

TAPPAHANNOCK POLICE DEPARTMENT

January 14, 2020

2019 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 2019.

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: Captain Jacob H. Siddons

Below you will find the annual staff inspection report for the Administrative Division. Overall the division enjoyed a positive and productive year.

Administrative:

Office/Equipment: The police department moved into our new headquarters in late March, early April of 2019 providing a large and better workspace for the department. The VCIN connection was moved without incident and reconnected with the help of VSP and Kyle Durham. Additional improvements were made to the Wi-Fi connection and VERIZON wireless service within the building. Radio coverage inside is still intermittent and will need to be addressed. I would suggest that the department again explore the possibility of obtaining mobile data terminals for VCIN/NCIC and mobile reporting. The department is still handwriting reports which are long outdated. The police department headquarters is still without individual voicemail for employees, which was approved by the Town Manager several months ago. Verizon has mentioned an alternative to provide not only voicemail but also upgrade the

outdated NORTEL phones inside the office. The LOREX camera system has been installed by Kyle Durham to provide security in and around the police headquarters. We are also waiting on grant funds to replace the outdated VIEVU body cameras. In the future it would be worth considering designating a spot in the building for a modern and proper interview room. Officers currently have no secure space in which to meet with a victim or suspect to conduct proper interviews or interrogations.

Training: All sworn personnel requiring recertification in 2019 did so without extensions or special considerations. I, 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 the field. All officers were recertified in DCJS mandated firearms in October. This training/qualification was limited to issued sidearm, rifles, and off-duty pistols. The qualification also included training presented by Deputy (Retired) Wallace Johnson, Stafford County Sheriff's Office and Detective Scott Simon, King George County Sheriff's Office. Officer Hurd completed two advanced level forensic courses in photography and crime scene processing under the auspices of the Virginia Forensic Science Academy. Plans should be considered to allow her to attend the formal academy once personnel and budgetary resources allow.

Evidence/Property Room: The evidence & property held by the police department was moved from the old office to the new location in April with all items accounted for and verified. Quarterly and unannounced inspections were completed within the prescribed times. The annual audit will be conducted at the end of the accreditation term. The current room is smaller than the previous location and presents some challenges in storage space. A large locking cabinet was purchased for sensitive items and works well. Once the new RMS is online, existing evidence will be transitioned to the new system. It would be beneficial soon to explore options to constructing a new, larger, and more modern evidence room inside the building.

Grants:

The police department utilized two distinct types of grants during the year. Once again, we were awarded the *DMV Highway Safety Grant* in the amount of \$5,400.00. Officer Hurd was the only officer to take advantage of the grant and worked all 180 hours allowed. The department received the same grant for FY2019/2020 which began October 1.

The second grant was awarded by the *Virginia Risk Sharing Association* to purchase items related to liability reduction. The department selected new traffic vests that are more uniform and provide better visibility. Total funding for that grant was a reimbursement of \$432.00.

The police department has also been awarded two *Byrne* grants but have yet to receive funding. Those grant funds will be utilized in CY2020.

Department Accomplishments:

The police department has enjoyed another successful year. We again participated in the *National Drug Take Back Initiative* in April and October at Wal-Mart. This program was under the direction of the DEA and was in cooperation of the Essex County Sheriff's Office. A total of approximately 110 pounds of unwanted medication was collected for safe disposal.

For the first time, the department participated in the **National Night Out** in August with cooperation of the ECSO, Essex EMS, TEVFD, VDGIF, and VSP. The event was held at the TEVFD and was well received. Plans to participate in the next event are being discussed. Individual crime prevention programs were conducted for the retired teachers' association in November with a topic of Identity Theft/Fraud.

We were also grateful to receive a 2013 DODGE Charger police vehicle via donation from the Westmoreland County Sheriff's Office. The vehicle is in great condition and we thank Sheriff C.O. Balderson for his generosity.

The effectiveness of the department's social media platforms is still excellent. We currently have over 4,000 Facebook and 400 Twitter followers. The pages have been of great help in relaying important information, particularly wanted persons, requests for the public's assistance, and traffic alerts. I see no reason to change our method in using them. Media releases for this year were standard with no major news events occurring.

2019 saw the end of an era with Lt. Woody Johnson retiring after 48 years of service. His dedication to this department and town will likely be unmatched and we will miss his knowledge and service.

Accreditation:

We are currently in the final days of our 4th term for accreditation. Our on-site is scheduled to commence on February 4, 2020. I foresee no issues in achieving reaccreditation. I have been able to achieve Master Assessor status through the commission and firmly believe that this status has helped our own accreditation. We hosted the 1st quarter VALEAC meeting in January and well attended by agencies from all over the Commonwealth. The annual conference held in Charlottesville in October was attended by me and was able to network with many professionals and attend worthwhile training.

2020/2021 Budget:

I again believe that most importantly the department should lobby the town for a pay increase in the upcoming year. Neighboring departments are starting officers at higher salaries which will pose an issue to recruitment and retention. The town and police department should again seriously consider the implementation of an MDT program. Plans are in development for the acquisition and issuance of NARCAN or Naloxone to sworn staff. Training for that should be done prior to obtaining. If promotions occur in either supervision or specialty, i.e., Sergeant or Detective, I recommend that those personnel attend appropriate training within 90 days of their new duties.

Events:

- The Tappahannock Police Department and the Essex County Sheriff's Office conducted two prescription drug take-back programs at Wal-Mart in April and October.
- 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 provided traffic control for the Homecoming and Christmas parades.
- TPD provided extra patrol and security for Halloween.
- TPD officers provided traffic control for the Free Clinic Bunny Hop race.
- TPD officers provided traffic control for the SAARA Recovery Walk.
- TPD officers provided traffic control for the annual Police Unity Tour.
- TPD officers assisted with the Essex/Triad Car-Fit Program at Walmart.
- TPD participated in Law Enforcement Appreciation Sunday at New Liberty Church.
- TPD participated at Essex Intermediate School for their Trunk-or-Treat in October.
- TPD participated with the Touch-A-Truck event at Aylett Country Day School.
- TPD sponsored a Shop-with-a-Cop event at the Tappahannock Walmart in December.
- TPD conducted two 40-hour Law Enforcement In-Service Schools at the TEVFD.
- TPD participated in the Essex/Tappahannock Triad Health Fair in October.
- TPD participated in an Active Shooter Exercise at Riverside/Tappahannock Hospital
- TPD participated in the National Night Out Event at TEVFD in August.
- TPD participated with the 7th grade class picnic at Essex Intermediate School

OPERATIONS DIVISION: Captain Charles F. Davis, Jr.

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. 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 and salaries need to be more competitive with surrounding agencies. He suggested that the department's annual performance evaluations were not really an incentive to excel because no rewards are provided.

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.

2019 Total Calls for service and Enforcement statistics:

- Calls for service (Routine) – (2014) – increase of 357 from 2018
- Criminal Investigations – (309) – increase of 114 from 2018
- Total accidents investigated – (223) – increase of 74 from 2018
- Criminal arrests – (251) – increase of 13 from 2018
- Illegal narcotics criminal arrests – (52) – increase of 24 from 2018
- Traffic summonses issued – (552) – decrease of 97 from 2018
- Driving under the Influence arrests – (34) – increase of 12 from 2018
- Total calls for service – (3644) – increase of 573 from 2018

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 309 criminal investigations were conducted which resulted in 261 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 are regularly be available for use.

Narcotic Detection Canine – 2019

- Vehicle searches – 30
- School searches – 5
- Search warrants – 5
- Traffic checking details – 5
- Illegal drugs seized – ½ pound marijuana; 1 ounce cocaine; numerous illegal narcotics
- Weapons seized – 2
- Vehicles seized – 1
- Arrests made – 12
- Money seized - \$1604.00

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.

- Promote officer to patrol sergeant

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 2019 are below:

- Complaints investigated – 5
- Complaints sustained against employee – 1
- Complaints unfounded against employee – 1
- Complaints not-sustained against employee - 0
- Complaints handled informally with counseling – 1
- Complaint inquiries unfounded – 2

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. There was no increase in the number of Use of Force incidents over the previous year.

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

General Condition of Department:

- The Tappahannock Police Department maintains a high condition of operational readiness with average morale. 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 assessment on February 4, 2020. Patrol vehicles are well maintained however, several vehicles will need to be replaced in the future and six of our vehicles are over seven years old with high mileage. The addition of a replacement police headquarters has assisted 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 has increased substantially. The future addition of two additional police officers for patrol would allow us to become

more proactive, enhance officer safety by providing two officers on every shift, and provide more better police services to the community.

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 or tablets 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. (Same as last year's report)
- 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.
- Police Officer salaries need to be re-evaluated and adjusted to be more competitive with surrounding agencies. New and veteran officers' salaries are far less that where they should be in comparison with surrounding agencies. In order to retain our staff, serious consideration needs to be given to address this issue at this time.

SUMMARY

- Calls for police services within the town have greatly increased. Although it is still a small town, there exists big city issues and crime. This department has strived to be proactive and maintain the safety of our citizens. In this current society, officer safety is paramount and more officers are needed to provide effective coverage and response to

ever increasing calls for service. A modern police agency however, is not just about enforcement but also about community involvement. Besides enforcement, we are asked to handle many different police services and community events which squeeze our current staff very thin. In my opinion, a modern, well-staffed and fairly compensated police department reflects to visitors and citizens what kind of town Tappahannock has to offer and what it can achieve.