

# ST JOHNS COUNTY CIVIC ROUNDTABLE

Minutes of October 9, 2017

President Lofgren opened the meeting at 9:04am.

Treasurers Report: It was reported that we have a balance of \$649.54

Secretary's Report: The minutes of the August 14, 2017 were accepted. There are no September minutes because the September meeting was cancelled due to the hurricane,

President Lofgren introduced Matthew Cline, St Johns County Undersheriff. Matt Cline is the principal command officer for directing, coordinating, supervising and training the staff except in those areas reserved for the Sheriff. A graduate of the Florida Coastal Law School and a member of the Florida Bar, Mr. Cline was formerly General Council for the Sheriff's Department prior to becoming Undersheriff in 2015.

Undersheriff Cline focused his talk in four areas:

- 1) The challenge of growth in St. Johns County especially in the Northeast portion of the county. Since the growth is mostly residential, a significant uptick in crime is not expected. However, drift of

criminal activity from Duval County is expected with more break-ins of cars and homes likely to occur. Many of these adult crime break-ins are done by perpetrators as young as 14 according to Mr. Cline.

- 2) Response times: The counties main roads do not permit fast travel for deputies responding to a call. More personnel will have to be assigned to the northwest quadrant of the county to compensate for the lack of efficient travel routes in that area.
- 3) License Plate Readers (LPR's): Matt suggested the readers can become an important tool for tracking potential lawbreakers. Florida Sun Pass and Easy Pass use the readers to identify violators that try to avoid tolls. A number of HOA's are considering employing the devices to detect potential crime as vehicles associated with individuals known to be offenders enter their community. This information can be sent directly to law enforcement. The use of the LPR's at important intersections though out the county would be a valuable proactive method of fighting crime. The major objection to their use, as he sees it, will come from those concerned about privacy issues. "Big Brother is Watching"
- 4) Opioid Addiction & Overdose: To help break the addictive cycle of these drugs a long acting injectable agent Vivatrol (naltrexone) can be used

to block the opioid high for as long as 90 days. This can be an important tool to help those addicts who wish to break free from opioids. Cline said the use of this agent locally is in its' initial stages. Another life saving agent that deputies now carry is Narcan (naloxone nasal mist). The nasal administration by deputies to men and women suffering from opioid overdose can rapidly block the effects of opioids and prevent fatalities. Undersheriff Cline noted the close connection between mental health problems and drug addiction. Problems associated with methamphetamine and cocaine seem to be decreasing while opioids (heroin, fentanyl, etc) are increasing.

Cline also commented on an increase in the homeless in our county and mentioned that 18 new deputies will be added to the force. He also gave us a "heads up" on the use of red light cameras in Palatka

Civic Roundtable Discussion:

Doug Worth: Citizen's Task force working on ways to improve traffic flow on A1A from the Butler to Mickler. Using Survey Monkey and expect survey to be completed by end of November. Main issue is to widen A1A to 6 lanes.

Bob Olson: Reported on a beach renourishment plan that will involve trucking enough sand to the South Ponte Vedra/Vilano area to make a dune 10ft high and 26ft deep. Local officials feel this program with State matching funds can be implemented before the 2018 Hurricane season.

A master plan has been submitted for "Steeplechase" a community of 980 homes covering 851 acres. William McCormick commented that the EPA may deny the application.

Verna Bacon: State will pick up storm debris along A1A.

It was also noted that female Sheriff's Deputies are in short supply and needed for important tasks.

Adjournment: The meeting concluded at 10:50

Respectfully Submitted,

Dennis Froio, Secretary