

Date: February 10, 2009

Members: Art Harris, Jeff Papa, Dan Montgomery

Public Safety Transition Subcommittee Meeting (draft) Notes

Sheriff Ken Campbell and Major Mike Nielsen of the Boone County Sheriff's Office attended the second meeting of the Public Safety Transition Subcommittee. Art Harris began by asking Sheriff Campbell how the reorganization may affect the Sheriff's Office. Sheriff Campbell responded that not much will change initially; all of the covered areas remain a part of Boone County and the Sheriff's Office will respond whenever they are needed. In a few limited areas (as portions of the Rural District move into the Urban classification), the Zionsville Police Department may become the primary responder, but the Sheriff will continue to respond wherever needed and will continue to be the primary responder in the Rural area of the new town.

The Sheriff relayed that his Department fielded 18,950 calls for service last year. The Sheriff indicated the Sheriff's Office will continue to assist other departments and participate in the teamwork environment in which the various Boone County law enforcement agencies willingly assist each other as needed. Often the closest law enforcement officer is first to respond regardless of primary jurisdiction, BCSO responds into the town as needed. As the boundaries change, the system will need advance warning in order to implement those changes; this takes time and effort.

Calls for service to BCSO increased 11% in 2008. The Sheriff has two fewer officer than Lebanon PD, but fields only 200 fewer calls. In addition to primary law enforcement duties, the Sheriff is also responsible for Courthouse security, civil process (650 per month), as well as operation of the jail (including medical provision and meal service – 3 meals a day times 365 days times 126 inmates). The jail has an average daily population of about 126, and processed 2,800 bookings last year. The Sheriff is responsible for all three interstates (3,000 calls per year just from I-65 between the South edge of Lebanon and 267). Responsible for I-865, I-65 and I-74.

The Sheriff has 28 deputies, 17 of whom are patrol officers. There are also jail correctional officers, communication officers and a cook under the Sheriff. The Sheriff will need more officers as the county population continues to increase. He has funded many services, equipment and projects without general taxpayer funds (by using tax warrants, Commissary funds, work release, cases of mandatory DOC housing and 911 tax, among other creative funding methods). Sheriff Campbell has chosen to be a salaried Sheriff and forego personal income from tax warrants and inmate meals. Tax warrant money instead funds some projects and also benefits the county general fund.

The Sheriff has a verbal agreement with the City of Lebanon to provide law enforcement coverage for some recently annexed areas, as well as an agreement with Fayette to provide primary law enforcement in the event of incorporation.

Under the reorganization, nothing changes. The Rural District will remain as Primary response area under the Sheriff. Agreements to ensure that future Sheriffs and Zionsville Town Councils continue to see things that way are for the legal personnel to work out. Steve Freeland, who served on the original planning committee for the reorganization process pointed out that Sheriff Campbell was heavily involved in providing information and planning assistance to the reorganization committee and has been a part of the team. Sheriff Campbell suggested that he and ZPD Chief Dowden should be directly involved in the crafting of the MOU in order to ensure the best language for both departments.

ZFD Chief Jamie VanGorder spoke next. Art Harris also asked Chief VanGorder how the reorganization would impact the fire service. Chief VanGorder noted that his department may be the least impacted as it currently serves the three entities which will comprise the new town of Zionsville; no substantive changes are

expected. ZFD is, however, still making the transition from volunteer to a full-time fire department. ZFD is already working through the strategic transition plans, and planning for additional population growth (most recently in Western Eagle Township), including increasing staff levels.

Some challenges for ZFD include the fact that the current legal structure is a fire territory between Zionsville and Eagle Township with service to Union Township by contract. By law, a fire territory must be an agreement among at least two governmental bodies. Because these three entities are merging into one, we will no longer qualify as a fire territory and will need to again become a fire department.

The Fire Territory Board after 1/1/2010 may wish to form a new fire territory with one of our neighbors (pending any legislative changes). There has been some discussion of a Regional Fire Service in Southeast Boone County, possibly involving six entities and three fire chiefs.

Some flexibility of fire territories will be lost. There will be some challenges, but no change in service level. Like the Sheriff, ZFD needs to add capacity, not due to the reorganization, but due to existing and future growth. Costs for ZFD have consistently fallen under the cost projections for the transition to a full-time department. The service area will remain the same, with a small asterisk. The area annexed by Whitestown may be served in the future by another department or by ZFD. The fire territory board has authorized conceptual planning for a Western fire station. Jeff Papa asked if this fire station could include space for a Sheriff's substation, and Chief VanGorder indicated this would be possible. The Sheriff noted he has a similar agreement with Whitestown to provide some space as needed.

There will continue to be confusion over which entity people live in (including urban vs. rural classification) and who provides their services. Many people already assume services go with zip codes or mailing address city. Major Nielsen noted that the Sheriff's Department answers the Central Communications (911) calls as Boone County Emergency Communications, not as the Sheriff's office and directs those calls to the appropriate safety agency. Major Nielsen asked for input on any ongoing confusion so that corrective measures can be taken if there are any ways to make the system more efficient. Art Harris noted that this will be a major educational process to describe the two-tiered service structure to the citizens. The Subcommittee concluded by agreeing that the costs associated with the areas of responsibility of this Subcommittee were likely to include only attorneys fees to draft an MOU between the Sheriff's Department and the Town. ZFD will also have some legal costs associated with the transition from a fire territory back to a single fire department.