

Law Enforcement

Committee

February 7, 2011

Present: Ken Arney, Robert Gobble, Russell Kyte, L. C. Tester, Ronnie Trivett and Richard Winters.

Guests: Mayor Humphrey, Roy Livingston, Jim McGee and other concerned citizens.

Chairman Ken Arney called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.

Motion to adopt last months minutes was made by Russell Kyte, second by Richard Winters.

Old Business

Richard Winters stated that the problems in Roan Mountain continue with vandalism, arson, and a prowler. Winters noted that residents are insecure and upset as a result of the number of recent arson fires and the safety of the people is a concern that needs to be addressed. Nearly two dozen vacant structures have been destroyed by arson fires in Roan Mountain over the past year. The need for the Sheriff's Department or constables to increase patrol in the community is vital at the present time. Establishing a sub station has been discussed with Sheriff Mathes and the committee. Winters added that it should be a matter of safety rather than costs to provide a deputy in Roan Mountain 24 hours a day.

Ken Arney added that there are problems all over the county especially drug problems. He stated that the zone includes not only Roan Mountain but Hampton, Butler and Elk Mills, he wondered if it might be possible to rezone the deputies' coverage area.

Mayor Humphrey stated that the county has quite a large area to cover and that we should inquire how our neighboring counties increased their staffing with regards to their population increase over the years.

L. C. Tester, an officer at the Sheriff's Department said that the current deputy that works in Roan Mountain covers all of Carter County from the double bridges on Hwy 19E in Valley Forge to the county line and this includes Hampton, Poga, Little Milligan and Roan Mountain. There are currently five deputies on each shift patrolling the roads of Carter County. Tester also mentioned that a \$2,000 reward is being offered for information on the fires. Tester stated that when an arrest is made by an officer, a deputy may be off the road for up to two hours completing paperwork for the warrant, waiting for a tow truck and other responsibilities.

Suggestions to start the Neighborhood Watch were made by Ronnie Trivett. Robert Gobble stated that the deputies should work with the constables in Roan Mountain to coordinate their locations.

Ronnie Trivett brought up the subject of contract staffing. Mayor Humphrey stated he had covered the matter in the previous meeting with the Jail Task Force Committee. He shared the information he received from the CTAS Attorney Rick Hall with the Mayor quoting TN Case Law and Statutes: Tennessee Code Annotated 8-8-201: The Sheriff by virtue of his office is the jailer and is entitled to the custody of the jail. From time immemorial the jail has upright belonged to the office of Sheriff. It's obvious that the Sheriff cannot, against his will be deprived of custody of the jail. The Sheriff may be deprived of custody of the jail if it is jointly operated by two or more contiguous counties pursuant to an inter-local agreement.

Public comment was made regarding hiring new employees for the jail, are we going to protect the prisoners or are we are going to protect the people, where are our priorities at here?

Ken Arney is going to investigate other counties to see how many deputies they patrol and how they deal with protection of the people in each respective area.

Motion to adjourn was made by Ronnie Trivett, second by Russell Kyte. Motion duly carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Street