

**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH
POLICE POWERS TASK FORCE MEETING**

May 29, 2019

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Police Powers Task Force was called to order at 2:02 p.m. by Chairman Hays for the purpose of conducting the meeting.

II. ROLL CALL

Board members present and establishing a quorum were:

VOTING MEMBERS:	EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS AND ADVISORS:
*George Hays, Chairman Patti Fisher Robert Hall Jim Sykes Mike Holman Dan Mayfield	John Aschenbrenner Tiffany Richards
<u>Voting Members Absent:</u> Jeff Laughlin, Deputy Chairman Bert Cottle Earl Houser Lance Ketterling	<u>Ex-Officio Members and Advisors Absent:</u> Cheyenne Heindel Tony April

*May vote only in a tie vote

Guests:

Todd Smoldon – Office of the Governor
Gene Belden – Wasilla Chief of Police
Hannah Newberry – MSB Dept. of Finance

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

GENERAL CONSENT: The agenda was approved as presented.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

V. APPROVAL OF PRECEDING MEETING MINUTES

The minutes of the May 15, 2019 meeting were approved as presented without objection.

VI. REPORTS / CORRESPONDENCE

A handout titled “Mat-Su Borough Law Enforcement Task Force: Concept of Operations” written by Palmer Chief Lance Ketterling was distributed to the group.

VII. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Todd Smoldon reported that HB49, which repeals SB91, did pass the Senate and Governor Dunleavy is expected to sign it. He said this bill would probably result in more arrests and longer sentencing times; there may be a need to open a facility to handle the increase in arrests and jail time.

VIII. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

A. Discussion Focusing on the Dedicated Crime Task Force – 20 Officers Option

Discussion ensued regarding the “Mat-Su Borough Law Enforcement Task Force: Concept of Operations” report that was drafted by Chief Ketterling. There was positive feedback from the group. Dan Mayfield said it was a great report; he asked why the drafted, Concept of Operations, required a separate dispatch. Additionally he asked why would we designate the Task Force as a traffic entity? A discussion ensued that this Task Force should not be used for traffic enforcement. Mike Holman replied that dispatch does more than just call dispatch – they need to be able to communicate with the proposed Task Force throughout the length of the response. It is important to have a constant ‘status quo’ between dispatch and the responding officers. George Hays asked if we could roll the Task Force dispatch needs into the Fire and EMS dispatch. Chief Gene Belden said, “No, not possible – the training is different. Cannot work both scenarios. The Task Force will need a separate dispatch operator.” Chief Belden recommends at least one dispatcher for each shift for this task. Wasilla has 5 dispatchers on at all times – for EMS, Fire, AST and Wasilla Police. May need to hire another Prosecutor and Public Defender.

The topic of the E-911 legislation came up and possible access to that pool of money to use for dispatchers. Currently the money is only able to be used for the call-taker, not the dispatcher role. These are two separate positions. Legislation would have to be written to amend the E-911 money so it can be used for the dispatching position along with the call-taking. George Hays will look into this more and find the legislation, in order to consider amending the language.

It was asked if the Task Force would be able to utilize the new Wasilla Police Department building for work space? Chief Belden said yes, and that the current Wasilla Police Department building is open and will be available to use. The current location has an established evidence locker. George Hays suggested that it might be possible for small parts of the Task Force to utilize the Fire Stations for the activity up North. Mike Holman said there are issues combining space for Fire and Police activities.

There is still concern that the Troopers would pull out once the Task Force is in place. Chief Belden said that the Troopers usually take ~2,000 calls per week, if the calls drop they will move to an area without coverage. Dan Mayfield thinks that the Troopers would not pull out. He said there is plenty of property crime, but currently not enough Troopers to answer calls and follow-through is lacking. The Task Force can do the follow-through investigative work. Investigation could be the primary task – it would be an Investigative Task Force. The purpose would be to control the crime problem we have, the Task Force should be an extension of the MSB’s existing abilities to address crime. The Task Force would help to identify organized crime in the MSB and the connections to organized crime outside of the MSB.

Who would be a part of this Task Force? If the positions are not PERS positions, than we can hire retirees of the Troopers, Wasilla and Palmer police. The experience they would bring to the table as an investigative Task Force would be extremely valuable. It would be a high caliber group if we could hire retired, experienced officers. Maybe a combination of both PERS and contracted officers? However, you would have to offer some kind of equal retirement system.

MOTION: Jim Sykes made a motion to move page 2, paragraph 5, from the draft "Concept of Operations" to replace what is currently under the "Mission" heading on page 1. The paragraph reads:

Based on current citizen and MSB concerns, it is anticipated the unit would focus initially on property crime. This includes a wide range of activity including burglaries, larceny from yards, vehicle thefts, thefts from vehicles, and the trafficking of stolen goods. Drug crime would also factor heavily since drug and property crime are closely linked. During the investigation of these activities it can be anticipated the task force will uncover crimes against persons. These can and will be investigated by the Task Force, however the intent is to leave crimes such as homicide, sexual assault, and sexual abuse of a minor to specialized units already in existence with AST, WPD, or PPD.

The motion was seconded.

VOTE: The motion passed without opposition.

IX. ADDITIONAL MEMBER AND STAFF COMMENTS

Dan Mayfield: Enjoys coming to this meeting and having the opportunity to look at solid proposals. Feels it is important to define the budget. Can we generate cost estimate for 2 dispatchers per shift? Cost estimates for space? In the Memorandum of Understanding it will be important to work on the scope of the Task Force and send a clear message that we want to assist existing forces.

Jim Sykes: If we designate a subcommittee, then we can work without a quorum. We should draft proposals in order to gain police powers and the assembly will be responsible for the "how to". There is a risk that the assembly or future assembly will alter the limits of the specific police powers, increase the police powers and increase the cost of running the Task Force.

John Aschenbrenner: Agrees with Jim Sykes that a subcommittee can work without a quorum. Also, need to lay out vision of how to carry out police powers, avoid legislative limiting action – create other documents to lay out details. Cautioned that putting administrative details into a Police Power may cloud the issue and could be challenged in court, i.e. "only for detective work" or "only for property crimes."

Robert Hall: Keep it broad; how we phrase the Task Force will matter. Try to make it so the State does not pull the Troopers out of this area. Has an idea about maybe paying Wasilla a pro-rata share of other services to help fund the Task Force.

George Hays: Need to identify the primary and secondary scope and focus of the 20 person Task Force, i.e. enforcement of drugs and property crimes.

Mike Holman: Great job drafting the Concept of Operations. Important to get clarification regarding PERS. PERS or contract. Non-PERS option a great idea to attract retired and experienced officers.

Patti Fisher: The Concept of Operations that Chief Ketterling drafted is very clear and well thought out. How is this different from a regular Sheriff's Department, it sounds like one?

Action Items:

George Hays:

- Check to see if we can have discussions/work sessions without a quorum.
- Get Todd info on the E911 money use and what we would like the amendment to the legislation to say.

Gene Belden:

- Cost of dispatch and cost of housing.

John Aschenbrenner:

- Research how other municipalities who have accepted police powers formed and are working. How specific is the language in the agreements?
- Obtain statutory definition of police powers.

Next meeting: Wednesday, June 12, 2019, at the MSB in the Lower Level Conference Room, 350 Dahlia Avenue, Palmer, AK 99645 from 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

X. ADJOURNMENT

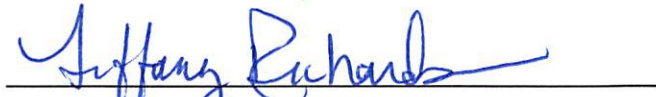
Meeting adjourned at 4:02 p.m.

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH
POLICE POWERS TASK FORCE



GEORGE HAYS,
Task Force Chairman

ATTEST:



TIFFANY RICHARDS,
Task Force Secretary

Minutes Approved: