

**CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD  
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

**MONDAY, MARCH 8, 2021  
6:00 P.M.**

**VIA TELECONFERENCE**

1. **CALL TO ORDER** at 6:00 PM
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** led by Chair Laflen
3. **OATH OF OFFICE**

Councilmember Erickson thanked Commissioner Sol for her service and Commissioner Balbone for assisting at the food distribution event. The Oath of Office was administered to Tod Hallman by Councilmember Erickson.

4. **ROLL CALL**

**Commissioners Present:** Balbone, Berger, Hallman, Laflen, Norton, Roshay, Williams

**Commissioners Absent:** None

**Others present:** Lieutenant Bill Moulder, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department; Sergeant Fanny Lapkin, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department; Battalion Chief Jason Ghorbani, Los Angeles County Fire Department; Kristin Cook, Public Safety Director; Janet Jimenez, Assistant to the City Manager

5. **ADJOURNMENT REQUESTS**

Commissioner Balbone requested that the meeting be adjourned in the memory of Jeeves Tangonan, a West Hollywood chef killed by an impaired driver, Luis Vega, who was assaulted on La Cienega, and Rodney King.

6. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

**ACTION:** Motion by Commissioner Norton to approve the March 8, 2021 agenda, seconded by Commissioner Roshay, and approved.

**POSTING OF THE AGENDA**

The agenda for the March 8, 2021 Public Safety Commission meeting was posted at City Hall, Plummer Park, and the West Hollywood Sheriff's Station.

**7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**ACTION:** Motion by Commissioner Norton to approve the February 8, 2021 minutes, seconded by Commissioner Williams, and approved with Commissioner Hallman abstaining.

**8. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

**9. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND LIAISON REPORTS**

Commissioner Williams welcomed Commissioner Hallman to the Public Safety Commission. Commissioner Williams thanked staff, public safety personnel, and fellow Commissioners for their support over the years.

Chair Laflen thanked Commissioner Williams for her service.

Commissioner Balbone thanked Commissioner Williams for her service.

Commissioner Norton thanked Commissioner Williams for her service and wished her a happy birthday. Commissioner Norton welcomed Commissioner Hallman to the Public Safety Commission.

Commissioner Hallman thanked Commissioner Williams for her service.

Commissioner Roshay thanked Commissioner Williams for her service. Commissioner Roshay welcomed Commissioner Hallman to the Public Safety Commission.

Vice-Chair Berger thanked Commissioner Williams for her service. Vice-Chair Berger welcomed Commissioner Hallman to the Public Safety Commission.

Commissioner Roshay spoke regarding her attendance at the Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission and the City Council Sub-Committee on Homelessness. Commissioner Roshay spoke regarding the Human Trafficking training to be held on March 23<sup>rd</sup> and the Neighborhood Watch Captain's Roundtable to be held on March 25<sup>th</sup>.

Vice-Chair Berger spoke regarding recent equity meetings, the Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission Meeting, a fraud prevention session for seniors, an emergency preparedness seminar, and a safety fair.

Commissioner Balbone spoke regarding the Senior Crime Stoppers event and the COVID-19 vaccine panel. Commissioner Balbone spoke regarding the police reform bill currently being considered by the US House and Senate and asked how it will impact the City of West Hollywood.

## **10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **10A. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE WEST HOLLYWOOD MENTAL HEALTH EVALUATION TEAM**

Commissioners received a report on the West Hollywood Mental Health Evaluation Team's (MET) second year (fiscal year 2019-2020) of service delivery and impact on the community from the Strategic Initiatives Division staff. Corri Planck, Diane Kahn-Epstein, and Elizabeth Anderson gave an overview of West Hollywood incidents, the services that community members receive, and the many benefits of having MET.

Commissioner Roshay asked for additional information regarding how calls that are appropriate for MET are dispatched.

Lt. John Gannon, LASD MET, gave an overview on how calls are dispatched and how having a dedicated team improves response times. Lt. Gannon discussed how calls are handled when the West Hollywood MET team is tied up on another call.

Commissioner Roshay asked for additional information regarding the 14 interactions that prevented use of force.

Lt. Gannon said that supervisors in the field track incidents that deter force when force may have been likely without MET intervention.

Commissioner Balbone spoke regarding the improvements made in data that are tracking equity.

Lt. Gannon said that the data is tracked by the Department of Mental Health which also includes cultural sensitivity training.

Commissioner Hallman asked for clarification regarding a recent case involving a patient who needed significant medical intervention.

Lt. Gannon said that they are seeing an increase in the severity of cases in the field this year.

Vice-Chair Berger asked if there is anything that can be improved to encourage prevention.

Lt. Gannon spoke regarding the twelve high risk factors that indicate “high users” of the 911 system and the ways that MET tries to get to the root cause and break the cycle. Lt. Gannon spoke regarding the various services that the City of West Hollywood provides which complements the MET’s work.

Vice-Chair Berger spoke in support of having service providers conduct outreach with MET Deputies.

Chair Laflen asked what the biggest challenges are for MET and if there are any resources that MET needs.

Lt. Gannon said that MET needs additional teams and are only staffed at about 55% of what is needed. Lt. Gannon spoke regarding the ongoing advocacy to increase resources at the county level.

Battalion Chief Jason Ghorbani spoke regarding the Fire Department’s experience with MET and the limitations of approved receiving facilities.

Jacqueline Eyerly, Department of Mental Health, said that locally in West Hollywood both Stations 7 and 8 contact MET directly for assistance with appropriate patients.

Commissioner Williams suggested City Council lobby the County Board of Supervisors for additional funding for MET.

Commissioner Balbone asked for additional information from the Fire Department regarding receiving facilities.

Chief Ghorbani said he would report back to the Commission.

**ACTION:** Motion by Commissioner Williams to ask the City Council to send a letter of support for additional MET teams to the Board of Supervisors, seconded by Commissioner Balbone, and approved.

Commissioner Balbone asked about serving patients just outside of West Hollywood’s border

Lt. Gannon spoke regarding the work they do with various agencies in neighboring jurisdictions.

Ms. Planck said that West Hollywood service providers regularly connect with individuals and agencies just outside of West Hollywood.

Commissioner Roshay called attention to the reduction in the use of force and the estimated savings in cost and time. Commissioner Roshay spoke

regarding the LA Found Project and asked if MET is still involved and asked what the Department of Mental Health “HOME” team stands for.

Ms. Eyerly said that HOME stands for homeless outreach mobile engagement.

Vice-Chair Berger asked for additional information regarding the outcomes of the calls that did not involve MET.

Lieutenant Bill Moulder said that when regular Deputies attempt to assist a patient in need of a mental health evaluation when MET is not available, they generally transport the person to a hospital.

Lieutenant Gannon said that when a MET unit is available, generally the outcome is improved for the patient.

Vice-Chair Berger spoke regarding the significant savings by using MET and asked if there are ways to explore the data further to demonstrate the savings.

Lieutenant Gannon spoke regarding the limitations in the County’s data systems. Staff added that all involved would agree that the MET program deters force and reduces emergency room visits so saves money.

Commissioner Norton spoke about the difficulty in quantifying the savings of something that may or may not have happened.

## **10B. REPORT FROM FIRE DEPARTMENT – MONTHLY REPORT**

Battalion Chief Jason Ghorbani reviewed the Fire Department statistics for February 2021, including suppression, rescue, and fire prevention activities.

Commissioner Roshay asked for clarification of the “service” call definition. Commissioner Roshay asked for additional information regarding the “psychological” classification in calls for service and asked if those calls are referred to MET.

Chief Ghorbani spoke regarding the definition of “service” which includes requests such as locked keys in a car, a cat in a tree, or other community service. Chief Ghorbani also gave examples of calls that dispatchers may classify the original call as “psychological”. Chief Ghorbani said that sheriff dispatchers always connect with fire when there may be a life-threatening issue.

Vice-Chair Berger asked when the batteries in the City’s AED units are checked.

Staff said that AEDs are checked monthly. Chief Ghorbani also said that the AED will alert you if there is ever an issue with the battery.

Commissioner Roshay asked for an explanation about the “TC person trapped” classification.

Chief Ghorbani said that it is a traffic collision with severe damage to the car where the passengers cannot remove themselves from the car without assistance from the Fire Department.

Chair Laflen asked there has been an increase in warming fires.

Chief Ghorbani said that neighboring jurisdictions have experienced an increase and said that some warming fires progress into exposure to a structure causing damage.

#### **10C. SHERIFF’S REPORT: MONTHLY REPORT; REIMAGINING POLICING**

Lieutenant Bill Moulder reviewed the crime statistics for February, including calls for service. Lieutenant Moulder said that Part 1 Crime is down over 20% and spoke regarding face covering enforcement, health order enforcement with code compliance, and crime suppression operations.

Lieutenant Moulder spoke regarding a recent meeting with Center for Policing Equity and staff to discuss the upcoming study for the City of West Hollywood.

Lieutenant Moulder gave an update on questions from the last Commission meeting, including the following:

- At the December 2020, PSC meeting, a request was made to check lighting and tree growth around the West Hollywood community streets of Flores, Sweetzer, Kings, etc., south of Melrose. A street robbery had recently occurred in the area. Both West Hollywood Public Works and West Hollywood Sheriff’s Station personnel checked the area to develop any recommendations. An update was provided at the previous meeting. Commissioner Williams asked about lighting and tree trimming in other areas of the City, and staff followed up with Facilities staff. Sheriff’s personnel met with City staff on February 9, 2021 to discuss tree trimming and lighting in the area of the robbery and other areas of the City. The City will be replacing all the streetlights with LED lights, which are brighter. This replacement process should take 90 to 120 days. Also, the tree trimming schedule has not been interrupted and has continued on the normal rotation. Because new lighting is coming soon, Sheriff’s personnel will see how that improves lighting in the City. If low

light conditions continue in different areas, or over-grown trees, Public Works will address each issue on a case-by-case basis. If residents have concerns about over-grown trees or lighting, they can contact the City to report the issue.

- Commissioner Williams inquired about a possible overdose at the Abbey on January 30, 2021. There was a call for service (Tag 15) to West Hollywood Station at 2:10 am on January 31, 2021, regarding a medical call with LA County Fire. The informant stated her mom was possibly drugged and was vomiting. When Deputies arrived at the location, the informant told them that her mom was possibly poisoned. The patient (mom) may also have been overly intoxicated. The patient was taken to the hospital. The informant said they would contact the Sheriff's Station if blood tests indicated poison, or a drug was present in the patient's system.
- Commissioner Balbone expressed concerns about the number of aggravated assaults. There were nine (9) incidents involving eleven (11) victims in January of 2021. There were six (6) suspects arrested. Of the nine incidents, five (5) involved transients as the suspect/perpetrator. The others were: One was a fight at a house party, another was a domestic violence situation, one was two friends fighting over food, and one appeared to be a "road rage" incident between a vehicle driver and bicyclists. Lieutenant Moulder mentioned that most of these incidents involved transients. Both the COPPS and EPT Teams address issues involving transients during their regular duties. The Teams conduct weekly CARE Outreach operations, and they offer help and resources. The MET Team is active around the City attempting to provide help and resources, as well. The City's social services outreach program also offers help and resources. Commissioner Balbone asked if we have the MET Team respond to these calls. In situations where the individual is displaying mental health issues, Deputies request a MET Team, if the MET Team is available. Additionally, the MET Team monitors the radio for calls for service that may have a mental health component and then respond. In situations where the person has left before Deputies arrive, there is not a need to request a MET Team. If a person, who is experiencing mental health issues, is arrested, the MET Team will meet up with the person at the Sheriff's Station and conduct an evaluation. If they determine that person needs help, that person will be transferred to a hospital for an evaluation.
- Lieutenant Moulder reminded all that it is very important that when members of our Community encounter a situation that is suspicious, threatening, or a person appears to be in obvious need of help (experiencing homelessness, mentally ill, under the influence, etc.), that the community member call West Hollywood Station to report the

situation (If you see something, say something.). Deputies can respond and determine what appropriate action is required to assist the individual or conduct enforcement, when appropriate. City, Community, and Sheriff work as a Team, and this relationship is critical to keep our Community safe and help those in need.

- A review of aggravated assaults – 11 victims (9 incidents) with 6 suspects arrested:

Hands, Feet, Fist

900 block Curson Avenue

01/01/2021 @ 0202. A male was punched several times in the face by another male during an argument at a house party. The male victim suffered a cut to his face that required stitches. #00001

Aggravated Assault – Knife (Suspect Arrested)

800 block N Kings Road

01/09/2021 @ 0329. A female stabbed the female victim twice in the shoulder during an argument that took place inside the residence. The suspect was arrested by responding deputies. #00129 argument between friends over food

Other Weapon (2 Victims, Suspect Arrested)

9100 Sunset Blvd

01/09/2021 @ 1015. A male and female were walking their dog on Sunset Blvd when male transient threatened to hit them with a metal rod he was holding. The male transient swung the metal rod towards both victims but did not hit them. Both victims ran from the area. The male transient was arrested by responding deputies. #00132

Domestic (2 Suspect/Victims, Both Arrested)

1000 block Sweetzer Avenue

01/15/2021 @ 1930. A female and a male were both arrested after fighting with each other while inside the male's residence. The female suffered bite marks and was transported to the hospital. The male suffered a cut to his face and was also transported to the hospital. #00236

Aggravated Assault – Knife (Suspect Arrested)

8600 block Santa Monica Blvd

01/19/2021 @ 0220. A male transient pointed a box cutter at a security guard and threatened to hurt him after being asked to leave the area. The suspect was arrested by responding deputies. #00273

Aggravated Assault - Other Weapon

8400 block Santa Monica Blvd

01/23/2021 @ 1030. A female transient was sitting at the bus stop when a male transient approached and asked her for money. The victim said she had no money, and the suspect hit her in the face with a wooden stick. #00343

Hands, Feet, Fist

7871 Santa Monica Blvd, Whole Foods

01/24/2021 @ 1725. A male was confronted in the parking lot by large group of men riding bicycles and was punched in the face several times. The male suffered a cracked tooth. The suspects left the area on their bicycles. #00362 appears to be a "road rage" attack

Aggravated Assault – Knife (Suspect Arrested)

8600 block Santa Monica Blvd

01/27/2021 @ 1044. A male transient approached a security guard in an aggressive manner while holding a pair of pliers in his hands after being asked to leave the area. The suspect was arrested by responding deputies. #00385

Aggravated Assault - Knife

8400 block Santa Monica Blvd

01/28/2021 @ 1230. A man was sitting in the park when a male transient (suspect) approached him and asked for a cigarette. The suspect became upset and removed a knife from his duffel bag, pointed it at the victim, and then moved towards him in a threatening manner. The suspect fled the area on foot. #00411

- Commissioner Sol inquired about a person who continuously commits theft from Target. Commissioner Sol said this person appears to be experiencing mental health issues and asked if the MET Team has been requested to these incidents. Lieutenant Moulder contacted our MET Team, and they are aware of this person. They will respond to calls at Target in an attempt to contact her. Lieutenant Moulder has also directed our Desk Personnel to be aware of this person and ask that they alert the MET Team to respond if she is involved. If she returns to Target, Lieutenant Moulder said that Target employees should relay information to the Sheriff's Station that this person is involved. Lieutenant Moulder also asked the Special Teams to conduct additional patrol checks in the area. If they contact her, they will endeavor to have the MET Team respond or attempt to get her some help using City Social Service resources.
- Commissioner Berger inquired about a carjacking that occurred on January 7, 2021 and if the Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR) system was employed in the investigation. The handling West Hollywood Detective on this case did check the ALPR system for a hit, but there was

not hit on that vehicle. The vehicle was later recovered by LAPD. The victim refused to cooperate with the investigation.

- Commissioner Roshay inquired about additional MET Teams assigned to West Hollywood. Lieutenant Moulder said that the MET program has been a very successful program. The City of West Hollywood is the first Contract City in Los Angeles County to contract for a full time MET Team. In addition to the full time MET Team, the Sheriff's Department has also included a Countywide MET Team based out of West Hollywood for additional coverage. The MET Team is composed of one Deputy Sheriff with about 1,000 additional hours of mental health training and a Clinician from the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health. The Sheriff's Department initiated this program in the early 1990's. The MET Team was, and still is, an innovated way of imagining effective policing that well serves our Community. The City of West Hollywood was a pioneer in bringing this program to this City. Both City and Sheriff's Department envision this program expanding and evolving.
- Commissioner Sol inquired about the Bike Team and asked to see Deputies on bikes. At one point, West Hollywood Station had a dedicated Bike Team. The Station no longer has an official Bike Team, and our bike fleet has been diminished because of old or broken equipment. Most of the Special Teams Deputies (COPPS and EPT) are bike trained. Once summer is here, we will conduct some Bike Operations using the bikes that are currently serviceable.
- A couple of Commissioners communicated concerns about the increase of the number of certain crimes. Last January 2020, the crime rate was down around 25% and continued to go down throughout the rest of the year. We experienced one of the lowest crime rates in the history of the City of West Hollywood in 2020. For January of 2021, the crime rate was down an additional 14%. That said, it is always a concern to have the number of incidents in the robbery, burglary, and aggravated assault category increase. In January of 2020, there were 8 robberies and in January of 2021, there were 10. In January of 2020, there were 6 aggravated assaults and in January of 2021, there were 11. In January of 2020, there were 6 residential burglaries and 12 "other" burglaries. In January of 2021, there were 7 residential burglaries and 23 "other" burglaries. There were 10 robberies in January of 2021, compared to 8 robberies in January of 2020. For January of 2021, 5 of those robberies were considered "Estes" robberies. "Estes" robberies are incidents where the suspect commits a theft at a retail establishment or store and attempts to leave. As they attempt to leave the location, they are stopped by security or an employee. At that point, the suspect engages physically (strong arm) or produces a weapon (armed – knife, gun, pipe, etc.) in an attempt to escape. The other 5 robberies were either armed

(knife, gun, pipe, etc.) or strong arm. Our Special Teams (COPPS and EPT) have conducted numerous operations addressing the increase in the "other" burglary category, as well as addressing robberies. The Teams have also conducted saturation patrols in areas where our Crime Analyst has indicated a propensity for these crimes, based on the statistics. Our Patrol Deputies have engaged in proactive policing in an attempt to prevent these crimes from occurring. The Sheriff's Station also fields Park Deputies and West End and East End Foot Beat Patrol Deputies at various times during the week.

- The City Council of West Hollywood and City Staff have always been dedicated to ensuring the safety of all our Community members and provide an array of resources to ensure this endeavor. Our goal is to create a safe Community and have our Community members feel safe in West Hollywood. Lieutenant Moulder reminded all that it is a partnership between City, Community, and Sheriff, and it is extremely important for our Community to report suspicious circumstances and incidents to the Sheriff's Station (When you see something, say something.). If you see something that does not look right, call the Station and have the Deputies check it out.

Commissioner Hallman asked if the Sheriff's Station is seeing an increase in burglaries and robberies.

Lieutenant Moulder said that there has been a lot more publicity around certain incidents although the statistics may not show an increase at this time.

Commissioner Hallman spoke in support of the Sheriff's Department and additional Bike Patrols to encourage more interaction between Deputies and community members. Commissioner Hallman asked if the City could assist the Station with bicycles and repair.

Lieutenant Moulder said that when the weather warms up a little, they will be considering additional Bike Patrols. Lieutenant Moulder spoke regarding the Foot Patrols utilized on both the east and west sides. Staff added that the City can support the station with bicycles and bicycle repair if needed.

Commissioner Hallman asked if tag numbers are provided to callers.

Lieutenant Moulder said that tag numbers can be provided by the dispatchers who answer calls.

Commissioner Norton asked for additional information on the homicide and the two sexual assaults.

Lieutenant Moulder said that suspects were identified in the homicide and that he would follow-up on the assaults and report back to the Commission.

Commissioner Balbone asked for additional information on the homicide and if there is anything that should be shared with the businesses. Commissioner Balbone spoke regarding an impaired driver who struck and killed another driver. Commissioner Balbone spoke regarding an incident in AHHS.

Lieutenant Moulder spoke regarding the incident at AHHS which turned out to be a false call. An arrest was made for the person making the false call.

Commissioner Balbone spoke regarding the upcoming closure of Robertson and spoke in support of Bike Patrols to deter pick-pocketing and other crimes.

Chair Laflen spoke in support of additional public safety personnel having a presence in the area due to the high-profile robbery in Beverly Hills.

West Seegmiller expressed disapproval for the Sheriff's Department's face covering enforcement and encouraged the Commissioners to take a stand on the issue.

Chair Laflen asked staff to forward the community groups previously identified for participation in the equity study to her fellow Commissioners.

**10D. DISCUSSION ON HOW TO COLLABORATE WITH THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT COMMISSION**

Staff reached out to Jennifer Osborn at the COC and said that Ms. Osborne encourages attendance at COC meetings as the best way to stay engaged and to make public comments on any topics the Commissioners would like to bring to the COC's attention. In addition, Ms. Osborn said that staff can forward any questions or requests from the Commissioners via email to her for consideration for future agendas. Finally, COC is planning on hosting a series of virtual town halls.

Commissioners agreed to co-host a future town hall with COC if possible.

**10E. UPDATE ON IMPACTS FROM COOKIES**

Lieutenant Moulder said that the next meeting of the Los Angeles Cannabis Commission is on March 18<sup>th</sup>.

**10F. REPORT FROM BLOCK BY BLOCK SECURITY AMBASSADORS – MONTHLY REPORT**

Commissioner Balbone asked if Block by Block Security Ambassadors are prioritized for vaccinations.

Staff said that Security Ambassadors are in group 1B and can seek vaccinations through the County or pharmacies.

Commissioner Hallman asked if there has been any progress on the suggestion of having a fixed location or kiosk for Block by Block near La Brea and asked staff to follow-up with Mr. Gibson.

**11. ITEMS FROM SUBCOMMITTEES**

None.

**12. ITEMS FROM STAFF**

Staff and Commissioners reviewed the schedule of meetings for 2021.

**13. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

West Seegmiller thanked Commissioner Williams for her service, welcomed Commissioner Hallman, and spoke in opposition to homeless encampment sweeps.

**14. ITEMS FROM THE COMMISSION/COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Commissioner Balbone welcomed Commissioner Hallman.


Commissioner Roshay asked for additional information regarding the homeless enforcement referenced in the public speaker's comments.

Staff and Sheriff asked the speaker for additional information.

Chair Laflen thanked Commissioners Williams and Sol for their service.

**15. ADJOURNMENT**

The Public Safety Commission adjourned at 8:54 PM in the memory of the Jeeves Tangonan, Luis Vega, and Rodney King. The next meeting is scheduled for April 12, 2021 at 6:00 PM via teleconference.

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Public Safety Commission Chair

Staff Liaison

**A copy of the audio recording of this meeting can be obtained from the City Clerk's office upon request.**

***(Disclaimer: Staff records the meetings for the sole purpose of composing the official meeting minutes; therefore, the recordings are not of commercial quality.)***