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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

houston, substation, community, houston police department, officers, lesbian community, concerns, homeless, talk, foundation, individual, city, storefront, public safety, people, issues, reference, area, stations, homosexual relations

00:00

You're a relatively new police chief here at Houston, maybe we could get you to talk a little bit about what your relationship was like in Phoenix with the gay and lesbian community.

00:07

Sure. The relationship that I had in City of Phoenix with the gay and lesbian community was the same as any other group. I had a series of advisory groups to the police chief, and again, lesbian community was represented on that, as well as, even though we have a practice of not asking. Several of the individuals within the finish Police Department throughout all ranks were members of the gay and lesbian community that was made known through self admission. And, you know, I just tried to hire people that can do the job. I don't ask them about their personal life and their preferences. We look for people that can contribute to the organization.

00:56

You said you had some advisors? Do you have something similar set up here in Houston? No.

01:00

We have a police Advisory Committee. I don't know the makeup of everybody on it, but it should be in supposed to be representative of an entire community. So I am sure that they're, I'm not sure. But But I suspect I suspect that there is representation from all communities on there.

01:23

relatively recently, homosexual relations by the Supreme Court were decriminalized. And that had a big impact here in Texas and the case was originated from Texas where the decriminalization took place. As a law enforcement professional. What do you think this means

for relations between Houston police officers and the gay community?



01:41

As long as people are not committing criminal acts to relationship with the Houston Police Department should be just fine. You know, one of the things that we do not concentrate on that is patrolling bedrooms. And what we're really concerned about is how people treat each other. As far as any conflict, especially use of force issues of abuse of individuals. And you know, other than, you know, people call us for services we respond. We don't ask you what your preference and your lifestyle if you need the Houston Police Department you dial 911



02:21

Great. Speaking of dialing 911 and access to the police there have been some concerns recently here in the Montrose area about the substation having its hours cut back there is a proposal to cut back its hours I believe at night. When there's a there's a high rate of usage of that substation, can you address those concerns? There's



02:39

no solid decisions have been made reference any of the substations or storefront. One of the things that is a reality is that we do not have the resources that we had last year, the year before to commit to them. And I'm going to leave it up to the captains in the districts as what hours that they need to be open to best serve the community that live in use those storefronts or those district stations.



03:06

There is specifically there was a clicker used I think here where they monitor the number of people coming in, I guess, walk ins to the substation, and apparently that rate was high at night, Montrose area GN so there was again concerned that there were nighttime cuts that any hours I mean, you're saying that that hasn't been made yet. And you're gonna leave it up to the individual?



03:26

That's right, I'm gonna leave it up to the individual captain to whatever areas I guess whatever hours that is necessary for them to best serve the community that lives in their immediate district.



03:38

Would you be open with the substation? Okay, budget concerns, all sorts of reasons maybe to scale back hours. Now in the Montrose area is a strong sort of community feeling would you be

open to community volunteers helping to staff these substations,



03:53

I'd be very much open to the community volunteers to help staffed as stations, as well as we have a very aggressive effort going on right now to attract volunteers throughout the department. So if people can answer the phone, they can use a computer, greet individuals, whatever skills or expertise that you have. And if you have one hour, four hours, or eight hours or five days that you can contribute to the Houston Police Department, we'd appreciate that. Again, let's make sure



04:28

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08:55

might ask you a little bit more about that in a little bit. Switching gears, I wanted to look at a couple of other issues. I told you I want to start with your questions. With the crackdown on traffic violations. How is this effort to increase public safety? There's been a couple of people raised concerns to me that this was instead of really going to increase public safety. It was rather a way to raise money for the city through municipal fines.



09:23

The primary responsibility of a police department is public safety. Public Safety includes traffic safety. I think if you drive around city of Houston, I'm sure you do. You'll see people running red lights, speeding, changing lanes inappropriately. I don't think that we can allow that to continue. The commitment to traffic in the city has been very limited. The city of Houston have 40 motorcycle offices. city this size should have approximately 400 based on comparison With other major cities across the country, one of the things that we would like to do to really address one of the most dangerous concerns is the use of photo red light cameras. That is when people violate the law by running a red light will be able to capture information from the vehicle and an individual then forward the citation to them, and they'll have to pay it. You know, by making those type of decisions, we're able to take officers and put them into neighborhoods, keep them in a storefront, so the storefronts can stay open later, in the evening, as well as concentrate more on the real concerns that the people have in reference to our personal safety, such as violent crime, and robberies and assaults. We'll be able to be more visible and community level and around the businesses, while using technology to help us reduce the number of accidents as well as injuries and deaths in the city of Houston.



11:06

You've talked about also wanting first responder officers to have tasers, and you face some budget difficulties in getting them out of tasers that you probably liked those first responders. Can you talk about the way you expect to or you hope to fund this project?



11:22

Well, hopefully, that we'll be able to get some of the money through the budget process within the city of Houston. Also, we're concentrating on starting a foundation, the Houston Police

Department Foundation, where our businesses and I hope some of them are listening right now can make contributions because those days is to outfit one officer costs approximately \$1,000. And we'd like to outfit eventually 3600 police officers. And I think one of the things that we need to think about when we're talking about the Taser is not just the fact that the cost of them but think about the cost savings. And not only financially but also in injury and death, where officers may have the opportunity have the option of using that Taser versus a firearm, and they can reduce injuries and assaults to our officers, as well as can reduce injury and possible death to members of our community.



12:24

Can you tell me a little bit more about this foundation, the Houston Police Officer foundation? What type of businesses are you doing outreach to is this already a foundation that exists?



12:32

Well, we did the preliminary work as far as being a lawfully established organization. We're in the process now a meeting with groups across the city of Houston, explaining to them what we're trying to do, and offering them the opportunity to be a part of it. I know a lot of people out there says well, I already pay taxes. Yes, that's true. But also when we want the best things. And as far as quality of life issues and the best equipment and the best training for people that keep the peace in our community. Sometimes we have to go above and beyond just like the officers do on a day to day basis.



13:19

It's a difficult topic, maybe with budget cuts. But is there has there been any movement on the front to get video cameras in police in patrol cars.



13:28

There are some video cameras already in patrol cars. That was an issue that came up with the new legislation reference racial profiling. And we did get some cameras, we didn't get enough to put them in every patrol car, I'd love to have them in every patrol car. But this is a case, I guess where the state had a mandate for local law enforcement. But they were unable to find it. And the cities across the state as wealth crosses scattered in the same position is they're unable to fund some of those mandates themselves.



14:05

Is there any discussion about creating like a similar foundation to get these?



14:09

Well, the foundation would be for numerous things and not just for the teachers. I think the cameras would be a good topic of discussion referenced funding through the foundation, as well as any other high tech that will enable us to do a better job of investigating crimes, and also look at specialized training for officers in the area of cybercrime or some new issue that may come up and also, we have been forced to take on the added responsibility of Homeland Security. So that calls for a great deal of training as well as we don't know what else that we may need to be able to defend this community. And some of those things that come up funding may not be there from the federal government nor at the local level, and we may You have to go to the foundation to ask for some assistance.



15:03

KPFT sort of a free speech oriented station, civil liberties oriented radio station, a lot of our listeners are concerned about those issues. Can you talk a little bit about the homeless population downtown, and how you can ensure their right to exist there while still preserving public safety. For example, there's been talk of closing down the jail downtown jail and putting homeless folks that are arrested out at Macau and then releasing them out of Macau. That makes it very difficult for them to get back. downtown's. Talk about that a little bit. Oh, I'm



15:34

not been a party to that discussion. But the my feelings reference to homeless number one been homeless is not a crime. And a lot of people call the police agencies to address the issue of homelessness and what they are who they should be calling as a social services agencies and other elements of the government not necessarily law enforcement. But if an individual no matter whether they're homeless or not, I'm involved in criminal activity, the Houston Police Department will respond and take appropriate actions. But as far as any, I guess hardship been imposed on the homeless where they would be locked up. I have not been a part