

**CITY OF LOMPOC**  
**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION MINUTES**

**Meeting of Wednesday, October 17, 2018**  
**City Hall, 100 Civic Center Plaza, Council Chambers**

**Commission Members Present**

Roy Belluz, Chairperson  
Frank Campo, Co-Chairperson  
Maria Aguiniga, Member  
Amanda Hollingworth, Member  
Philip Gallanders, Member

**Staff Present**

Police Chief Pat Walsh  
Police Captain Joseph Mariani  
Fire Chief Jerry Kuras  
Battalion Chief Chuck Ruda  
Police Administrative Aide Debbie Oliver

**Public Present**

Jim Mosby, City Council Member  
Dirk Starbuck, City Council Member

Called to order by Chairperson Roy Belluz

The minutes of July 18, 2018 Public Safety Commission were approved with a minor spelling correction, with Co-Chairperson Campo making the motion to approve. The motion was seconded by Chairperson Belluz at 6:30 p.m.

**New Business:**

**3.1. Commission to discuss the efficacy of continuing the Public Safety Commission (PSC).**

Chief Walsh provided a brief history of the creation of the Public Safety Commission. The Public Safety Commission was originally created by Former Mayor Joyce Howerton as way to communicate with public/police. The commission has since morphed into the current PSC with Police and Fire both represented. Chief Walsh recommended the PSC has out lived its need and has created a fiscal cost to the City, which is not beneficial to the public.

Chairperson Belluz- Open commission to discontinue PSC.

Member Aguiniga- Discussed what her role is as a Public Safety Commissioner is and admitted the commissioners have not been doing enough outreach to the community. Discussed what police department role and fire department role are according to the PSC handbook. Mentioned Page 24 of function of PSC Handbook. Does not agree with discontinuing PSC. Recommended changing PSC.

Member Gallanders- Admitted he has not been as proactive as he would have liked on the PSC. Stated the difficulties the Brown Act rules have created, constrained the PSC and to continue as

is, does not feel it will be effective. In order to continue it will require the Commissioners to actually go out and speak with the public.

Member Hollingworth- Stated the original idea behind forming the PSC has been made obsolete by the use of current technology being used by the Police and Fire Departments.

Co-Chairperson Campo- Discussed when Council Member Costa was on council, the current council has not been including the PSC. In the past the City Councilmembers would direct the public to contact the Public Safety Commissioner, however the current council does not direct the public to use the PSC members. Feels the decision should be made until after election.

Chairperson Belluz- Mentioned wanted to be more involved with the community. Spoke about the crime rate is increasing. Discussed limitations created by the Brown Act requirements. Stated this is a council decision.

Chief Walsh- Spoke on Member Hollingworth point regarding using 1990s technology by having this commission. The Police App is used as a real time communication tool for the public. Information is constantly being shared with the public and the public uses the Police App as a communication tool with the Police Department. Discussed the Commissioners appointment by City Council members with no known vision. At the end of the day are we having a meeting to have a meeting because we have always had this meeting. That's the question that needs to be answered.

Chief Kuras- The only time commissioners have contacted him are at the meetings. The PSC meetings provide status and statistics. Stated he would love to have an App, but does not have it in the Fire budget. This meeting is the only interaction he has with the PSC.

### **Public Comments:**

#### **Calvin Tucker**

- Voiced concern regarding the Chief of Police has stopped going out into the community. Recommend using Apps and becoming modernized. Votes to revamp. Mentioned he would like to be involved.

**Chief Walsh-** Responded that the community walks have not been discontinued and are posted on the App.

#### **Nickolas Gonzales**

- Voiced his concern that council members appoint commissioners in the newly created districts. Mentioned a good percentage of society that is not tech savvy and requires face to face interaction.

#### **Hugo Aguiniga**

- Spoke in support of continuing the PSC.

**Susan Galvan**

- Voiced concerned regarding a murder that occurred in the City and the public was not aware of it for two days. Spoke on support of a communication person to provide information to the public.

**Sally Silva**

- Spoke on the need to speak with the youth in the community. Mentioned a need for a place for the children to do stuff.

**Richard Smith**

- Spoke on need to have PSC members based on the districts.

**Gary Bower**

- Recommended changing to commission to engage community and change the makeup of the commission by adding more commissioners.

**Nick Nicolecto**

- Voiced concern regarding gang activity, shootings, stabbings, and gang members congregating in alleyways.
- Would like to see what type of tips the community has in combating gang activity.

**JimThroop, City Manager:**

- Spoke on the cost to the City for 14 different commissions currently in the City and with the current financial state of the City we have reached a point where decisions need to be made.
- Discussed the perspective to weigh the benefits of the commission.
- Mentioned the Apps to connect citizens immediately about what is going on.
- Posed the question whether the community would really want a public outreach rather than a commission.

**Joe Garcia**

- Questioned Jim Throop whether this commission was going to be “axed” due to financial reasons.
- Throop responded: This is a decision council will have to decide. One option is the possibility of combining commissions.

**Bernie Federmann:**

- Thanked commissioners for their services.
- Discussed the his service and the history of the Public Safety Commission served 9 years on the commission on Crime Commission started by Mayor Joyce Howerton, which included commissioners attending the Community Academy, getting to know officers and their needs, being the was eyes and ears for the community and Public Safety personnel. Commissioners at that time went to HOA groups and spoke with them. It was a very time consuming to serve on the Public safety commission. Served 20-30 hours a month as a PSC. It takes that to have a successful Public Safety Commission.

- Mentioned he has not seen any of the current PSC commissioners at the City Council meetings.
- Stated he believes combining commissions is a great idea.
- Mentioned how the Police Department has taken on a new role and it has taken a toll on our Police and Fire personnel.
- Mentioned PSC is too taxing on the police and fire personnel and is in support of discontinuing the PSC as it is today.
- Recommended creating a grassroots as a community and do something for the community without the PSC.

### **Kevin Aguiniga**

- Made a comment regarding a Police Officer being rude to him and mentioned his lack of trust in the police department.
- Mentioned there is no communication with an App.
- Spoke in support of continuing the PSC needs to stay.

### **Chief Walsh**

- Explained with a commission the Brown Act requirements the commission is required to only speak on agenzized items. Mentioned there seems to be confusion between what a commission is and what a community forum is.
- Addressed concerns that the Police App would never replace face to face conversation.
- Addressed concerns regarding a murder investigation and notifying the public. Stated LPD will not talk about investigations or murders until they can be discussed. Stated LPD will inform the public when we can, however LPD are professional in regards to investigations and releasing pertinent information could jeopardize an investigation.
- Mentioned the need for community engagement. We need public to walk the community, which public is encouraged to attend the community walks.
- Addressed the fact that the Police Department has three, maybe four police officers working at a given time. Community engagement is encouraged.
- Communication is always a problem. When you are spinning a lot of plates, dispatch, gang, triage, homeless problem. Should we communicate more, absolutely. Again this is about the PSC and you need vision. Community forums are a separated issue.
- Addressed comment about PD not out walking the streets. Stated he walks around the town daily and talks to people daily.
- Stated one of his goals was to increase community events. The goal was one per month. This past year the LPD has done 130 community events. Addressed the fact that most of the LPD officers are coaches, they go into local schools, and are continuously reaching out.
- Discussed the short-handed staffing levels of the LPD. Of 51 sworn positions, currently staffed 44, 3 are injured and 3 are working in dispatch. LPD has one FT homeless liaison, 3 working in gangs. Insufficient amount of people working gangs/homeless.
- LPD handled 40,000 calls for services with a skeleton crew.
- Bring it back to this commission

### **Back to Commission:**

**Aguiniga:**

- Questioned how many of the commissioners are walking down L Street.
- Stated people are calling and no one is showing up.
- Does not support ending PSC.
- Requested City attorney weigh in on types of forums and commissions that can be brought back.

**Gallanders:**

- Posed the question how the districts effect the appointment of Commissioners.
- Stated the way PSC has been running has not been effective.
- Mentioned whatever happens commissioners need to proactive and out there with the community.

**Hollingworth:**

- Stated her biggest concern is the Brown Act, which cripples the ability of commissioners to be proactive. Does not feel the PSC is effective.
- Recommended created a volunteer group rather than continuing PSC.

**Campo:**

- Noted two council members here today. Discussed the council needs to determine if the PSC needs to continue or end.

**Chief Walsh:**

- Mentioned the Police Chief Advisory Board when he started in this position.
- Recommended an Ad Hoc or forum rather than continuing with the confinements of the PSC.

**Chief Kuras:**

- Recommended starting a citizens' commission not continuing PSC.
- Stated it doesn't start at this table it starts with the public.

**Belluz:**

- Stated PSC is missing the mark. Have not been able to have the council take action.
- Stated possibly a Community Action Group. Agrees that we take a lot of staff time.

Motion to have the City Attorney, City Manager of different options forums or commissions including the PSC and options that do not fall under the Brown Act.

Motion made by Member Aguiniga to request options of the City Attorney for different commissions/citizens groups/ advisory groups/ involving the PSC and the pros and cons from a legal aspect point of view in addition to clarifications for options for other types of avenues with or without the Brown Act. Co-Chairpersons: Campos seconded. All in favor unanimous.

**Chief Walsh:**

- Suggested whatever form there needs to be a clearer vision for the commissioners. PSC commissioners are to be to help FD and PD to advocate for departments.

**Additional Public Comment:**

**Nikolas Gonzales**

- Expressed concern of a non-profit group distributing needles in the community.
- Discussed value of community discussions and commissions.

**Richard Smith**

- Cannabis operations business owner. Voiced concern double standard for needle exchange and Cannabis operation.

**Joe Garcia**

- Voiced concern about needle exchange van.

**Sally Silva**

- Voiced concern about needle exchange van.

**Unknown Speaker**

- Voiced concern regarding needle exchange van.

**Kevin Aguiniga**

- Made statement, “Don’t make this a drug or Jesus town.”

**Chief Walsh**

- Discussed needle exchange van.

**Adjournment**

- The Public Safety Commission adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:15pm. The next meeting of the Public Safety Commission is on Wednesday, January 16, 2019 at 6:30pm.