



SPOKANE POLICE DIVISION
CHIEF OF POLICE
CRAIG N. MEIDL

Strategic Initiatives
March 2020 Report

Public Safety and Community Health Committee Briefing
March 2, 2020

Public Safety Building • 1100 W. Mallon Avenue • Spokane, Washington 99260-0001





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Selected Excerpts of Officer Commendation Letters

I was just writing to thank you for having such great officers. **Officer [Andres] Valencia** was nice enough to stop and help me change my tire in the snow. I really appreciate this because today is my birthday and I was having the worst day ever but to have him stop when he didn't have to and help me get my tire changed really changed my day. So thank you once again. You guys are awesome.

I would like to say thank you to all the officers working the Hillyard area. Our shop is located in a rough section of town, surrounded by many drug houses, and just a generally crime filled area. We are constantly having items stolen, vehicles tampered with, and property damaged. We filed a report the other day (in a futile venture) but were shocked when officers arrived promptly. They took our info, assessed our situation, and were professional. A few days later **Officer [Jeremy] Howe** and his supervisor returned on a follow up and even handled the issue with the nuisance motor home in our area. He gave them a timeline to move, and was on scene at the time he told the occupants to be gone by. Today, it was gone. Thank you all for your efforts and we appreciate your diligence. You are all appreciated and we enjoy seeing your presence in the area even if it's just a drive through. Be safe and keep up the good work.

I am currently student teaching at Moran Prairie Elementary school in District 81. My third grade classroom had recently read a short story called Areo and Officer Mike and had some great discussions about police officers and their K9 companions. After discussing with my mentor teacher, we decided to reach out to the K9 unit within the Spokane Police Department to see if we could have the chance for the students to have a face to face interaction with them. You may already know; my father was **Lt. Jon David Anderson** who worked in your department longer than I have been alive. Having the experience I have had with police in my life has made me want to share the culture with my students. I reached out to **Chaplain Ed Hoffman** to see if I could get in contact with someone from the K9 unit to see if this face to face was possible. He quickly gave my contact information to **Officer Todd Belitz** who also got back to me quickly. Officer Belitz and Zeus made this interaction a priority and came in on their day off. This interaction included a presentation and explanation of what kind of things K9 officers and their companions do, as well as a little background on officer Belitz and Zeus's lives. The students were able to ask and answer questions and of course pet Zeus. When students have this kind of positive experience with what could sometime be perceived as scary, it can really change their mindset. I just wanted to take this time to reach out to you and tell you what an amazing experience we had and how great of an opportunity it was to hear a little about what it is like to be an officer and a K9 pair. As always, thank you all for your hard work for this city and stay safe.





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Internal Affairs Unit Update

January 1 through January 31, 2020 Commendations and Complaints

Commendations Received: **Total: 10**

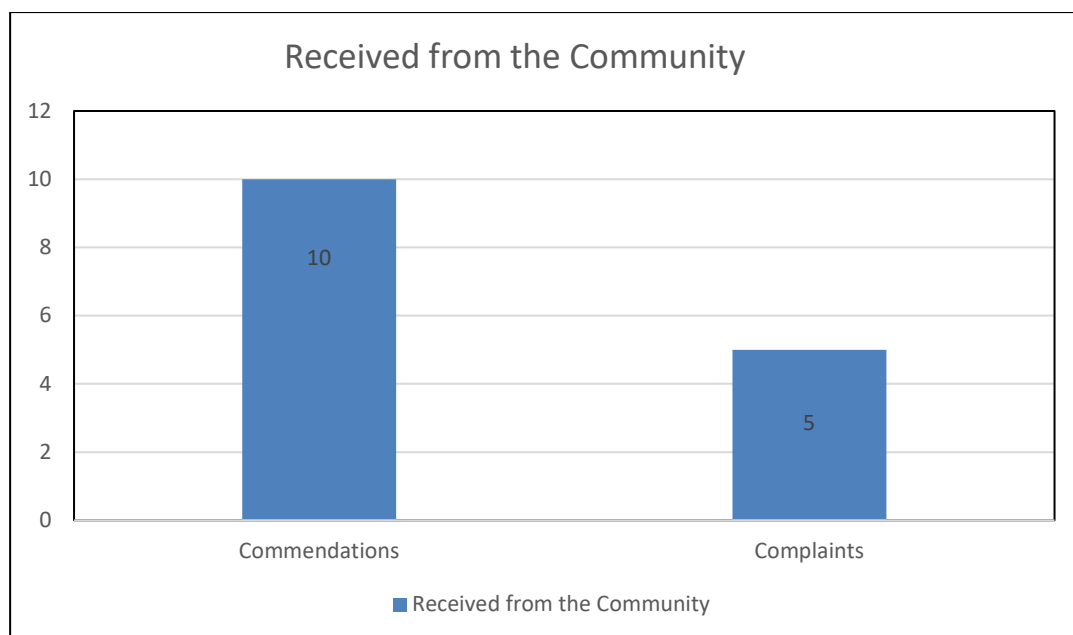
Complaints Received: **Total: 5 (4 from community)**

Closed Out as Inquiries: 0 (As of January 31, 2020)

An inquiry is an initial complaint about employee conduct which, even if true, would not qualify as a personnel complaint and may be handled informally by a department supervisor and shall not be considered complaints.

Source of January 1 through January 31, 2020 Complaints

Received by the Office of Police Ombudsman	Total: 3
Received by the Spokane Police Department	Total: 2
Internally Generated by the SPD	Total: 1
Generated by the Community	Total: 4





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Use of Force Update

2020 Non-Deadly Reportable Use of Force Incidents

From January 1-January 31, 2020, there were 2 non-deadly use of force incidents- no K9 contacts and 2 other (e.g., TASER, neck restraint).

2020 Deadly Use of Force Incidents

From January 1-January 31, 2020, there were no deadly force incidents. See below for active cases from 2019.

2019 Officer-Involved Shooting Incidents Update (through January 31, 2020)

These incidents took place in 2019 but are still active cases.

Incident 2019-20004372 (Under investigation by SPD Internal Affairs)

Incident 2019-20004372 occurred on January 7, 2019, in the 600 block of West Montgomery. The Spokane Investigative Regional Response Team's (SIRR) criminal investigation is complete. The County Prosecutor ruled the use of deadly force as justified. Internal Affairs is conducting an administrative investigation.

Incident 2019-20124831 (Under investigation by SPD Internal Affairs)

Incident 2019-20124831 occurred on July 6, 2019, in the 1400 block of West 9th. The Spokane Investigative Regional Response Team (SIRR) criminal investigation is complete. The County Prosecutor ruled the use of deadly force as justified. Internal Affairs is conducting an administrative investigation.

Incident 2019-20201879 (Under investigation by SPD Internal Affairs)

Incident 2019-20201879 occurred on October 23, 2019, in the 3400 block of East Garnet. The Spokane Investigative Regional Response Team (SIRR) criminal investigation is complete. The County Prosecutor ruled the use of deadly force as justified. Internal Affairs is conducting an administrative investigation.





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Items of Interest

New Lateral Officers Join SPD

In January 27, 2020, 14 individuals were sworn in as Spokane Police officers. Officers Makalia Brearty, Mikayla Holmes, Tim Edwards, Tricia Leming, David Vilchiz, Kaitlyn Painter, Jackson Henry, Britton Ballard, Joe Hefling, Xenon Berkeley, Jennifer McInelly, Anthony Ussery, Mike Alford, and Connor Tangeman. These new officers are starting the Basic Law Enforcement Academy in February.



Black History Month: Remembering Officer Walter Lawson (1862-1917)

Spokane would like to acknowledge Black History Month by highlighting Spokane PD's own Officer Walter Lawson (1862-1917). Before becoming a Spokane Police Officer, Walter Lawson was a private in the 25th infantry regiment from 1886-1891. After his military service, he spent time in Montana as a cowboy, where he married his wife Emelia "Millie" Langford in 1893.

After moving to Spokane in 1884, Lawson was hired as a special police officer and began working for the police department full-time in September 1899 as a mounted officer. He began as a regular officer in 1903. He then served as a patrolman for several years and was one of the patrol wagon drivers for many years when it was a horse-driven vehicle.



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In one notable arrest in 1905, an abusive husband shot his wife and left her, bleeding on the floor, to die. The woman, shot in the abdomen and knee, crawled over to her neighbors to seek help. She was transported to the hospital, while officers looked for the suspect. Lawson located the man the next morning and apprehended him. As he made the arrest, a gun fell from the suspect's pocket. Lawson took both to the police precinct.

Lawson worked for 18 years on the police department. He was on duty six days before his death when he fell ill with an acute intestinal disorder. At the time, Lawson was Badge #4, meaning he was the fourth longest tenured officer on the police force. Lawson died on May 30, 1917. At the time of his death, he was the only commissioned police officer of African American descent serving on the West Coast.

Remembering K9 Leo

Retired K9 Leo passed away on January 28, 2020. His longtime handler Officer Craig Hamilton wrote,

I write this with a heavy heart, but I thought some might like to know. Yesterday, my best partner, K9 Leonidas (Leo), died at home. It appeared as though he might have had a heart attack as he was making his rounds.

I will say that Leo was my "one" partner in my nearly 16 years as a handler. We just clicked and he quickly learned the game and was one of the best in his 9 years on the streets. He was my second working dog out of the three I worked. If you speak to handlers that have had more than one dog, most will agree that you only have one that is "the dog" for you, Leo was mine.

He came up to Spokane and started his career at about 18 months old, back in 2008. I only had 4.5 years in K9 so I was still figuring things out myself. Leo was very energetic and in training we could never put a decoy up high enough where Leo couldn't get to them. In his kennel, he would literally do back flips off the fence when I would grab him for work. He was also a dog that had the perfect mix of drive to work, yet social. He didn't have a mean bone in his body. If he could have, he would have been smiling and giving knuckles to the bad guys he captured. To him it was all a game, he wasn't defensive in the slightest.

It's my time to brag on Leo some, because he deserves it. He was so well loved, we would get requested specifically at times to join the Washington State Marijuana Eradication Team just because he knew the game so well, was stealthy and one of the guys when driving all around the state. Once he fell asleep on the back seat of the WSP supervisor's truck, rolled off the seat and never woke up as he slept on his back, feet up and wedged between the front and back seat. Other times he would just enjoy the ride as one of the guys with his head between the driver and passenger, looking out the windshield. He has flown under the ERAD helicopter numerous times, sometimes just him and me dangling 2500' over the canyon floor and he did it with a dog smile, yet I would be wanting down. He was always there for me, even if it was simply to use him as a pillow while on deep woods stake-outs. He and I once crossed a suspension bridge that spanned a fast flowing river that I wasn't super keen on crossing, especially with a K9 in hand. I didn't know how it





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was going to go with Leo, since the footing was probably 12" wide and only the spanning cables for me to hold. However, it didn't faze him a bit, just another day for him.

He made an impact on some of the bad guys' lives, too. Heck one guy Leo captured 2 or 3 different times over the years. One night at work that same guy happened to pull up next to us while we were stopped at a light and he very excitedly yelled at me out the window, asking if that was Leonidas in the car?! He even talked about naming his first born child after Leo (I tried talking him into a tattoo of Leo's name).

I could go on and on and on about all the good times that we had together. I will say that we were lucky enough to enjoy our peak years in K9 together. Our paths seemed to mirror each other to a point. He died just a couple weeks after my last day in the Spokane Police K9 Unit. My time in K9 has been the best years of my career to date and I can't imagine anything topping all that I was privileged enough to experience.

Thank you all for the best job ever,

Craig and Leo





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Precinct Highlights

North Precinct Highlights

Crime Prevention: Safeway

The Safeway at 1616 W. Northwest Boulevard wanted to follow a similar crime-reduction blueprint that the North Precinct recently utilized at the Safeway on East Mission. Neighborhood Resource Officer Dale Wells has been working with the staff. After the deployment of resources and tactical plans, the store has seen a significant reduction in crime. Weekly calls for service used to average 18-20; currently, they average two. Due to the great results, the North Precinct no longer considers this location a "Hot Spot."

Crime reduction efforts included:

- Better lighting
- Closed bathrooms during hours of darkness
- Patrol-based special enforcement
- Patrol-based Hot Spot policing
- Coffee with a Cop scheduled for March 18, 2020.

Crime Prevention: North Town Mall

The North Precinct also recently focused on North Town Mall as a "Hot Spot." Neighborhood Resource Officer Deanna Storch took the lead on this project and met with the Director of Security.

Crime reduction efforts included:

- Worked with security to train staff and grant limited commissions. Two members have limited commissions currently, and they are working to expand the number of people.
- Met with JC Penney loss prevention staff; currently working to get limited commissions for the staff.
- Meeting with other larger tenants in the building.
- Created a foot patrol Hot Spot special enforcement.

Downtown Precinct

Crime Prevention

Downtown Precinct staff will be conducting emphasis specials in the viaducts over the next few weeks. The goal will be to encourage those camping in the viaducts to stay in the shelters and get in contact with service providers.





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South Precinct

Crime Prevention and Notable Arrests

- Recently, a shooting occurred between two people who fled on foot at 600 S. Richard Allen Court Apartments. All three South Precinct Neighborhood Resource Officers worked to locate suspects and suspect vehicles. Search warrants were written, one gun was recovered, and an arrest has been made. The NROs also worked with Safe Streets Task Force, as there may have been gang involvement.
- 7-11 @ 2nd/Division Hot Spot update: the new camera system installation is nearly complete. The fencing materials have been ordered and the installation will begin when the ground thaws. The new security company is performing well and contributing to a reduction in calls at the location.

Community Outreach and Events

The South Precinct hosted Coffee with a Cop on February 11, 2020, at miFLAVOUR on 3403 E. Sprague Avenue.



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Outreach Update

Community Outreach Unit Summary

- Presentation to high school students in law enforcement class, NE Skills Center, (2/3)
- Excelsior Wellness Center Student Outreach (2/4, 2/19)
- Detention School Student Outreach (2/5)
- Pride Schools Gala (2/6)
- PAL Boxing Club (2/6, 2/13, 2/20, 2/27)
- Coffee with a Cop (2/11)
- SPD Outreach Cadre meeting (2/12)
- Gonzaga Event: Behind the Hashtag- Bridging the Gap (2/12)
- Shadle Prevention and Wellness Coalition meeting (2/13)
- Eastern State Hospital Patient Outreach (2/13, 2/21)
- PFLAG meeting (2/18)
- URM Training Night with Foster Parents and Youth (2/19)
- Rogers High School Project LIT and Black Student Union event- movie and discussion
- Outreach meeting with Les Schwab (2/20)
- Youth & Police Initiative at Shadle Park High School (2/18-2/26)
- Coordination of Services Presentation at Juvenile Court (2/24)
- Shadle Wellness Coalition Youth and Vaping Presentation, Salk Middle School (2/25)
- Meeting at Glover Middle School (2/26)
- Truancy Board at Pride Prep (2/27)



Police Activities League (PAL) Boxing Program

The PAL Boxing Program got its start in November 2019. Rick Welliver's Spokane Boxing Gym hosts PAL Boxing on Thursdays. SPD officers join Rick and participating youth to focus on boxing skills and personal growth.



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Notable News

New Recruits Enter Academy

Police Chief Craig Meidl said of the department's effort to recruit people from various backgrounds. And that's why not only is this Spokane's largest cop class in more than two decades; it's also the most diverse. Several of the prospective officers are over the age of forty. Five of the recruits are women.

<https://my.spokanecity.org/news/stories/2020/02/07/new-police-recruits-enter-academy/>

