



PHOENIX LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSOCIATION

The Professional Association of Phoenix Police Officers Since 1975

June 18, 2018

To: Mayor Thelda Williams

Councilpersons: Jim Waring, Sal DiCiccio, Danny Valenzuela, Debra Stark, Kate Gallego, Michael Nowakowski, Laura Pastor

Phoenix City Hall
200 W. Washington St.
Phoenix, AZ 85003

Re: Officer Involved Shooting Study

Mayor and Councilpersons,

As you know, an agenda item recently heard before the Public Safety Sub-Committee will be coming before the full council on whether to spend \$149,000 on a study to determine the reasons for the rise in officer involved shootings here in Phoenix in 2018.

Let me emphatically state on behalf of rank and file Phoenix Police Officers and Detectives that a study of this nature is not needed. Rushing into a study without clearly defined parameters is a solution in search of a problem and would be a huge waste of taxpayer money. The language contained in the agenda item heard at the June 13th Public Safety Sub-Committee was intentionally inflammatory to create the air of exigency which allows the standard request for proposal (RFP) process to be bypassed.

The emergency clause, as worded, is reckless, irresponsible, and dangerous. It puts our officers in a false light by creating the illusion they, rather than violent criminals, are to blame for an increase in shootings. This is unequivocally NOT TRUE. The language also biases any potential study and it also could be read as an open invitation to the Department of Justice to put the Phoenix PD under the federal microscope which, if it were to occur, could result in extreme expense to the City of Phoenix.

Officer involved shootings, like crime trends, will ebb and flow like a stock market graph. Some years, as the one we are currently in, may indicate a spike. Trying to determine what variables drive these ups and downs can be as difficult and elusive as trying to put fog in a bottle.

We have certain politicians, as well as a Police Chief, that seem to struggle with not only facing but stating the obvious with higher levels of officer involved shootings. The obvious is this:

Our men and women who daily patrol the streets are dealing with an increasingly violent segment of society; criminals, who have no regard for lawful authority, are willing to break the law and, when confronted with police, demonstrate increased willingness to engage with violence rather than submit to lawful authority. There are many factors that contribute to this:

- A city government that allowed the police department to get dangerously understaffed
- A porous Southern border that facilitates violent drug and human smuggling traffic and that allows criminals from anywhere to enter the country illegally
- A burgeoning transient/homeless population many of whom are unstable and quick to violent action. Police officers interact with this segment of society daily
- A growing anti-authority segment of society that believes it is their right to challenge, obstruct, resist and fight with police out in the street
- Depressed and suicidal people who use the police as their mechanism to commit suicide
- People who are on street drugs, alcohol, psych meds, or sometimes a combination of the three which produces irrational and erratic behavior.

All the above points are obvious. They are indisputable. Why then, the need for a study?

The responsibilities of a police officer are: to uphold, protect, and defend the US and State Constitutions, enforce the law, and do our best to prevent breaches of the peace. Therefore, when officers encounter violence, they will react based on training, policy, and state law to protect themselves and the community.

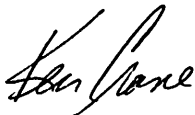
When considering the obvious, is it really any surprise we are seeing an uptick in police use of force cases? Police are the constant in the equation. Our training is consistent, state law and police policy are also consistent. The criminal element we are expected to deal with daily is the unpredictable variable, the wild card. Every day, police officers know even the most mundane calls can turn violent in a flash resulting in the need to utilize force up to and including deadly force to control the situation and protect lives.

Unfortunately, we now live in a society where small radical elements who, through lies and deception, do their best to villainize and turn public sentiment against the police and destabilize communities.

Their goal is to de-police the police and de-criminalize the criminals.

There is a lot that could be done with \$149,000. PLEA believes this money would be better spent on community outreach and education programs right here in Phoenix to include public service announcements on police community interaction.

Sincerely,



Ken Crane
President
Phoenix Law Enforcement Association