

Media/Public Safety Cooperative Meeting minutes for 11/18/2004

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Dutchie Mirolli, WVTF
Shane Moreland, WSLs
Jeff Schmucker, Vinton Messenger
Meg Hibbert, Salem Times-Register
Amy Freeman, Vinton Police Department
Ben Cook, Vinton Police Department
Steven Doyle, Vinton Police Department
Laird Manlove, Roanoke Valley Crime Line
Mike Green, Salem Police Department
Herb Cooley, Vinton Police Department
Jim Day, Roanoke Police Department
Bob Carpentieri, Virginia State Police
Mike Stater, Virginia Department of Health
Laura Bullock, Virginia Department of Transportation
Jason Bond, Virginia Department of Transportation
Jennifer Conley-Sexton, Roanoke County Fire and Rescue
Amanda DeHaven, Roanoke Regional Airport Commission
Erin Barnhart, Roanoke Sheriff's Office
Jennifer Faulkner, Roanoke Fire-EMS
George McMillan, Roanoke Sheriff's Office

This meeting was hosted by the Vinton Police Department at the Vinton War Memorial.

- I. Introductions
- II. Welcome: Sgt. Bob Carpentieri, new PIO for the Virginia State Police
- III. Program: By Sgt. Craig Harris, Vinton Police Department
 - A. Harris' presentation dealt with the problems they faced with the former administration at the Vinton Police Department. Five years ago, they lost their Chief and Deputy Chief after an investigation into improprieties within the force.
 - B. Harris said the investigation and the way it was covered by local media soured police/media relations greatly. Many officers still harbor hard feelings toward the media because of the way the investigation was handled in the news. Harris wanted to tell the group how well the department has come out of their dark period.
 - C. Harris challenged the media to do a follow-up story about the department and to show how well they've done. He said only one or two media outlets have done any such story. Some media outlets are viewed as more unfair than others by the Vinton PD because of the past.

- D. Chief Edwards, and now Chief Herb Cooley, have rebuilt the department from the ground up. Their ultimate goal now is to get the information out to the citizens and to maintain citizen safety.
 - E. Vinton Police have started to send out email news releases to the media to keep them better informed of what is happening in the town. Can other police departments do this? Major Day with Roanoke City says their caseload is so much greater than Vinton's that it may not be feasible.
 - F. Suggestion is made that the media meet with shifts or academy classes to explain what we need and how we can work together better.
- IV. Laird Manlove with Crime Line stands to talk about a "Crime of the Week" or "Crime of the Month" feature. Says it needs these features from the media.
 - A. Manlove adds that the Salem Rotary Club is supporting the troops in Iraq and Afghanistan and shipping supplies. Also trying to get a dinner together for family of local troops.
- V. A. Lindsey Nair still attempting to put together a school panel discussion.
 - B. Request for other new ideas for meetings in the future.
- VI. Some concerns are expressed by many media members over the recent use (or lack thereof) of the media paging system. Some examples of recent incidents are given when the paging system was not used.
 - A. Carpentieri explains that he can't always use the pager in rural areas because of reception. He wonders too if the message can be longer than 3 minutes.
 - B. Lindsey Nair hands out a handout with guidelines for use of the paging system
 - C. Major Day announces that Shelly Alley's replacement will be Aisha Johnson from News Channel 10.
- VII. Ideas for meetings: Bob Carpentieri suggests a demonstration of the bomb robots. Someone else suggests a tour of the new Roanoke County Sheriff's Office facility.