

**NOTICE OF MEETING OF THE TOWN OF CAREFREE
PUBLIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

WHEN: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2021

WHERE: ZOOM WEB: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3229729660>
MEETING ID: 322 972 9660

TIME: 1:30 P.M.

Pursuant to A.R.S. § 10-822, notice is hereby given of the time, place and purposes of a meeting of the Public Safety Advisory Committee.

Members of the Committee are participating by technological means or methods pursuant to A.R.S. §10-708.

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

AGENDA

- ITEM #1** Review and approval of the October 20TH meeting minutes.
- ITEM #2** Presentation by Maricopa County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) and discussion regarding diversity of law enforcement services and associated costs to the Town.
- ITEM #3** Discussion regarding future Committee's recommendations to Town Council.
- ITEM #4** Discussion regarding future considerations to include in a contract for services for fire and emergency services.
- ITEM #5** Adjournment.

DATED this 2nd day of November, 2021.

By: Samantha Gesell _____
Samantha Gesell, Planning Clerk

Items may be taken out of order

*Due to the risks to public health caused by the possible spread of the COVID-19 virus at public gatherings, it has determined that public meetings will be indefinitely held through technological means. Meetings will be also open to the public through technological means. In reliance on, and compliance with, the March 13, 2020 Opinion issued by Attorney General Mark Brnovich, the Town of Carefree provides this special advance notice of the technological means through which public meetings may be accessed. While this special notice is in effect, public comment at meetings will only be accepted through written submissions, which may or may not be read aloud during meetings.

Join Zoom Meeting:

Click on the following link or cut and paste it into your browser:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3229729660>

Meeting ID: 322 972 9660

A password is not required.

By phone:

Please call 1.669. 900. 6833 or 1.253.215.8782



DRAFT

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE TOWN OF CAREFREE
PUBLIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

WHEN: WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 20th, 2021

WHERE: VIA ZOOM *

TIME: 1:30 P.M.

Members of the Public Safety Advisory Committee participated by technological or methods pursuant to §A.R.S. 38-431(4).

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chairperson - Leslie Hine
Vice Chairperson - Philip Henn
Sheila Amoroso
Peter Burns
Jerry Wetta
Anton Wilke

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Scott Peterson
Kim Taha

Chairperson Hine opened the meeting at 1:30 pm.

AGENDA ITEM #1 Approval of the Public Safety Advisory Committee meeting minutes dated October 06, 2021 minutes.

Committee Member Burns **MOVED TO APPROVE** the minutes of the Public Safety Advisory Committee meeting dated October 06, 2021. **SECONDED** by Committee Member Amoroso. **CARRIED** unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM #2 Committee Staff Updates

Committee Member Burns expressed frustration due to the lack of responsiveness from Rural Metro regarding his request back in September, asking for clarification of the Rural Metro call data.

Town Administrator Neiss and Chairperson Hine commended Town of Carefree Administrative Assistant, Carrie Carter for her support with the Public Safety Advisory Committee, posting agendas, taking minutes etc. and wished her the very best in her future endeavors.

AGENDA ITEM #3 Review and discussion of PSAC Fire Service Recommendations

Chairperson Hine expressed the importance of the Committee articulating their recommendations, as they will help to form the presentation to Town Council.

Ms. Hine recapped details of the October 18, 2021, Cave Creek Town Council meeting regarding the presentation by a Consultant Economist that Cave Creek engaged, to provide an overview of the financing of their fire service. Those committee members who also attended (via zoom), provided relevant input.

Committee Member Amoroso was pleased to see that the Economist recommended to have a stable revenue source to meet the needs of a fixed cost. Being that the Town of Cave Creek is heavily reliant on sales tax, the Economist recommended they diversify their revenues to make sure they are protected in recessionary periods. To create a stable revenue source for the fire contract, he also recommended a property tax and discussed a combination of a sales tax and property tax. Concluding, a more stable revenue source should be part of the answer.

Committee member Burns added, it appeared that the Economist recommended funding of 50% sales tax and 50% property tax. Noting, that there is a contingent in Cave Creek committed to the opposition of a property tax. The opposing citizens would prefer to bond for all their one-time capitol needed to purchase a fire station and acquire trucks and equipment. Mr. Burns added that there is hope in Cave Creek that within the next 3-5 years, they could extinguish their sewer bonds and their subsidy to the water utility which would free up general fund monies.

Chairperson Hine questioned if the engagement of an Economist Consultant in the Town of Carefree's process would be necessary and at what point would such expertise be useful?

Committee Member Wilke reminded the group that when the Town of Carefree made its presentation to Town Council regarding water, they brought in professional finance people as part of the presentation. Mr. Wilke felt that was very effective and important when convincing a constituency for a vote.

The Committee acknowledged the importance of public education and getting information out that's useful and complete to aid Carefree citizens in their own decision-making process.

Chairperson Hine presented via PowerPoint the Committee's" Working Draft In Progress Recommendation to Town Council. Exhibiting the groups evolving additions and revisions to the working draft document. The Committee provided additional edits to the draft recommendation, working toward a final recommendation to be presented to Town Council at a future date.

AGENDA ITEM #4 Committee discussions/input on future fire service contract.

This item to be placed on a future agenda.

AGENDA ITEM #5 Town Council presentation date, format, and future meeting dates.

Chairperson Hine expressed the importance of having a date confirmed for finalizing the recommendation document that will be presented to Town Council. Ms. Hine's initial thinking was the Committee should be prepared with this to go before Town Council sometime in January 2022. Committee member Wetta asked Town Administrator Neiss when he needs to start negotiating with Rural Metro and how long can that wait? Town Administrator Neiss explained that a January date would be best, as it allows for the M.C.S.O discussion to take place and a picture of public safety in Carefree to be discussed at one time. Mr. Neiss believes it would be a healthier approach to layout the overall picture for the residents and Town Council so that they can see the picture holistically and make some of those policy decisions collectively rather than piecemeal. Town Administrator Neiss noted that this meeting would be a special session with Town Council outside of the regular session. Mr. Neiss suggested a Special Meeting date of Tuesday, January 11, 2022, at 5:00 p.m. to have a Joint Session between Town Council and the Public Safety Advisory Committee and hopes to hold this meeting in person.

Chairperson Hine confirmed four (4) meeting dates prior to the January 11 ,2022 Special Meeting.

- Wednesday, November 03, 2021
- Wednesday, November 17, 2021
- Wednesday, December 01, 2021
- Wednesday, December 15, 2021

Ms. Hine expressed the importance of utilizing these four (4) meetings to build the framework for the recommendation presentation to Town Council.

Town Administrator Neiss noted that he will be meeting with Captain Brandimarte with M.C.S.O., who oversees the Town's district, on Tuesday, October 26, 2021. This meeting is to discuss their presentation to be made to the Public Safety Advisory Committee at either the November 03, 2021, or November 17, 2021, meeting.

Chairperson Hine asked for volunteers from the Committee, to form a small writing/design team to put together the outline of the recommendation to be presented to Town Council in January. Chairperson Hine, Committee member Amoroso and Town Administrator Neiss agreed to begin the work with the goal of having a fairly well populated report and presentation to share with the group by the December 15, 2021 Public Safety Advisory Committee meeting.

Chairperson Hine commended the Committee for all the hard work, contributions and dedication put forth, by consistently coming together and moving this whole process forward.

AGENDA ITEM #6 Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:16 p.m.

**Town of Carefree Public Safety Advisory Committee
Working Draft In-Progress– Committee Recommendations for Further Discussion
As of October 20, 2021**

Note: This draft includes Committee comments and edits made during the 10.6.21 and 10.20.21 meetings.

Recommendation #1:

The Public Safety Advisory Committee recommends that the Town of Carefree Town Council establish a 3-5 year contract for fire service with Rural Metro beginning July 1, 2022, under the following conditions:

- Rural Metro has mutual aid agreements in place with bordering fire departments, agencies and districts and jurisdictional/call boundaries and protocols are worked out and documented.
- There is demonstrated and assured ability to respond to fire and medical emergencies within Carefree town boundaries including west of Black Mountain, within 6 minutes of station notification by alarm room.

Rationale for Recommendation

- Lowest contract operating cost of options presented
- No startup costs
- Three fire personnel on the engine appears sufficient to serve Carefree as long as an ambulance with two additional personnel is dispatched with the engine – this model has served Carefree well historically
- Existing satisfactory service and response track record – good and proven working relationship between Rural Metro and the Town of Carefree
- Town retains political and decision-making control of fire service
- The Town does not presently have the financial capacity to participate in automatic aid
- The 3-5 year contract period allows the Town of Carefree to consider, and if necessary, plan and develop the financial and physical capacity to join the automatic aid system at some future date. Need to develop clear cost estimates (both operational and capital expenditures) and revenue plan for financing increased fire service expenditures.

Recommendation #2:

The Public Safety Advisory Committee recommends that the Town of Carefree develop a revenue strategy to pay for fire and emergency services to include the existing dedicated sales tax and a new dedicated property tax to be presented to voters for approval within three years. Further, PSAC

recommends:

- The strategy should include law enforcement costs, in addition to fire and emergency services, in total public safety expense forecasts and budgets.
- The strategy should include anticipated future capital expenditures to replace and update existing equipment as well as a detailed expenditure analysis of future participation in automatic aid.
- Town Council should consider re-establishing license requirements and penalties for repeated residential and commercial fire and security false alarms.

Rationale for Recommendation

- Existing dedicated sales tax revenue is not sufficient to cover fire and emergency services costs. The Town has experienced an annual average \$400k shortfall requiring the Town to make up the “loss” with General Fund revenue.
- The need for the Town to consider a property tax to pay for fire and emergency services exists under both the current (and recommended) option of contracting with Rural Metro under mutual aid agreements AND under any potential future scenarios where the Town might choose to be part of automatic aid through contracting with another public fire response entity such as the City of Scottsdale, City of Phoenix or Daisy Mountain Fire District. The current dedicated sales tax revenue alone will not cover fire and emergency services under any scenario – particularly in periods of economic downturn.
- Sales tax revenue is highly elastic and difficult to accurately predict and budget. It is also driven by economic cycles. Fire and emergency services are inelastic costs – they remain fixed and constant over time and are not tied to economic cycles.
- The three-year time frame to pass a property tax referendum acknowledges the fact that Carefree has not had a property tax to date and significant public education may be required to help citizens understand why a property tax is necessary if we want high quality fire and emergency response services provided by the Town of Carefree.

Recommendation #3:

The Public Safety Advisory Committee recommends that the Town of Carefree apply to the Central Arizona Life Safety System Response Council for inclusion into the automatic aid system as it becomes financially and practically possible to do so.

Rationale for Recommendation

- Applying for inclusion to automatic aid now will assist in identifying, with certainty, the costs and other considerations (including the Certificate of Necessity (CON) for ambulance services) of participating in automatic aid that should be factored into the revenue strategy
- Developing the financial capacity to participate in the automatic aid system will take time. The groundwork can be laid while the Town deliberates on its revenue options in the next 3-

5 years, regarding how best to pay for the increased costs to participate in automatic aid. The estimated operating costs of automatic aid today are roughly 25-50% higher than a potential ongoing mutual aid arrangement and contract with Rural Metro. In addition, there are significant startup costs and capital outlays to participate in automatic aid. These costs must be firmly identified and a revenue plan to cover the increased Town budget that will be required, must be in place before a formal commitment to an automatic aid partnership can be made.