

AGENDA ITEM #: _____

DATE: January 4, 2021

CAR #: 2021-7150



CITY COUNCIL ACTION REPORT

SUBJECT: Arizona Child Abduction Response Team (AZCART) Intergovernmental Agreement

STAFF PRESENTER(S): Santiago Rodriguez, Chief of Police

OTHER PRESENTER(S): None

Summary: Intergovernmental Agreement to participate in the Arizona Child Abduction Response Team

Recommendation:

Approve Intergovernmental Agreement to participate in the Arizona Child Abduction Response Team.

Fiscal Impact: Each Party will be responsible only for the costs accrued by their own agencies in implementing this IGA, such as employee salary, shift differential pay, overtime compensation, benefits, vehicles, equipment, etc. Any costs incurred in a response by Goodyear staff will be absorbed within the Police Department base budget.

Background and Previous Actions

The Arizona Child Abduction Response Team (AZCART) is a multi-jurisdictional task force to provide additional resources to east and west valley agencies in order to combat crimes against children, such as kidnapping, abduction, false imprisonment and similar or related offenses. The Central Regional CART team agencies will include the participation of east and west valley cities and Luke Air Force Base.

The East Valley CART program was federally certified in 2011 and instrumental in the investigation of the disappearance of 5-year-old Jhessye Shockley. The existence of the East Valley CART IGA resulted in the quick response of law enforcement agencies in the investigation and the assistance of 58 law enforcement officers from surrounding agencies for two days. Without the IGA, these officers would have been otherwise an unavailable resource. The East Valley CART Team is now expanding into a Central Region CART Team which further expands the resources available to CART agencies. CART Team agencies may request, and render, law enforcement assistance from all other CART agencies both east and west valley, in dealing with serious violations of law including, but not limited to, the investigation, arrest and prosecution of

those involved in criminal child kidnapping, abduction, false imprisonment and similar or related violations (utilizing state and federal law and prosecutions, as appropriate), the rescue of the abducted child or children and the seizure and forfeiture of assets of those engaged in child abduction or otherwise supporting such activity (utilizing state and federal forfeiture options, as appropriate).

In any major criminal case, the initial 24 hours are the most critical in tracking down a suspect, but child abduction cases have a much shorter window for survival. Studies have found that in child abductions that end in homicide, 76 percent of victims were killed within the first three hours of their disappearance. This is why it can be vital to garner numerous resources as quickly as possible. The concept is simple, have the immediate ability to flood a crime scene with as many police employees as possible to run down leads, canvass a neighborhood, do background checks for the number and location of convicted sex offenders in a neighborhood, and/or to conduct any other investigation that is necessary as quickly as possible can be the determinative factor in whether a child is located alive or dead.

The new AZ CART IGA becomes effective upon execution and remains in effect until June 2030, unless otherwise terminated by the terms of the agreement.

Staff Analysis

By participating in AZCART, the Goodyear Police Department will have access to multi-jurisdictional law enforcement resources and expertise which will provide additional necessary resources to respond to, investigate and prosecute these crimes. Any Party to the IGA may request activation of CART. The Party that has jurisdiction over the incident or investigation will remain as the lead agency for the duration of a particular CART activation, with support from CART agencies. Each Party shall, to the best of its ability, make at least one sworn law enforcement officer available along with supporting equipment such as vehicles in support of any CART activation. Each Party shall have the sole discretion to determine how many or how long any of its personnel or resources shall be assigned in support of CART activation and responsible for their agencies costs. The original IGA, signed in 2012 remained in effect until July 1, 2020.

Currently, if a large scale qualifying event (i.e. child kidnapping, abduction, false imprisonment and similar or related violations) were to occur in the City of Goodyear, the Goodyear Police Department would be reliant on its own limited resources and personnel. Although this may be sufficient for the successful investigation of a qualifying event, the ability to immediately expand available resources and expertise with a CART activation would make a significant difference in the investigation and resolution of an event.

Attachments

Intergovernmental Agreement for Arizona Child Abduction Response Team