

Jacque S. Humphrey

Dr. Phelps

PSC 101

KNPR Paper

08 May 2020

Crime and Revenue are Down, Will Metro Officers be Laid Off?

On April 30, 2020 Joe Schoenmann had a broadcast discussing the fact that crime in Las Vegas is way down, and Tax Revenue is way down as well. Some crimes are down as much as 30 percent, however aggravated assaults and domestic violence reports are up and on the rise. As state and local tax revenues from the Casino, Entertainment, and Food industries found on the Las Vegas Strip are down and expected to be until July 2020. What can the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department do to save money? So, Joe Schoenmann asks the question, "will Metro Officers will be laid off?"

The host of the show Joe Schoenmann of KNPR was pleased to have his guest Kevin McMahill who is the Undersheriff of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department. Kevin McMahill agrees that we are currently in an Economic Perfect Storm, and that the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department needs to be part of the solution and not the problem. The Department has already laid-off more than 100 part-time workers that are essential to the daily operations at Metro. These workers were hired on a temporary basis and only worked 19 hours per week, however their contributions and effectiveness were great. They worked on projects like loading DNA samples into the database and working homicide, and cold cases. The Mounted Patrol Unit was also Laid off which was not a popular decision. The department has suffered some major losses recently. 22 officers have tested positive for the COVID-19 Virus, 1 had a Heart attack, 1 committed suicide, and 1 overdosed on an illegal substance.

The specific issues or controversies discussed were that Tax Revenue is down, officers are being laid off, and the public wants to make sure that we still have a police force to protect us if we need

them. The main fact of the matter is that the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department needs to determine what is a luxury and what is a necessity. With over 86 percent of the department's budget being for the salary and benefits of the officers, there is almost no fat to trim off the budget. However, they managed to save 2.5 Million off the current budget, and 17 Million off the future budget.

Regarding sustainability, it is too early to know exactly what kind of budget problems will arise in the future. One third of the Budget is from property taxes, both residential and commercial. Losing the commercial side is very hurtful to budget of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department. Currently the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department has a 2.0 officer per 1,000 permanent resident ratios. This has been the goal of the department since the recession back in 2008. This ratio has provided them with the most successful crime fighting setup in years. Unfortunately, the department is going to be forced to go back down to the ratio that was during the recession 1.6 or 1.7 officers per 1,000 residents.

The main course concepts that I believe were discussed, were taxation without representation and freedoms. We as the general public take for granted a lot of things. I believe this is a byproduct of our freedoms. Our freedom of speech, religion, press, just to name a few. With a smaller police force, if a situation arises that a citizen's rights are being violated, the response time to help them may be too slow and something bad may happen to that citizen. Also, No taxation without representation. Citizens are still being taxed and therefore should be provided the same services. Even through a crisis, there should have been a plan in place to take into consideration a collapse in the economy, economic crisis, or world pandemic. It's not like this is the first time any of these scenarios has come to light.

Joe Schoenmann and Kevin McMahill both stated that the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department just needs to focus on finding the right combination of benefits and wages to provide to officers during these trying times in order to appease the public and be able to effectively safeguard them while performing their duties. Kevin stated that the most difficult thing is that the officers are

protected by Union Rights and that everything must go through the Union to be deliberated on and decided upon. They are talking about canceling pay increases for now and other possibilities soon.

There were no opposing opinions during the show. The Host Joe Schoenmann and Guest Kevin McMahon both stated that the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department just needs to focus on finding the right combination of benefits and wages to provide to officers during these trying times in order to appease the public and be able to effectively safeguard them while performing their duties.