

Minutes

Mayor's Crime Intervention Task Force
The GATE 201 E. Gordon St., Kinston, NC
Thursday, April 13, 2023, at 10:30 am

Mayor Dontario Hardy called the meeting to order at 10:32.

Pastor Ryan Vernon delivered the invocation which was followed by the recital pledge of allegiance by all in attendance.

Mayor Dontario Hardy asked everyone to introduce themselves.

Michael James (Lenoir Co.)

Linda Rouse Sutton (Lenoir Co.)

Colleen Kosinski (AARC)

Jeff Harrison (DDS)

Jennitra Veal (KHA)

Bryan Casad (NC DAC)

Tracey Price (LCC)

Rhonda Barwick (CoK)

Donna Hardy (The GATE)

Ryan Vernon (902 Church)

Present Also: Captain Brandon Turner and Captain Kevin Jenkins, Kinston Police Department.

Action Items:

1. Consider approval of Minutes from the February 16, 2023 meeting.

Pastor Vernon made the motion, seconded by Linda Rouse Sutton, and after no opposition, the minutes of February 16, 2023, were approved.

Mayor Hardy discussed resources that will be available from the Office of Violence Prevention opened by Governor Cooper's Office. The resources will be for rural communities like Kinston. He stated the invitation was extended and he hopes to have a representative from this office here next month.

2. Presentation by Kinston Police Department - Annual Report.-- Captain Brandon Turner

Captain Turner shared a PowerPoint presentation for an overview of the Kinston Police Department's Annual Report. The presentation started with the Patrol Division and Captain Turner shared the number of calls for service and traffic stops in 2020, 2021, and 2022 and noted that the information can be accessed online. The Criminal Investigation Division is comprised of the Narcotics, Vice (VCAT), General Investigators (5 officers), and the Crime Lab Units (3 officers). Captain Turner discussed that 2022 was a violent year. They did close out the year with 10 homicides that were all solved. Regarding shooting incidents, there were 25 incidents responded to with 31 people being shot and 87% of those were solved. The Violent Crime Action Team was established in 2021/2022 and consists of a Captain, a Gang Investigator, a General Investigator, an ATF Task Force Officer, and two patrol officers. He discussed the number of firearms (271) recovered in 2022, and as of April 10th, the VCAT Team is responsible for 47% of firearm seizures. The Office of Professional Standards is our Internal Affairs and investigates complaints of misconduct and excessive force by police officers. The body cameras help a lot and have been worn since 2013; we were one of the first in the state to

have them. This live video provides details of what happens and negates the “he said she said”. In 2022 the complaints were up and could be contributed to the increase in traffic stops. The sustained citizen allegations are zero; nothing reported was found to be true. In 2021, 2022, the use of force decreased while the call volume increased. There were 2,100 arrests and 5.9% of those ended in a use of force complaint. Captain Turner discussed the Recruitment Division and reported that recruitment is good. He discussed the social media’s positive impact on the officers and the community and referenced the Juvenile Justice initiative and stated that they are working with DMC, You and Five-O. The grant was finished last year but the partnership has not ended. The Training Division was discussed and the topics of training that were and are being attended were shown in the presentation. The promotions of 2022 and 2023 were noted. In discussing the traffic updates, he said that the weekly crime stats were available online to let the citizens know what we are doing and where we will be. He stated that they did not start separating citations from warnings until June of last year. While the citations look high, those citations and the warnings were about 50/50. Captain Turner said we have a Sentinel Program and a Chaplain as volunteer positions and discussed how they are utilized. Hopefully, they will be able to initiate a Citizens Police Academy that may generate more interest in the volunteer program. He asked everyone to go online and pull up the Strategic plan that covers 2022 to 2027.

Sylvano Farris asked about the number of officers per shift and the new gun permit (lack of) laws. Captain Turner stated that there are seven (7) officers per shift; VCAT with five (5) officers and the Investigation Division is out simultaneously, totaling about 14-15 officers. Regarding the guns, Captain Turner stated that when you go to buy a gun the seller runs your name through the same system that the Sheriff’s Office does. And convicted felons are not allowed to have a gun. Mr. Farris stated they need to return the substations to the projects to combat juvenile crime. Captain Turner stated they have a substation in Mitchell Wooten at present.

Ms. Linda Sutton Rouse shared that she and the Commissioners are pleased that the City and County are working together, and they can see a difference in the community.

Mayor Hardy thanked Captain Turner and noted that he was pleased with the collaboration they have with the County and the State and Federal agencies. They will look at the intervention side of things also, such as addressing opioids, food, etc. to encompass all our resources with the committee members’ insight.

3. Consider adoption of the Interlocal Memorandum of Agreement drafted by the MOU Subcommittee

Mayor Hardy asked for recommendations for the MOU.

Linda Rouse Sutton stated that they had talked about adding some of the goals that the various committees brought before us.

Jeff Harrison made a motion that the emails that were received regarding recommendations for the goals be distributed to the chair of each committee so they can look at those and make sure that they can incorporate those into the MOU so that the purpose can be clear to the citizens. It will be crafted to say what we are after, what the goals are, and how we can go

about making this a reality between the City and the County. The motion was seconded by Linda Rouse Sutton.

Linda Rouse Sutton made the motion, seconded by Ryan Vernon, and upon a unanimous vote, the Interlocal Memorandum of Understanding was approved, subject to any recommendations on confirming the MOU for the City/County, subject to the recommendations of the Chairwoman Linda Rouse Sutton.

If adopted the Agreement will be submitted to the Kinston City Council and Lenoir County Commissioners for approval and signatures.

4. Consider adoption of the Mission Statement for the Task Force

Mayor Hardy read the Mission Statement. Tracey Price stated that she thought it needed to be briefer. Ms. Sutton said that was the reason to have the goals in the MOU because it would not be a committee member when someone picks it up to read it.

Jeff Harrison stated that he was busy and may not receive the emails. He asked if the clerk could incorporate the information into a mailing list and send it out as a blast email to all the members.

Sylvano Farris commented on getting the information out to the community.

5. Updates from Subcommittee Chairpersons

Mayor Hardy stated that the **MOU Committee** would transfer into a City/County government committee where majorly impactful ordinances and things of that nature can be added. He also said he was looking forward to tapping into State opportunities. There is funding available from the State out of the Office of Violence Prevention – Governor's Crime Commission, etc. Mayor Hardy said he will have someone come down to talk to the Task Force about what is available.

Pastor Ryan Vernon stated that the **Faith-based Committee** met on March 7th and came up with a mission statement and objectives for the faith-based side of things. The mission is: We exist to function as a faith-based team of hope and health to Kinston/Lenoir County. Three objectives were 1) Change the landscape of an unproductive mindset; 2) Increase the awareness of the power of prayer; and 3) Enhance the visibility and availability of the faith-based community. Pastor Vernon said we have a lot of churches that are doing things, but we do not know what each other is doing.

Jeff Harrison of the **Resource Committee** reminded everyone of some of the things talked about at the last meeting. In addition to what our law enforcement is doing when they're out in the community doing their community policing, They are looking to add another human aspect piece to that by creating a day to join with the local law enforcement and go door-to-door to access the needs of the community. He shared that on April 21st at 9 am at the Library the Re-entry Council is preparing re-entry bags to share with individuals that are coming out of prison. The bags will consist of a list of available community resources, vocational information, employment security commission information, hygiene products, snacks, foods,

socks, and different things that they would need to reintegrate back into the community successfully. Mr. Harrison also spoke about a program that was held in Goldsboro last week and asked for someone to share some of that information.

Captain Jenkins stated they would go through the District Attorney's Office and the Probation Office to see if we can get a Call-in Program here. It was done here about 15 years ago for first-time offenders who are given a warning (Second Chance). He stated they are looking at that in the future. Brian Casada said he was at the Goldsboro event and the event was run by the police department. They brought in a lot of resources and linked those to the offenders. There was the re-offend aspect of the program as well. Tracey Price mentioned that in Greensboro they had a program that was successful in that the courts agreed to forgive certain fines, and wondered if that could be done in Lenoir County. Ms. Price said she will check to see if it is ongoing. Ms. Kosinski shared that through the recovery courts, they have had several of the participants who had either orders for arrests that have been outstanding, or we have had notes with multiple fines. One of them had \$2,400 in fines and they were keeping her from getting her license. The DA's office was very willing to not oppose motions to have those fines stricken. She thinks that is something to be considered and something the Reentry Council could approach the court about.; maybe have something put into place. It's something to consider, especially if somebody has remained law-abiding except for multiple traffic offenses.

6. Subcommittee Breakouts 20 minutes – if time allows

There were no breakout sessions.

7. Discuss meeting schedules going forward

Mayor Hardy announced that the next meeting date would be May 11th, the second Thursday of May at 10:30 am. He stated we will work on the email blast, the Mission Statement, and the Memorandum of understanding. There will be some timelines added for responses to be returned.

Closing Remarks/AdjournmentMayor Dontario Hardy

Jeff Harrison made the motion, seconded by Linda Rouse Sutton, and upon a unanimous vote the meeting was adjourned at 11:35 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra Thompson, City Clerk