



## **CITY OF MENIFEE**

---

SUBJECT: Feasibility of Establishing a Volunteer Traffic Enforcement Unit

MEETING DATE: July 19, 2023

TO: Mayor and City Council

PREPARED BY: Heriberto Gutierrez, Captain

REVIEWED BY: Chris Karrer, Interim Police Chief

APPROVED BY: Armando G. Villa, City Manager

---

### **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

1. Receive and file.

### **DISCUSSION**

At the November 16, 2022, City Council meeting, a question was raised regarding the feasibility of establishing a volunteer traffic enforcement unit in the City of Meniffee.

To enforce traffic laws and issue traffic citations as appropriate, a peace officer must conduct a traffic stop of the violator. To do so, a peace officer must operate a police vehicle that at minimum is equipped with a forward facing solid red lamp and a siren. The vehicle should be clearly identifiable as a police vehicle. This requirement is outlined in California Vehicle Code 21806, which states that drivers in California must yield to clearly marked emergency vehicles when they are using sirens, and at least one visible red light. These requirements prohibit police agencies from using volunteers as traffic enforcement officers.

The Meniffee Police Department currently employs a group of police volunteers that are a great asset to the Department and the community they serve. The volunteer group performs a variety of duties, not requiring police powers. These include such duties as the direction and control of vehicular traffic at collision scenes and the patrolling of business districts, residential neighborhoods, and school zones, for increased law enforcement visibility. Police volunteers are instrumental in a variety of clerical duties, the success of community related events, and assisting with management of department fleet and equipment needs.

When assigned to field duties, volunteers are encouraged to observe and report criminal activity to police dispatch for an appropriate peace officer response. Police volunteers conduct field

duties in police volunteer vehicles. These vehicles are white in color and are clearly marked with "Police Volunteer" insignia. The vehicles are equipped with amber flashing lights that help alert motorists to the vehicle's presence. This type of patrolling by the department's volunteers is an effective way to increase police presence and deter crime in designated areas. It is also an effective way to observe and report crime and traffic violations. Our police volunteers can report crime because they are equipped with two-way radios that allow for contact with police dispatch and police officers. To date, we have found that the deployment of police volunteers in designated areas is an effective and safe way that police volunteers can help with deterring crime and traffic violations.

Traffic enforcement in the State of California requires that peace officers complete specific training authorized by the State's Peace Officers Standards and Training authority, before they have any police powers. This requirement includes the completion of a standard one-part instructional course with a minimum requirement of 664 hours of training. Without the completion of this training, one cannot lawfully detain motorists and issue citations.

The required peace officer training standards outlined in California Penal Code 832, state that peace officers must successfully finish an "introductory training course." This Code also states that people who do not successfully complete this course do not have the powers of a peace officer.

Peace officer's powers of arrest are outlined in California Penal Code 836(a). The Penal Code states that a peace officer may arrest a person in obedience to a warrant, or, pursuant to the authority granted to him or her by Chapter 4.5 (commencing with Section 830) of Title 3 of Part 2, without a warrant, may arrest a person whenever the officer has probable cause to believe that the person to be arrested has committed a public offense in the officer's presence.

The issue of safety and training for the volunteers are also of great concern. The dangers that a peace officer can face during contacts with motorists at a traffic stop can be fatal. If not properly equipped and trained to use force in the defense of their lives or that of others, volunteer traffic units can expose themselves to great risks and the City to liability.

The Menifee Police Department will continue to deploy our volunteer team in designated areas and in ways that can help deter crime and traffic violations.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVE**

Safe and Vibrant Community

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact associated with the recommended action.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

None.