



Date of Council Meeting: June 13, 2016

**TOWN OF LEESBURG
TOWN COUNCIL WORKSESSION**

Information Memo

Subject: Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force

Staff Contact: Vanessa L. Grigsby, Interim Chief of Police

Council Action Requested: Information memo only. No action is required by Council at this time.

Staff Recommendation: Information memo only. No staff recommendation at this time.

Commission Recommendation: Not applicable.

Fiscal Impact: The organizational membership for the Town is \$25,000 annually, and is appropriated in the approved Fiscal Year 2016 and Fiscal Year 2017 General Fund budgets. Federal funding for the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force (NVRGTF) began in 2003 and ceased August 31, 2012. Since then, the participating agencies have appropriated an equal share of funds (\$25,000) necessary to acquire, maintain, and operate the task force.

However, the seizure funds collected by the NVRGTF are used to reimburse jurisdictions for the cost of vehicle rentals, overtime, gang-related training, telephones, and other equipment for task force members. Although Federal guidelines do not permit the seizure funds to be used for the personnel costs, the Town receives more than the amount of the annual membership in some years.

Work Plan Impact: The Police Department annually assigns one detective to the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force.

Executive Summary: The Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force is an integral part of a regional approach to gang related crimes. The program includes intervention, prevention, and enforcement efforts in addressing the issues surrounding gang recruitment, involvement, and activity in the region and in the Town of Leesburg.

Background: Along with the Town of Leesburg, the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force (NVRGTF) consists of members from the following jurisdictions: Arlington County, City of Alexandria, City of Fairfax, City of Falls Church, Fairfax County, City of Manassas, City of Manassas Park, Town of Herndon, Loudoun County, Prince William County, Town of Vienna, and the Virginia State Police.

The \$25,000 membership fee covers the administrative/operating costs of the NVRGTF to include the Executive Director, Finance Manager, and the Administrative Support staff. The membership fee also covers any equipment needed to operate the task force. Per Federal guidelines, the NVRGTF personnel costs cannot be paid for by seizure funds.

The seizure funds collected by the NVRGTF are used to reimburse jurisdictions the costs of vehicle rentals and overtime for task force members. In addition to the reimbursement for the overtime and the rental vehicles, the NVRGTF also pays for its members to attend gang related training, seminars and other related training. The NVRGTF also pays for cellular telephones, Smart Toll Passes, and other equipment when needed. The chart below indicates reimbursements to the Town of Leesburg for Fiscal Year 2014, Fiscal Year 2015, and the current Fiscal Year of 2016 to date. The Leesburg Police assigned NVRGTF member was on administrative duty from October 2014 to May 2015 which accounts for the decrease in reimbursements for Fiscal Year 2015 & Fiscal Year 2016.

Fiscal Year 2014	
July - Sept	8,518.07
October - December	6,518.41
January - March	9,211.37
April - June	7,908.61
TOTAL	32,156.46
Fiscal Year 2015	
July - Sept	10,052.16
October - December	1,533.84
January - March	\$0.00
April - June	1,949.33
TOTAL	13,535.33
Fiscal Year 2016	
July - Sept	5,706.18
October - December	4,089.12
January - March	5,763.81

Examples of cases that Leesburg's task force member has worked in the past three months include Gang Related Prostitution involving a juvenile, stolen handgun involving a juvenile gang member, assault and Gang Participation involving a juvenile gang member that took place at a school in the town (there is a related incident in Loudoun County). Leesburg cases also include, Abduction/Extortion Involving Gang Members, Malicious Wounding involving rival gang members, and a number of warrants have been served related to gang activity.

The Town of Leesburg Police Department has at its disposal the availability of all task force resources, which include twelve (12) detectives, and two (2) task force supervisors. Many of

the cases that NVRGTF members work cross into other jurisdictions so collaborating with other agencies acts as a force multiplier for all jurisdictions. The NVRGTF is a greater benefit to the smaller jurisdictions such as Leesburg since many of the larger agencies (Prince William County and Fairfax County) have their own internal gang units. However, the larger jurisdictions also participate in the NVRGTF because of the regional effort, and the prevention piece related to the task force activities. The NVRGTF members routinely conduct prevention and awareness meetings.

The Town of Leesburg is a part of the Court Service Unit Gang Response Intervention Team, and the Leesburg Police Department hosts the monthly Gang Response and Intervention Team (GRIT) meetings. These meetings are attended by the Commonwealth Attorney, Leesburg Police Department, Loudoun County Sheriff's Department, Loudoun County Public Schools, Loudoun County Mental Health, Department of Family Services, Juvenile Probation, Adult Probation and Parole, Community Corrections, and the Town of Leesburg Parks and Recreation Department (The R.O.C.K Program). This allows for information and resource sharing for the Leesburg/Loudoun area.

Additionally, Leesburg has benefited from several NVRGTF Programs which includes the Tattoo Removal Program, the Summer Jobs Program (provides at risk youth employment), the Northern Virginia Gang Task Force Soccer Tournament (for at risk youth), Community Presentations on Gang Awareness and Gang Controlled Sex Trafficking, and After School Prevention Groups for at risk youth attending Leesburg High Schools sponsored by Northern Virginia Family Services and The Loudoun Community Service Board. Last summer the NVRGTF received a \$25,000 grant from the state, and the money was split between Fairfax Court Service Unit and the Loudoun County Court Service Unit. During the fall, Northern Virginia Family Services held group counselling and life skills sessions for selected juveniles from Heritage High School and some of their parents.

A recent prevention issue that the NVRGTF is dealing with is the unaccompanied minors who are coming into the region. At a recent GRIT meeting representatives from the Office of Refugee Resettlement were in attendance. These unaccompanied minors are undocumented youth that are put into the system upon being detained, after illegally crossing the border. Most are placed with sponsors while some are held in a juvenile detention facility either in Alexandria or Shenandoah County. All unaccompanied minors must attend school and cannot work. In Fiscal Year 2015, there were 118 unaccompanied minors placed in Loudoun County. For the current federal government fiscal year, as of February, there were 150 unaccompanied minors placed in Loudoun County. These numbers reflect only those detained at the border, and there are no numbers on the total who have come to the region without being detained. This particular population is at risk for gang recruitment so the NVRGTF is dealing with the issue on the prevention side. Northern Virginia Family Services is applying for a grant that will focus on this population.

Attachments: None.