

Clallam County Sheriff's Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

February 18, 2021

I. Call to order

- i. Alan Barnard called to order the regular meeting of the Citizen Advisory Committee at 1700 hours on February 18, 2021. This meeting was held via ZOOM due to the COVID restrictions.

II. Roll call

- i. The following members were present: Alan Barnard, Rochelle Blankenship, Tom Cox, Charles Meyer, Brooke Nelson, Lourene O'Brien, Barbara Sanford, Ted Shanks and Nate Tyler.
- ii. The following staff members were present: Sheriff Benedict and Admin Manager Lorraine Shore.
- iii. There were no guests or members of the public that joined the meeting.
- iv. There was a quorum established for this meeting.

III. Approval of minutes from last meeting

- i. Minutes from the November 19, 2020 meeting unanimously approved with no changes.

IV. Sheriff Benedict

WASPC Re-Accreditation

The Clallam County Sheriff's Office is currently in the process of preparing for the upcoming WASPC (Washington Association of Sheriffs & Police Chiefs) Re-Accreditation. Accreditation occurs every 4 years and both the Sheriff's Office and Jail are accredited. WASPC will conduct a "Mock Accreditation" the week of March 2 – 4, 2021 for both the Sheriff's Department and Correctional Facility. There will be two separate Accreditation Assessments involving WASPC Assessors that will review the files for the Sheriff's Office and Jail to determine if we meet the standards associated with each.

There are 137 standards that the Sheriff's Office must meet to achieve re-accreditation and 172 standards that the CCSO Jail must meet. Accreditation certifies that our agency is operating under best practices and standards. There are many benefits to accreditation including increased public confidence and reduced liability.

CCSO Office Procedure Change

The Sheriff's Office has resumed fingerprinting service to the public.

Emergency Operations Center and COVID Clinics

Sheriff Benedict noted that the numbers are going down for COVID positives in Clallam County and our Emergency Operations Center has been activated for the COVID Pandemic since last March 2020. In 2020, 35 EOC Volunteers logged 8,149 hours volunteering for the COVID activation. This does not include a tremendous number of CERT Volunteers (State Emergency Workers) who also volunteered thousands of hours to the Pandemic.

Sheriff Benedict stated that without the leadership of Undersheriff Cameron and the numerous volunteers, it would not have been possible to respond to the COVID Pandemic as well as we did. The EOC has been working with the County Health Department to run COVID Vaccination Clinics in Port Angeles. Clallam County is a model for other communities in WA State on how to respond to a pandemic.

Legislative Updates

Sheriff Benedict sent a PowerPoint created by WASPC to the members of the CCSCAC titled “Legislative Overview” which reviews and discusses the top 10 law enforcement related bills thus far in the 2021 legislative session.

Sheriff Benedict said the 24th District legislators, Senator Kevin Van De Wege and State Representatives Mike Chapman and Steve Tharinger are very supportive of the law enforcement agencies in Clallam County and of the concerns expressed by WASPC regarding the bills put forth in this legislative session. Some of the concerning bills are:

SHB 1310 –Use of Force

Limits use of force to affect arrest, prevent escape, protect against imminent threat of bodily injury

- Duty of reasonable care
 - Exhaust available de-escalation tactics
 - Leave area if no threat of imminent harm or no crime being committed
- Force allowed to minimal degree necessary
- Submit use of force policies to Attorney General

CONCERNS:

- Undermines decades of case law, unreasonably limits any use of force, effectively requiring an arrest any time any level of force is used
- Creates an inappropriate oversight role for Attorney General
- Uses subjective language without incorporating a reasonable officer standard

Sheriff Benedict commented that it essentially creates a “Duty to Retreat” for officers.

SSB 5051 – Oversight & Accountability

Complete overhaul of Criminal Justice Training Commission (CJTC)

Commission membership, purpose, and added oversight of agencies

- Overhaul of De-Certification
 - De-Cert Criteria-mandatory and discretionary, concurrent CJTC investigations, anyone can file complaint
 - Allows CJTC to suspend peace officer certification

CONCERNS:

- Essentially creates a second employer for every law enforcement officer-the CJTC. This 50+ page bill creates a new bureaucracy that will reduce local control.
- More than half of the Commissioners would have no direct knowledge of, or experience in, law enforcement or corrections.
- New bureaucracy will take budget dollars and result in fewer peace officers responding to calls.

SHB 1203 – Community Oversight Boards

- Mandates Oversight Boards for all city/county law enforcement agencies with 15 or more commissioned officers
- Investigate upon receipt of complaint or own initiative
- Access to any investigation, and access to crime scenes and evidence
- Right to subpoena documents and compel testimony
- Requires local jurisdictions to provide adequate funding for oversight board

CONCERNS:

- Broad authority to small group of unelected persons, no experience in law enforcement, all at taxpayers' expense

*-Grants power of subpoena, compel testimony, and access crime scenes and evidence-will jeopardize criminal investigations and delay justice
-More financial burden on local jurisdictions and removes local control, fewer resources for behavioral health programs
-Unfunded mandate*

Sheriff Benedict commented that, if passed, this would require the Sheriff's Office to fund the Oversight Board using 5% of his budget and uncertain whether the members are on salary or not. In cities, the board would have the power to select the Chiefs rather than the City Councils and Managers.

HB 1499 – Drug Legalization

- Legalizes “personal use amounts” of controlled substances
 - Directs Health Care Authority to establish a substance use recovery plan to assist persons with substance use disorder in accessing community-based treatment and recovery services
 - Requires BLEA to incorporate training on interactions with persons with substance use disorder
- CONCERNS:**
- *We support a robust, wrap-around system for behavioral health, and would actively support this bill if decriminalizing were removed. A lack of services and law enforcement being the only resource will continue until better systems are in place*
 - *Any decriminalization consideration should occur following a system being built and proven*

Sheriff Benedict stated this would legalize Meth, Cocaine and Heroin in significant quantities that would allow drug dealers to carry the drugs without fear of arrest. He finds it ironic that in a State and Country that talk about how concerned everyone is with opioid use and overdoses that this bill would be considered, as it will lead to more deaths and drug use.

SHB 1267 – Office of Independent Investigations

- Governor's Task Force- creates a new state agency
- Concurrent jurisdiction with local investigations
- Law enforcement officers vs. civilian investigators
- Places priority over all other agencies/investigations
- Authority to also investigate sex offenses, and any other criminal activity related to or discovered during course of investigation- at the discretion of the state agency- permissive, not mandatory, to investigate

CONCERNS:

- Relies on civilian investigators for complex criminal investigations
- Gives “priority registration” to CJTC training, at the expense of training needs of the other 279 agencies in the state
- Requires local agency to relinquish scenes, jeopardizing criminal investigations of incidents that may have led to the use of deadly force

Sheriff Benedict felt these proposed changes to law were a result of a divide between those living in urban areas (particularly Seattle) and the rural areas. The rural areas have a better relationship with their law enforcement agencies and he feels if the urban areas have issues they should change their local laws and not enforce change where none is needed.

Sheriff Benedict said there is a push to nationalize policing.

Sheriff Benedict invited any CCSCAC members who have questions on any of these proposed changes to sit down with him and talk one on one.

Link to WASPC site regarding proposed law enforcement reforms:

<https://www.waspc.org/Reforms>

V. Sheriff Personnel Changes

a. Resignations

- i. Jamestown Deputy Ben Tomco – Resigned 12/11/20
- ii. Corrections Deputy Megan Heck – Resigned 12/29/20

b. New Assignments

- i. Deputy Marc Titterness – Assigned as Jamestown Tribal Deputy
- ii. Corrections Deputy Alicia Newhouse – Provisional Jail Sgt.

VI. Roundtable

Blankenship spoke about what a huge loss Deputy Tomco was to the Jamestown Tribe as he was an excellent deputy who had a great relationship with Jamestown. She said the new Jamestown Tribal Deputy Titterness has been establishing relationships with the tribe and she has heard good things about him. She also said that they've seen a decline in drug use on the Jamestown property in the last year and credits the assistance of CCSO and WSP with assisting security to get crime under control. She credits the Jamestown security officers with doing a great job identifying those individuals who need to be removed from the property quickly, even though they come in wearing masks. Jamestown is happy they prevailed in the legal battle over their Sequim MAT Clinic and they are starting work on the project.

Meyer – submitted the following comments regarding the work that has been taking place in Sequim to provide COVID vaccinations to the public:

In response to the serious COVID pandemic threat in eastern Clallam County, the Sequim Operational Area quickly implemented an innovative vaccination program that is now working to immunize at least 70 percent of its 36,000 residents over the next few months. In this joint effort, the Sequim Operational Area has combined the resources of the S'Klallam tribe's Jamestown Health Clinic, Clallam County's Fire District #3, Trinity United Methodist Church, and the City of Sequim. Each of these four organizations has played a crucial role in the success of this effort. The Jamestown Clinic has leveraged its access to needed supplies of vaccines and adequate numbers of qualified medical personnel to make large-scale immunizations possible. The City of Sequim has approved the repurposing of its Carrie Blake Park to allow for substantial drive-through traffic and post-immunization observation parking. The City also assigned Police assets for public safety and security plus public utility personnel for infrastructure maintenance. Trinity United Methodist Church made its large parking lot and building facilities available for pre-vaccination screening and also opened its doors to provide volunteer personnel restrooms and lunchroom access. Fire District #3 provided an on-site EMT and ambulance presence along with a cadre of over 125 Community Emergency Response Team volunteers to support traffic flow management and various logistical and administrative tasks.

The Drive-Thru Vaccination Program began on January 14th. The Jamestown Clinic brought 600 doses to the day one effort, and managed to achieve an inoculation throughput of one shot every 24 seconds! The Drive-Thru Program is scheduled to be operational three days each week, weather permitting, and depending too on the availability of doses. By mid-February, the throughput of the Program had reached 1000 inoculations in a day.

As of this writing, roughly 6000 of our most vulnerable residents have received their inoculations because of the work of so many willing volunteers.

Benedict asked the committee what they thought of inviting Dr. Unthank and Simcosky to the next meeting to explain their efforts to vaccinate the public and the cooperation between multiple agencies. Everyone stated they would like to hear from them so they will be invited to the April 22, 2021 meeting.

Shanks said that the Saturday COVID Clinic was cancelled due to the weather and the Tuesday clinic was able to handle over 1300 people that needed to be vaccinated and it was very well organized.

O'Brien said she was glad the MAT clinic was going forward and thanked the Jamestown tribe for their generosity in sharing the COVID Vaccine with the county.

Sanford said she was very impressed that the Jail has done such a great job keeping the inmates healthy during the pandemic. She also wanted to congratulate the department on their response to the Fentanyl smuggling that occurred in the jail.

Benedict credited Corrections Chief Wendy Peterson and the jail medical team for their excellent work keeping the inmates healthy. Only 5 inmates have tested positive for COVID since March 2020. The jail has an average population of 80 inmates due to COVID restrictions and for the most part the inmates have worked with the staff to stay healthy.

Tyler said the Makah Tribe shut the reservation down in March 2020 and they are still shut down. This has cost them a lot of revenue from tourism, but they have only had 10 COVID cases since March 2020. Nate said that 70% of the population in Neah Bay has been vaccinated and 1326 vaccines have been given, including the second shots. Nate works with tribes from many communities and said they all want to help their surrounding communities. Nate said there are no plans to reopen the reservation at this time but restrictions have been eased. Nate is concerned about the Hwy 112 closure and worried that if Hwy 101 goes out they will be totally cutoff from the rest of the country.

Cox said he really appreciated the social media posts from Undersheriff Cameron.

Barnard said he has been involved in the CCSO Bike Patrol program and it was suspended for several months due to COVID but they were training again and expect to be patrolling the Olympic Discovery Trail in two months. He hoped that would encourage the public to use the trails.

VII. Public Comments

Public comments were requested and none were given

VIII. Adjourn

Next Meeting – 4/22/2021

Adjourned at 5:50pm

Minutes submitted by: Lorraine Shore

Minutes approved by: