

**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**  
**April 13, 2009**

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The Coachella Valley Association of Governments' (CVAG) Public Safety Committee (PSC) meeting was called to order on Monday, April 13, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. by Chairman Alan Seman, Councilmember, City of Rancho Mirage, at CVAG offices, 73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Conference Room 119, Palm Desert, California 92260-2516.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

At the request of Chairman Seman, Councilmember Scott Matas, City of Coachella, led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. **ROLL CALL**

A roll call was conducted and it was determined that a quorum was present.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Councilmember Alan Seman (*Chair*)  
Councilmember Chuck Vasquez  
Mayor Pro Tem Scott Matas  
Councilmember Patrick Mullany  
Mayor Pro Tem Gene Gilbert (*Vice Chair*)  
Mayor Bob Spiegel  
Councilmember Lee Weigel  
Sheriff Stan Sniff, Jr.

**AGENCY**

City of Rancho Mirage  
City of Cathedral City  
City of Desert Hot Springs  
City of Indian Wells  
City of Indio  
City of Palm Desert  
City of Palm Springs  
County of Riverside

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Mayor Eduardo Garcia  
Councilmember Tom Kirk

City of Coachella  
City of La Quinta

**EX-OFFICIOS REPRESENTED**

Stan Henry, Chief  
Brad Ramos, Chief  
Dave Dominguez, Chief  
Blake Goetz, Chief  
Ignacio Otero, Deputy Chief  
Patrick Williams, Chief  
Michael Singh, Agent-In-Charge  
Dan Wilham, Police Chief (PD/RM)

**AGENCY**

Cathedral City Police Department  
Indio Police Department  
Palm Springs Police Department  
Palm Springs Fire Department  
Riverside County Fire Department  
Desert Hot Springs Police Depart.  
U.S. Border Patrol - Indio  
Riverside County Sheriff - PD & RM

**EX-OFFICIOS NOT REPRESENTED**

Bill Soqui, Chief  
Rodney Vigue, Chief (LQ/Coachella)  
Matt Jimenez, Lieutenant  
Sara Danville, Assistant District Attorney  
Ron Miller, Division Director (*alt.*)  
Alan Crogan, Chief  
Sherrell Sutherland, Commander

**AGENCY**

Cathedral City Fire Department  
Riverside County Sheriff  
Indian Wells Police Department  
County District Attorney Office  
County Probation Department  
County Probation Department  
California Highway Patrol

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Tammy Herrera, Field Operations Supervisor  
Daniel Parra, Field Operations Supervisor  
Linda Dunn, Chief Deputy D.A.  
Jose Rodriguez, Supervising Investigator  
Ray Paiz, Battalion Chief  
Mario Acosta, Admin. Chief  
Rich Bitonti, Lieutenant

**AGENCY**

U.S. Border Patrol  
U.S. Border Patrol  
County District Attorney Office  
County District Attorney Office  
CalFire/Riverside County Fire-Indio  
City of Cathedral City  
Indio Police Department

**CVAG STAFF PRESENT**

Larry Parrish, Interim Executive Director  
Aurora Wilson, Community Resources Director  
Jacob Alvarez, Management Analyst  
Valarie Franklin, Program Assistant

4. **FINALIZATION OF AGENDA & ADDITIONS AND REVISIONS**

Jacob Alvarez announced that Program Assistant Valarie Franklin would be out on leave for a period of time and introduced interim assistant Patty Nevins. Chairman Seman extended the committee’s appreciation of Valarie and hopes for her quick return.

5. **PUBLIC COMMENTS** - None.

6. **PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEMBER AND DIRECTOR COMMENT**

Councilmember Lee Wiegel, City of Palm Springs complimented the job done recently by law enforcement, the District Attorney’s office, and others, and also expressed appreciation for the Palm Springs fire and police departments and assistance from outside agencies for work at a recent fire.

7. **CORRESPONDENCE**

None.

8. **MEETING MINUTES**

Jacob Alvarez noted that minutes of the March meeting will be brought forward at a later date.

9. **INLAND EMPIRE VIOLENCE PREVENTION COALITION / DRIVE BY AGONY**

Lorna Hawkins, Executive Director of Drive By Agony of Los Angeles, stated that she had recently moved to the Cabazon area and was part of a regional violence prevention coalition in Moreno Valley. She expressed a desire to connect with public safety officials here and share her violence prevention expertise with others in the Coachella Valley, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties. It was suggested that she approach the local school districts. Chuck Vasquez, Councilmember, City of Cathedral City noted two upcoming youth events - a youth festival and Day of the Child event – and offered to provide Ms. Hawkins with additional information about the events after the meeting.

10. **RECOMMENDATION TO THE HOMELESSNESS COMMITTEE REGARDING DONATED FUNDS BEING SPENT OUTSIDE THE COACHELLA VALLEY BY NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS**

Jacob Alvarez reported that the Homelessness Committee had requested that the Public Safety Committee explore a valley-wide ordinance limiting solicitations for donations to serve needs outside of CVAG's jurisdictional boundaries based on concerns that such solicitations diminish the ability to procure needed funds for the Desert Resource Center. An increasing number of solicitors at local shopping centers and businesses are not from this area. Mr. Alvarez suggested that color coded permits could distinguish for the public whether funds are used here in the valley or not. Councilmember Chuck Vasquez, City of Cathedral City, said that he had called these organizations and none of them were based in the Valley. He felt that it was important to utilize a media campaign to educate valley residents and the business community about helping local organizations. Members expressed concern about utilizing law enforcement to address solicitors. Aurora Wilson suggested that staff could look at the City of Indio's public education program as well as various City ordinances and come up with a plan for a subcommittee of the Homelessness Committee.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILMEMBER LEE WEIGEL, CITY OF PALM SPRINGS AND SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER SCOTT MATAS, CITY OF DESERT HOT SPRINGS TO REFER THE ITEM BACK TO THE HOMELESSNESS COMMITTEE TO PUT TOGETHER A PUBLIC INFORMATION CAMPAIGN ON THIS TOPIC.**

**ROLL CALL VOTE:**

**YES:** Councilmember Vasquez, Councilmember Mullany, Mayor Pro Tem Gilbert, Mayor Spiegel, Councilmember Weigel, Councilmember Seman, Sheriff Sniff, Jr.

**NO:** None

**Abstain:** None

**THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

11. **DEVELOPMENT OF COMMITTEE GOALS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2009/2010**

Jacob Alvarez reported that a subcommittee meeting including Councilmember Seman, Councilmember Matas, Fire Chief Soqui and Police Chief Dominguez. He stated that three topics had been developed including a regional reform and reentry program for parolees, a youth intervention program, and a Safe Routes to School master plan.

Chairman Alan Seman stated that Rancho Mirage's primary concern was an increase in burglaries. It was noted that walled communities can create a false sense of security and that a large workforce enters these communities daily, creating opportunities. Linda Dunn of the Riverside County District Attorney's office noted that burglaries have a low solve rate and that neighborhood watch groups help; Chief Wilham added that Citizens on Patrol and other programs also help. Sheriff Sniff stated that relative to goals, there should be an emphasis on collaborative efforts. Because input was still missing from three cities, it was agreed that this item would be held for the next meeting.

13. **EX-OFFICIO MEMBER UPDATES**

13.1 **SHERIFF/POLICE CHIEFS** – None

13.2 **FIRE CHIEFS** – Chief Ignacio Otero announced that summer transitional staffing had commenced, adding that the fire season had started early this year. Chief Otero added that budgets are being presented early this year and that it is recognized that there are more budget demands than revenue. He emphasized that one of the main purposes of government is to address public safety. Fire Chief Blake Goetz of Palm Springs provided an update on the recent tram fire stating that many agencies had responded immediately with assistance. Ongoing emergency and evacuation training was reviewed; and, the reverse 911 system was used for the first time to send out 75 phone calls to residents to evacuate.

13.3 **CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL** - None.

13.4 **BORDER PATROL** – Michael Singh, Agent in Charge for the U.S. Border Patrol, stated that this is cyclicly a high activity period for smuggling periods and

reviewed recent activities and arrests. He added that recruitment goals for the current period have been met.

**13.5 DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE** – Linda Dunn provided a brief overview of the Falling Sun operation. She stated that team DHS led by Jose Rodriguez of the District Attorney's office included members of the Sheriff's department, Desert Hot Springs police department, FBI, and others. She indicated that the entire operation went according to plan, with 41 teams being briefed at 5:00 a.m. and rolling out the operation at 7:00 a.m. 129 people were arrested; a meth lab was discovered, and numerous weapons were confiscated. Ms. Dunn stated an injunction is being sought against members of two gangs, which would severely restrict the activities of the members including their ability to associate with each other. A more detailed presentation will be made the next meeting.

**13.6 COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT** - None.

14. **INFORMATIONAL**

**14.1 COACHELLA VALLEY GANG TASK FORCE** – Item being held over until next month.

**14.2 COMMITTEE ATTENDANCE RECORD** – Item being held over until next month.

**14.3 COMMITTEE GOALS FOR FISCAL YEAR 08/09**

Goal #1	Burglary Task Force East/West Valley and Property Crime Prevention Education Programs to Decrease Auto Theft and Reduce Property Crimes and Crime Free Multi-Housing Task Force Unit.
Goal #2	Traffic Safety through valley-wide Enforcement Strategies as it relates to Speed Enforcement Programs; Collision Reduction and Enforcement of Hazardous Driving; Teenage Drivers; and Seatbelt Enforcement.
Goal #3	Gang Intervention Programs and Task Force Support from all Cities and Help Obtain Funding Grants.
Goal #4	Disaster Preparedness Program that includes Coachella Valley Safety Personnel Participation in the State OES Golden Guardian Earthquake Exercise in November 2008 with progress reports; Locate and Develop Disaster Equipment Caches; Identify out of Area Contact Points for Public Safety Personnel; Prioritize Primary and Secondary Roads; Unified Command Training for Public Safety Personnel (ICS 3000 & 400 level).
Goal #5	Communications Upgrade and Support 800 Radio System Interoperability for both ERICA and RSO, and Provide Mobile Data Computer Interoperability; by tracking fire resources, sharing data (streets, fire hydrant data, preplans and aerial images).

15. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Jacob Alvarez noted that members should have received a handout regarding SCAG's 2009 General Assembly on May 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>.

The next regularly meeting of the Public Safety Committee is scheduled for **10:00 a.m.** on **Monday, May 11, 2009** at the CVAG offices, 73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 119, Palm Desert.

15. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting of the Public Safety Committee was adjourned at 11:23 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patty Nevins, Interim Program Assistant  
Department of Community Resources (DCR)