



SPOKANE POLICE DIVISION
CHIEF OF POLICE
CRAIG N. MEIDL

Strategic Initiatives
February 2021 Report

Public Safety and Community Health Committee Briefing
February 1, 2021

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





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Selected Excerpts of Officer Commendations

We want to express our deepest gratitude to Salvation Army, JC Penney, and the Spokane Police Department. You have given the joy of hope and opportunity. The hope that tomorrow will be better and the opportunity that a child will not have to go to school with clothing that is inadequate for the weather. To watch as the children as they went to various racks being able to choose clothing that otherwise they would not get was inspirational. Their smiles and excitement was one of the greatest gifts to receive. When a young person spends most of their day feelings inadequate or that they don't measure up in so many ways, to see them experience something where feel like they are like anyone else is amazing. The volunteers and police officers were simply put, FANTASTIC! I was a little anxious as to how some of our more challenging students were going to react in this environment and with strangers. These people did a great job! The patience and care with which they interacted with the young people was beyond my expectations.

[PACT Team, Chaplains]

I just want to say thanks again for gifting my daughter a bike. With myself being a single father with full custody (on top of the pandemic), money is very tight. SPD really made her Christmas and I can't thank you enough. Best wishes to the entire department!

Thank you police officers for being nice to us and protecting us. Thank you **Officer Ed [Richardson]** for helping us learn how to control our anger.

Chief Meidl, I understand we borrowed **Officer Matthew Stewart** for a few days on this trial and though I would pass this along to you.

"Okanogan, Washington - After a three-day trial before the Honorable Henry Rawson a Superior Court jury on December 3, 2020 at approximated 7 p.m. returned guilty verdicts in State of Washington v. Philip Nolan Lester, 15-1-00009-24, for Child Rape in the First Degree and Child Molestation in the First Degree for acts committed in 2014. The case was investigated by Det. Deborah Behymer (Ret.) and former Okanogan County Sheriff's Deputy **Matthew Stewart** who is now a Spokane City Police Officer.

Chief Criminal Deputy David Stevens prosecuted the case to verdict. Mr. Stevens thanked Deputy Prosecutor Felecia Chandler and said that her help preparing for the trial cannot be overstated. He also thanked Det. Deborah Behymer (Ret.) and former Deputy Matthew Stewart for the thorough investigation and said, 'These cases are tough on everyone, especially the mother and the child victim who testified. And no matter how hard our office works or how many hours we put into a case and given our lack of resources, ultimately it is the quality of the investigation that largely determines the outcome of a case.'"





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Internal Affairs Unit Update

January 1 through December 31, 2020 Commendations and Complaints

Commendations Received: **Total: 411**

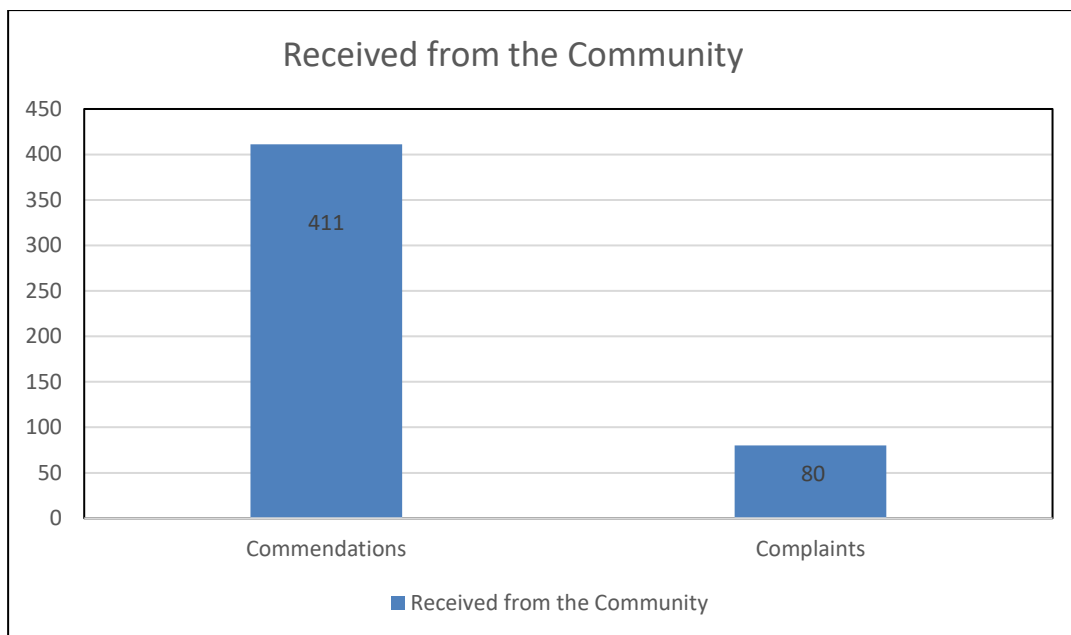
Complaints Received: **Total: 91 (80 from community)**

Closed Out as Inquiries: 11 (As of December 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 Complaints—January 1 through December 31, 2020

Received by the Office of Police Ombudsman	Total: 49
Received by the Spokane Police Department	Total: 42
Internally Generated by the SPD	Total: 11
Generated by the Community	Total: 80





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Use of Force Update

2020 Non-Deadly Reportable Use of Force Incidents

From January 1-December 31, 2020, there were 70 non-deadly use of force incidents- 11 K9 contacts and 59 other (e.g., TASER, Level I lateral neck restraint).

2020 Deadly Force Incidents (Officer-Involved Shootings)

From January 1-December 31, 2020, there were three deadly force incidents.

Incident 2020-20136616 (Prosecutor Review)

Incident 2020-20136616 took place on August 7, 2020 in the area of Courtland/Crestline. The criminal investigation is by the Spokane Independent Investigative Response (SIIR) team is complete and the case is with the Prosecutor.

Incident 2020-20160038 (Under Investigation)

Incident 2020-20160038 took place on September 11, 2020 in the 6300 block of East Broadway. The criminal investigation is being conducted by the Spokane Independent Investigative Response (SIIR).

Incident 2020-20168741 (Under Investigation)

Incident 2020-20168741 took place on September 24, 2020 in the 9000 block of Highway 2. The criminal investigation is being conducted by the Spokane Independent Investigative Response (SIIR).

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

These incidents took place in 2019 but are still pending the Deadly Force Review Board- delayed by COVID-19 protocols.

Incident 2019-20004372 (Pending Deadly Force Review Board- delayed by COVID-19 protocols)

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 completed the administrative investigation. The case will be reviewed by a Deadly Force Review Board.

Incident 2019-20124831 (Pending Deadly Force Review Board- delayed by COVID-19 protocols)

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





Incident 2019-20201879 (Pending Deadly Force Review Board- delayed by COVID-19 protocols)

Items of Interest

SPD continues hiring police officers even during a summer of calls to defund police departments across the country. In July SPD held its largest graduation class in more than two decades and the most diverse with 5 women, several people over age 40, and others who represent a broad cross section of our community. The 14 officers graduated are the first hired under a 2019 levy, passed overwhelmingly by



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Spokane voters, for additional police officers. Hiring continued this month with the addition of 4 lateral officers from Seattle.

The Bicycle Rapid Response Team (BRRT) mobilizes. In October SPD added a new element to its Tactical Team (TAC) - officers conducting patrol and responses from bikes rather than on foot for marches, special events and other gatherings. Bike patrols are increasingly used in downtown and other high traffic areas for easier access to crime scenes and other locations where police assistance is needed. Officers on bikes are more accessible than those in vehicles, allowing citizens to interact with their police departments in a more personal way.



Community Outreach continues through COVID. Drive-by birthday and graduation celebrations became the norm allowing officers to continue interaction in neighborhoods and giving community members a personal touch with their police. The Spokane Police Activities League (PAL) carried on through a partnership with the YMCA and with necessary COVID restrictions in place. PAL is an outreach program that helps build trusting relationships between at-risk youth and local law enforcement. Again this summer children enjoyed athletic programs like hiking and disc golf as well as STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) enrichment activities with police officers all while learning core values including integrity and honesty. And COVID could not steal Christmas. Once again Spokane Police Officers adopted families in need and blessed them with gifts and food impacting 110 individuals. New this year, the BRRT donated 18 bikes to children identified through Spokane schools and delivered them, with the help of Santa, just before Christmas!



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Detective Byington Retires from Domestic Violence Unit

Spokane Police would like to honor Detective Byington who retired in December after 31 years of distinguished service. Detective Byington retired out of the Domestic Violence Unit but had previously worked in Major Crimes, and served as a member of the TAC team and Honor Guard.



New Lateral Officers

SPD is excited to introduce four lateral police officers – all coming from the Seattle Police Department. Each officer expressed an interest in joining the Spokane Police Department in part because of the department's reputation as a quality organization and because of the community support toward law enforcement.

On December 18, SPD graduated four recruits from the Spokane Police Academy. They began three weeks of post Academy training before starting three months-plus of field training.



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Behavioral Health Unit Update

Officers from the Spokane Police Department and Deputies from the Spokane County Sheriff's Office and Spokane Valley Police Department co-deploy with clinicians from Frontier Behavioral Health to assist people experiencing a "crisis" within our community.

From July-December 2020 (grant period), the BHU:

- Contacted 1,836 individuals.
- Saved 1,317 hours from patrol officers
- Made 781 referrals
- Contacted 52 people who refused services
- Had one use of force incident beyond handcuffing
- Made 25 arrests
- Diverted 179 people from jail or the hospital

As an example of the BHU working to help a person in crisis, the BHU focused their efforts on a Schizophrenic male who was released from inpatient care. The BHU was very familiar with this male. When he is at baseline, he is able to live independently with the help of a caregiver and a payee. However, off his medication, he tended to act very violent. While un-medicated, he allowed two individuals to move into the house and create a Domestic Violence relationship. DV No Contact Orders were generated after a short time due to the male's violent behavior. The male uses tools and sticks as weapons, including knives as a weapon of choice. Patrol responded multiple times to the male and even had a barricaded standoff with the male before walking away. The male had decompensated so much that he was losing weight, eating cat food from a can, and was unrecognizable. He was very hard to understand because of drug-induced disabilities. He became very paranoid as usual when off his medication, very assaultive and dangerous. Multiple calls for service occurred in one week.

The BHU worked with the male's caregivers and friends to coordinate an apprehension and evaluation. After several attempts and hours of coordination, the BHU was able to apprehend the male without force. He was so emaciated and decompensated in his mental state that he had to be transported via ambulance. At the hospital, it took two days to get him medically cleared before he could be evaluated. The male is currently safe and is being housed on a 90-day involuntary evaluation order.





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Precinct Highlights

North Precinct

Crime Prevention Missions

- Nevawood Businesses and Public Areas: Concerns with Northside transient issues, trespassing, garbage accumulation, neighbor and property owner complaints. Neighborhood Resource Officers are conducting prowler checks at businesses and parks. One individual was cited for trespassing, who is a constant nuisance around the Franklin Park area. The male is currently trespassed from 22 businesses due to trespassing/camping.

Collaboration with Neighborhood Residents Addressing Quality of Life Issues

- The Neighborhood Resource Officer served a chronic nuisance notice on a residence that has generated more than 100 calls for service over the past four months.
- In one location, an individual living in a chronic nuisance residence has been harassing another neighbor. At this point, the individual has been charged with seven criminal citations and has been fined over \$10,000.00. Additional criminal charges are pending.
- Another active location NROs are focusing on is empty, but has been frequented by squatters. There have been reports of multiple assaults and recently a child luring call at the residence. Neighbors have reported drug activity. The NRO had difficulty contacting the homeowner, who lives in another state. The NRO contacted the owner of the property and determined that nobody has permission to be in his house and there was a burglary in progress. With his permission, officers entered his house and arrested a female for Residential Burglary and Malicious Mischief. The homeowner made arrangements with a contractor to board up his house and secure it. The owner returned home and began fixing up the house to sell it. There have been no other calls for service since.

South Precinct

Collaboration with Neighborhood Residents Addressing Quality of Life Issues

- Neighborhood Resource Officers are working on affidavits for abatement on five separate nuisance properties.
- Patrol and NROs are working together on two other problem locations that have surfaced recently, one in East Central Neighborhood and one in the South Perry Neighborhood.

Community Engagement

- The Precinct worked with multiple businesses in the South Perry Neighborhood to sign on as foundational members of SPDs newly implemented Safe Place Program. The program accepts





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businesses who volunteer and commit to offering a safe place for victims of crime, notably hate crime, to report and wait for police response.

- Attended Neighborhood Council Meetings by Zoom to stay connected with neighborhoods regarding concerns, crime trends, and important information that is neighborhood-specific.

Downtown Precinct

New Officers

The Precinct added four Neighborhood Resource Officers:

- Tyler Heiman
- Chris Lesser
- Timothy Marquez
- Karl Richardson

The Downtown Precinct is also planning on adding two additional Behavioral Health Unit officers soon.

Crime Prevention Missions

- Officers have been conducting foot patrols at River Park Square. Officers will maintain a visual presence to keep shoppers safe and deter property crime. Patrols will include the parking garage to deter vehicle prowling.
- The new mission is around the area of 2nd-3rd Avenues between Wall and Post Street, in response to recent crimes including burglary, assault, and malicious mischief. This area includes the Collins (204 S Wall) which generated dozens of calls for service and serious crimes recently. Officers have already conducted a special enforcement at the building and completed a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) assessment.





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Downtown Officer Richie Plunkett was recently highlighted in Police 1's 50 heroes in 50 states

Wash. officer aids vulnerable citizens as pandemic makes resources hard to access

Officer Richie Plunkett works on the front line with homeless and disadvantaged individuals to help them get resources during COVID-19



Richie Plunkett, a downtown neighborhood resource officer with the Spokane Police Department, usually focuses on solving problems by being "proactive." But preparing for the COVID-19 pandemic was nearly impossible. With nearly all business shuttered and most people remaining home, Plunkett said, many of those who are still downtown are struggling.

"Over the past couple weeks I've turned into more of a social worker than a police officer," Plunkett said.

Plunkett grew up in Las Vegas and played football at University of Nevada-Las Vegas. After spending years playing on a team, becoming a cop was a perfect continuation. Being part of the police department tapped into many of the team aspects of playing sports, like working together. He was a police officer in Kent, Washington, for five years before moving to Spokane a few years ago. Plunkett now teaches crisis intervention techniques at the police academy and works the streets downtown.

Neighborhood resource officers are tasked with tracking the pulse on the area they serve. For Plunkett, that often means working with homeless shelters and behavioral health specialists.

"While working in the downtown corridor, we have a lot of crime but we also have a lot of people who need assistance," Plunkett said.

With the pandemic, many of the resources Plunkett helps people access aren't operating like usual. Community Court is closed, shelters are operating with reduced capacity, and behavioral health services are operating via phone.

"A lot of people right now have been pushed out of shelters due to social distancing and the pandemic," Plunkett said. "They're worried about it, that there's not enough food, that no one is around to help them."

Plunkett is focused on helping people on the streets, sending them to the new shelter at the downtown Spokane Public Library or directing them to safer areas outside. He tries to point people to places where they can camp or sleep that are out of the way and police are "not going to really go after," Plunkett said.

"It's more, give them warnings, too, most of these people are in a dire situation as it is," Plunkett said.

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With Community Court closed, some people Plunkett sees regularly are having trouble making progress getting their lives back on track.

"They're not really sure what to do to keep working towards their goals," Plunkett said.

To remind people that someone out there is trying to help, Plunkett often gives people he sees some basic supplies.

"My wife likes to pack me extra socks, gloves, stuff like that, hand sanitizer, Kleenex," Plunkett said. "So I got certain guys that I try to look out for on the streets, and I like to make sure they're getting these things. They're not feeling left out from society at this point in time."

<https://www.police1.com/2020-year-review/articles/50-states-50-police-heroes-how-cops-made-an-impact-in-2020-FZCgwdjsvzBLf57M/>

Outreach Update

Adopt a Family Christmas program

The Community Outreach team worked with community members to select families and then adopt those families to SPD employees. This program was a joint effort between Spokane Police Officers, teams/units, SPD civilian employees and the Spokane Police Foundation. Officers reached out to school counselors at local school districts, the Martin Luther King Jr Family Outreach Center, Partners with Families and Children, Lutheran Community Services Northwest and World Relief to locate families in need.



The Community Outreach Unit planned to help approximately 15 families. With financial support from Les Schwab Tires, Michelle Anderson (Lt JD Anderson's widow), and the Spokane Police Foundation, the Spokane Police Department helped 22 families in Spokane celebrate Christmas. The number of individuals





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within our community who received a gift this year was approximately 113. Eggers Meats donated turkeys, the food bank at the MLK outreach center donated boxes of food, and officers put together baskets of cleaning supplies. The Unit was also able to gift coloring books, crayons, coats, and some toys for children who will be helped by Partners with Families and Children this year.



Spokane Police Department brings Christmas cheer with adopt a family program

<https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2020/dec/21/spokane-police-department-brings-christmas-cheer-w/>

Shop with a Cop

Spokane Police Department is grateful to the South Hill Target, Manager Erik Mathies, and Target Corporate for hosting and sponsoring the 6th annual Target Heroes and Helpers shopping event! Target sponsored 20 kids with a \$50 gift card each to shop with SPD Officers. The kids shopped for gifts for family members during the event.

This year due to COVID, officers and kids were paired up outside, walked in together and shopped. When they were finished, each child received a special bag that included wrapping supplies and candy. Local community partners selected the children. It was another great opportunity for police officers and local kids to interact in a healthy positive way and is fun and exciting for all participants.





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SPD officers and Spokane Police Foundation supporters raise funds to replace stolen special needs stroller.



The Spokane Police Foundation raised funds to help replace a Dreamer Design 3 wheel stroller stolen from the Shadle neighborhood on December 3, 2020. The stroller was used for a special needs elementary aged child and it was sorely missed. The photo is of the stroller that was purchased. Due to a sale, the stroller was less than anticipated (about \$765). The vendor, eSpecialNeeds.com shipped the stroller overnight!

The remaining funds were used to help with additional items for the family. A few folks from the community also participated in making this Christmas even brighter for the family by providing some other Christmas presents. Maliek, a local Spokane resident, saw the Foundation's Facebook post about the family's stolen

stroller and wanted to join in on the mission to make their new year a better one. Spokane continues to come through and we couldn't be happy to partner with our fellow community members! Thank you, Maliek, and to all who donated.

Below, a photo from the family and Maliek with presents.





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Reaching out to Local Heroes



Two children had to jump out of a third story window to escape a fire in their apartment. (<https://www.kxly.com/sfd-children-jump-out-of-window-to-es.../>). Spokane Police Community Outreach reached out to this family and asked if they needed any help. The request was sleeping bags and pillows for the kids since they needed to stay with Grandma for the time being.

The Community Outreach delivered a sleeping bag and pillow pet to both children! The children were thanked for being heroes and hopefully their traumatic incident was made a little less traumatic as a result of this interaction.

Helping Those in Need

Spokane Police Officers responded to check on a mother with two infants. They discovered that she was without power, which meant that she had no running water, as her well pump requires electricity. It was apparent to the officers that she needed a few items to make her situation more comfortable for her and her children. Community Outreach officer and patrol officers raised \$250.00 amongst their peer officers and purchased needed items such as diapers, purified water for formula, and additional warm onesies for the children. The day shift officer that originally responded to this call did not want recognition for this act of kindness. Sergeant Kannberg is in the photograph assisting with the delivery of the items purchased.





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Notable News

Spokane Police, Santa surprise local kids with new bikes for Christmas

<https://www.kxly.com/spokane-police-santa-surprise-local-kids-with-new-bikes-for-christmas/>

Blessing on Patrol

[Blessing on Patrol - City of Spokane, Washington \(spokanecity.org\)](https://www.spokanecity.org/Blessing-on-Patrol)

SPD cold case to be highlighted on national program

On the Case with Paula Zahn aired on the Investigation Discovery Channel on Sunday January 17, 2021 at 10 PM Eastern. The program is also available to stream on Discovery+.

<https://my.spokanecity.org/police/news/2021/01/14/spd-cold-case-on-national-tv-program/>

Alert citizen helps SPD bust two porch pirates

https://www.khq.com/news/alert-citizen-helps-spd-bust-two-porch-pirates/article_8d11ecfc-56e3-11eb-aeab-c792cdce464f.html

