

# WASHINGTON AUTO THEFT PREVENTION AUTHORITY

WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF SHERIFFS AND POLICE CHIEFS  
3060 Willamette Drive NE, Suite 101 ~ Lacey, WA 98516 ~ Phone: (360) 292-7900 ~ Fax: (360) 292-7269 ~ Website: <http://watpa.waspc.org>  
“preventing and reducing motor vehicle thefts and other associated crime in the State of Washington.”



**WATPA MEMBERSHIP MEETING:** January 15, 2009

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mr. Don Pierce, Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs Executive Director; Chief Ken Hohenberg, Kennewick Police Department; Chief John Batiste, Washington State Patrol; Sheriff Harvey Gjesdal, Douglas County; Chief Steve Strachan, Kent Police Department; Mr. Mike West, Southtowne Auto Rebuild; Mr. Merle Pfieler, General Public

**MEMBERS REPRESENTED:** Mr. Shaya Calvo, King County Prosecuting Attorney, for Mr. Dan Satterberg, King County Prosecutor

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Mr. Emil Dammel, PEMCO Insurance and Sheriff John Lovick, Snohomish County

**STAFF PRESENT:** Mr. Jim LaMunyon, WATPA Executive Director; Mr. Grant Clark, WATPA Public Awareness Coordinator; Ms. Nancy Morris, Accounting Services Support; and Ms. Cynthia Jordan, Division Assistant II

---

## CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Pierce called the meeting to order.

## APPROVAL OF 11/6/2008 MINUTES:

Changes/Corrections:

Financial status of the WATPA account – the correct balance as of November 6, 2008 was \$5.3M with total cash receipts of \$6.6M.

Mr. West made a motion to approve the minutes with the various recommended changes/corrections. The motion was carried unanimously.

## FINANCIAL REPORT:

Mr. LaMunyon gave the financial report. As of 12/31/08 the WATPA account has received \$7,703,928.88 in cash receipts, the current cash balance at that time was \$6,178,788.23 of which \$4.5 is committed for grants and operating expenses for the Authority. We expect another \$2M

---

Washington Auto Theft Prevention  
Authority

JOHN BATISTE  
Chief – WA State Patrol

EMIL DAMMEL  
Insurance Industry

HARVEY GJESDAL  
Sheriff—Douglas County

KEN HOHENBERG  
Chief—Kennewick

JOHN LOVICK  
Sheriff – Snohomish County

MERLE PFIEFER  
General Public

DON PIERCE  
Executive Director - WASPC

DAN SATTERBERG  
Prosecuting Attorney – King County

STEVE STRACHAN  
Chief—Kent

MICHAEL WEST  
Automobile Industry

JIM LAMUNYON  
Executive Director - WATPA

– \$3M in the account by the end of the biennium. The WATPA monthly revenue stream has slowed down and the reasons for this may be due to the weather, people traveling fewer miles, or the poor economy. Generally the revenue runs a couple of months behind the actual time the traffic infraction was issued allowing violators time to contest or pay the fine. This lower revenue trend may continue if people do not pay their tickets due to the economy. We will watch this closely to see if that downward trend continues or if we begin to see an increase. Chief Batiste added that the troopers have seen a decline in motorist travel and tickets issued primarily due to the weather and high fuel prices. Total disbursements include the Authority, Dept. of Corrections (DOC), and the Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration. The Office of Financial Management (OFM) projected the revenue for this account at \$666K per month; however, we are running well below that estimate. Grant disbursements have been slow until this month due to the ramp up of the task forces and the procurement process for the equipment. A reminder was sent out to agencies that the grant money expires June 30, 2009. Unspent grant award dollars will remain in the account. We have received quarterly reports and there is good work being done by the various task forces that have received grant awards.

Mr. West made a motion to accept and approve the financial report as presented. The motion was carried unanimously.

#### **SUPPLANTING ISSUES:**

Chief Strachan introduced the subject regarding the challenges imposed on smaller agencies by not allowing supplanting. Individual agencies have to show they have back filled a position when they send someone to a task force. The non-supplanting language is in statute. It would require a change in the law to remove the supplanting language. The advice that has been given to smaller agencies is the money can be used to pay overtime for officers to back fill the task force position. There was general discussion regarding grant funded agency FTEs and the risk involved for smaller agencies. Large agencies have a bigger pool that gives them the ability to move personnel into grant positions to back fill for staff assigned to a task force. The Authority will be as flexible on this issue to the extent the law allows, recognizing that some agencies face this situation.

#### **WATPA AUDITS:**

WASPC hires an outside auditing firm each year and submits the results to the state auditor's office.

#### **OPERATIONS PLAN:**

A copy of the WATPA 2007-2009 Operations Plan was provided to the members. Progress and strategic intent completions are noted in red. Please review and let Mr. LaMunyon know if you have any questions or concerns.

**PUBLIC AWARENESS:**

The WATPA office is tracking public presentations given about the Authority. Mr. LaMunyon requested that if any Authority members give presentations about WATPA they let us know so we can track how many and to what groups. Mr. LaMunyon and Mr. Clark are available for public presentations and have scheduled a number of speaking engagements over the next few months for various civic groups.

**KING COUNTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEYS OFFICE PRESENTATIONS:**

Mr. Calvo suggested conducting regional roll call trainings statewide. The target audience of this training would be detectives, patrol officers, and prosecuting attorneys. The training would cover what information is needed to file successful cases. The consensus was WATPA would cover any related expenses from the Public Awareness budget to have Mr. Calvo's group conduct several of these trainings statewide.

**STATISTICS:**

Mr. LaMunyon discussed the 2008 stolen car statistics by county. WATPA uses the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) data in annual reports as opposed to the WACIC data which is approximately 8% – 10% less than UCR data. We use UCR primarily because it reflects what is included in the FBI's annual report, *Crime in the United States*.

**GRANTS:**

Mr. LaMunyon reported that currently there are two WATPA grant opening announcements on the WATPA website. There is a \$1M equipment and technology only grant with a closing date of 2/17/09 that has generated a lot of interest. The other is the 09-10 general grant application, which depending upon the legislation appropriation, may have between \$3.8M to \$6M.

Mr. Pierce initially anticipated we would not have the \$1M to do the equipment grant due to signals from OFM and the Governor's Office. There was a concern that WATPA accounts would be targeted due to the state's budget deficit. For now OFM and the Governor's Office made a decision to leave the WATPA account intact.

The funding decisions for the equipment grant awards will be made at the March 19, 2009 meeting. The regular grant application process will close on March 16, 2009 and funding decisions made at the May 21 meeting. The regular grant applications are for new task forces, enhancing current task forces, and new initiatives. There was language in the application stating that currently funded task forces will receive priority consideration.

Chief Batiste asked if WATPA has considered securing federal funding through the 1983 Auto Theft Act. Mr. LaMunyon indicated that he has been watching closely for those opportunities. Recent Federal funding was primarily for projects/task forces that will translate to the national level, as opposed to funding smaller areas/regions.

**ANNUAL REPORT & STUDY:**

The authority members were asked to review the annual report and if there are recommendations regarding the content or format please communicate to Mr. LaMunyon.

The study conducted by Washington State University was reviewed by members and a few points of interest were discussed. One recommendation given was that WATPA might consider offering VIN etching for the public as an auto theft prevention service. VIN etching is inexpensive; however, there is a one-time equipment investment of approximately \$1,800. The theory regarding VIN etching is that many car thieves would rather not steal a car that needs to have all the glass replaced. Stickers warning car thieves the vehicle has been VIN etched are available as part of the kit as well. WATPA would propose to provide the materials and work in conjunction with crime prevention groups at events supporting those efforts.

The study recommended improving the WATPA website. Mr. Clark has been working on the website and developing it so it is visually appealing and user friendly. Mr. Clark continues to work on it and welcomes authority member's suggestions and content contributions.

Another recommendation was that the Public Awareness Coordinator pursue community outreach campaigns. Mr. Clark has already reserved space at a couple of the larger car shows, including the Seattle Auto Show, and contacted various civic organizations to let them know he is available for auto theft prevention presentations.

We will soon acquire a 1999 Chevy Blazer that was donated to WATPA. The Blazer has been professionally detailed, outfitted with a Lo-Jack anti-theft device, and various other anti-theft devices, which were all donated. WATPA is paying to have vinyl graphics applied for promotional purposes. The anti-theft alarms and tools installed will allow us to demonstrate the types of anti-theft devices that are available.

The study encourages inter-agency cooperation. WATPA has emphasized multi-agency initiatives and has set a priority of inter-agency cooperation for grant awards.

Emphasized in the study was the need to hire more people in this state that are focused on auto theft investigations, apprehensions, and prosecutions. Due to the current economic situation agencies may not be in a position to add staff dedicated to auto theft. Although the numbers of cars stolen is decreasing, the value of those cars is increasing so the value of property loss remains high.

Many auto theft victims are those least able to absorb the financial loss. This can translate into more than just an inconvenience, but possibly the loss of employment and other basic needs that their source of transportation represented.

**2009 LEGISLATIVE SESSION UPDATE:**

WASPC was successful in 2007 in passing mandatory minimums for juveniles. The Authority believes that the law is too new to assess its level of success or impact and that it should remain in effect..

**With no further business Mr. Pierce adjourned the meeting at 12:30 PM.**

**The next regular scheduled WATPA meeting will be held on  
March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2009, 10 AM – 2 PM, WATPA Conference Room**