



MINUTES

Public Safety, Courts and Civil Service Committee

March 18, 2021

Members Present

Dave Gruber, Chair
Marsha Berzins, Vice Chair
Curtis Gardner, Member
Mayor Pro Tem Francois Bergan
Council Member Allison Hiltz
Council Member Juan Marciano

Others Present

S. Day, T. Buneta, V. Wilson, D. Parker, J. Batchelor, M. Chapman, A. Robnett, G. Koumantakis, J. Heckman, M. Platt, R. McGregor, W. Lippman, C. McDonald, J. Schneebeck, C. Carlson, E. Wittman, M. Nelson, R. Jackson, S. Redfearn, C. McDonald, F. Gray, C. Amsler, J. Krieger, Z. DeBoyes, I. Evans, C. Andersen, M. Hays, R. Weber, S. Wright, R. Wesner, D. Wilson, M. Novak, J. Lesnansky, J. Drake, M. Paolino, J. Bergeron, C. Juul, E. Scherr, M. Smith

1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 11am.

2. Approval of Minutes

February 25, 2021 minutes approved.

3. Consent Items

3.a 2021 RTD Intergovernmental Agreement Resolution

Approved to move forward to the next Study Session

4. General Business

4.a March Crime Update and UCR Report

Deputy Chief of Police, Darin Parker, provided a summary of the crime statistics from January 1, 2021 to March 7, 2021. There weren't any significant changes in the crime trends. They are still trending upward in comparison to last year at approximately the same rate as they were before.

CM Berzins: You said it's gone up, are you talking about 2021 is going up like 2020?

Parker: The crime stats that were presented last month, the increases and trends in crime going up are 2021 compared to the same time frame in 2020.

CM Berzins: It's really startling, and the facts are there to show that the less we arrest people, the more crime is going up. It's amazing to see and it's in District 1 and District 2. It's comparable that you don't arrest 50% and crime goes up 50%.

CM Gruber: I would like to go a little bit deeper into this. I think the point the CM Berzins made is correct. I'm very concerned about Senate Bill 62, which is going through legislature right now. The three main parts, the way I understand it – and I know it's being modified. The first part is that the police will not be allowed to arrest for misdemeanors, certain felonies and certain drug crimes. Those felonies include auto theft. The second thing is that judges will not be able to put a monetary bail, it'll be a personal reconnaissance signature to leave the court. The final thing is the sheriffs will not be able to accept certain criminals charged with certain crimes to go into jail. I'm very concerned about the impact of that. As we can see based on the stats that we have in front of us. The crimes are beginning to explode and, to reiterate what CM Berzins said, if you don't put people in jail, the crimes they're committing will continue, and we will see more of those crimes. I would like to have the city, and Jason, work with Roberto on this – I would like to have these crime stats emailed to the state legislature for those areas representing Aurora, for their information, so they have these statistics as they debate SB62. If I have the concurrence from the other two committee members, we will ask that on behalf of this committee to forward that to our state representatives. CM Berzins, is that okay with you?

CM Berzins: I think that's a wonderful idea. I don't think they have this statistic in front of them. I would like to clarify, maybe I didn't say it correctly – I'm not necessarily saying put them in jail, I'm saying there has to be some sort of consequence other than just a little slap on the wrist. I think we have a lot of tools in our toolbox to use. There does have to be some sort of consequence just like raising your kids – if they don't have a consequence, they don't obey the rules.

CM Gardner: I'm fine with forwarding the statistics on. I guess my questions is – It sounds like we're blaming a piece of legislation that may or may not even be passed, on an increase in crime over the last 12 plus months. I'm not quite clear why we're going over the crime stats and then talking about a potential piece of legislation. At what point are we going to hear the concrete ideas that we can do here in Aurora to address the issues. All I keep hearing is, it's Council's fault, it's state legislature's fault, it's COVID's fault. So, either there's a solution or there's not and if there's not then that's what we just need to say, is that crime is increasing in Aurora as well as nationwide. If there is a solution, then I think we should talk about it. I feel like we keep bringing this topic back and really not discussing anything concrete. It's more just putting the information out there. If that's the point of it then I guess that's fine.

CM Gruber: My point is that the first thing you have to do before solving a problem is measure it, you need to identify and monitor what's going on. What we are seeing here is crime is going up. There are a number of reasons why it's going up. SB62 has nothing to do with where we are now but it could have a negative impact, which is why I want the state legislature to have the situational awareness as to what is happening with our constituents in the city of Aurora. SB127 has had a major impact both, on retention and other factors that have also driven up crime in Aurora. I don't want to write any editorial comments in the email, and I want to make sure that we coordinate that with FISR so CM Lawson has a copy as well. I believe that the people that are making decisions at the state level that will affect crime in the city of Aurora should have the latest information. The second part of your issue – I agree 100%. Now that we are monitoring it, I would like to have much more information on what we can do to reduce the crime so we can make the proper

decisions to have the trends going in the direction that we choose. Chief, would you like to respond?

V. Wilson: CM Gardner touched on it. This is a problem across the nation. I just came back from National Executive Institute last week. Chiefs and sheriffs are all facing the same increase in crime. I think the stats are showing that we had many crimes that we could not jail on due to COVID restrictions. That's not an excuse, it's a reality. I also want to point out that we are doing everything we possibly can, and the men and women of this agency are committed to fighting crime. I appreciate the discussion about SB62. My personal opinion, if I may give it, is that I am very concerned.

CM Gardner: Specific to SB62, I'll mention because I'm on FISR, we discussed twice now I believe – In that meeting I did share my concerns with that bill and we ended up settling on taking a position of pursuing changes through bill sponsor. Judge Day was at our last FISR meeting and discussed some of his – what previously had been concerns, some of which had been addressed but there are some additional concerns from him. After our discussion we took the position to pursue changes through bill sponsor because there are some changes that I think the city would like to see.

CM Gruber: What I want to continue to do for the remainder is to focus on those items that council can do to support a reduction in crime. I believe the jails will be opening up. We're talking about returning to normal in the July or August time frame. Hopefully the jails will open up again and those people that are committing crimes will understand that if they're caught, they will be put in jail if the crime requires that and the law requires that. I think having a consequence available to law enforcement and the criminal justice system other than a simple release or ticket will help that.

V. Wilson: I just want to put it out there for everyone to think about – We can make arrests but it has to be in partnership with the courts and the judicial system to make sure there is accountability for people's actions that are victimizing our community.

Outcome

Information Only

Follow-up Action

Staff will provide crime states to state representatives and FISR on behalf of the Public Safety Committee.

4.b Motor Vehicle Thefts Update

Police Sergeant Matt Novak presented this item to the committee. The presentation included a review period from December 29, 2019, through December 26, 2020. Significant incidents of note were the issuance of the stay-at-home order and the protests that occurred. Stats at the beginning of 2020 were similar to the stats in 2019. An increase is recorded starting when the stay-at-home order was issued and continuing after the protests. One of the reasons indicated for the protests was due to the resources deployed to the protests. The average MVT's were about 68 per week in the city of Aurora for 2020 compared to 2019 which was about 40 per week. The stay-at-home order impacted the stats because more people were home and vehicles were accessible from condominium and apartment complexes and there were opportunities for those crimes to occur across the metro area. Also, with

the stay-at-home order, the courts and jails implemented restrictions, focusing specifically on Arapahoe and Adams Counties, they were not accepting new felony charges on property crimes. They weren't able to charge or jail offenders in Arapahoe or Adams counties. They could not jail persons for warrants unless the bond amounts were \$25,000 or more. The bond restrictions are still in place today. However, the restrictions on new felonies has been lifted in both counties. Another challenge is that courts are setting no bonds or low bonds. There have been discussions with the courts about this. Offenders know the jails have COVID protocols and bond restrictions which means they won't be taken to jail. Offenders are going to bond court and getting out the same day on significantly reduced bonds. Some cases have been dismissed due to speedy trial issues. During the stay-at-home orders, grand juries weren't meeting in some counties or in the Attorney General's Office, affecting the organized crime cases and significantly impacting the way the auto theft task force would do business. Another challenge is the inability to have certain types of physical evidence processed, or the extended length of time to receive results due to the lower priority assigned to property crimes by the crime labs. This makes it more difficult to file charges against the criminals. Year over year there have been slight increases in reported motor vehicle thefts for 2017-2019. However, in 2020 there was a significant increase, where the stats almost doubled. Comparing Aurora to Denver for 2020, Denver's are almost double that of Aurora and they are seeing the same trends. Aurora and Denver are seeing about 75% recovery rate of stolen vehicles in the first 30 days. The metro average for recoveries is about 85%. The top ten stolen vehicles list was provided. Most on the list are due to the lack of security features on the vehicles such as chipped key fobs. The task force gathers information from patrol and PAR and conducting operations with bait vehicles. They also have programs that distribute security clubs to citizens each year and provide community-based education presentations. COVID has made community outreach difficult. They use intelligence to help them focus on hot-spot locations, prolific offenders and violent offenders. The task force analyst provides a weekly and monthly stolen vehicle and recovery interactive map that is distributed to patrol to encourage patrol officers to bond offenders on new felony MVT charges when appropriate and if the call volume allows. The task force also meets with the officers in the districts to educate them on utilizing felony charges and jailing offenders if the felony charges are appropriate as opposed to just writing citations for muni court.

CM Gruber: You said some things that I'm just astounded about; prolific car thieves and knowing who they are and knowing that if they stole a car today, they're going to steal a car tomorrow and they're walking around. The second thing I'm a little surprised about is that you spoke earlier about the supply and demand. On the supply side you mentioned that people are home due to COVID, apartment buildings and condos have cars parked in them and they're a bigger target. On the flip side, as far as demand, I was surprised about the 75% recovery rate. Who is paying the thieves for the cars and do we see that going up at the same rate as the number of cars stolen?

Novak: I believe that rate is probably less. Some of the cars that we're seeing that are going to chop shops or even transported out of state – A number of things that we're seeing right now is that motor vehicles are being stolen purely for the catalytic converters. They're cutting them out of the precious metals found in them and selling them. Colorado does a good job at regulating recycling by requiring ID's before they will accept the materials. However, there's a number of other states

that don't require ID's, so many of the catalytic converters are being loaded onto large trucks and hauled to other states where they will be sold. Other noted thefts are because the thieves need transportation, because they're part of the transient population. Other thefts are utilized in the commission of other crimes, more violent crimes such as shootings or robberies.

CM Gruber: You had mentioned that the crime lab's work load is exceeding their ability to turn these cases promptly. I was on this committee two years ago and we had talked about funding for the crime lab. Is the crime lab adequate in keeping up with the police force demands or are there modifications that need to be made to augment the crime lab?

V. Wilson: With UMFCL, we have other partners and they're really stepping up to make sure that we're getting latent print examiners and other examiners to look at different things. The priority is going to be crimes against people and so there is a problem with keeping up but not just with UMFCL but also CBI and other jurisdictions as well.

CM Gruber: Are the laws in Aurora sufficient, does council need to consider additional ordinances in order to better support the citizens? Is there something we can do legally to better protect the citizens of Aurora in some way? And this might be a longer discussion...

V. Wilson: I think our Muni Court does a really good job doing the best they can with the MVT's that go through their system. I think it's a broader discussion. We need the judicial system and the DA's to realize that this is like a revolving door and it's very frustrating but we're going to continue to do our part. I know MPT Bergan was looking at researching into street racer type situations. I don't know where she is on that and her decision there, but we appreciate council looking at what they can do to give us more tools. Even with ordinances, we can't keep them in jail for more than a day, we're still going to see the issues.

CM Gruber: Maybe we could add that on a later agenda; identifying additional tools that council can provide in order to better protect our citizens and residents. I think it's important that we monitor that.

Batchelor: There was a question from CM Marcano in the chat. How much does a catalytic converter go for versus how much a whole car would go for? Do you have any information on the economics of that piece of it?

Novak: As far as the stolen vehicles themselves, I think that varies based on the vehicle stolen. Newer vehicles are going to sell for a higher price. As it relates to catalytic converters, they can go anywhere from \$300-500 here in Colorado. I know in other states they are getting as much as \$1000 for the catalytic converters.

Outcome

Information Only

Follow-up Action

Staff will follow-up with list of tools for consideration by the committee at a future meeting.

4.c City of Aurora Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan

Battalion Chief Matt Chapman presented this item to the committee. The plan provided sets up the framework, response, and city coordination to ensure compliance with laws and authorities. This also needs to be in place for several different funding sources that come from the state or federal government. The plan is meant to meet all these requirements as well as provide a starting point for how the city is going to coordinate in a large-scale emergency or disaster. City Ordinance, Chapter 38, Article II outlines the Civil Emergencies-Emergency Management. One of the requirements is to have a disaster plan to include large-scale emergencies. The city is required to update the plan every three years to meet federal grant requirements. The Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) will be converted to a Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP). There will be four parts to the CEMP. It will refer to the overall collections of emergency plans and includes the information from the previous EOP. It will also include best practice concepts within Emergency Management. Part I is the Base Plan, Part II is the Role and Responsibilities. These two need to be approved and adopted by Council. Part III is the Associated Plans and Part IV are Incident Specific Plans. Examples of items found under Part III would include Recovery Plan, Public Alert and Warning, Resource Mobilization, Continuity of Operations, Damage Assessment, and Debris Management. Part IV includes annexes in the current EOP. Examples include winter storm, mass casualty, mass fatality, tornado, and aircraft.

CM Gruber: Are exercises regularly scheduled?

Chapman: They are. We have a training exercise that we put together every year. That is also part of our grant requirement, but also something we would implement regardless. We do look at the areas that we think there are gaps or haven't been exercised in a while. There is typically an EOC exercise once a year. Not only internal to the city but regional and state exercises as well.

CM Gruber: My final question has to do with the span of control and the ability to manage police, fire and other areas of the city. Depending on the type of emergency, for example, a shooter would probably be under the lead of the police department with the fire department having a very close second. Some of the other plans would have different command control structures. How are those requirements listed within plans?

Chapman: You're right. Some emergencies will lend themselves – One department will be a lead or be more active in handling that emergency. What we try to do, and we have worked on this over the weekend is a good example – linking the two operation centers. We ask someone from the PD and someone from Fire or other departments like Public Works to be in the center with us. There's also a command post where Fire will join PD. We try to put together an Incident Command System (ICS) where if we do have a defined lead, we also have the support of the other departments needed within the unified command. We also put something like an area command together when working with the counties.

CM Gruber: The key word I was looking for you to say was that you have a defined lead based on the type of emergency the plan is executing. So that person would then have the authority to direct other parts of the city. If you do have that, that's exactly what I was looking for.

CM Berzins: Do you work with – Who is in charge of plowing and our plow map. Because we do have some errors there. Some roads aren't even on the map. It's hard for us to plan for the storm like we just had but I think we saw some holes in our system. Who would we go to see? Do we need more plows, do we need to empower people to plow themselves? What do we do so this won't happen again?

Batchelor: The snow removal plan is updated each year and is taken to the Transportation Policy Committee for discussion and review each year. I don't know the exact timing of when they did it for this past one, but it is an item that is regularly reviewed and taken to council at the policy committee level.

CM Berzins: I thought it went to transportation because I've served on that committee several times but, now we're talking public safety, so I thought I'd bring it up. We did see some holes and we heard it from our citizens about the holes. So, I think maybe we should all have a chat about what they heard and what they saw.

CM Gardner: During the last storm I saw several other agencies had a track-type vehicle to use in the snow. I don't believe AFR has something similar. I'm curious, are there programs available to procure something like that and how would that process work? It just so happens Engine 13 responded on my street and then got stuck. The patient was in a Falck ambulance. If the ambulance got stuck, there wouldn't have been a way to quickly transport that patient. I'm curious, is that something we could look in to procuring because I don't really want to rely on the National Guard or South Metro. I would like to see AFR have all the tools available that other agencies do.

Chapman: We have looked into in 2016 and 2019 and is a recurring conversation. That along with other issues such as sheltering that we need to address and find some solutions for. But resource needs are up there to have one of those vehicles. And you're right, we don't want to delay it. Either way, it takes time even if we're re-routing some of the public works equipment to go help public safety folks. We'll schedule our after-action discussions again and the resource needs will be a big topic of discussion that we'll need to address.

CM Gruber: Could you describe the after-action process within the city?

Chapman: We've handled it a few different ways. Typically, we'll meet with each department that had a major role in the event or emergency and then we'll meet with the policy group, which is what we consider to be our directors, city management and elected, and then we'll ask for their feedback as well. Then we have a larger one where everyone comes together so that everybody can hear what everybody was doing. Then we provide a document. We'll capture all the lessons learned, here's gaps, here's weaknesses, and then some recommendations about how to move forward and fix those gaps or weaknesses.

CM Gruber: Is the AAR included in the appendix? I'd like that formalized. Is there a formal process for that or this an ad hoc process?

Chapman: No, it's stated that we will perform an AAR. We usually use the FEMA documents and processes to put it together. There is no plan that says this is how the AAR will be performed each time.

CM Gruber: I would like to have, maybe not a separate plan, but an annex addressing a requirement for an AAR. I think that on major issues, the AAR results should be reported to council. The reason I'm bringing it up for this specific case

is because all of us were being contacted by our constituents. I would like to see what the city's thoughts are on that if they need more resources, more training, more drivers, whatever that is. The most important thing as far as this presentation goes, is I would like an AAR annex or something like that added to the plan so that there's a formal process and everybody understands that there will be an AAR following an emergency.

CM Gardner: I wanted to go along the lines of questions I had on the tracked vehicle. Do we have any data that indicates missed calls or slow response times from the event over the weekend? I'm curious because I think that would drive home the importance of making sure we have the proper vehicles for what is admittedly not a common occurrence in Colorado, but certainly can happen.

Chapman: I don't believe any of that data has been pulled quite yet. Any time we have an event like that, response times will be slower, but we want to make sure that we're doing everything we can to reduce that for sure.

CM Gardner: I would like, if we can at some point, to see if we missed calls, did not get to things in a timely manner and I'm assuming we did. It was obviously a significant amount of snow and that would demonstrate the importance of having a vehicle like that. I also wanted to say thanks to our firefighters and police officers that continued to work and serve our community over the weekend. My understanding is that we received a lot of calls from residents that were stuck. It's too bad that people didn't heed the warnings to stay off the roads. Of course, some people didn't have that opportunity because of what they do for their jobs or whatever. But, I think that both police and fire demonstrated a lot of really great work this weekend. I think they should all be commended for what they did.

CM Gruber: I second that.

CM Berzins: It seems like it takes an emergency to pull us together as a community these days. Hate speech stopped, there were no snarky comments, it was truly wonderful to see people helping people which is what we were made to do. I want to say a big thank you, not only to Chief Gray and Chief Wilson, all the police, fire, and Falck - but all our volunteers. You know, we had people out pulling cars out, helping push cars, shoveling neighbors' sidewalks. We have a program that other people go and shovel seniors' or anyone who needs it. So, I want to give a big thank you to that and our first responders were out pulling people out. We had a fire truck get stuck, and an ambulance get stuck. That didn't stop them, they were out. We even had BEAR - some people prefer to call it our militarized vehicle - We had them pulling people out and putting families, children inside to keep them warm and safe. And you just can't get any better than that. Helping people, like I said, it's what we were meant to do. I just want to say a big thank you. We knew this was coming and a lot of people stayed home but sometimes you don't have an opportunity if you're a doctor or someone who has to go to work. I appreciate that and everything that entails. So, thank you to Aurora and everybody that lent a hand.

CM Gruber: Chief Gray, do you have any other comments about the CEP?

Gray: I do. CM Gardner asked a question about the response metrics. I know we've had a lot of conversations. You know I'm an advocate for data and metrics. That information will be part of the after-action process. We actually looked into a tracked vehicle after the 2019 event as well. We'll be able to provide those numbers for you here pretty quickly.

CM Gardner: I appreciate that.

Gray: The last thing I was going to say was thank you to all the council members for your comments about the work that was done this past weekend. Many of you have come to events and I normally don't speak without saying, let's recognize the firefighters and paramedics for the work they do each and every day. I extend that to all city workers because not only was the fire department out there working this past weekend, so many other departments were out there as well. We appreciate your comments and we appreciate your support.

V Wilson: I just wanted to say that we also would like a snowcat. Because, as you can see, it takes all hands-on deck to make a community safe and to rescue upwards of 212 people, I think that was the last count that we were able to touch. If we're giving out snowcats, we'll take one too.

Batchelor: I just want to make sure – I believe the update to the CEP will need to go to all council. Matt, do you mind chiming in on that? If it does, I just want to make sure the committee is okay with it moving forward and if there's any edits or comments before we bring it forward to council.

Chapman: Yes, that's correct. It'll have to be moved forward and adopted by council.

CM Gruber: CM Gardner, do you support moving this forward?

CM Gardner: I'm fine with it moving forward, yes.

CM Gruber: CM Berzins?

CM Berzins: Yes, so am I.

CM Gruber: And all I would like to see is something formalizing the after-action review process. Whether it's in the appendix, doesn't have to be long, just has to be in the plan. With that, it is approved.

Outcome

Information Only

Follow-up Action

Staff will add the AAR requirement as requested before going forward to the next available Study Session.

4.d Car Seat and Smoke Alarm Installation Program Update

Aurora Fire Rescue Community Engagement Administrator, Sherri-Jo Stowell, presented this item to the committee. She oversees three lieutenants and one rescue technician that fill the roles of one community health officer, two public information officers, and one recruiter. Community engagement programs include adopt a school, camp spark, car seats, smoke alarm installation, safety reminders, pulse point, shots for tots and mobile patient outreach. Car seat installations is a life-saving program and they hope to get it operating again. AFR responds to a complex auto extrication approximately every three days. Vehicle crashes are the number one cause of death among children under the age of 12. Car seat installation appointments can be scheduled online for a 1-hour, one-on-one instruction. Installation is completed by the caregiver for hands-on learning. Data tracking allows for record keeping and grant opportunities. They partner with Car Seat

Colorado to track this data. The program was put on hold in March 2020 however, they were able to hold 12 events throughout 2020, all but one prior to March 12, 2020. They installed at least 48 car seats in 2020 with a few others installed at fire stations upon request. The E470 Transportation Safety Foundation provided funding used to purchase 28 car seats that can be handed out, pays for training of new recruits, free materials for caregivers, and overtime for car seat technicians. The smoke alarm program is important because the risk of dying in a reported home structure fire is 55% lower in homes with working smoke alarms. AFR saves lives by properly installing smoke alarms in homes. This program has also been on hold since March 2020. The free smoke alarm program has an online request option. Community members can request to have smoke alarms installed for free by appointment. Installations are performed every 2-4 weeks by crew members. Regular training is provided to members regularly. Data tracking is necessary for record keeping and grant opportunities. Neighborhood canvassing events are coordinated with AFR, volunteers, and the American Red Cross. There were 315 smoke alarms installed by crew members in 2019 and 12 in 2020. The neighborhood events in 2019 installed 346 smoke alarms. They are looking forward to getting back out into the community in 2021. They were awarded the 2020 Fire Prevention and Safety Grant of \$61,675. They purchased approximately 2000 smoke alarms, 120 CO detectors, 20 ADA smoke alarms. Installation paperwork is provided in English and Spanish. More than ¾ of the grant funding was used on supplies. It then falls on the crew members and volunteers to get the equipment installed in homes. They are hoping to grow the program over the next two years. The goal is to have community fire academy graduates come back and get engaged in volunteer opportunities. They are planning to have safety plans developed and approved by March or April, online registration will re-opened for car seat appointments and planning with Red Cross for May events, develop a car seat technician program by June, begin accepting community requests for residential fire alarms by the Summer, and ongoing data collection for future grant opportunities and program sustainability.

CM Gardner: I usually try to share community events and things that AFR does, so I'm looking forward to when you all get that scheduled this summer and I can share all the great things you're doing with the community. Thank you.

CM Berzins: These programs are wonderful. Thank you.

CM Gruber: I appreciate it as well. It's so incredible. I had no idea that when I was changing my fire alarms that they had an expiration date on them. If I hadn't looked for it that one day, I wouldn't have known about it. If anyone has lived in a house for more than 10 years, it's very important. I had no idea about the grants either. Thank you.

Outcome

Information Only

Follow-up Action

None.

5. Miscellaneous Matters for Consideration

CM Gruber: There was a question in the chat from CM Hiltz. It said, Will there be any discussion about the nuanced reasons for increased crime that doesn't include arrests/jail? Such as mental health, poverty, schools being out, pandemic, etc. Perpetuating the narrative that this is only an arrest/jail issue is dangerous narrative and I hope our police department and chief don't intentionally perpetuate it. Any comments to that? Chief Wilson, would you like to respond.

V. Wilson: Yes, sir, I would like to respond. The presentation was about motor vehicle theft and the reasons and the trends that we're seeing in motor vehicle thefts, and also our stats and the increase we've not only seen in Aurora but across the nation. My job as the Chief of Police is to be honest, not only with you but the community and I think we need to really focus on the fact that these crime stats are not just stats – these are human beings that are being victimized in our community. They deserve justice. I am not going to shy away from talking about these prolific criminals and what I see and why my subject matter experts within our agency are seeing as the issues. I know that homelessness and mental health are major issues and I think I'd like to say that the police department championed the Aurora Community Outreach Team (ACOT) program that dealt with homelessness as well as the Crisis Response Team (CRT). So, I'm not intentionally perpetuating any dangerous narrative. I think a dangerous narrative is us to ignore the fact that our community is being victimized at a greater rate.

CM Gruber: Thank you, Chief. Frankly, the message I took away was that if a car thief is in jail the day after stealing a car, the car thief won't be stealing a car that next day. Taking those people off the street is the best thing we can do to protect the citizens of Aurora moving forward.

V Wilson: I agree, sir, that we do have a lot of social programming that needs to be looked at. We need to help those individuals that are suffering from mental health, poverty, and schools being out. I'm really looking forward to the youth violence initiative that CM Lawson is looking at. I think that's going to be very impactful. We need to also have real conversations about crime and the safety of this community and people feeling safe in Aurora.

CM Gruber: I agree. I think we were just rated – I saw a news report saying that Aurora is now the 2nd most dangerous city or has the 2nd highest crime. Whereas, when I was first elected, we were the safest large city and now we're number two in Colorado.

CM Berzins: You read that correctly. We're now 2nd highest crime in the state and I think that shows you how quickly things can turn. You've been on council for three years and look what's happened in that three years. So, we really have to stay on top of it.

CM Gruber: I agree. I think our next meeting is going to go over a little bit longer because we've added the gang initiative and the 18th District Attorney as a speaker.

Batchelor: I just want to confirm the dates for you all to make sure that still works. You're right, we did bump the one item. I think we've got the draft that we provided last month, we're still on track for that with the addition of the youth violence and gang initiative that was previously scheduled for this month.

CM Gruber: CM Gardner brought up a point at the beginning of the meeting when we were looking at the statistics. We should be looking at ways for council to support the city in reducing crime and I'd like to add, and again, we have limited number of tools. We control budget, we control policy, and we control ordinances within the city, but I am looking for

ways that could be brought forward for council to support measures that would reduce crime and protect our residents. CM Gardner, did I say that correctly or would you like to rephrase?

CM Gardner: Yeah, that's correct. My point was, I've heard several times that a big part of the reason for the increase in crime is because of council or political leaders in Aurora not supporting the police. But then the actual reason is given for the increase in crime, COVID-19, inability to jail, SB217 – Those are outside of Aurora issues. If it's something that there is a council issue or something we can address at council, I'd love to talk about that. I don't want to just continue to have the crime stats for no reason. We need to do something about it if we're all in agreement that there's something that can be done. Otherwise, it's there for no reason.

CM Gruber: That's why I wanted to bring them, so thank you for reiterating that. That's exactly why I wanted to bring them on.

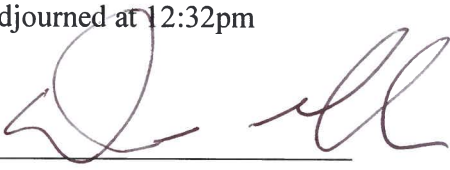
6. Confirm Next Meeting

Next meeting confirmed for April 15, 2021 at 11am via WebEx.

7. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 12:32pm

APPROVED: _____



Dave Gruber, Chair