

**CITY OF NORTH LAS VEGAS
SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

September 5, 2007

Website - <http://www.cityofnorthlasvegas.com>

CALL TO ORDER

4:36 P.M., Council Chambers, 2200 Civic Center Drive, North Las Vegas, Nevada

ROLL CALL

COUNCIL PRESENT

Mayor Michael L. Montandon
Mayor Pro Tempore William E. Robinson
Councilwoman Stephanie S. Smith (by phone)
Councilwoman Shari Buck
Councilman Robert L. Eliason

STAFF PRESENT

City Manager Gregory Rose
Assistant City Manager Sam Chambers
Assistant City Manager Maryann Ustick
City Attorney Carie Torrence
City Clerk Karen L. Storms
Communications Director Brenda Fischer
Parks and Recreation Director Mike Henley
Police Chief Mark Paresi
Assistant to the City Manager Michelle Bailey-Hedgepeth
Chief Deputy City Clerk Anita Sheldon

VERIFICATION

Karen L. Storms, CMC
City Clerk

BUSINESS

City Manager Gregory Rose stated Item No. 2 would be heard before Item No. 1.

2. PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION REGARDING THE UTILIZATION OF "RED LIGHT" CAMERAS IN A NON-ENFORCEMENT CAPACITY FOR THE PURPOSE OF COLLECTING EMPIRICAL DATA THAT COULD BE USED TO FORMULATE FUTURE LEGISLATION.

Police Chief Mark Paresi stated while it was unlawful to use cameras at red lights to enforce laws, the collection of data through the use of such cameras was lawful. Chief Paresi reported there were 4,500 traffic accident investigations in North Las Vegas in 2006, with 29 fatalities. 53 days of thoroughfare usage were lost as a result of traffic accidents at the top ten intersections in North Las Vegas. Chief Paresi introduced Mark Etzbach of Redflex Traffic Systems. Mayor Pro Tempore Robinson commented the State Legislature failed to pass a bill that would have approved the use of cameras at red lights. He asked how many communities in Southern Nevada used the cameras. Chief Paresi emphasized the intention was not to use the cameras for enforcement, only for collection of data. He stated the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (LVMPD) also intended to install cameras at two Las Vegas intersections.

Mark Etzbach stated there was a dramatic increase in traffic safety in over 150 metropolitan areas where Redflex cameras were installed at red lights. Sergeant Bob Roshack of the LVMPD stated one of the obstacles to getting the law passed was the lack of statistics. The objective of the installation of the cameras was to gather the needed statistics to help secure passage of a law in the next Legislative session. The cities of Las Vegas and North Las Vegas had worked together with other county and state agencies. Chief Paresi explained the intent was to initially do a six month blind test at two intersections. There would be no indication the cameras were installed. Then, signage would be posted to determine whether the presence of cameras at lights was a deterrent in itself. Councilwoman Buck asked whether the cameras were used in lieu of police presence, and if it resulted in fewer traffic tickets. Chief Paresi contended the presence of the cameras and signs freed police officers to enforce laws away from intersections, and therefore increased law enforcement potential. If cameras were used for law enforcement in the future, tickets would be issued as part of the camera system. Mayor Pro Tempore Robinson asked about the cost of the cameras. Chief Paresi explained there was no cost to install the cameras, however there was a four-year exclusivity clause for a contract with Redflex.

Chief Paresi stated if approval for the program was granted, Council would be provided quarterly reports.

Councilwoman Smith said she thought the program would improve public safety and collection of documentation of traffic accidents was beneficial.

ACTION: STAFF DIRECTED TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THE PILOT PROGRAM

MOTION: Mayor Pro Tempore Robinson

SECOND: Councilwoman Smith

AYES: Mayor Montandon, Mayor Pro Tempore Robinson, Councilmembers Smith, Buck and Eliason

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

1. DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION REGARDING A STAFFING PATTERN CHANGE TO ADD AN ASSISTANT CHIEF OF POLICE POSITION AND A DEPUTY CHIEF OF POLICE POSITION.

Mayor Pro Tempore Robinson requested separation of the two proposed additions to the Police Department staff. He preferred to vote on each one instead of voting at once for both positions. City Manager Gregory Rose said Council could include that direction as part of their motion if they so desired. Mayor Montandon directed Council to hear the discussion and allow Police Chief Paresi to make his presentation before the matter was decided.

Police Chief Paresi displayed graphs of population growth, the number of service calls and the number of police officers from 1996 through 2006. Population rose from 80,000 to 202,520. Service calls increased at a rate of 5,000 per year. Part I offenses, which included murders, rapes and burglaries, had increased at a rate of 400 per year. Although the number of crimes had risen, victimization rate decreased from 81 per thousand to 54 per thousand. The traffic accident victimization rate dropped from 33 per thousand to 22 per thousand. However, as population increased, the total number of crimes rose, particularly in the northern area of the City. Councilman Eliason and Mayor Pro Tempore Robinson noted crime was highest in their Wards 1 and 2. Chief Paresi explained it was due to the fact those wards had the highest intensity of population. Chief Paresi stated although the number of police officers was higher, the ratio of patrol officers to citizens was lower.

Chief Paresi summarized the accomplishments of the Department. Detention had a paddy wagon program and a Justice Court Video. There was now arraignment consolidation in Municipal Court. Additional revenues were to be generated from higher bed rates and lower telephone contract rates. The City had acquired two new Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant vans. The City now utilized Offendertrak and responded to City Track

calls. 22 Corrections Officers were hired. Detention had entered into regional partnerships with the U.S. Marshal Service, Northwestern University and Latino Community Outreach. There was a Regional Academy and a regional approach to radio operability. Community Services Crime Prevention initiated The McGruff Truck and House and crime prevention was a major strategy of the Police Department. Chief Paresi emphasized the importance of Neighborhood Watch programs. In addition, a Bicycle Helmet Grant provided 2,000 helmets a year for three years.

Chief Paresi reported the Police Department attended 35 recruiting events for police officers, which resulted in 477 candidates. With the hotline and website, the total number of recruits was 1,887. Of those, 289 candidates applied, and only 14 were hired, which highlighted the difficulty in attracting and retaining police officers.

Of the 297,640 service calls in 2006, there were 53 internal allegations which resulted in 23 internal complaints, and 10 allegations by citizens which resulted in two complaints. Chief Paresi was proud of the low number of substantiated complaints, however, Mayor Pro Tempore Robinson thought the number was too high. The total number of complaints against Detention was somewhat higher, but the ratios between contacts with citizens and inmates and Use of Force incidents was very low, as was the ratio between traffic stops to vehicle pursuits.

Mayor Pro Tempore Robinson and Councilman Eliason were confused about how crime had increased, yet Chief Paresi reported the crime rate was down. Mayor Pro Tempore Robinson asked why statistics were given for the preceding ten year period rather than the five years Chief Paresi was the head of the Police Department. Chief Paresi explained the incidence of crime had risen at a rate of 400 per year because population rose dramatically. However, each citizen's chance of being a victim of crime - the per capita rate - was lower than it was ten years ago. City Manager Rose explained he directed Chief Paresi to do a ten year study to get a better historical picture of the City's progression in relation to crime. The per capita crime rate had dropped every year and was lowest in 2004. However, there was serious concern the crime rate had begun to rise over the last two years, which led to the recommendation of the addition of two new positions in the Police Department. City Manager Rose explained one position was Assistant Chief which encompassed a span of control. The other was Deputy Chief which was a growth opportunity for current employees to demonstrate a skill set or add additional skills. Mayor Pro Tempore Robinson asked if the positions were to be filled from within the Department. City Manager Rose responded his intent was to fill the Assistant Chief position from existing staff, however, if both positions were approved, he intended to do a nationwide search for a Deputy Chief. Additionally, City Manager Rose stated he intended to conduct a nationwide search if only one position was approved.

Mayor Pro Tempore Robinson reiterated his request to separate the two positions into two separate votes. He was in favor of promoting an Assistant Chief from within the

Department, but was unsure about supporting the Deputy Chief position. Mayor Pro Tempore Robinson was also not in favor of hiring from outside the Department. City Manager Rose felt a nationwide search maximized the benefit to the City. He thought it ensured the most qualified person was awarded the position. Mayor Pro Tempore Robinson thought that implied the City's staff was not qualified or had not received adequate training. He took issue with the fact the City paid for training Police Department personnel and then determined their acquired skills were not sufficient. Mayor Montandon clarified a national search included current City of North Las Vegas Police Department employees. The candidate could be selected from outside the Department, or inside the Department. City Manager Rose felt a nationwide search was appropriate to ensure the selection of the best qualified candidate, as the position carried critical responsibilities. Mayor Pro Tempore Robinson commented it could be interpreted the implication was the people who held the highest positions within the Department were inadequate and if that was the case, they should be fired. City Manager Rose disagreed, and said it provided an opportunity for current employees to compete and prove their abilities were the best nationwide. Mayor Pro Tempore Robinson and Councilman Eliason asked why the City intended to do a national search if current employees were qualified. City Manager Rose maintained it was in the best interest of the City to search nationwide to make sure the most qualified person was placed in the position.

Councilwoman Smith asked if one of the positions focused on community policing. Chief Paresi replied that was the intended function of the Deputy Chief, who would direct the Assistant Chiefs and focus on community policing and crime prevention. Councilwoman Smith stated she was not in favor of firing current staff. She felt an investment in the expansion of the Department with the addition of the Assistant Chief was crucial. She noted the improvements to Code Enforcement and Neighborhood and Community Services since the departments were expanded.

Councilman Eliason agreed the two proposed positions should be separated. He also wanted the City Manager to evaluate current employees before making the decision to search nationwide. He asked about the financial impact of adding the two proposed positions. Chief Paresi replied the salaries and benefits totalled approximately \$160,000 per person. Cars and equipment were additional.

Councilwoman Buck thought it was very important to promote from within and prepare employees to replace superiors when they left. She liked the fact the Assistant Chiefs would rotate through Detention, Operations and Investigations, which prepared them to move into higher positions. Chief Paresi explained over the last five years those processes were put into effect to achieve the goal of producing well rounded staff. Councilwoman Buck spoke about community policing of years past, and wanted police presence to build trust in the community. Chief Paresi agreed the people with direct involvement in the community were of utmost importance. The Police Department provided a Community Policing Leadership class for Police Officers.

Chief Paresi displayed the proposed reorganization chart. The City had grown to the point that a Northeast Area Command center was warranted.

Terrence McAllister, 3425 West Craig Road, North Las Vegas, introduced himself as president of the North Las Vegas Police Officers' Association. He pleaded with Council not to fire the current officers. Mayor Pro Tempore said his comment about firing current staff was misunderstood. Mr. McAllister stated he grew up and worked in North Las Vegas. He had seen the City grow. He was in favor of the two additional positions, but was not in favor of the consideration of outside candidates. He thought to look outside the City would be to challenge the abilities and qualifications of current members of the Department.

L. Dean Richards, 713 East Carey Avenue, North Las Vegas said he was also a long time North Las Vegas resident. He stated he had not heard justification of the need for the two additional positions. He requested more information regarding the job descriptions. He did not know why the Police Department staff did not could not handle the workload.

Bob Borgersen, 7617 Island Rail, North Las Vegas asked if the City Manager felt it was important to look outside the current staff to fill one of the positions, why they did not intend to fill the second position the same way. City Manager Rose reiterated one position encompassed a span of control and the other allowed internal staff to demonstrate skills or add skills. If only one position was approved, the person in the position would take on the responsibilities of both positions. City Manager Rose believed there was a need for two separate positions. Mr. Borgersen questioned whether there was a true need for both positions, as the total cost was approximately \$360,000. He thought the City wasted taxpayers' money. City Manager Rose pointed out the recent increase in the crime rate, which came after a steady decline in the crime rate. Mayor Montandon said that increase needed to be addressed immediately. Mr. Borgersen asked why two additional high level positions were preferable to the addition of six police officers. City Manager Rose responded police officers were actively recruited and hired. There was a need for effective leadership. Mr. Borgersen commented the head of Code Enforcement was hired from outside the City, which implied City staff was inferior. He felt hiring from outside the City took away employees' incentives to excel. City Manager Rose disagreed and said employees were provided additional opportunity, because the job would go to the most qualified person.

Jose Troncoso, 2028 Sedona Circle, Las Vegas asked where the proposed Deputy Chief was in the chain of command. Mayor Montandon stated the Deputy Chief was directly under the Chief and above all of the Assistant Chiefs. Mr. Troncoso did not understand why there would be someone between the Chief and his Assistant Chiefs. He thought a rotation of three Assistant Chiefs over Services, Operations and Detention was sufficient. He said he had spoken to City Manager Rose about his opinions. City Manager Rose thanked him but said he needed to rely on the current Police Chief for guidance on what was needed in the Police Department. Mr. Troncoso said he had many years of experience

and had never heard of a police department structured with a buffer between the Chief and the Assistant Chiefs.

City Manager Rose stated the addition of someone who was an expert in community policing and Compstat to oversee the activities of the Assistant Chiefs was a way for the organization to move forward to accommodate the growing needs of the community. He said it was the structure of many police departments. Mr. Troncoso said one of the Assistant Chiefs had met with Los Angeles Police Chief Bratton, who created Compstat. He thought the Police Department was already familiar with community policing and Compstat and did not understand the need to go outside the department for qualified candidates. Mr. Troncoso stated when he worked for the Police Department, his Chief would not have tolerated looking outside the Department to fill high level positions.

Mayor Montandon clarified no one had said current staff was not qualified; only that they would search both within the Department and nationally. Mr. Troncoso asked why City Manager Rose would look outside the Department if there were qualified people within the Department. Mayor Montandon said they wanted the best person for the position. Mr. Troncoso felt the promotion of someone within the Department was the best option. He also thought it would be cheaper to hire from within. Mayor Montandon explained the salaries were the same whether someone was hired from within the City or not. If someone was promoted, someone else would be hired to fill the resulting vacancy. Mr. Troncoso contended the City already had many community programs. Mayor Montandon agreed, but said the studies determined more needed to be done. Mr. Troncoso felt one of the Captains should be promoted to the Assistant Chief rotation to work directly under the Chief, and more police officers should be added. Mayor Montandon said they were hiring 50 police officers. He reminded Mr. Troncoso no one said the current staff was not qualified, only that a national search would find the best candidate.

Dean Leavitt, 918 Dawn Valley Drive, North Las Vegas did not think anyone should be hired at all. If someone was hired, he thought it should be from within. He thought the Police Department was doing a good job and the money that would be spent on hiring new people should be used for training existing staff who could then be promoted from within.

Councilman Eliason stated with the rise in crime the City needed more police and not more management personnel. He said he had lived in his neighborhood for 40 years and crime had increased. He thought the training provided to Police Department staff made it unnecessary to hire from outside. He felt the City should only look outside the Department if it was determined no one in the Department was qualified. He did not think a Deputy Chief was needed and was not sure about an Assistant Chief.

Mayor Pro Tempore Robinson asked who would be promoted to Assistant Chief. He felt taking one of the men out of the community where they had developed ties and connections was detrimental.

Councilwoman Buck spoke about the importance of the development and preparation of staff and providing staff with the training and opportunity to move up. She supported the addition of both positions but was adamant hiring should be from within. She supported the City Manager and thanked him for his proactive response to the rise in the crime rate and for bringing the matter to Council's attention.

Councilwoman Smith also supported the addition of both positions and acknowledged the quality of the Police Department staff. However, she thought City Charter dictated decisions regarding hiring were at the discretion of the City Manager. City Attorney Carie Torrence said Council had authority over expenditures of over \$25,000 and Council could direct the City Manager not to spend money on researching personnel from outside the City. Selection of new staff was under the authority of the City Manager.

Mayor Montandon thanked the members of the public for their input and thanked City Manager Rose, Police Chief Paresi and Staff for their hard work.

ACTION: ASSISTANT CHIEF OF POLICE POSITION APPROVED; DEPUTY CHIEF OF POLICE POSITION APPROVED, WHEN WARRANTED; DIRECTION GIVEN FOR POSITIONS TO BE FILLED INTERNALLY

MOTION: Councilwoman Buck

SECOND: Mayor Pro Tempore Robinson

AYES: Mayor Montandon, Mayor Pro Tempore Robinson, Councilmembers Smith, Buck and Eliason

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

3. PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION REGARDING THE OPTIONS FOR A YOUTH COUNCIL PROGRAM.

ACTION: TABLED TO SEPTEMBER 19, 2007

MOTION: Mayor Montandon

SECOND: Mayor Pro Tempore Robinson

AYES: Mayor Montandon, Mayor Pro Tempore Robinson, Councilmembers Smith, Buck and Eliason

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

PUBLIC FORUM

There was no public participation.

ADJOURNMENT

ACTION: THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 6:07 P.M.

MOTION: Mayor Montandon

SECOND: Mayor Pro Tempore Robinson

AYES: Mayor Montandon, Mayor Pro Tempore Robinson, Councilmembers Smith,
Buck and Eliason

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

APPROVED: October 17, 2007

Mayor Michael L. Montandon

ATTEST:

Karen L. Storms, CMC
City Clerk