



DEWEY BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Constance Speake
Chief of Police

7/20/2023

Authorized Strength Increase Proposal

In the six months that I have led this agency I'm very pleased with the progress we have made, I feel this proposal will be a keystone in providing consistent, professional police services. I have shared some ideas in this document to give you an overview of my goals for increasing manpower to include the benefits of increasing authorized strength. I'm convinced that this manpower increase would greatly enhance the agencies capabilities, and increase officer safety while also improving the level of service we would provide to our citizens and visitors.

Staffing:

- For a 12 hour shift plan to work with no peripheral situations (leave, injuries etc.) we must have a staffing minimum of (8). This number does not include the two command officers (Chief and the lieutenant). So far this schedule has been a challenge in that early this summer one of my men suffered an injury that took him out of the line-up.
- I would propose the addition of three full time positions to build in enough manpower per Team to create autonomy within the team. i.e. by staffing each patrol team with (5) full time officers: this allows for things like illness, annual leave, and training classes to be fulfilled without pulling manpower from one shift to staff the other. This would allow for a minimum of two officers working at all times.
- Small agencies have difficulty granting hard earned leave, or sending officers to mandated and/or critical training. Increasing manpower eases those burdens and gives the agency latitude to create a favorable working environment where leave is granted, job enrichment is fulfilled, and mandates are met.



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- Although each patrol team would be staffed by (5) two would be assigned the dayshift 7a-7p and two would be assigned the night shift 7p-7a with the fifth slot being the Sergeant who would work an overlap to oversee all four personnel.
- With the addition of these three positions we would staff two teams with 5 officers per team. The K-9 Unit would be assigned to a "Power shift" rotation i.e. (4) ten hour days working the optimum hours for when K-9's are most needed. The K-9 would be position (11) with Lieutenant Dempsey being the Operations Lieutenant (12) and me filling out the roster. Thirteen full time Officers.
- With the addition of these positions we would still rely on bringing in outside agencies on summer weekends; however the number of officers needed would be reduced. Concerns that we would have more officers than we need off season I believe are not warranted. This plan would allow for a minimum of two officers working each shift which is a necessity. As we have seen and I've been told this town is becoming less and less a seasonal destination and now has a vibrant nightlife for approximately ten months of the year. All agencies experience decreases in calls for service during January and February.
- Having a strong background in training I would use the off season to ramp up our officers training rotations and begin to identify and develop each officer's expertise. i.e. Officers would be developed in areas that they have demonstrated interest in such as traffic enforcement, criminal investigations, tactics, instructor certifications, evidence collection and collision re-construction. By doing this with our personnel we are offering job enrichment and satisfaction which in turn is going to increase retention and create a satisfied and motivated work force.



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- Realistically policing has always been a profession that suffers burn out, and/or has lateral movement from one agency to another. Some officers just want to be a Trooper, or at least have an agency that has various full time units that we don't offer such as SWAT, Aviation, Dive Team, or full time Criminal Investigations. So although 13 full time Officers would be ideal, reaching that number is possible, maintaining it may be more of a challenge!
- It is realistic to predict that when an officer reaches the four year mark (contract term for new hire) we have an increased likelihood they may move on to another agency.

Seasonal Police Officer Program:

- Truly our seasonal officers are that critical stop gap measure that allows us to heighten visibility, and be a force multiplier in dealing with low level nuisance crimes. They are energetic, enthusiastic and willing to place themselves in harm's way with two weeks training and no firearm. I am impressed with the officers we have and am delighted that we have this important tool to get us through the summer seasons.
- Seasonal officers are restricted in their knowledge, skills, and abilities to only handle civil and low level criminal offenses. Seasonal officers are of no tactical value in dealing with dangerous or violent armed felons. Seasonal officers do not possess a skill set to conduct in-depth criminal investigations or inquiries.
- I feel our agency could not get through a summer without this invaluable program. However I believe in the past we have relied too heavily on these officers. And in some cases having them handle incidents that are clearly outside the scope of their skill set.



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Peripheral Duties and Responsibilities of our full time personnel:

- Having come from three previous agencies where our officers were asked to wear many hats and be a jack of all trades makes me qualified to understand the dynamics that are required to be a valuable officer within a small agency.
- I have every officer in the DBPD carry out multiple duties in addition to their patrol duties. Just some examples are: Body Worn Camera program, evidence storage and processing, quartermaster, vehicle fleet, uniform and vehicle staff inspections, scheduling, training, firearms instruction, use of force instruction, recruitment, seasonal officer academy, bike maintenance, firearms armorer, DELJIS coordinator, supervisor, court liaison and many, many more. These jobs would be more evenly distributed with the increase in manpower.

Examples of how quickly staffing shortages can occur:

- During a busy weekend we investigated the report of a serious sexual assault. Because of physical evidence and an out of town suspect exigent circumstances existed. It took my entire on-duty staff and additional staff from the previous shift to safely and effectively write, get a judges signature and serve a criminal search and seizure warrant. The primary officer on this case worked 17 hours straight.
- During a recent stabbing arrest (both combatants) the Officer had to conduct a criminal investigation with one suspect at the hospital and one under arrest at the station. It required both officers that were working to work the case. Officers had to hold over to provide coverage. The primary officer on this case worked 18 hours straight.
- When an officer makes a standard DUI arrest, the arrest from the initiation of the traffic stop through the collection of blood or breath evidence to the issuance of traffic charges takes an officer off the street for 4-6 hours.



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- As soon as a team has an arrest, the remaining in-service officers must switch from a proactive approach to a reactive approach since staffing is at minimum coverage. This impacts the effectiveness of our police services.

Policing is very hard to predict when we will need the officers we have. In the area of public safety it is always advisable to err on the side of caution. Because of how quickly a quiet uneventful night can quickly turn into a high risk confrontation with a violent or mentally unstable individual. We do have identified times for increased calls for service, but ultimately a serious crime can take place on any day at any time.

The FBI Uniform Crime Report (UCR) indicates that Officers risk of death or serious injury is mitigated substantially when they have a second officer on the scene with them. This additional manpower will improve many areas as I have highlighted. But absolutely none are more important than increasing our officer's safety.