



600 Jefferson; conference room #2

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING REPORT September 24, 2024

The meeting was called to order by Chair Ben Adams. The July 25, 2024, board report was reviewed and approved. Chair Adams explained the purpose of this “special called” meeting, noting that it was necessary due to the upcoming discussions on the legislative budget, which typically occur in the fall.

APPROVAL OF NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Chair Adams presented two names for board appointment; the two names presented: Chris Fairey, ARS & FBI SAC Joe Carrico.

Chair Adams also presented the Acting U. S. Atty. Fondren as a replacement for U. S. Atty. Kevin Ritz.

The motion was made, seconded, and approved to accept Chris Fairey, Joe Carrico, and Acting U. S. Atty. Reagan Fondren to the Crime Commission Board of Directors.

CRIME COMMISSION BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS BY MR. GIBBONS

The Public Safety Institute (PSI) is excited to welcome Madeline Arriazo as the newest addition to its team.

The Crime Commission will host its next “Talk It Out” virtual meeting on our bail system on October 3rd.

- Featured speakers include Judge Lee Wilson and Lead Judicial Commissioner John Marshall.
- Participation will be limited to twenty-five attendees to ensure an interactive and focused discussion.
- The virtual meeting will last 45 minutes.

CHIEF C.J. DAVIS' CRIME DATA UPDATE:

Chief C.J. Davis provided an update on crime data in the city of Memphis for the period from January through August:

- **Aggravated Assaults** saw a slight increase compared to 2023.
- **Auto thefts** have shown a significant decrease, dropping from 11,240 in 2023 to 7,314 during the same period in 2024.
 - Chief Davis noted that the average age of a car thief is 18 years old, with more juveniles involved in vehicle thefts than adults.

Chief C.J. Davis outlined the following preventive measures being taken to address retail crime:

- **Hosted Retail Security Meetings:**
 - Regular meetings are held at the Realtime Crime Center (RTCC) with local retailers such as Lowe's, Home Depot, Walgreens, Walmart, and other major retail stores to discuss security measures.
- **Monthly Business Awareness Forums:**
 - These forums provide opportunities for businesses to discuss crime prevention techniques and share best practices.
- **Code Zero Operations:**
 - Held bi-monthly meetings at selected precincts to address various issues, including crime, blight, code enforcement, Shelby County Sheriff's Department (SCSD) warrants, and abandoned properties.
- **Introduction of Connect2Memphis.org:**
 - This program is being promoted at all community meetings, business meetings, and townhall meetings to encourage participation in city-wide security efforts by connecting surveillance cameras to the Realtime Crime Center.

Chief Davis concluded by emphasizing that the police department is leveraging every available resource to improve its overall effectiveness and strengthen public safety efforts across the city.

CRIME COMMISSION BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE

The Crime Commission will partner with local business leaders and with Crime Commission business board members to launch a Business Roundtable. Modeled to some degree after the Atlanta Police Foundation, the Roundtable will focus on helping fund crime prevention solutions and tackle challenges unique to Memphis.

Bill Gibbons highlighted the precedent for the Roundtable, referencing a successful 2017 initiative focused on increasing and retaining Memphis Police Department officers, which demonstrated the value of community-business collaboration in addressing critical public safety issues.

Ben Adams noted that Mayor Young and Memphis businesses are looking forward to the possibilities that the Crime Commission Business Roundtable will bring for crime prevention and public safety funding.

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Chair Ben Adams outlined the legislative budget priorities that the Crime Commission will support, with a focus on the following areas:

- **Prevention:** Programs targeting at-risk youth to reduce the likelihood of involvement in delinquent behavior.
- **Intervention:** Initiatives aimed at addressing youth recidivism and providing alternatives to repeat offenses.
- **Enforcement:** Strengthening forensics testing capabilities to enhance the efficiency of crime-solving efforts.
- **Downtown Safety Plan:** Supporting the development and implementation of a comprehensive plan to improve public safety in downtown Memphis.

Mr. Adams noted that these priorities emphasize a balanced approach to tackling crime through prevention, intervention, and enhanced enforcement efforts.

Mayor Young stressed that key stakeholders in downtown Memphis are calling for long-term solutions to ensure the retention of businesses, in particular in the FedEx Forum area. He indicated that the city must make aggressive investments and show visible progress in revitalizing downtown to prove the seriousness of the city's efforts and commitment to sustaining its economic growth.

Bill Gibbons outlined several legislative priorities for the Crime Commission to consider supporting, including:

- Increased penalties for the possession of switches attached to firearms, which convert firearms into fully automatic weapons.
- Threats of mass violence.
- Legislation allowing access to juvenile records when determining bail.
- Closing a loophole in aggravated assault cases involving firearms.
- Targeting issues related to aggressive driving and the accessibility of guns.
- Amending the TN Constitution to allow defendants to be held without bail in serious non-capital cases.

A debate arose regarding the possession of switches, particularly whether harsher penalties should apply only when switches are attached to a firearm or if simple possession should also carry stricter consequences. In the debate, Pastor Norman and Pastor Kirkwood opposed individuals serving Class B sentences for the simple possession of a switch, urging for a more

lenient approach. However, Chief C.J. Davis insisted that possession of a switch should result in a tougher sentence.

After extensive discussion, District Attorney Mulroy offered alternative language for the legislation. A vote was then taken, resulting in the offense being classified as a Class B felony, with the understanding that the switch would have to be actually attached to the firearm.

Ben Adams presented the motion to approve the 2025 Crime Commission state budget and legislative priorities as presented with an amendment to remove the two sentences beginning with “in 2014” and “in 2021” in the section dealing with opposition to further loosening of firearm possession laws.

The motion was made, seconded, and approved to accept the budget and legislative priorities with the removal of the last two sentences as presented.

U.S. Attorney Fondren abstained from this vote.

Other business

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned

IN ATTENDANCE

Ben Adams
Floyd Bonner
Vinessa Brown
Sgt. J. Matt Cunningham
Tom Cowens
Chief Jeff Cox
Chief C. J. Davis
John Dudas
John Gillespie
Jeffrey Higgs
Pastor James Kirkwood
James Kirkwood
Paul Morris
D. A. Steve Mulroy
Pastor Keith Norman
Mike Palazzolo
Stacey Sherley-Muhammad
Blair Taylor

Coleman Thompson
U. S. Atty. Reagan Fondren

ALSO, IN ATTENDANCE

Joe Oakley
David Brown
Lauren Huddleston
Amaia Iratzoqui
Madeline Arriaza
Leslie Taylor
Carolyn Turner
Jeremy Baker
Bill Gibbons
Linda Russell

Presented by:
Sam Walker
MSCC, Executive Assistant