Methadone clinics, the courthouse, etc.

Further details of the PST presentation regarding how these tax dollars are being put to work to benefit our community and a 2017 & Beyond overview can be viewed by the following link on the El Paso County Sheriff's web page at:

https://www.epcsheriffsoffice.com/sites/default/files/resources/PST_WEB_5-18.pdf;

El Paso County Sheriff's Office 2017 Annual Report

- 2017 Annual Report

This report was handed out to the COG members and provides an overview of the El Paso County Sheriff's Office Detention Bureau, Law Enforcement Bureau, Administrative & Support Services Bureau, Staff Support and the 2017 Staff Achievements.

This report can be viewed by the following link on the El Paso County Sheriff's web page at:

https://www.epcsheriffsoffice.com/sites/default/files/resources/annual-reports/pdf/2017_AR_Spread_2.pdf;

Illegal Marijuana Grows

- Sheriff Bill Elder spoke to the illegal black market marijuana grows in El Paso County.

Came about because of Amendment 20, the Medical Marijuana Amendment.

- Colorado is the marijuana state capital of the United States. We are producing the highest level of marijuana in the nation; THC levels are 20 to 30%.
- Sheriff's Office has been pushing hard to change the law. They have corrected the state law where if you live in a residential home you can't grow more than 12 mature plants; used to be able to grow 600 plants.
- Problem is intense – started going after about 650 grows when this project started. They have executed 55 search warrants to date, and by the end of this year they hope to have hit about 300 of those, either by chasing them away or executing warrants. It's probably about a three or four year project.



Further information regarding this topic can be viewed by the following link on the El Paso County Sheriff's web page at:

<https://www.epcsheriffsoffice.com/news-releases/sheriff%E2%80%99s-office-second-quarter-statistics-on-illegal-and-black-market-marijuana>;

Veteran & Military Confinement Ward

- Sheriff Bill Elder spoke to a new program regarding the Veteran & Military Confinement Ward.

This project started in 2015 to benefit the incarcerated veterans and military personnel in the El Paso County Criminal Justice Center to treat them accordingly in a way that helps them with their legal & court processes, without being stigmatized due to their duty related injuries. Now being adopted by the state and state prison systems & has been adopted by Jefferson County. It was presented nationally at the American Corrections Association. Other states are considering adopting this project as well. The El Paso County Criminal Justice Center has about 100 inmates in there a day. This program helps them with coping mechanisms due to their duty related injuries - it puts them in contact with people that can help them deal with some of the issues they have related to PTSD, and head injuries. This is a very successful project and a way that we can give back to our veterans and military personnel.

Further information regarding this program can be viewed by the following link on the El Paso County Sheriff's web page at:

https://www.epcsheriffsoffice.com/sites/default/files/resources/resources/AJA_Brochure_Spread.pdf

Sheriff Bill Elder mentioned he would like to provide the COG members with a tour of the El Paso County Criminal Justice Center.

The meeting adjourned at 10:55 a.m.