

**MINUTES OF THE WORK-STUDY MEETING OF THE
COMMON COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF STAR VALLEY**

**Tuesday, April 18, 2023
3675 East Highway 260, Star Valley, AZ
(Star Valley Town Hall)**

- **CALL TO ORDER**
- **ROLL CALL**

Present: Vice Mayor McKinney, Council Member Armington, Council Member Binney, Council Member Dueker, Council Member Highstreet, Council Member McDaniel, Mayor Davis. Town Manager Grier, Finance Administrator Woody, and Town Clerk Chapin were also present.

- **PURPOSE OF MEETING:**

Sixth Work-Study Meeting. Presentation by Payson Police Chief Ron Tischer regarding law enforcement. The Mayor may open the item for public discussion, following a presentation from Police Chief Tischer and a questions and answer session with the council.

Law enforcement, stated Town Manager Grier, is the most important service the town provides to the community. As everyone is aware, Star Valley law enforcement is provided by the Payson Police Department. Mr. Grier then introduced Payson Police Chief Tischer to the council. Chief Tischer provided a handout with some of the statistics they collect. He referred to the last page of the handout titled *Police Incidents for Star Valley Venue*. Calls have gone up, explained Chief Tischer, by a couple hundred from 2021 to 2022. Some of that is COVID related with more people coming through town as things started to open up a little more. The handout, added Chief Tischer, breaks down the services they provide to the Town of Star Valley. There were not 700 traffic stops in Star Valley this past year, pointed out Chief Tischer. What has been happening is his guys are up by University and the 260, explained Chief Tischer, and by the time they get the vehicle stopped it is in Star Valley. There are a lot of reckless drivers coming into town that they get calls on. As you look through some of the locations on page two, pointed out Chief Tischer, the one that jumped out at him was Diamond Point Shadows. There were not fifteen calls at Diamond Point Shadows last year. Sometimes, explained Chief Tischer, they get a reckless driver and his guys get them stopped at Diamond Point Shadows. Anytime we look at stats good information in is good information out. Chief Tischer stated he does not want to say they are 100% accurate all the time but they are pretty close and they do a pretty good job.

Chief Tischer referred the council to the first page titled *Arrests made in Star Valley*. This would be taking somebody into custody, explained Chief Tischer, or bringing them to jail for the night. The offenses are pretty consistent from year to year; 89 in 2021 and 82 in 2022. As you can see at the bottom of the page, pointed out Chief Tischer, the vast majority of those are from citizen complaints. Chief Tischer referred to the third page and the one number that he thinks is misrepresented which are the 911 calls. There were more than fifteen 911 calls that

came from Star Valley for 2022, pointed out Chief Tischer. What has been happening, explained Chief Tischer, is by the time a call from Star Valley comes into their dispatch center it might say they are on 87 and 260 when actually the event happened in Star Valley. In order to figure that out they would have to back track through all of their 911 calls. A big issue they do have in both Payson and Star Valley, reported Chief Tischer, is they are having a hard time getting people to call 911. The residents and the people that are from the area call the non-emergency line. This creates an issue of lowering the funding for the dispatch center. Call 911, stated Chief Tischer, it's okay. The more 911 calls they get the better it is for stat collection; monitoring response times; and it is easier and quicker to transfer a 911 call. One of the biggest problems in Gila County, reported Chief Tischer, is domestic violence. As you can see, pointed out Chief Tischer, there were 25 domestic violence calls in Star Valley. Some of them are pretty significant. Queried Mayor Davis – Is it generally the same people? Sometimes, answered Chief Tischer. There are a couple residents in Star Valley that cause them concern and it is more than a two officer response when they get called to that house.

Chief Tischer asked if there were any questions. Council Member McDaniel asked why the security checks went from 16 in 2021 to 69 in 2022. Security checks, answered Chief Tischer, are a part of the officers job to obtain information to provide better service. Queried Council Member Dueker – Is *accident no injury* and *accident with injury* someone slipping and falling in a bathroom or is that a vehicle? Those are all vehicles, answered Chief Tischer. Asked Council Member Dueker – Is that in the Town of Star Valley proper? Yes, answered Chief Tischer. Queried Council Member Dueker – Do you have records of those accidents? Chief Tischer responded he would have to look each one of them up and get the reports. A lot of them, explained Chief Tischer, could be as simple as someone backing into someone at the gas pumps at Circle K. We have had several drivers falling asleep coming into town and crossing the center line. There have been a couple of fatalities, reported Chief Tischer. The big calls like that are the responsibility of the Department of Public Safety (“DPS”). Asked Council Member Dueker – You have DPS on record also? Yes, replied Chief Tischer. Queried Mayor Davis – Does DPS respond to those? Yes, answered Chief Tischer. There are no troopers on after 8:00 p.m. or 9:00 p.m., reported Chief Tischer. The dispatchers that work the night shift are very persuasive in getting DPS to call out troopers. The Payson Police Department, explained Chief Tischer, does not have the resources or the experience to investigate. DPS are the experts with that as they have the resources, the equipment and the knowledge. It is pretty much a joint effort on some of those major accidents. There have been a few out there that have been pretty bad, concluded Chief Tischer.

Council Member Highstreet asked what agency assist means. That could be anything from assisting Child Protective Services (“CPS”), Adult Protective Services (“APS”), the Tribal Officers, the Gila County Sheriff’s Office and the Department of Public Safety (“DPS”), responded Chief Tischer. The Payson Police Department has a responsibility to make sure those agencies are safe, explained Chief Tischer, especially with some of the major drug loads and human trafficking. There are some bad characters traveling through the towns and they don’t want to leave any other officers hanging out there by themselves. Queried Mayor Davis – There is no DPS on the night shift? Not normally, answered Chief Tischer. They are working with some DPS task forces to bring them up during some of the bigger weekends. They do come up when we ask them to. They are short staffed, explained Chief Tischer, and there is not the call volume to justify a trooper being out here. Asked Council Member Dueker – What were the times that DPS in not out on this side of town? It varies, replied Chief Tischer. He would say

later at night or very early morning hours. There were 54 reckless driver calls in 2022, reported Chief Tischer, of strictly people coming down the highway speeding, crossing the center line or weaving in and out of traffic. Council Member Armington thanked Chief Tischer for placing the dummy car by Plant Fair Nursery during the last holiday weekend. It really helps, stated Council Member Armington. Vice Mayor McKinney asked what guardian angel means. Chief Tischer explained it is a program and service they provide. It is basically an emergency pendant worn around the neck. If someone falls, has an accident at home, or needs police assistance they can hit the button on the pendant and the call goes right to the dispatch center.

Council Member Binney stated he has constituents who complain about barking dogs. He was trying to figure it out and he requested six reports. After a month, reported Council Member Binney, he received an email stating the reports are \$15 each. If there are any reports that are needed for the town, responded Chief Tischer, he will get them. It's the same people, stated Council Member Binney and he doesn't know what can be done about it. Right now, explained Chief Tischer, police officers handle all barking dogs, dog bites and all those type of calls. They will be hiring a new community service officer soon who will be taking care of all the barking dog complaints. Police Chief Tischer stated his thoughts – we will talk to you the first time; we might talk to you the second time; but if it is still a problem with you and the neighbors then it is time to take some kind of enforcement action. Their goal, stated Chief Tischer, is to abate the problem. Queried Council Member Highstreet – In light of the impending Memorial Day weekend traffic do you have a plan to help mitigate some of the traffic flow and people blocking various intersections? The last couple of years, reported Chief Tischer, they have been putting officers in parking lots. The officers will flag the drivers to pull over and the drivers will get their ticket. An ordinance with some more teeth is needed, recommended Chief Tischer, because right now it is a \$25.00 parking ticket. Blocking intersections is a huge problem, stated Chief Tischer.

Queried Town Manager Grier – How does the disruptive property work? Is it effective? What do you think about it so far? It's a disruptive property ordinance, answered Chief Tischer. There is a list of houses with barking dogs, noise complaints, disorderly conduct and drug activity. A property can be deemed disruptive, explained Chief Tischer, if they go out to a house twice in sixty days. They initially meet with the people and give them a chance to abate the problem. If the problem isn't abated and they get called out again the first fine is \$500.00; if they get called out again within one hundred and twenty days the second fine is \$1,000.00; and if they get called out again within one hundred and eighty days then the fine is \$1,500.00. That does not include the bill that they will get, added Chief Tischer, for all the police services time. This ordinance works fantastically, explained Chief Tischer, because it holds the owner of the house accountable as opposed to the person renting the house. It is kind of intertwined with the Short-Term Rental ordinance. The problem is they will go to a noise complaint at one residence and give them a \$150.00 ticket for loud noise. Then they go back the next weekend and somebody completely different is renting the house. The only way to fix those problems for the neighbors, explained Chief Tischer, is to take it up with the homeowner. The fines increase substantially and it would be a substantial hit to their property rental income. The homeowner, added Chief Tischer, usually fixes the problem pretty quickly. Town Manager Grier asked if that would be an ordinance that would be a helpful tool for Star Valley. "Yes it would be," responded Chief Tischer. Mr. Grier asked for a copy of the ordinance and asked if there are other tools that may be helpful. The disruptive property ordinance is just another tool in the tool box, answered Chief Tischer, and it is probably the best one for Star Valley that he can think of.

Queried Mayor Davis – What about feeding wild animals? Chief Tischer explained that he thinks Gila County adopted an ordinance not to feed wild animals. It is Gila County who has to enforce it, added Chief Tischer. Council Member Binney brought up an issue about an incident reported to the police about a water department lock being cut off. Chief Tischer stated he does not know the whole story but he heard that the bill was paid. The way he looks at it, it is still criminal damage to the town’s property. Asked Council Member Binney – Why didn’t they get some sort of citation? He would have to look into that, answered Chief Tischer. Town Manager Grier explained the customer’s water was shut off and locked for non-payment. The customer paid the bill one or two days later. The town’s service technician was sent out to unlock the meter and turn on the water. The service technician found that the lock had been cut off and the customer had been using water. Mr. Grier stated he thinks it is theft of services and criminal damage from cutting off the lock. The problem in prosecution is that when the officer went out to the customer, the customer said they did not know anything about it. That makes it a difficult decision for the officer to charge or a prosecutor to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that person was responsible for criminal damage or theft of services. Mr. Grier stated he is not sure if the Town of Payson does it any differently or how they enforce that. It certainly doesn’t seem right, concluded Mr. Grier.

Queried Council Member Binney – Is a business that has lots of calls subject to disruptive property? It depends, answered Chief Tischer. They get a lot of calls about the music being too loud at the bar across the street. Most of the time the bar is asked to shut the doors, keep the music contained and turn it down. That usually takes care of the problem until the next weekend. To answer the question, added Chief Tischer, yes a business could be subject to the disruptive property ordinance. Queried Council Member Armington – When you do get a call to an establishment with a liquor license do you report that to the liquor board? Not always, answered Chief Tischer. It depends on what is going on. The bowling alley in Payson, reported Chief Tischer, just lost their license because of the amount of over serving they did. They were having more problems off the premise that stemmed back to the bowling alley. A disruptive fight or gun shots, explained Chief Tischer, might be something they discuss with liquor control. If someone is injured or gets shot liquor control will come out to do their own investigation. Half the time, reported Chief Tischer, it is disorderly conduct because of having too much to drink. Asked Council Member Highstreet – Do you have an obligation to report to liquor control? “No,” responded Chief Tischer. We will contact them if we get to the point where we think more enforcement action is needed. If the town tell us to take care of an issue at one of the bars we will talk to them and say this is what the town wants, this is what we are telling you is within the guidelines of the law and if you violate that here is what is going to happen – we are either going to start arresting people or we will call liquor control and they will take care of it. Usually just that threat of liquor control quashes a lot of problems. There were no further questions for Chief Tischer and the council thanked the chief for his time.

- **ADJOURNMENT TO THE REGULAR MEETING**

A motion to adjourn to the regular meeting was made by Council Member Armington and was seconded by Council Member Highstreet.

A roll call vote was taken:

Vice Mayor McKinney X, Council Member Armington X, Council Member Binney X, Council Member Dueker X, Council Member Highstreet X, Council Member McDaniel X, Mayor Davis X.

The motion was voted on and passed 7 – 0.

APPROVED:

_____ Date: _____
Bobby Davis, Mayor

ATTEST:

Edie Chapin, Town Clerk

CERTIFICATION:

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Work-Study Meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Star Valley held on this day, the 18th day of April 2023. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held, and that a quorum was present.

Dated this 27th day of April 2023.

Edie Chapin, Town Clerk