



# City of Fort Bragg

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## Meeting Minutes Public Safety Committee

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Wednesday, April 19, 2017

10:00 AM

Town Hall, 363 N. Main Street

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### MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Committee Member Peters called the meeting to order at 10:15a.m.

### ROLL CALL

**Present:** 7 - Lindy Peters, Bernie Norvell, Linda Ruffing, Fabian Lizarraga, Steve Orsi, Tom Varga and Lesley Bryant

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Committee Member Norvell and seconded by Committee Member Peters that the Committee Minutes of the March 22, 2017 Special Meeting be approved. The motion was carried by a unanimous vote.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Anna Marie Cesario commented on the lack of written Minutes for the meeting, she felt it was leading towards a mild form of censorship when Committee Members have access to files and notes on their iPads. She would like to see a projection of any attached documents on a screen during the meeting, along with printed copies of all attachments. She also commented that Neighborhood Watch Meetings are not listing any of the attendees in the Minutes.

Malcolm McDonald addressed the issue of the Minutes as it was part of the State Clerk's new requirements.

### CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

#### 1. [17-178](#) Discuss Vehicle Code Violations and Traffic Enforcement

Chief Lizarraga stated the primary goal of traffic enforcement was to educate drivers. Officers have the discretion to either offer educational or punitive actions. Most calls end with the driver receiving a warning for their behavior. Speeding tickets can either be issued by "pacing" the vehicle with patrol vehicle, or with radar gun. Patrol vehicles need to have the speedometers calibrated by C.H.P. which has not happened in recent years. There are now four officers certified on using the new radar gun which also has to be calibrated. The radar trailer has been deployed which has reduced speeding. Officers are not slacking and the numbers of calls for service show the activity.

Committee Member Peters asked if the radar trailer was set and an officer was placed to see trailer display, could a ticket be issued? Chief Lizarraga stated the Police Department does not participate in "speed traps", but as long as the radar trailer had been calibrated, and the officer was able to determine speed of vehicle setting off trailer, then that could be used as probable cause to initiate a traffic stop. With the new radar gun and additional officers, the number of citations is

anticipated to increase. Traffic enforcement will be based on traffic accident locations, school areas.

Committee Member Peters appreciated the fact officers were giving warnings to drivers. Should drivers be issued citations, the rumor mill will get the word out and that may in itself help the issue. He added that he appreciates the Police Department and is not nit-picking.

Lt. Gilchrist added the radar beam from the trailer radiates from a fixed spot, and the further the beam travels the wider the spread, which can pick up any traffic coming from another direction. Officers need to have probable cause to enforce a traffic stop.

Committee Member Norvell asked if there was plan for the ongoing calibration of vehicles and the trailer. Chief Lizarraga stated CHP would be contacted to calibrate the vehicles and keep the calibrations up to date. Committee Member Peters asked City Manager Ruffing to notify Chief Lizarraga of any complaints.

Chief Lizarraga stated that any citation issued by an officer can be contested in Court. When that happens, Officers are on the stand making their case. With no supporting evidence, the Judge is likely to dismiss the ticket. Some violations can not be issued citations if the crime is not committed in the presence of the officer.

Lt. Gilchrist also mentioned the purchase of a tint meter and a decible meter which will be deployed by officers.

Public comments were heard from Steve Funk.

## 2. [17-179](#) Discuss U.S. Post Office Operating Hours and Security Issues

City Manager Linda Ruffing stated the Post Office hours had been changed recently, and after speaking to the Postmaster invited her to the meeting for clarification for the change.

Postmistress Denice Sisco stated the decision was made to change the hours after a serious assault had occurred there. The decision was taken at a level above her position, and due to public and staff safety. Sisco has received two complaints to her face, and has read a lot of comments on social media. It was not cost effective to install electronic locking doors. Sisco is receptive to amending the hours to remain open until 6:00p.m.

Committee Member Norvell appreciated the explanation, and had heard a rumor that the Police Department had locked the facility years ago. Chief Lizarraga stated the building is a Federal building. Calls for service could impact the ability of the Police Department to secure the facility, and that would increase liability for the City. Committee Member Peters agreed but would like to see hours extended.

Committee Member Norvell asked if the City was able to fix the problem would the doors remain open, or was it a decision to "lock the doors"?

Public comments were heard from Kathy Silva.

## 3. [17-176](#) Discuss Possible Installation of Additional Public Restrooms in Downtown Area

City Manager Ruffing stated the Public Works Committee had looked at this issue just over a year ago. Having looked at the suggested "Portland Loos" and discovered the cost was approximately \$100,000 each there was a huge cost factor. The issues with additional restrooms are the maintenance, accessibility for everyone and the location. There is the option to retro-fit the current restrooms at Town Hall allowing them to remain open at night, with a hand wash station outside of the building, and external security cameras. There was the possibility of a grant opportunity, and it was something the City has been grappling with for some time.

Committee Member Peters stated the vandalism to public restrooms is nothing new. Procuring Port-a-potties would prove to be expensive.

Tom Varga stated the current setup serves the daytime population. The issues arise with the night time population, transients and bar patrons, with vandalism, drug use and general "ick" factors. Years ago it was common practice to have restroom attendants. It would prove expensive to provide durable restrooms with an attendant, unless the attendant was a volunteer.

Committee Member Norvell stated he did not want this to become a problem.

Committee Member Peters stated there would be no further discussion on the topic.

Public comments were heard from Anna Marie Cesario and Jeff Wright.

4. [17-183](#) Discuss Placement (and Removal) of Benches in Downtown Area

City Manager Ruffing stated the issue is loitering and the misuse of the current benches, which is why two benches have been removed. Ruffing suggested a process be developed whereby complaints about benches are received. The complaints would be forwarded to the Public Safety Committee who would make the determination as to whether the bench be removed or not.. The owner of the property located at the corner of North Franklin Street and East Redwood Avenue has provided a no trespass letter. Would a fence around the property help to keep the transients out? While the Police Department does make contact with people who loiter there, any unlawful behavior is handled, and there has been increased foot patrol. The property owner would have to work with the property owner to determine the correct materials for the fence.

Committee Member Peters stated that in 2014, when the Main Street Merge project was being looked at, business owners stated they did not want benches outside their businesses as it attracted undesirables. Maybe business owners should be contacted to see how they feel about having a bench placed outside their business. Are there any plans to add benches? The bench issue should be handled by the Public Safety Committee.

Committee Member Norvell asked if the property owner put a fence up, the bench was replaced, and the loitering resumed, would the person be asked to move on before being issued a citation. The bench is wanted back at the location, but not the problem. A plan needs to be in place before the bench is returned.

Chief Lizarraga stated the issue of the fence would need to be addressed prior to the bench being replaced. The area would be given the same attention as Bainbridge Park.

Public comments were heard from Richard Mack, Jeff Wright, Kathy Silva, Malcolm McDonald, Anna Marie Cesario

5. [17-205](#) Receive Status Report on Homeless Issues and Consider Possibility of Preparing a Homeless Action Plan for Fort Bragg

The mention of homelessness and the local homeless population will be held over until the next meeting when there are representatives from parties who can provide answers to questions.

City Manager Ruffing stated the invitation to attend should be extended to faith based groups as well, and should be a Special Town Hall meeting to devise an action plan.

Committee Member Norvell agrees the homeless issue be continued to the next meeting, however not convinced the Hospitality House and Center staff would attend.

6. [17-210](#) Receive Oral Update from Staff on Departmental Activities

Chief Orsi stated the Fire Department hosted a fund raiser in January to replace the thermal imaging camera. The event raised approximately \$6000 and the camera costs approximately \$8400.

## **MATTERS FROM COMMITTEE / STAFF**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Committee Member Peters adjourned the meeting at 12:04p.m.