

**ITEM 7A**

**Public Safety Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
November 8, 2021**



The audio file for this meeting can be found at: <http://www.cvag.org/audio.htm>

- 1. CALL TO ORDER** - The meeting was called to order by Chair Waymond Fermon, City of Indio, at 9:00 a.m. via Zoom videoconference, pursuant to AB 361 and the guidelines for virtual meetings.
- 2. ROLL CALL** - Roll call taken and it was determined that a quorum was present.

**Members Present**

City of Blythe	Councilmember Johnny Rodriguez
City of Cathedral City	Councilmember Mark Carnevale
City of Coachella	Councilmember Megan Beaman-Jacinto, Vice Chair
City of Indian Wells	Councilmember Greg Sanders
City of Indio	Mayor Pro Tem Waymond Fermon, Chair
City of La Quinta	Councilmember John Peña
City of Palm Desert	Councilmember Karina Quintanilla
City of Palm Springs	Councilmember Grace Garner (arrived during Item 4)
City of Rancho Mirage	Councilmember Iris Smotrich
County of Riverside	Pat Cooper, District 4 Deputy Chief of Staff

**Ex-Officio Members Present**

City of Desert Hot Springs Police	Chief Jim Henson
City of Indio Police	Chief Mike Washburn
City of Palm Springs Police	Chief Andrew Mills
City of Palm Springs Fire	Chief J. Kevin Nalder
Riverside County Fire	Deputy Chief Robert Fish
District Attorney's Office	ADA Gerald Fineman
California Highway Patrol	Sgt. Rob McLoud
Riverside County Sheriff	Sheriff Chad Bianco

**Members & Ex-Officios Not Present**

Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians	Councilmember John Preckwinkle
City of Desert Hot Springs	Councilmember Roger Nuñez
Agua Caliente	Emergency Services Mgr. Robert Bradbury
City of Cathedral City Police	Chief George Crum
City of Cathedral City Fire	Chief John Muhr
Riverside County Probation	Chief Probation Officer Ron Miller
U.S. Customs and Border Patrol	Assistant Chief Patrol Agent David Kim
Palm Desert Sheriff's Substation	Captain Dean Agnoletto
Thermal Sheriff Station	Captain Herman Lopez

## **Others Present**

CVAG	Tom Kirk Erica Felci Joanna Stueckle Beverly Newton Kathleen Brundige Anyse Smith Dr. Geoffrey Leung Mark Lancaster Stan Henry John Siegel Shelley Vedorde One other individual without full name provided
Riverside County Public Health Riverside County Transportation CVCC Consultant Individuals	

### **3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Fermon led the Committee in the pledge.

### **4. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS**

None

### **5. CHAIR / COMMITTEE MEMBER/CVAG STAFF COMMENTS**

Chair Fermon thanked local public safety departments for the work, both behind the scenes and on the ground, to ensure the success of the recent special events in the Coachella Valley. He requested that the following items be added to future agendas: information on bicycle safety and hotline information for reporting a crime.

Cathedral City Councilmember Mark Carnevale said the City of Cathedral City was in the process of replacing the ERICA radio systems with the County's Public Safety Enterprise Communication (PSEC) system.

Vice Chair Megan Beaman Jacinto, City of Coachella, noted the recent release of crime statistics and said the City had seen a decline in categories.

Palm Springs Councilmember Grace Garner introduced the new police chief, Andrew Mills, who was marking his first official day on the job and had attended the Pride Festival over the weekend.

Palm Desert Councilmember Karina Quintanilla discussed a recent tour of the training centers and encouraged members to see the facilities first-hand. She also discussed the need for more dispatch staff.

Pat Cooper, Riverside County District Four's Deputy Chief of Staff, highlighted Supervisor Manuel Perez's recent tour of the sheriff's station, behavioral health office and animal services in Blythe.

Chief Andrew Mills, City of Palm Springs, introduced himself to the Committee and said he was looking forward to addressing issues in the City as well as collaborating with the other public safety agencies in the desert.

Erica Felci noted that the Blue Light Ceremony would be a virtual ceremony this year and that the date would be shared with the members when it was announced.

## **6. EX-OFFICIO COMMENTS**

### **A. Riverside County Fire Combustible Task Force project in Mecca**

Deputy Chief Robert Fish provided an update on the public space closures, particularly hiking areas as a result of the drought.

Deputy Chief Fish also introduced a video that was played for the Committee, which detailed a coordinated response to a homeless encampment and green waste situation in the community of Mecca. Member discussion ensued about the impact that coordinated resources can have in addressing such concerns.

Chief Mike Washburn, City of Indio, provided a number of department updates including the passage of Measure E and the funding in a public safety campus; resources dedicated to the increased number of larger events in the community; and staffing shortages. Chief Washburn also extended a welcome to Chief Mills.

Before the conclusion of the ex officio updates, Vice Chair Beaman Jacinto noted that ordinances related to green waste can help address the concerns.

## **7. CONSENT CALENDAR**

**IT WAS MOVED BY COUNCILMEMBER PENA AND SECONDED BY DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF COOPER TO:**

- A. Approve the September 13, 2021 Public Safety Committee Minutes**
- B. Receive and file an update on CVAG's CV Housing First program and the coordinated response with local law enforcement to provide services to the chronically homeless in the Coachella Valley**

**THE MOTION CARRIED WITH 10 AYES AND 2 MEMBERS ABSENT**

<b>Councilmember John Preckwinkle</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>
<b>Councilmember Johnny Rodriquez</b>	<b>AYE</b>
<b>Councilmember Mark Carnevale</b>	<b>AYE</b>
<b>Councilmember Megan Beaman Jacinto</b>	<b>AYE</b>
<b>Councilmember Roger Nuñez</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>
<b>Councilmember Greg Sanders</b>	<b>AYE</b>
<b>Mayor Pro Tem Waymond Fermon</b>	<b>AYE</b>
<b>Councilmember John Peña</b>	<b>AYE</b>
<b>Councilmember Karina Quintanilla</b>	<b>AYE</b>
<b>Councilmember Grace Garner</b>	<b>AYE</b>
<b>Councilmember Iris Smotrich</b>	<b>AYE</b>
<b>Deputy Chief of Staff Pat Cooper</b>	<b>AYE</b>

## 8. DISCUSSION / ACTION

### A. COVID-19 Public Health Crisis & Vaccine Distribution – Dr. Geoffrey Leung, Riverside County Public Health Officer

Dr. Leung provided an overview of the COVID-19 current conditions, including the distribution of the vaccine, the vaccine rates in the Coachella Valley and resources such as <http://myturn.ca.gov> for the latest information. Member conversation ensued, including discussion of vaccine rollout for school-aged children.

There was no action taken as this was an information item.

### B. Update on Riverside County Sheriff's Department Activities in the Desert – Sheriff Chad Bianco

Sheriff Bianco provided a wide-ranging update to the committee that included the following topics: staffing shortages as a result of rhetoric around policing as well as attrition; rise of violent crime; trends of gang accessibility to guns; new technology; as well as challenges with addressing the homeless, particularly chronically homeless individuals, and its impact on parks and social services. Sheriff Bianco also noted that January is human trafficking awareness month and highlighted the upcoming educational campaign on this topic.

Member discussion ensued, including requests from Committee members that the Sheriff facilitate conversations with the community about officer training. Committee members also noted the overlap with the CVAG Homelessness Committee's ad hoc to explore additional options for addressing homeless issues.

No action was taken as this was an informational item.

### C. Partnership for Cooperative Land Management on Habitat Lands – Kathleen Brundige

Given the time, Chair Fermon inquired whether the Committee would prefer to continue this informational item to the next meeting.

**IT WAS MOVED BY COUNCILMEMBER CARNEVALE AND SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER SMOTRICH TO CONTINUE ITEM 8C TO THE NEXT MEETING OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE.**

**THE MOTION CARRIED WITH 10 AYES AND 2 MEMBERS ABSENT**

Councilmember John Preckwinkle	ABSENT
Councilmember Johnny Rodriguez	AYE
Councilmember Mark Carnevale	AYE
Councilmember Megan Beaman Jacinto	AYE
Councilmember Roger Nuñez	ABSENT
Councilmember Greg Sanders	AYE
Mayor Pro Tem Waymond Fermon	AYE
Councilmember John Peña	AYE
Councilmember Karina Quintanilla	AYE
Councilmember Grace Garner	AYE
Councilmember Iris Smotrich	AYE
Deputy Chief of Staff Pat Cooper	AYE

**9. INFORMATION** – The following items were provided for information only:

**A. Attendance Record**

**B. Resources for Graffiti Abatement in the Coachella Valley**

**10. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

None

**11. ANNOUNCEMENTS** – Upcoming Meetings:

Upcoming Meetings:

The next meeting of the **Public Safety Committee** will be held on Monday, January 10, 2022, at 9 a.m. via Zoom webinar.

The next meeting of the **Executive Committee** will be held on Monday, December 6, 2021, at 4:30 p.m. via Zoom webinar.

**12. ADJOURN**

Noting the next meeting will be held in 2022, Chair Fermon adjourned the meeting at 10:33 a.m. by extending well wishes for a safe and healthy holiday season.

Respectfully submitted,

*Erica Felci*  
Assistant Executive Director