

TAPPAHANNOCK POLICE DEPARTMENT

January 17, 2019

2018 Annual Staff Inspection Report

Chief James G. Ashworth, Jr.

The following is a brief summary of the staff inspection review process and overall activities accomplished by the Tappahannock Police Department during 2018.

A review of the overall operation of this office has been completed. It is my opinion that the members of this department are effectively pursuing department goals and objectives and there were no overall deficiencies discovered.

This inspection included, but was not limited to, a review of the following items:

- The Agency Goals and Objectives themselves were reviewed, with changes.
- The Agency Mission Statement was reviewed, with no revisions.
- The day-to-day operations standards of the various sections of the department were reviewed with no discernible concerns detected.
- A complete review and revision of the department's policy and procedures manual was conducted and completed in accordance with accreditation standards.

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION:

There were no new significant equipment changes or additions for 2018.

Office/Equipment:

Captain Siddons reported that improvements will need to be made to the computer hardware for the entire department. The realistic life expectancy for computer systems is about 5 years and all the desktop computers within the department are nearing that threshold. Plans to replace the existing records management system and Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) are scheduled to begin in spring 2019. RMS/CAD plans do not include the mobile data terminals for police vehicles apparently due to budgeting issues. The Town should explore future funding to equip all patrol vehicles with computers in order to have instant DMV access for driver's license and registration information, VCIN/NCIC access for wanted persons and stolen property, and for electronic submission of reports. This department remains the only law enforcement agency in the area without vehicle computers.

The new Harris/Tait radio system was installed in 2018 in all department vehicles. This system is digital and P25 compliant and it a big improvement over the Motorola radios it replaced. So far, they have performed as expected with greater coverage and interoperability capabilities with other agencies.

Training:

All sworn personnel requiring recertification in 2018 did so without extensions or special considerations. Captain Siddons along with the partnership of Captain Robert Nester and Investigator Scott Hamilton of the King William Sheriff's Office, conducted two successful and well attended regional in-services at the TEVFD. There are preliminary plans to host two more this year with a slight change in the offered curriculum. Those in-services allowed us to send officers to quality training without requiring long commutes. Officer Hurd completed the Lethality Assessment Training and was certified to instruct this course. This course involves aspects of domestic violence cases. Captain Davis and "Drego" successfully completed the VADOC Passive Narcotic Detection Course in December. All indications are that he and his canine excelled in the training. All patrol officers have been issued 5.56 patrol rifles and have completed the necessary training in their use. All sworn officers successfully completed pistol and rifle requalification in 2018. All officers requiring recertification of their Breath Alcohol Operator status did so at the Department of Forensic Science in Richmond. Officer Hurd successfully completed Field Training Officer course during the summer.

Evidence/Property Room:

The evidence & property room was audited 6 times during the following the departments accreditation term (January 27, 2018-January 26, 2019). All audits were found to be in compliance with DCJS regulations and policy.

Grants:

The police department utilized two distinct types of grants during the year. First, we were awarded the *DMV Highway Safety Grant* in October 2017 to September 2018 in the amount of \$3500.00. The funds were used for speed enforcement overtime. The department also received a grant from the Virginia Municipal League for the purchase of equipment to enhance traffic safety. The department was able to purchase new flashlights, traffic delineators, and battery operated traffic flares.

Department Accomplishments:

The department held our first "Shop-with-a-Cop" event in December to aid children of Tappahannock and Essex County at Christmas. The event was made possible by a generous donation from WALMART. Twenty-two underprivileged children benefited from the program and it was well received by the participants and the public.

The department in cooperation with the Essex County Sheriff's Office conducted Drug Take Back events in April and October of this year. Both events combined events collected approximately 150 pounds of unwanted prescriptions.

A crime prevention program related to senior personal safety was presented in May 2018 by Captain Siddons and MPO F.J. Mitchell, Virginia Marine Police to the Essex-Tappahannock TRIAD. A crime prevention program related to home security was presented to the TRIAD in November 2018 by Captain

Siddons. The Tappahannock Police Department, Essex County Sheriff's Office and the TRIAD presented the annual CAR-FIT program regarding seniors and their vehicles in October 2018 at Walmart.

We currently continue to utilize the department Facebook and Twitter accounts. They have been active since 2013 and have been well received. The public engages it the most heavily when persons wanted by the department are shared. It is also used to share crime prevention tips, traffic updates, special events and other news worthy items. Currently over 3200 people follow our Facebook page and over 300 people follow the Twitter account. The website usage is difficult to track and plans to update should be discussed. The website is essential however to the department for a variety of information such as employment and annual reports.

Accreditation:

We are currently in the 3rd term of our reaccreditation process. The term dates are January 27 to January 26 of the corresponding year. The reaccreditation efforts will be a much more challenging process due to the tighter time constraints. All proofs must be dated within the term timeline. Ms. Marks continues to be valuable in the maintenance of accreditation files. Captain Siddons attended accreditation training at the annual VALEAC conference in October 2018 in Richmond, VA. This three-day conference is vital to staying abreast of significant changes to the VLEPSC process.

It is important to point out the overall importance of the accreditation program. This distinction is vital to day-to-day operations of the department. There has been a vast improvement of every service we provide just by adhering to the required standards set by the commission. The residents and businesses understand its importance and positive comments have been received on this achievement from the public. Accreditation is quite an achievement and I feel that its importance and the amount of work that goes into it, is not understood to the extent it should be by council and town management. I invite all interested persons to visit police headquarters to view accreditation files and operations.

Events:

- The Tappahannock Police Department and the Essex County Sheriff's Office conducted two prescription drug take-back programs at Wal-Mart.
- The TPD provided off-duty security at Walmart and the Annual TEVFD Oyster roast.
- We also provided assistance with the monthly Tappahannock Farmer's Markets.
- TPD also provided traffic control for the Homecoming and Christmas parades.
- We also provided extra patrol and security for Halloween.
- TPD officers also provided traffic control for several 5k walk/run events.
- TPD officers provided traffic control for the annual Police Unity Tour.
- TPD officers provided traffic control for the July 4th Celebrations in town.
- TPD participated in the NAACP Health Fair with safety handouts.
- TPD participated at Essex Intermediate School for their Trunk-or-Treat in October.
- TPD provided a police cruiser, officer, and police K-9 at the Annual Trinity Methodist Church Fall Festival.
- TPD sponsored a Shop-with-a-Cop event at the Tappahannock Walmart in December.
- TPD officers provided traffic control and security for Santa's River Cottage over three nights in December 2018.

OPERATIONS DIVISION:

After discussion with Operations Commander Captain Charles F. Davis, Jr., it was determined that the patrol section had met its goals and objectives for the reviewed period of time and directed patrols and checking details have been conducted. The patrol section continues to function in a professional manner and continues to meet the expectations of the agency. Captain Davis advised that traffic enforcement has improved and will be assigning more directed patrol and enforcement projects for patrol. He also stated that the department's Radar and Lidar equipment is in good working condition. He also advised that the department's patrol vehicles are in satisfactory condition although aged and consideration should be given to upgrade by purchasing or leasing new vehicles. Captain Davis advised that officer morale is not where it could be due to lack of incentives other than the weekly paycheck. He suggested that the department's annual performance evaluations were not really an incentive to excel because no rewards are provided. He suggested that consideration be given to grant some type of incentive in order to attract and retain good police officers in Tappahannock.

Captain Davis explained his goals for the upcoming period as follows:

- Continue to support training of patrol officers and their activities.
- Increase traffic enforcement.
- Improve and maintain officer morale and motivation.
- Continue to obtain useful equipment and update current equipment.

2018 Total Calls for service and Enforcement statistics:

- Calls for service (Routine) – 1657
- Criminal Investigations – 195
- Total accidents investigated – 149
- Criminal arrests – 248
- Illegal narcotics criminal arrests - 28
- Traffic summonses issued – 649
- Driving under the Influence arrests – 22
- Total calls for service – 3071

Criminal Investigations:

The section continues with weekly discussions regarding active cases, information received, and case reviews are being conducted. Major case investigations have been successfully prosecuted. Training continues regarding crime scene procedures, evidence handling and packaging, and evidence storage. A total of 195 criminal investigations were conducted which resulted in 248 arrests. Captain Davis advised that a real need for filling the department's detective position exists in order to conduct serious investigations and for follow-up investigations from patrol units. He also suggested that the detective handle general criminal

and well as narcotics investigations. Captain Davis and his narcotic canine Drego have been utilized for building and vehicle searches and will regularly be available for use.

Captain Davis set his goals for the upcoming year as follows:

- Continue to increase criminal investigation and forensic training and increase utilization of the department's forensic vehicle for crime scenes.
- Conduct more illegal narcotic investigations.
- Fill the detective vacancy with an experienced officer who would handle criminal and narcotics investigations.
- Send detective to the Virginia Forensic Academy for training.

Personnel Complaints:

Personnel complaints are either handled formally, (Documented with disciplinary action if proven and sustained) or informally (written or oral counseling administered). The total number of personnel complaints for 2018 are below:

- Complaints investigated – 4
- Complaints sustained against employee – 1
- Complaints unfounded against employee – 0
- Complaints not-sustained against employee - 0
- Complaints handled informally with counseling – 2
- Complaint inquiries unfounded – 1

Total number of complaints investigated for 2018 were down **60%**. This can be attributed to intervention training, use of body-cam video, professionalism, accreditation standards, and more community policing and involvement.

Use of Force Investigations:

Use of Force investigations were conducted whenever any type of force was used against an individual who resisted arrest or upon complaint from an arrestee. All incidents of this type were thoroughly investigated to include a written report by the officer and any witnesses as well as a supervisory review of body cam video. This was followed by a recommendation by the officer's supervisor to the Chief.

- Use of Force investigations – 3
- Officer Justified – 3
- Not Justified – 0

Department Use of Force incidents were down **80%** in 2018. Again, I attribute this to crisis intervention training, use of department body cams, professionalism, and more community involvement.

General Condition of Department:

- The Tappahannock Police Department maintains a high condition of operational readiness with average morale and professionalism. We have adequate equipment and each officer is very well trained. DCJS Accreditation Standards are being adhered to and we will be scheduled for re-accreditation in 2020. Patrol vehicles are well maintained however, several vehicles will need to be replaced in the future and five of our vehicles are over seven years old. The addition of a replacement police headquarters will assist us with office and storage space and is most appreciated. Raises and incentives for performance should be considered for retention of personnel in the future.
- As the town continues to grow and evolve, the police department should be properly staffed in order to provide better and more effective law enforcement to its citizens. The department is busy and the amount of calls for service is increasing. The future addition of two police officers for patrol would allow us to become more proactive, enhance officer safety by providing two officers on every shift, and provide more community policing activities.

Future Projects and Planning

- The new Police Department Headquarters Building should have a generator system installed for use of the office and computer systems during power outages. (Same as last year's report)
- A Police Officer Career Development Program is still in the planning stages. This would allow officers who achieve certain career benchmarks to progress to a higher lever within this rank. Department policy has been created however funding for this program has not been determined. This program is another incentive to retain and attract good patrol officers and has been implemented by most law enforcement agencies. (Same as last year's report)
- Implementation of incentive based Performance Evaluations. Consideration should be given to reward some incentive such as a salary increase or additional leave time for those employees whose work performance exceeds expectations and performs their duties in an exemplary manner. The department has been conducting employee performance evaluations since 2012. (Same as last year's report)
- Mobile data terminals for patrol vehicles would assist officers with overall enforcement and increased officer safety. This would also allow electronic submission of required reports by officers. This can be added to the new RMS/CAD system at any time funding is available. This should be a priority for the future and will allow the department to become more efficient and will provide officers with instant notifications of wanted persons to include photos, information from dispatch

that can't be over the radio system and instant GPS locations for dispatch if the officer needs assistance.

- The department needs a full-time criminal/narcotics detective to handle investigations. The addition of a sergeant dedicated to supervising patrol operations would greatly enhance operations and enforcement. These again should be priorities and they need to be acted upon soon.