

## **Remarks of Chief Steve Anderson—Mayor’s Budget Hearing—March 30, 2015**

- Good morning Mr. Mayor. It is my privilege to appear before you this morning to present our budget request for this next fiscal year. Before we do that I would like to take a moment to talk about how the decisions you have made over the last 7 ½ years have shaped the public safety landscape in Nashville for many years to come.
- It was your initiative and support that allowed us to expand the number of police precincts from 6 to 8. Constructing and staffing the Madison Precinct and Midtown Hills Precinct have allowed our police officers across the city to work much more closely with families and businesses at the neighborhood level.
- Your decision to move the West Precinct and Central Precinct into new facilities, specifically designed for police operations, has allowed our officers to be more efficient and responsive to community concerns.
- Your decision to construct our city’s first-ever full-service DNA Crime Laboratory will be paying dividends for decades to come. As an example, we know that many burglars are rapid repeat offenders. We believe that having the ready availability of DNA analysis to our investigators will help us, not only to solve burglaries that have occurred, but also to prevent many burglaries that have not yet occurred.

- I am pleased to report that our crime lab underwent inspection in January for international accreditation. We have received a very positive report from the inspectors and expect to receive accredited status any day now. At that time our scientists will begin to perform analysis on active and current criminal cases.
- Earlier this month, Ann Talbot, a 30-year-veteran of crime laboratory forensics and management, was named Director of our lab. She is with us this morning and I know is very anxious, as is her staff, to begin work on active cases. The scientific analysis generated in our lab will greatly enhance the safety of Nashville's families for years to come.
- Ann has a great team in place. Their expertise and experience allowed us to undergo the accreditation process even before the lab is operational.
- Your decision to maintain a fully staffed police department throughout your administration has resulted in the graduation of more than 700 officers from 22 recruit classes. Not only have we kept pace with attrition, we have added more than 100 officers during your tenure. This staffing level has allowed our officers to attain an unprecedented level of citizen confidence and cooperation.
- That confidence and cooperation translates into the 622 neighborhood watch and business groups now supported by the men and women of the police department, the highest

number ever. These groups are made up of citizens who are actively partnering with us to improve quality of life and reduce crime. During 2014, our officers attended 2,110 community meetings across Davidson County.

- An important result of your commitment to keep public safety at the top of your priority list is the reduction in the number of victims of major crime by more than 10,000. There were nearly 43,000 major crime incidents reported in Nashville during calendar year 2007. There were approximately 31,000 major crime incidents reported in 2014.
- The crime of murder last year totaled 41, the lowest number in the 52-year history of the Metropolitan Government. While you and I agree that even one homicide is one too many, the city as a whole is making significant progress in preventing this violent, and often senseless, criminal act.
- Your attention and focus on domestic violence is also paying dividends. Last year, there were four domestic-related murders. Only one involved intimate partners. Those are the lowest figures since the Domestic Violence Division was created more than 20 years ago.
- Your decision to make Domestic Violence investigation and prevention a priority of our city is providing much needed services and intervention to some of Nashville's citizens that need our help the most. The added resources to the police department's Domestic

Violence Division has enabled detectives to be even more effective in holding the perpetrators of family violence more accountable.

- And, your decision to establish the Jean Crowe Advocacy Center for domestic violence victims seeking help from the courts is providing a much needed additional measure of assurance that we are serious about ending the cycle of abuse.
- On behalf of the men and women of the police department, thank you for your vision and support over the past seven years, and for helping us continue to move forward with public safety plans for a constantly growing and evolving Nashville.
- As you know, we are a community-based police department delivering police services at the precinct level. The leadership teams in our eight precincts are committed to public safety and quality of life issues. They are working very hard to build on the successes of the past seven years. Several of the persons responsible for these successes are with us this morning
- Now to the budget. The police department has always taken our commitment to financial responsibility very seriously. In carefully analyzing our needs for the upcoming fiscal year, we are asking for a budget increase of \$6.6 million.

- One of the largest line items, more than \$1.6 million, is to raise the officer staffing level by 22, to a total sworn strength of 1,453. Two of those positions are for School Resource Officers in Charter Schools. We need to ensure that Charter Schools have the same benefits as traditional public schools.
- As to the remaining 20 positions, it is our plan to request an increase of 20 officers per year for the next three years, with the expectation of opening the police department's 9<sup>th</sup> precinct in fiscal year 17/18.
- As you know, it takes about 60 officers to open a new precinct. We propose to bring on board those 60 officers, over a period of three years, so that all will be recruited, trained and in place when it comes time to open the 9<sup>th</sup> precinct.
- While the location for the 9<sup>th</sup> precinct has not been finalized, it will likely be situated in the southern half of the county. The adding of a new precinct south of the river would necessarily reduce the geographical size of the other precincts, allowing our services to be even closer to the neighborhoods.
- Mr. Mayor, as you know, the city now owns the old Carl Black/Capitol Chevrolet property on Murfreesboro Road. On your initiative, it was acquired for public safety purposes. It is our intention to first locate a Family Justice Center on the site, which will house, under One Roof, our Domestic Violence and Youth Services Divisions...as well

as the Nashville Children's Alliance and the Tennessee Department of Children's Services.

- A Family Justice Center will greatly enhance services to families confronted with violence by allowing detectives, counselors and social workers to be together in the same building and coordinate their strategies.
- While a Family Justice Center would be the first public safety component to open, the property on Murfreesboro Pike is expansive and could accommodate a full-service precinct in the years ahead.
- Just as the new West Precinct and Midtown Hills Precinct have given their communities a shot in the arm when it comes to economic development around these facilities, we expect the same to take place in the area of Murfreesboro Pike and Fesslers Lane as the Family Justice Center is built there.
- Another major line item in our budget request is \$1.5 million to fund our continuously expanding Special Events initiative. Nashville is now well-known for its special events, including the New Year's Eve Bash, 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration, Country Music Marathon, Live on the Green, CMA Music Fest, professional and college sporting events and major concerts.
- As more and more persons attend these events, additional police officers must be assigned to ensure the safety of all.

- For example, in the case of the New Year’s Eve Bash last year, the footprint of the event had to be expanded by several blocks as the crowd estimates in the days prior to this event rose tremendously. On the night of the event it was clear that the additional space was needed. If You Build It, They Will Come. Mr. Mayor, you have built a city where people want to come, and do come—by the thousands.
- Additionally, when it comes to Special Events, there is what we now know to be the “New Normal”. As we watch disruptive activities that take place across the country and around the world, some of which are terrorism related, we have increased staffing at special events, both overtly and covertly, to prevent any disruption here.
- The Special Events money we ask for is to staff these activities with primarily extra-duty officers on overtime so that our service to neighborhoods with regular-duty officers is not disrupted. The program is working... we, by necessity, however, will have to up our staffing numbers to cover additional events and the increased number of visitors attending those events.

In effect, we are a business. As Nashville continues to have an increased number of customers wanting to come here, for both business and pleasure, and spending their money here, we need to ensure that our staffing levels stay abreast of that customer demand.

- For the new DNA Crime Laboratory, we are requesting a budget increase of just over \$1 million. More than half of that is for the maintenance of very sensitive machinery, and

the purchase of essential chemicals and lab supplies. Another portion of the request is to upgrade 10 forensic technician positions so that we remain consistent and competitive with other area crime laboratory operations, such as the TBI's.

- We are requesting an additional \$291,000 to hire more part-time school crossing guards so that we can cover both the new public and charter schools during the 2015-16 school year.

Many citizens don't realize that the 200 part-time school crossing guards across Nashville are actually police department employees. They are an essential element to our public safety mission.

- Our budget request contains a \$600,000 request for secondary employment. Note that this line item is budget neutral. We anticipate an increase in demand for the services of off-duty officers by area businesses. The increase in billable hours, with those fees being paid into the Metro General Fund, will offset the requested additional funding.

- In keeping with the police department's...and the Metropolitan Government's...commitment to increase diversity in the workforce, we are requesting an additional \$6,000 to reclassify one of our employees to serve as a diversity coordinator. That person's mission will be to interact with the community and faith-based organizations to increase diversity in both sworn and civilian positions within the police department.

- Our budget request also includes \$195,000 for salaries and fringe benefits relating to the hiring of two additional police crisis counselors. On occasion, police officers encounter

horrible scenes and circumstances as part of their jobs. For years, we have been able to provide the much needed debriefing and counseling services. Over last few years I am pleased that our officers are taking advantage of these services in increased numbers. The mental health of our officers is very important. We need to add two additional counselors in order to keep pace with the increased demand for services.

- The additional money will also help cover the increased cost of psychological examinations for applicants seeking to be police officers.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- We are also asking for increases to cover the higher cost of ammunition, required maintenance and software licensing for our computer systems, and the purchase of software that allows for the more consistent performance evaluation of the new police officers who have just graduated from the academy.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Mr. Mayor, it is because of your priorities and your support throughout your two terms, along with the backing of the Metro Council, our city's clergy and Nashville's citizens that I can say to you, and to our citizens, that public safety in Nashville is in the right place. And, just as important, the stage is set to continue us onward in the right direction over the next years.

- As the historians write about Nashville in the future, the chapters recording your legacy will note that your commitment to public safety was instrumental in making Nashville a place where businesses want to locate and where people want to live.
- It has been my privilege to serve the city during your tenure.
- Thank you for all that you have done to ensure that the police department has had the resources we need to effectively serve the public. We look forward to building on our successes as we go forward.
- I too, believe that Nashville's best days are still ahead.