



**SESNA minutes from special “Meet the Chief” May 25, 2021 meeting  
Capital Park Wesleyan Church gym, 7 p.m.**

Present: Shannon Priem, chair; Bill Smaldone, board member; Seleste Liyanage, board member; Darrin Brightman, David and Ruth Tompkins (Dave, board member); Dave MacMillan, Ken and Dolores Vance, Ken and Karen Schmidt, Pastor John chamberlain. Guests Chief Womack and police community relations coordinator Angie Hedrick.

Snacks and refreshments were available; the meeting, SESNA’s first “non virtual” meeting since the pandemic began, was not recorded. Without a board quorum, no formal actions including approving minutes was conducted.

Shannon Priem thanked the church for hosting the meeting, shared we were following COVID precautions. She introduced new Salem PD Chief Trevor Womack and community relations liaison Angie Hedrick.

Chief Womack came from Stockton, Calif., last year, where he rose through the ranks and found Salem as the perfect step to focus on his strength of connecting city police with the community through stronger engagement. His approach is to first “know the community” he serves. An early priority was the police audit, done with input by community representatives to identify problems to solve, plus strengths. This will lead to a strategic plan for Salem PD to launch in January 2022, with the goal of creating a “shared vision” for how police can better serve the community.

He addressed police strategy during the “proud boys” demonstrations to assure us that while it looked like very few police were there, they’d actually assigned 30 more than normal to this type of event – but also if citizens aren’t willing to report suspected criminal activity they see, officers don’t have the authority to respond. And, that much of the police work during these events is done afterwards.

The chief is a strong supporter of free, protected speech, but balanced against public safety. A challenge all police face today is the explosion of fast-moving information – often false – but still needs attention. He will work to increase the public’s perception of the role policing plays in our community – and most importantly, to build and earn trust where the rubber hits the road. “Culture eats policy for breakfast!” he told us.

After taking questions from the group, Chair Shannon Priem presented Chief Womack with a thank you gift – a bag of dog treats for the resident emotional support lab at the new police Headquarters, plus goodies for the chief, too.

Submitted,

Shannon Priem, SESNA Chair