

Public Safety Subcommittee Report

Tuesday November 4, 2008

In 2003, with 16 policing job problems to choose from, PLEA members indicated in our biannual survey that jail issues were in the top 4 they faced. Again in 2005, PLEA members indicated jail issues were in the top 3 out of 16 specific problems they faced with their job. In the most recent 2007 membership survey with a similar selection of 16 problems, officers once more placed jail issues in the top 4. These surveys might lead some to believe that the jail is an on-going burden to patrol - a huge chasm void of solutions and full of excuses. It still remains in the top four problems faced by first responders - all paid for by rank-and-file and tax-paying citizens. A tour of the jail by the former PLEA president with police management did not then and still hasn't offered a solution – deaf ears and blind eyes rarely do.

On Tuesday November 4, 2008 a report was submitted to the Public Safety Subcommittee. Civilianizing the booking/wagon process at the jail was a topic of discussion. Budget personnel explained to the subcommittee members that a 2007 jail study/report indicated that assigning officers to the jail was reducing booking times from 10 minutes to 2 hours. Donna Neill (*NAILEM*) and Ann Malone (*Require the Prior*) requested to see this report/study. This request led to the discovery in front of the subcommittee that this study/report never existed.

PLEA, along with Donna Neill and Ann Malone, presented concerns and solutions to the subcommittee reference civilianizing the jail/booking process. PLEA explained that an 8-man squad of officers, not 4 (*as in the report*), was assigned as jailers at the 4th Avenue Jail instead of police officers on the streets of Phoenix. PLEA explained that taking an entire squad off the street and assigning them to the jail was “robbing Peter to pay Paul” – an inefficient use of manpower. PLEA explained that assigning a non-sworn detention squad during shift II hours was the best use of this new manpower. PLEA explained that MCSO was willing to provide free mobile jailing services on Friday and Saturday in November for evaluation purposes. PLEA explained that MCSO was willing to provide free detention officer academy training to Phoenix non-sworn positions.

After this presentation, former PLEA President Jake Jacobsen (*2000 – 2007*), sitting next to Chief Lannon and wearing an SAU training uniform, alluded to his “previous assignment.” Former PLEA President Jacobsen stated that assigning officers to the jail was helpful to them. Former PLEA President Jacobsen communicated that over the past two years officers have been assigned at the jail, Phoenix Police officers were satisfied with the current jail situation. Former PLEA President Jacobsen agreed with the study/report's assessment that officers spend 10 minutes to 2 hours at the jail. Former PLEA President Jacobsen shared that MCSO was not reliable. Former PLEA President Jake Jacobsen did not provide any personal examples of where he successfully and quickly booked a prisoner under the current jail system.

Blunt comments by PLEA members from the 2007 survey were shared with the subcommittee chair Councilman Claude Mattox on Wednesday November 5. These comments appear to contradict the statements former PLEA President Jacobsen. Some of the comments are:

- Jail needs to be fixed years ago. Civilians/pay need to work jails so officers just need to fill out booking slip and form 4, civilian can do the rest, so officer can go and call in report and get back on the street. More a☹️👎 holes are on the street because no one including me wants to get hung up at the jail. It's a joke and makes this Department a joke.
- The new jail is nice, but procedures change so often and it takes too long to get medical clearance most of the time.
- Booking process is a joke. We should have a system installed into the cars so we can have the process at our fingers not transport to the station. Arrests numbers would increase if this would happen.
- The jail system has never been fixed.
- The current booking process is a mess. Each booking takes an officer off the street for 2-3 hours if everything goes well. A jail detail needs to be established where officers on the street can drop their prisoners with a form containing charges and go back to the street. Patrol is also expected to do the specialty squad booking along with answering the way too many radio calls for current manpower levels. A jail detail would allow them to drop their own prisoners without tying them up.
- Fix the booking/intake procedures.
- Jack Harris is an enemy to the patrol officer. The jail problem NEVER gets fixed and only gets worse.
- Fix the booking/intake procedures. PPD intake/detention officers would help.
- Why of all the agencies in this Valley are we the only ones not in step with ACDC bookings. If I take someone to jail, I shouldn't have to duplicate my paperwork because R&I won't accept the printout at MCSO. It is the same program!
- I'd like to (*and could*) arrest 5 people a day. But to be honest, I try not to between 11 am and 1 pm. All the other jurisdictions' wagons show up and I'm stuck behind them at medical.
- The booking process takes far too long and then you still have to drive down to the jail. Plus we have people sent to work at stations that downright refuse to do prints/help when asked.
- Way too much time is spent booking prisoners in this department. Something has got to change. It surely can't get any worse.
- The current booking process is the best deterrent to police work I've seen in my 30+ years here. Chief Harris preaches about wanting more arrests and bookings but the process takes hours it's not worth the effort in minor cases. We need a 24/7 Phoenix booking detail.
- While in patrol many misdemeanor warrants don't go to jail due to the lengthy process.

The committee decided that it was important for PLEA, citizens, police management, and MCSO to sit down and generate a solution to the on-going jail problem. PLEA will keep the membership informed.