

TRANSCRIPTION:
Compilation of Excerpts from various city venues RE
Form & Focus for the March 15, 2007 Sultan Town Meeting
Re Public Safety Issues

*(Note: Audio of all council venues can be found here:
http://www.ittakesgrit.org/AUDIO_main-page.htm*

THE TRANSCRIPTIONS INCLUDED THIS DOCUMENT ARE:

- I. Comments from the March 22, 2007 Sultan Council meeting
- II. Closing comments from Jan. 30, 2007 Sultan Town Meeting
- III. Council Discussion Feb. 10, 2007 Retreat

I. March 22, 2007 - Sultan Council Meeting:

- 1. Discussion Item: Debriefing/Deconstruction of 3/15 Town Meeting
- 2. Council Members' Closing Comments (end of council meeting)

1. Discussion Item: Debriefing of the Town Meeting (requested by Jim Flower)

Tolson: All right. That moves us to discussion of the March 15th Public Safety meeting. Mr. Flower, you brought this forward?

Flower: Yeah. I just think that we go -- those who are still here, which I really appreciate [you] sticking around -- we then just, uh, debrief and go over the, uh, council members' impressions of the public safety meeting. From my own observations, it was very well attended. It was, for the most part, fairly well run. I think it showed a large improvement over the last one. I came away with a consensus from the community, personally. And I've also heard from many constituents, others than what I heard tonight that -- asking that we simply drop this...right now. And there could be -- it could be a way of regaining some public trust at this point. I think that we're slipping dangerously on our public trust right now. We've been accused of not listening to the public. I think it's time we listened. So that's my observation. There's six more of us here, plus the mayor.

Seehuus: I agree.

Slawson: Well, you know, I've sat through meetings before, and I sat through a meeting for the levy and I thought the levy was a gang-bang we-gotta-win, too, and it didn't happen. So the consensus I got is...you know, everybody in the crowd was all for, you know, the police department staying, but if it goes to a vote of the citizens, what do they think? Um, I've talked to officers. I've talked to citizens. I've heard it both ways. So I didn't -- haven't made a decision on what I would do.

Tolson: Councilman Wiediger?

Wiediger: Yeah. *[briefly clears his throat]* Excuse me. Um, I don't -- well, I think there was probably 200 people --

Tolson: Probably a hundred and a half.

Wiediger: A hundred and a half, that's 150. What's our population? Five thousand? Or under five thousand?

Tolson: Voters are about 2,200.

Wiediger: Twenty-two hundred. So those that were there does not make the majority *[sounds like he says, "and or"]*. So I--I would just *[sounds like he says, "remove"]* it to a vote of the people. That's me. Whatever the people want, that would just *[unintelligible]* take it away from the council. Let the people vote on it.

Tolson: Councilman Champeaux?

Champeaux: *[unintelligible]* I think.... I was -- after attending the last meeting, fortunate enough to have missed the two prior, *[unintelligible]* my son's basketball game, um... I think these town meetings generally....*[are]* extremely a big gripe session. You have black and you have white. And the others know that no matter what information you give the people, they don't come any closer together. They're still here and they're still here *[hand movement: right and left hands separated, with a large air space in between]*. And from my -- what I--from what I see of that meeting, hopefully, you know, it--I would give it more *[sounds like, "chances"]*, but I don't want it to just be a total -- a gripe session. The best thing in town that night was to be at the middle school. And there were people that were rude, were inconsiderate, and... Personally I know that I didn't need to be there, and, you know, sit through that, and I just *[unintelligible]* didn't want to *[unintelligible]*. And it's not that you all needed *[unintelligible]*, it's just that people will, they followed up and they.... Hey, look, all the people that were there a week ago -- and we had maybe a handful of people that were there -- are with us tonight. How much do they really want to be involved? They're not back a week later. The people that want to be involved are here now, and, and were here tonight. They just came because they knew the fireworks may fly and they want to be part of it. Black and White, no grey. And we had to sit here, right in the middle of the grey, and not see black and white. I... I don't know.

Tolson: In--in response -- I'll toss my two cents in. I'll jump in before you guys put -- to go, I'll take my executive privilege. A promise had been made to the community to bring back an apples-to-apples/oranges-to-oranges comparison. I think we owe that to the entire community. I talked with three officers today, let them know that's what -- and they're fine with that, because they want--they want to see it put to rest, because they're very confident about what the outcome will be with that apples-to-apples/oranges-to-oranges comparison. I personally think that this issue, once it is handled for once and for all, not Okay it happened two years ago, it happened four years ago, it happened five years ago without resolution, it has to be brought for a complete and final resolution. That's my two cents.

Slawson: I agree. I really, it just -- it pops up every calendar -- I mean, we really need to see apples-to-apples so we know what it takes to really run a valuable *[sounds like he said a combination of "viable" and "valuable" so not sure what he really said]* police department. I mean, that's what we need to know. What does it really take to do this, so we can make it happen.

Tolson: Derek? I'll let you jump in now.

Boyd: It was kind of a rough meeting for me. And Steve. But I was glad to be there. Um...I don't know what table you're sitting on, Jim, but I—I have a lot of people that wanted to make an issue. And I have a lot of people that were interested in what the county had proposed. Agreed, there was a vocal crowd there that was in support of our police department, and more power to them. I'm glad they were there to express their—their spirit and their, um...and their passion that they have. That being said, the same thing I've told you time and time again, we have to do our job and look at this from a financial point of view: What can we best afford? What do we do? What do we use? I've said that many times. I don't know why that is such an issue with— with some people.

Seehuus: Having said that, Derek, are you proposing to do that with every other city department?

Boyd: I have no problem with that. Whatsoever.

Seehuus: Well, it makes sense. If you –

Boyd: Would you?

Seehuus: -- a common *[unintelligible]* fix for them.

Boyd: No, I –

Seehuus: I'm not prepared to do that right now. I don't think it's appropriate.

Boyd: Okay, well, you just said – I don't understand what you just said.

Seehuus: You were saying, you know, we should be -- in order to analyze the financial performance and consider the cost of contracting, why just the police department? Why not the rest of the city?

Boyd: Well, for one thing they run from the general fund --

Seehuus: *[interrupting; missed one or two words]* – contract it out?

Boyd: They run from the general fund. You—you understand that, right?

Seehuus: Yes, I do.

Boyd: So I lost my train of thought. Uh... I've also talked to people, and I had people come up to me after that meeting and say, "Mr. Boyd, we hope you hear what we're – we hope you hear us, you hear where we're coming from." And I said, "Yes. I do hear some people, and I—I hear what you're saying, but you have to look at it from my point of view." And I explained the same thing I said up here. And they were real receptive to that. And [they] said, "Well, we appreciate you doing that, Mr. Boyd." And that's all I'm doing, is my job. Uh... I've had a lot of people in the street saying they don't feel comfortable coming up and saying things about the police department. It's an issue with them. They are nervous about it, repercussions is a word that's tossed out there. Do I believe in it? No, or else I would be keeping my mouth shut. A lot of people want to see the numbers. A lot of people are dissatisfied with service. And a lot of people want to see the numbers. That's all I want *[sounds like, "to buy"]*. If it pans out, I'm for it. I have seen a little bit of

numbers and I—I believe that – I believe that the best service is probably with the county, but that's my own opinion.

Tolson: Councilwoman Blair?

Blair: Well, as you all know, I was absent for the meeting, due to a death in the family, and being the person dealing with all the arrangements for that. That was where my time was spent. So I don't—I don't have anything to say about the meeting. I'm glad to hear your feedback, your input. I do know my experience not – my experience is more limited than Councilman Champeaux's, uh, that he's been through far more community meetings than I have, and I respect what he has to say about that. I've seen the same thing happen in my experience: It's black, it's white, it turns into a gripe session and there's no middle ground. Uh...I've heard citizens, even ones in support of the Chief, saying, "It is broken." I mean, publishing, um, articles saying, "It's broken," but then pointing out council saying, "You're the ones who are to blame." So what I'd like to see if – I—I feel we owe the citizen – I—I respect our police department, I respect all of our offers—officers, but in order to do the best job as a council for the citizens and to all the people who pay their taxes to the city, we owe a look at what options are available. And, yes, I'd be willing to look at garbage service contracts or, you know –

Seehuus: I—I'm just trying to get the *[unintelligible]* send out one department –

Blair: But didn't people and supporters saying, "Hey, it's broken." But they're not pointing at the department, they're pointing at us, saying we broke it. Well, you know, we didn't—we didn't. If there's things that need to be changed, if there's budget amendments that need to be made, every department head comes to us to do that, and that's—that's what makes it happen. Um...So I'm certainly – I—I—I...have not made a decision either way. I'd like to see it up to the taxpayers once we get all of the information. You know, let's put it to them and let them make a vote. Because we—we represent one portion of our communities, but we certainly don't represent every opinion out there.

Slawson: There's one other thing I'd like to say. It was a budget meeting. And I really would like to see the City of Sultan's budget broken down in a pie chart, just like we did with our tax dollar pie chart that came out from the county. I think that would really help the citizens realize where the City's money goes. 'Cause there's always this question, "Well, you get all this money, and you spend it. Where does it go to?"

Tolson: I—I can—I can speak to that, Steve. Unfortunately I put together ten slides for PowerPoint on my home computer with my Office XP 2003. I brought it on a Zip drive and tried to use her (?) Dell computer. The first three slides worked, the last seven did not, which was to break down a little further how the—the thing went. The financial aspect of it lasted maybe the first ten minutes of the minute, and we got no subsequent questions.

Slawson: But you didn't provide them with all of the information they needed either, maybe? I'm—I'm not beating you up. I'm just saying, your slide pro---if it was maybe in a – I—I really wanted to see more ex—explanation to the citizens on how

their money goes. 'Cause that's – when I ran for election, that was one of the biggest – "Where's my tax dollar really go? How can the City spend it?" I heard that everywhere. And I knocked on door after door after door, you know. "Smaller government. Quit spending my money unwisely." And we had this meeting where we got to tell the citizens how we spend their money, and we didn't.

Tolson: Did you get a copy of the --

Slawson: I did.

Tolson – the stuff?

Slawson: And we did break us – the county pie chart's pretty nice. It tells you where the money goes, but we didn't have one for us. For our budget, where's the money go? I think that would've helped them. It wouldn't helped me. It would—I think it would help the citizens so they can understand it, you know, so the next time someone's going to be knocking on doors for election, if they can answer the question, "Well, here's the pie chart the City gives out."

Tolson: I think we can actually put that on the City's website. I mean, it—it did delineate the cushions and *[unintelligible]* police department. We didn't do any of the rest of the—the—the budget that way.

Flower: I would—I would like to point out...I'd like to point out, though, that before the meeting, to me it was about dollars and cents. And what I took away [as] my observations after the meeting is that there was a whole separate issue is the overwhelming support that the community has shown for these particular cops. I have one letter that was forwarded *[unintelligible]* to the mayor before the community meeting, is that we have a foundation to build on, and the people want to keep that. So to some, to a portion of our constituents, whether they're—it's a majority or not—that was the overriding issue, no matter what it costs. And if the dollars are even close – that that's no longer an issue – it's about these guys.

Boyd: So –

Flower: So that was not -- I didn't have that impression before the meeting, but I sure had it afterwards and that's why I choose that stance.

Tolson: We do need a motion to suspend time. Time stands still.

Blair: So moved.

Tolson: Second?

Slawson: Second.

Tolson: All in favor, please say Aye. Opposed?

Champeaux: I'm going to abstain.

Tolson: Why?

Champeaux: Because I'd rather be at home.

Tolson: Okay. All right.

Boyd: I just wanted to say to Jim I appreciate that, and... But my only problem with it was that we had four new police officers up there that they've only seen once. I mean, how—how—how familiar is – just in my mind, I was like....this town knows every – I've only seen them once, and that—that was the night they'd been taking—taking their oath. It wasn't like the old days when I knew every cop in town. We had four or five people leave, for whatever reasons they left, and, you know, I had one police officer saying they're worried about *[unintelligible]* after two years, which I can understand. But I don't have a contract with any one of those guys that say they're going to stick with the two years. And, you know, so I'm like offer the same thing *[unintelligible; someone coughs]* apples-to-apples, oranges-to-oranges.

Tolson: All right. Well, I—I think we can re-roast these apples and apples and oranges and oranges many times over. I think everybody has an understanding of where we're at. I have instructed staff—I have instructed staff to continue with the evaluation, um, for that. So that is proceeding, is that correct, Deborah?

Knight: The--the analysis on the apples-to-apples comparison?

Tolson: Yes.

Knight: The analysis has begun. And the next step is for the Chief and Ms. Pepperell to prepare an inventory of equipment that's over at the police department and in the police vehicles. And that is due by Friday, April 6th. And then we have a meeting with the county on April 9th to go over that inventory and to let the county ask me additional questions and gather any additional information. Because in order to make the April 26th council meeting, we need to have the analysis completed by the following Monday, which would be the 16th of April. So we're on a pretty tight timeline to get this done.

Blair: You know, there's something I'd like to say about that, too. I've seen people's comments about being worried about it rushing through council and having a vote. This council is so concerned about having a public process that I'm quite sure that we would be going through the proper public process before anything came to a vote or it went to any sort of decision or *[unintelligible; sounds like "capacity"]*.

Tolson: I would probably venture to say that because – and this is just one of those things that I—I miscommunicated at the meeting 'cause I—I was under the impression that we had a citizen referendum part of our—our code. We do not. The—the vote rests with council. And I would—I would thoroughly encourage the council, if it does come to that kind of a decision, that you turn that over to the public to make that decision. But that would require your vote to do so.

Chapeaux: *[unintelligible]*.

Tolson: Well, if there's an election in the fall, I believe that that could be—occurred—you know, further in regards to that. So *[unintelligible]*. But that—that comes down to that kind of a thing where it does go back to the people's decision.

Seehuus: And I've always liked to have adequate time to analyze the comparisons.

Tolson: Absolutely.

[simultaneous comments]

Seehuus: Not given [it] one day and—and *[unintelligible]* the next day.

Tolson: Yeah, I would agree.

2. Closing Councilmember Comments (3/22/07)

Bruce Champeaux: You know...*[pause]* we as councilmen have to take the high road. We can get the road well used *Jor*, "we use" for people...and if – why if why I stay and watch a basketball game spoke volumes to you, I'm glad that it did. But when you – until you're up there getting the abuse – and it wasn't, it wasn't that bad. It wasn't that bad. *[unintelligible]* work. But it's just that, "here we go again," you know? And it—but until you're there catching it knowing that...you know, it kind of related back to being – it used to be the forums for people who were campaigning to run for office. You had to, you know, go to these forums and speak with the interviewer, and people would come and you'd hope you'll gain a voter group, the people that come--that came to these meetings, or came to these forums, they were voting for this guy or this guy. No matter what you say, they weren't changing one vote. No matter what was coming out of this thing, you--you're not changing people. The people that come there already know which way they're going to vote. And that they have--that they're not only have to know that this is what's happening, but they're for the people that start at times (to) get abusive, and you have to sit there and take it. Yeah, it—it's tough at times to be able to sit there and put up with that. It really does (sic). You know...honestly, most people think politicians are crooks anyway. So that's just the way it is. *[smattering of laughter]*. And you know what? A lot of people think that all the cops do is sit down for a doughnut, so they have to eat doughnuts all day. And that's not fair. It's not – you know? People's perceptions. I'm not picking on you, Fred. I'm not picking on you.

Chief Walser: But how do you know it's not true? *[laughter]*.

Champeaux: See, I was going to give you the benefit of the doubt. But then I was going to say no, but it is true that all politicians are crooks. I mean, it's just people's perception.

Tolson: The best council money can buy. *[This refers to Ed Boucher's attempt at humor near the end of the 3/15 Town Meeting]*.

Champeaux: That's right. We are the best council money can buy. And we only *[unintelligible]* we've gotta *[unintelligible]* to get our handshakes and our envelopes right. That's all.

Seehuus: Wait, we're supposed to get envelopes? *[laughter]*

Slawson: You know, there's 19 different opinions in this room right now. Each one of us gets our opinion, and I don't know of any council members that have made up their mind yet. I haven't. I really would like to put this to rest and—and find out what it costs. That's what I want. So everybody has their opinion. In this town there's four thousand five hundred-something people. There's that many opinions there. So, uh, when it comes to it, if it does come to a vote, citizens will their decision and we'll live with it. Just as we did with the levy when it failed and we had to find out how fund our police department and keep them as safe as possible. Because when I was in that meeting, I thought it was going to pass, and it didn't. Shocked me. And also we had to jump through hoops to give the Chief as much as he does have, you know,

and, uh, so people think we don't support the Chief. That's not true. We do the best we can with what we have. That's all I have to say.

Ron Wiediger: I want to thank everyone for coming tonight and....I think that Steve, these councilmen said it all there. I want to – this isn't a very easy job. And you think it is, while you go register and try to get one of these seats and *[unintelligible]*. It's really not that much fun up here. Thank you.

John Seehuus: I'd like to thank everybody for coming tonight. Thank you for your comments, And that's all I have to say.

Champeaux: You're a perfect politician.

Seehuus: At least I didn't whine about it.

Jim Flower: And to those *[unintelligible]* you that are still here, it's lots of fun up here. We couldn't dream of doing anything else. And to sit up in front of a couple hundred people who are *[unintelligible]* insults, boy, that's just my idea of a good time. I don't know of any other way of getting public opinion other than having a ballot. The closest thing to that is you have a widely-advertised town meeting and invite everybody there, and then hash it out. Which really costs minimal. Having an election can get pricey. Waiting for it to fall into the cheaper range *[sounds like, "in the number"]* is – you're bucks ahead. But then by that time the issue's gone away, or has changed, or other factors come in. So I've heard it said tonight that well, none of us have made up our mind, well I know three of us that have. So, uh, that's where I stand.

Kristina Blair: Well, the meeting in March that I didn't go to was somewhat falsely advertised by someone who took it upon themselves to place a big sign that said, "Save our police" right outside of town. And, in fact, that's not what that meeting was intended to be. It was intended to be a budget meeting to inform people about the budget of the city and how it works. At least, that's what I was informed of. And I'm sorry to say that there were no handouts regarding the information that seems to be on everybody's mind, which is about the county. And the reason there wasn't handouts is because it's entirely premature. We don't have the information yet so we have nothing to hand out and *[sounds like "involve"]* people with. It's simply fact-finding process, that's all it is. So that's why there was no handouts with any of that information. It was never supposed to be about "this versus this." That wasn't the intent of the meeting. But there are certain people within our community who decided to make it that way. There are only a few very vocal people who are continuing to perpetuate this mistrust of council. Personally, I know a lot of business owners and people in the area that don't believe that way. I have heard from some that think that way, and generally do think that way of politicians. Even some of the people who've come and sat in on council meetings, they go, "Wow. That's not what I got out of it," and "I didn't get that the council's not supporting the Chief." I get that they're—they're – no matter what department, we look at all the best options and see what you can do. But thank—thank you everybody for sticking around. And regardless of whether I agree or disagree with what you're saying, I do appreciate that you're here and that you have *[unintelligible]* to be here. That speaks volumes to me. Thank you.

Derek Boyd: Just a couple things. I'm not sure where you think my dad is in support of the county, because he's not. He supports our police department the way it is now.

Traci Hoenstine: I guess it would be based on his comments at the last meeting *[unintelligible]*.

Derek Boyd: Well, he said it was the best council he could buy, and the best police department he's seen.

Traci Hoenstine: And what did he say in the meeting *[unintelligible]*?

Tolson: Okay, we can't get into a battle.

Derek Boyd: Anyways, I – so I know for a fact that he supports the police department. My dad and I don't agree on a lot of things. That's the nature of the beast. I think the best way to approach this is to give it to the people like we've done any other issue. And if they, you know, if it—if it ends up the numbers are *[sounds like, "available"]*, let the people decide. Then that's your job, like—like Kerry said. That's you guys' job. And more power to you, however it is.

Mayor Tolson: I want to thank everyone for coming tonight. I know this is a very contentious issue. We will endeavor to provide accurate information and....I do sense that the council will allow the voter initiative to take place and have it come to a vote that way. We will get the information to the public as soon as it is—it is—as it is possible. I can't even talk now. We do need to adjourn into an executive session for approximately 20 minutes, 15 minutes? And there is no action afterwards.

II. Jan. 30, 2007 Closing Comments by Mayor Tolson & Chief Walser Re the focus and need for another Town Meeting re Public Safety:

Tolson: It is 8:30. I can gather by your involvement that you would like to see this happen again in the next four to six weeks?

Male: I'd like you to set a date tonight.

Female: *[unintelligible]* school or the high school –

Tolson: Absolutely.

Female: -- so we could *[unintelligible]* venue so *[unintelligible]*.

Tolson: Yeah. Moving to the middle school the commons there, I think that's a very convenient place. And it also allows for a larger gathering. I don't have – we got a calendar back there. Tonight is the 30th. And what are the nights of the planning board? Are they the 1st and 3rd or are they the 2nd and 4th?

Female: The 1st and 3rd (Tuesdays).

[brief discussion re possible dates; not transcribed]

Tolson: We have a comp plan open house the 15th of March.

Walser: That's a Thursday.

Tolson: Oh, it's a Thursday. That is not a council. It's wide open. March 15. There we go.... I do want to thank every one of you for coming out this evening. This has been a positive beginning. Let's continue to work together on this. *[applause begins]* March the 15th, 6:30 PM. You wanna sit through this again, this will be on the City's website next week.

[end of transcription]

III. Feb. 10, 2007 Council Retreat Discussions/Direction Re Format & Focus of 3/15/07 Town Meeting re Public Safety

Flower: We do have another public meeting coming up on the 15th of March where we can get live input from the public. Since we're looking at public perception as probably the Number One issue right now, actually at this point it's a wait-and-see approach to follow up on the issue discussed on March 15th.

Blair: I have a question about that. Steve told me that in talking with the City that the March 15th [meeting] wasn't the follow-up on the police, that it actually was, uh.... [trailed off].

Tolson: It's a marriage, okay? Because there was so much misinformation out there on where the tax dollars come from, how much goes to the City, how much is dedicated to the police department, that clear, concise information -- make it available at that meeting it's also made it available (sic) on the City's website, so people do know, you know? 'Cause they see they see their tax [and] go, "I'm paying \$2,500 a year for this place? Yeah, the City must be rolling in dough." Well the City gets \$300 on that \$2,500. You know, and what we do with that, then it is our responsibility. That's the— that's the disconnect that's out there for a lot of people.

Slawson: Has staff been [unintelligible] to do that?

Tolson: Yes. That is coming together.

Blair: As much – [unintelligible comment] I mean, is that what you were -- ?

Slawson: Yeah. He didn't basically say it wasn't a follow-up for the police, it was more of a budget—budgetary item. Because we discussed maybe some people should [unintelligible] their minds and tell exactly what has happened since that last meeting.

Knight: Oh, as far as police were concerned?

Slawson: What's happening, you know, in – yeah.

Knight: I think my intention was to say, or to convey that it wasn't going to be a presentation as the Chief did at the first meeting about crime and crime statistics. That we were going to focus on the piece of the pie that says, "This is the reason we have the police levels of service that we have," and why the police or someone who's saying things that they can accomplish (sic).

Slawson: So the citizens are aware of that? That it's not another thing about police?

Tolson: Well, it is going to be – there—there-- public safety is going to be the—the—the main issue of the meeting. We have to continue, um, looking for the solutions and—and—and finding out, Okay, what is working? Talking about the block watches, getting more information back to that (sic), continuing to grow it (sic) rather than beat the same dead horse over and over again.

Seehuus: Because I think the public has a perception that they – there's going to be a lot more discussion about the police. [brief simultaneous comments by two or more people]. And I—I—I understand the budget component of that, and that's vital, that's critical. But prior to, you know, from my perspective, going down this road of community police, I'd like to hear some more public input. I'd like to hear what they have to say, you know? And I think this meeting is gonna – I think a lot of – maybe I have too high of expectations – I think a lot of things are going to shake out at this meeting and we're going to get a clear sense of direction. With regard to community policing, it's great to have goals and you want to focus on this, but police work is very fluid by its nature, you

know? And then the downside of this – and I realize this is the extreme face, but this is Sultan, and things do tend to happen like that -- You set your goals that you're going to be doing this, you're going to do downtown enforcement, you're going to have somebody on the phone showing up at a council meeting saying, "I saw somebody barreling down Highway 2 at 95 miles an hour. Where's a cop when you need one?" Well, they're downtown doing downtown enforcement. So it's kind of a double-edged sword, you know?

Tolson: And that's—that's the—the burden that we do have to bear as a city. I mean, that's the reality that we face. We don't have 50 police officers.

Seehuus: I understand that.

Tolson: And that with—with all that there, we have to take a look, you know, and even take a back route. Let's take a couple of steps back. One of the things I was thinking about this last week is saying, "Okay, we see this fight and the juvenile crime issues over the last year. And, okay, what's happened to the police department?" It's disintegrated. Officer Shelton and Dixie [*the city's drug dog*] are gone. To me that's a pretty significant differential for our current police department. We don't have all the officers back. We don't the dog.

Seehuus: That's the point I was making in my earlier statement, is the fact of what happened in 2006.

Tolson: Exactly. And—and—but look and see what is different between now and 2000—If we get these officers back, are they the same kind of officers? Is it the same kind of patrolling methodology? Is it the same kind of enforcement? Because, you know, a dog—a drug dog does make a difference. Having a dog period makes a difference. That's something to a teenage boy, it's a funny thing. You know? There's a deterrent that's there. But let's look at all these factors and see, you know, maybe try and get some information about what kind of influence that can have....

Knight: Since we had some—some seeming disconnect between what people were thinking the community meeting was going to be about on March 15th, do we want to come back and just briefly touch on that so we've got good direction for staff about what we need to be pulling together for that meeting? [*extended pause; no one responds*] There's a public perception that we're going to come back and talk about—about police services, and I liked Bruce's idea about – or maybe it was John who mentioned it – getting public input on community policing, and if that's—if that's where we want to focus the attention of this meeting. But I guess I'd be looking for some direction from the other council members as to that that's what they're expecting or the public is expecting us to do.

Flower: I might point out that the mayor made a statement at that last meeting, "Well, I guess we need to continue this because we have a lot more interest in public safety."

Seehuus: And that was heard.

Champeaux: Yes.

Tolson: And I can understand that. But staying in that same vein, you still have to come back with the information, you still have to come back and bring some answers.

Seehuus: I wasn't advocating not presenting the budget. I think that's critical....

Knight: Okay, so the budget –

Seehuus: ...to show people, you know, where the money goes because people did pop off, "Oh, I paid \$2,500. You should be able to fund the..." you know.

Tolson: Yeah.

Seehuus: You need to tell them where it goes, but – And maybe—maybe a little bit shorter presentation this time, a little bit more public input and interaction with the Chief and the council.

Walser: I'd really welcome that. I would – I would really, really, *really* like to get back and let the public ask me questions and respond back. I don't think we got enough of that at the last meeting.

Blair: I guess –

Walser: And I don't mind the negatives or the positives either. I want to know what they think so we can deal with perceptions.

Knight: Well, I think the most helpful thing was after that meeting, the following day, we took action. And I think the public has seen that action being taken, and I think that's probably one of the most important steps that –

Walser: Yeah. If I know it's important, we'll going to go out and take care of it. It's that simple.

Flower: I'd also like to commend the Chief. He was not caught flat-footed that evening. He was hitting some fast balls out of the park. There was some very difficult questions that demanded immediate answers. And it was a pleasure to see, because this sort of thing could have turned ugly quickly. And some of the stuff I was quite amazed with: "What about so-and-so drug house?" "What are you doing about this?" "How come this, that or the other?" Bam-bam-bam. The answers were [*sounds like "rough"*]. And that went off well.

Blair: I think it's important to go over the budgeting, and briefly, the other departments. I think the public was left – I know I was left with the idea that the next meeting was primarily going to be public safety. So I'd like to see—see us do the budgeting so people know where that's coming from --you know, briefly go over our other departments that are funded out of the general fund, but primarily focus on the public safety portion. But also I'd like to see a tighter format for public input and then response. And part of what we saw written in the paper and written as comments from the public, was the council was there, and, mayor, you said the council would have a chance to respond in the meeting and—and that primarily they [*the council*] were there for observation. And—and we as a council thought it was written that, uh...we--we had no input. It was in a fairly derogatory manner.

Seehuus: Basically [that] we didn't have anything to say.

Blair: Yeah! Yeah. And people wanted to hear from us, too.

Seehuus: We came with the expectations of listening.

Slawson: And support.

Blair: We did, but... Anyway, getting back to pointing out what our role is, you did in the beginning although we talked about council commenting on what was happening. We didn't get to that. The public had a lot to say and that was the important part. What I'd like to see there, we tighten up that format where they get a certain amount of time and then a certain person responds, and they give a – not some guy in the back shouting this thing and that thing. Because it's very destructive. It's like being at a council meeting when you get dialogue going back and forth you're varying from what the meeting's supposed to be and how the procedure is supposed to happen. Sometimes it's proper to do that, certainly. But other times it just throws the whole meeting off, and

it distracts and just – it distracts and distracts those that—the other purposes of the meeting. So if they could – I think the meeting should have a time limit. And use the timer. And you hear a warning and you hear a ding, like when you go to Toastmasters, you know? You get a little warning sound, "You've got 30 seconds left!" you know? And then ding your time is up. And that would give more opportunity, I think, for more people to comment –

Seehuus: Ding!

Blair: -- to see --

[group laughter interrupting]

Cynthia Stewart [group facilitator]: Okay, so basically – what we've seen before us is not to take any – not to *[unintelligible]* any additional direction, but rather to focus on increasing communication for this meeting on the 15th. And give some type of format with some different kind of information around kind of thing, and hopefully the exchange will begin to change public perception about what the police are actually doing. Is that where you all think you are right now? *[no verbal response heard]* Is there anybody who sees it differently? *[no verbal response]*. Okay, let's move on, then.... *[end]*

