CPAAA General Meeting

Grace Union Church

May 8, 2025

Refreshments served at 6:30 pm; General Meeting Call to Order at 7:00 pm by Larry McDaniel, President. This was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board Members present: Larry McDaniel, Joe Buffa, Noma Fogelbach, Kim Hummert, Janis McCracken, Elfriede Faulstich, Kathleen Luepke, and Karen Hernandez

**Fourth Precinct Report**

Lt. Noonan from the 4th precinct updated us on crime in South County. He knows we are aware of the recent case where there were car break-ins that ended with a shooting in South City. These break-ins actually started in South County and then moved to the city where the vandals wound up shooting one of their own. They were all juveniles and taken into custody, but are now back on the street. We were reminded to keep our garage doors closed and car doors locked. He noted there have been incidents when there is a lookout posted near the front door of a targeted residence who will cover in case the owner comes out while the other suspects break into their cars. He cautioned all not to confront suspects; please just call 9-1-1. In response to a question, it was noted you can only use deadly force if your life is in danger, not if it is a property crime. Lt. Noonan also updated us on a recent fatal accident on Baumgartner Rd. where an innocent victim was killed. It is a pending investigation, but they issued charges against one individual who they believe was intoxicated.

**Third Precinct Report**

Lt. Joni Jensen, midnight supervisor for the 3rd precinct, reported the 3rd precinct has noticed a slight uptick in stolen cars and car break-ins. They are asking for help from the citizens to be extra aware of our surroundings, lock our doors, secure valuables, etc. Overall, property crime is down 17% in the 3rd precinct and down 50% for burglaries. There was also a recent homicide in the 3rd precinct. It was domestic in nature so there was no danger to the public. In response to a question, Lt. Jensen noted that the vacation watch is still an active program. Just notify the precinct and your property will be checked while you are away. An idea to ask your neighbor to park in your driveway was presented so it would look like someone was home.

**Officer-of-the-Quarter Presentations (Second Quarter, 2025)**

Third Precinct: Lt. Jensen introduced Marcus Bechtold as the 3rd precinct’s Officer-of-the-Quarter. He has been with the department for 8 years. He is a Field Training Officer and also a military veteran. He is a true leader with great investigative skills. He recently solved one of our business burglaries and got warrants issued and he led the investigation into the theft and recovery of the Mausoleum doors. His supervisors are very proud of him. Larry McDaniel presented Officer Bechtold with a plaque and a $100 check.

Fourth Precinct: Officer Bradley Tucker was presented the Officer-of-the-Quarter award for the 4th precinct. He has been with the department for just over a year and is a Navy veteran. Officer Tucker is one of the reasons crime is down in South County. In the last quarter, he had 18 felony arrests, 20 misdemeanor arrests, wrote 16 summons, cleared 19 felony crimes, wrote 32 moving violations, 64 non-moving violations, 15 parking tickets and had 8 DWI arrests. Joe Buffa presented Officer Tucker with a plaque and a check for $100. Thanks and applause wasalso given to his wife/family.

**Special Guest**

Newly elected 6th District County Councilman, Mike Archer, was welcomed to the meeting. He spent 18 years in the Prosecuting Attorney’s office, having initially been hired by Buzz Westfall. He is getting acclimated to the position and feels like he is drinking from a fire hose. They have been dealing with homelessness and problem property issues. As expected, he has received tremendous support from the St. Louis County Police. He noted that he has surrounded himself with people smarter than him. He is here to serve. You should contact Tony (who is an Electrical Engineer) in his office if you have any questions or concerns. His office number is (314) 615-5442. He remained at the meeting and distributed business cards to those interested.

**Program / Guest Speaker**

We were pleased to welcome Specialist Dave Newcomb from the Problem Properties Unit (PPU) to our meeting. Specialist Newcomb has degrees in Criminal Justice and Building Inspection and Code Enforcement. He is an employee of St. Louis County, but he is not a Police Officer.

The PPU is a partnership between St. Louis County Police and the Department of Public Works. They operate within unincorporated St. Louis County and contracted municipalities.The PPU consists of 11 people total **(**1 supervisor, 2 administrators, 2 resource coordinators, 2 specialist officer teams, 1 vacancy monitor and 3 laborers/operators).There are 2 investigative units; one works north of highway 40 and the other works south of highway 40. Their work is primarily centered around the interior of the property.Some of the matters they deal with are: hoarding, infestations, child neglect and abuse, animal cruelty, animal hoarding, elder abuse and neglect, vacant properties, illegal trash dumping and lack of utilities. (Note: every property is required to have electric, water and gas.) The PPU investigates the issue(s) and tries to get assistance for the family. The assistance can be in the form of financial assistance, physical labor or emotional assistance.

Cases exist everywhere and many times there are no exterior signs of problems. Their work is 100% reactive. They must have a referral to begin an investigation, and they investigate every referral that comes from a reliable, valid source with some sort of evidence of the problem. Referrals generally come from the police department, fire department, EMS, school contacts, DFS, senior services, neighbors, friends or family members. They make contact with the homeowner and determine what needs to be done to get them into a safe environment. The PPU can write violations requiring the issue be corrected within a reasonable time frame. In more serious cases, they can issue an Order to Vacate (OTV). This requires the homeowner to leave the premises. When this occurs, the homeowner would be allowed to be there to work on the property during daylight hours only.

The PPU exists for three critical reasons:

1. Health: to protect from disease, drug use and abuse, infestation, biohazard, malnutrition, mental health issues
2. Safety: to protect from fire hazards (i.e., extension cords,) falls and injuries
3. Neighborhood Preservation: blight (example of domino effect that affects property values)

The PPU does encounter squatters and homeless individuals, but these issues are primarily dealt with by the police. Absentee landlords are also an issue. These landlords don’t take care of issues, renters move out and indigents often take over the property. Please call if you are aware of a situation like this as they have resources to find these landlords.

Specialist Newcomb estimates they investigate 50-60 properties per year. It often takes many months to “resolve” a case and they must be monitored. As they cannot engage without a referral, we can help by reaching out if we see something. Please call (314) 615-4100 to make a referral.

**New Business**

A warm welcome was extended to Sue Creighton who joined our group after her recent graduation from the Citizen’s Police Academy in the 7th precinct.

Participation in the Hardee’s / Heat Up St. Louis campaign will become an annual event. Breakfast biscuits will be supplied to the officers at both precincts and members will also shake cans for additional donations for about an hour at a local Hardee’s Restaurant.

The 4th precinct will be participating in “Cop on Top” on Friday, May 16th between 6:00 AM and Noon. This event takes place at the Dunkin Donuts location at 4220 Telegraph Rd. Proceeds collected during this time will be donated to Special Olympics. All are invited to stop by during this time to get coffee, donuts and support the officers.

The annual Officer Appreciation BBQs are being planned. The BBQ at the 4th precinct will be on Wednesday, June 18th, and the BBQ at the 3rd precinct will be on Wednesday, June 25th. We will be providing meals for all the officers on both shifts. Joe Buffa is handling the outside BBQ volunteers and Kathleen Luepke is handling the dessert donations and inside set-up and serving volunteers. There will be two shifts for volunteers 10:30-1:00 and 1:00 -4:00. We plan to serve lunch at Noon each day. Dessert donations will need to be dropped off at the precincts before Noon. Please contact Kathleen if you would like to bake or volunteer on either the 18th or 25th. Kathleen’s number is (314) 971-4929.

Elfriede Faulstich announced that we will again be participating in the BBQ and bake sale at Christ Memorial Lutheran Church on Saturday, July 19th. This is a great fundraiser for us and a great opportunity to get involved. Sheets were provided at the back of the room to provide additional information on duties and to sign up to bake goodies or work at the BBQ. The church hosts a BBQ each month between April and October. The next one is scheduled for May 17th.

There are many activities going on. Please check the website for a complete list of upcoming events.

**Old Business**

As the minutes from our last meeting can be found on our website at [www.cpaaasouth.com](http://www.cpaaasouth.com), the prior minutes were not reviewed.

Treasurer’s report: Our opening balance was $7,541.51. There were no deposits since the last report. Expenses of $408 were made during this time resulting in a final balance of $7,043.51 as of May 8, 2025.

Membership report: Our current membership stands at 124 members.

Merchandise report: There are a few shirts available at the table in the back of the room or you can order online.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 14th. There was a call for volunteers to bring refreshments for this meeting. A sign-up sheet had been passed during the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 8:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Janis McCracken, Recording Secretary