

MEETING MINUTES
Marion County Public Safety Coordinating Council
at Marion County Commissioners Hearing Room
1115 Commercial St NE
Salem, Oregon
April 8, 2014

Attendees: Patti Milne, Ray Byrd, Rod Calkins, Tom Ewing, Faye Fagel, David Ferre, Don Frederickson, Tamra Goettsch, Pete McCallum, Todd McCann, Ed McKenney, Jason Myers, Anna Peterson, Tracy Prall, Mike Runyon, Tom Sermak

Guests: Scott Hays, Deputy Chief, Salem Police Department, Lee Erikson, Oregon State Police (retired) Tom Rohlfing, Marion County Assessor

Staff: Don Russo

Chair - action, information

At 4:00 pm, Chair Patti Milne called to order a meeting of the Public Safety Coordinating Council. She introduced special guests Scott Hays, Deputy Chief, Salem Police Department, and Lee Erikson, Oregon State Police (retired). She announced the May meeting will be in Courthouse Square. Minutes of the March PSCC meeting were approved as corrected.

Resolution opposing legalization of marijuana

Commissioner Milne asked Don Russo to recap changes made in the revised draft resolution. He explained that discussion at PSCC began in December 2013 about making a statement against new efforts to legalize marijuana in Oregon. He said District Attorney Beglau and Sheriff Myers advocated that PSCC should take a public stand against legalization of marijuana. Some members of PSCC said they could not vote on such a resolution because of their role in serving a city council, a school board, the governor's office, or as a judge. Don said the revised version adds the mission of PSCC and states opposition legalization because it will harm public health and safety.

Commissioner Milne said the Board of Commissioners took a stand in February 2014 against legalization by passing a formal resolution. She also described the community effort led by Anna Peterson in response to an epidemic of problems caused by abuse of methamphetamine. PSCC did not issue a resolution at that time, but took an active part by responding to community problems and supporting law enforcement. She said a resolution could be helpful but not necessary in advocating against the legalization of marijuana.

Ed McKenney pointed out a major difference between methamphetamine and marijuana. He said virtually all were opposed to methamphetamine at that time, but many now believe marijuana should be legal for recreational use. For this reason, he said a resolution is more valuable by declaring a position. Sheriff Myers agreed that a resolution is needed to state a position that can be voiced publicly.

Ron Calkins said the resolution supports the resolution already passed by the commissioners.

Tom Sermak said he opposes the resolution. He supports decriminalizing it. He said marijuana does not pose the same threat to the community as harder drugs, and he prefers a different approach more like the regulation of alcohol as an alternative manner of controlling marijuana.

David Ferre said it is the policy of the Oregon National Guard to discharge anyone testing positive for marijuana. Mayor Peterson voiced support for the resolution stating it is appropriate for the PSCC to speak out on a substance we know has a harmful impact on public safety in our communities. She does not see how legalization would lessen the negative effects of drug abuse.

Rod Calkins said the Marion County Local Alcohol & Drug Planning Committee passed a resolution supporting a ban on medical marijuana facilities by a unanimous vote.

Tami Goettsch voiced support for the resolution because of the effort over more than 20 years by the Commission on Children and Families to strengthen families and children, and reduce drug abuse.

Tom Ewing said he supports the resolution because he does not want to legitimize one more drug into the culture, and he worries about unintended consequences.

Rod Calkins added the Health Department's prevention efforts are aimed at youth.

Sheriff Myers said he supports the resolution. He worries about the damaging effects of marijuana on youth.

Pete McCallum said the City of Woodburn passed a one-year moratorium on medical marijuana facilities. Over 32 years working in education, he saw too many problems with youth and families.

Salem Deputy Chief Scott Hays explained the need for drug recognition experts to confirm marijuana intoxication in a manner acceptable in court. Few officers have the training, limiting in their ability to enforce law.

Commissioner Milne said she agrees with others' comments, and said she fears an increase in problems with legalization of recreational use.

Ray Byrd said in representing the Salem-Keizer School District, its executive team takes no position on the issue.

Motion by Ed McKenney, second by Sheriff Myers to approve the resolution. Roll call of the question:

Milne- yes, McCallum- yes, McKenney- yes, Ewing- yes, Goettsch- yes, Myers- yes, Frederickson- yes, Fagel- yes, Calkins- yes, Peterson- yes.

Sermak – no

Ferre- abstain, Runyon- abstain, Prall- abstain, McCann- abstain, Byrd- abstain.

Motion passed.

Town Hall series on marijuana

Don Russo said he contacted six superintendents at school districts in Marion County to ask if PSCC could host a town hall meeting on their campuses. Silverton, North Santiam and Jefferson school districts have been most inviting and supportive. Only Salem-Keizer expressed reluctance.

Judge Prall asked what should be the content of the sessions. Don suggested the content could follow the points made in the resolution, and speakers selected who can best to speak to each. Patti Milne suggested expanding on some of the themes discussed at the Community Forum in February.

Tom Sermak suggested either an educational purpose about current and proposed changes in the law, or a purpose to persuade the audience to vote against legalization. Tami Goettsch suggested asking the PSCC Steering Committee try to plan further details for discussion at the May PSCC meeting. She also suggested avoiding the summer months that could prove a difficult time to attract an audience. Mayor Peterson recommended much publicity.

Child abuse prevention month

Tami Goettsch reminded the group that April is Child Abuse Prevention Month, and explained that all have a role to play in preventing abuse, which was defined in handouts she distributed. Blue ribbons again hang on the tree in front of the Marion County Courthouse, with each ribbon representing an abused child in Oregon last year. She encouraged all to do their part in preventing abuse.

“Striking Out Meth in Marion-Polk Counties”

Patti Milne said there have been a few changes in the program. Polk County, represented by Commissioner Mike Ainsworth, has formally joined this year. Conversations are underway to bring ““Striking Out Meth in Marion-Polk Counties” in a closer association with Law Enforcement for Youth because of the benefits of associating with a 501 (c)(3). She said 2014 is a transition period that those attending and participating would not see any difference. Pete McCollum added that the Volcanoes consider the event very important. Patti added that the

Planning Committee continues to plan for the 2014 event set for July 25. Faye Fagel asked if the event will still be a PSCC event? Patti said she is uncertain about Marion County's participation in future years, but desires that PSCC continue its involvement. Pete added that Law Enforcement for Youth would only associate with the event if PSCC and the Planning Committee continue to stay involved.

Don said that "Striking Out Meth" has been considered the signature event of the public safety council for nine years, and if the council wants to keep it as its signature event, Law Enforcement for Youth would consider that a positive.

Patti added that she intends to stay involved in the event, but cannot do so as a commissioner. She said her last day as a Marion County Commissioner is April 21. She is stepping down to pursue her campaign for election as an Oregon State Senator. Patti expressed her appreciation for the time spent working together for the benefit of public safety.

Adjourned

The meeting adjourned at 6:05 pm.

Next meeting

The Public Safety Coordinating Council will meet Tuesday, May 13.

Minutes by Don Russo