



Police Department

August 6, 2024

The Honorable Maureen F. Hallahan
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
County of San Diego
P.O. Box 122724
San Diego, CA 92112-2724

Re: Response to 2023/2024 Grand Jury Report entitled “Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol Programs (RSVP) at San Diego Law Enforcement Agencies”

Dear Judge Hallahan:

On May 22, 2024, the Chula Vista Police Department and Police Chief Roxana Kennedy received the San Diego County Grand Jury report on the Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol Programs (RSVP) at San Diego Law Enforcement Agencies. The Grand Jury Report contained five findings and three recommendations directed to Chief of Police Roxana Kennedy. The Grand Jury filed the report with the Clerk of the Court on May 29, 2024.

The following response pursuant to California Penal Code 933(c) and 933.05 is on behalf of the City of Chula Vista by Chief of Police Roxana Kennedy.

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY’S FIVE FINDINGS:

Finding 1: RSVP programs are an asset to local law enforcement agencies.

The City of Chula Vista agrees with this finding.

Finding 2: RSVP personnel perform routine administrative tasks allowing sworn personnel to perform other more vital public safety actions.

The City of Chula Vista agrees with this finding.

Finding 3: RSVP programs benefit significantly from having reliable equipment to provide quality services.

The City of Chula Vista agrees with this finding.

Finding 4: Current RSVP recruitment does not always meet membership goals.

The City of Chula Vista agrees with this finding.

Finding 5: Training requirements are currently determined and, in many cases, conducted by individual jurisdictions leading to potentially inconsistent policies and procedures throughout the County.

The City of Chula Vista respectfully disagrees with this finding. RSVP programs are meant to serve their local communities and augment their respective law enforcement agencies. Each agency and jurisdiction have unique needs and areas in which they utilize their RSVP members. In Chula Vista, our Senior Volunteer Patrol (SVP) members are formally trained on the tasks which are specific to the needs of the Chula Vista Police Department (CVPD) and the Chula Vista community. We therefore tailor the training and tasks of our SVP members to best meet our local needs.

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY'S THREE RECOMMENDATIONS:

The 2023-2024 Grand Jury recommends that all interviewed San Diego law enforcement agencies with RSVP programs:

Recommendation 1: Collaborate to create a centralized two-week academy for new RSVP recruits across all law enforcement agencies.

The City of Chula Vista has determined that this recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. Currently, CVPD SVP members attend a 40-hour in-house training class which is located at CVPD headquarters, where volunteers learn curriculum specific to our community and Police Department needs.

Currently, the Sheriff's Department hosts a two-week course three times a year in Poway. This course is attended by members of the Sheriff's RSVP. The San Diego Police Department (SDPD) are allowed seats in the Sheriff's course. The Sheriff's Department will also allow an additional five to ten seats (space permitting) for other agencies.

Requiring a senior volunteer to commute daily approximately 27 miles each way (54 miles in total) to Poway from Chula Vista for two weeks, with full days of training, would seriously strain our ability to attract and retain members for Chula Vista's SVP. Transportation to and from Poway, or other locations in the County, for elderly members of our community who wish to be a volunteer would be challenging and could dissuade or even prevent someone from joining our SVP program.

In addition, the weeklong course taught in-house by CVPD is specific to the needs of our community and resources for members of Chula Vista SVP, whereas the course put on by the Sheriff's Department contains substantial information which may not be relevant to our SVP members (e.g. tours of County offices, County buildings, etc.). Additionally, because our class is offered in-house by CVPD, we can allow as many SVP candidates as possible to attend and do not

need to worry about space limitations inherent with trainings offered by other agencies. Likewise, we have flexibility to schedule the classes around completion of background screenings of SVP members rather than waiting for training to be offered by another agency.

Recommendation 2: Collaborate to develop and share recruiting best practices.

The City of Chula Vista has not yet implemented this recommendation but plans to implement this recommendation within ninety days. Recruiting practices for police department employment, including volunteer positions, are the responsibility of each respective agency based on an agency's vacancies, budget, and unique job responsibilities, along with any additional agency-specific benefits. At CVPD, recruitment of SVPs occurs via our website, community presentations, booths at community events, staffing storefront offices, and word-of-mouth. Our recruitment methods mirror those of other agencies in the region as well. These recruiting practices and strategies have worked for CVPD for 30 years. In the current year alone, from January to June 2024, CVPD SVP members volunteered 7,900 hours and are on-track to volunteer a total of 16,000 hours for 2024. The Chula Vista Police Department looks forward to sharing recruiting practices that have been successful in Chula Vista and developing best practices.

Recommendation 3: Pursue outside funding sources for RSVP operations and acquisition of dedicated equipment.

The City of Chula Vista has implemented this recommendation and is in support of pursuing additional outside funding sources. The Chula Vista Police Foundation (a non-profit entity) has provided funds for SVP uniforms and miscellaneous gear. The cost for other supplies, equipment, and expenses is paid by CVPD, and the SVP vehicles are paid for by Chula Vista's "Measure P" (2016 local ballot initiative) funds.

Thank you for your thorough review of the various county-wide RSVP programs. If you would like additional information, or have any further questions, please feel free to reach out to me at 619-691-5150.

Sincerely,



Roxana Kennedy
Chief of Police

cc: City Council
City Manager Maria Kachadoorian