



SPOKANE POLICE DEPARTMENT

CHIEF OF POLICE

CRAIG N. MEIDL

Strategic Initiatives

March 2022 Report



Public Safety and Community Health Committee Briefing

March 7, 2022

Selected Excerpts of Officer Commendations
(Personal Identifying Information has been removed)

My wife and I would like to extend a heart-felt thank you to **Officers Paul Mead, Makalia McKitrick, and Chaplain Chinelle Flood** for their professionalism in carrying out their duties; to notify us of the sudden and tragic death of our twenty-year-old daughter, as the result of an automobile accident in Helena, Montana. It was shocking and devastating news to our family. It was obviously a difficult task for them to carry out. Yet they carried it out with tender kindness and compassion. They phoned the Helena, Montana coroner to obtain answers to our questions. Chaplain Flood contacted the U.S. Navy chaplain in Coronado, California to provide notification to our son, and to arrange for his emergency leave and travel home. Officer Mead drove me to Airway Heights and then to Cheney searching for my son, so that I could provide him in-person notification. Officer Mead then drove us both back to our home in Spokane. Officer McKitrick stayed with my wife, along with Chaplain Flood, to ensure her immediate needs were met while I was gone with Officer Mead. Chaplain Flood later mailed to us a card with tender and comforting prayers. After they left us, we started planning our daughter's funeral and the long difficult task of grieving the loss of our daughter and re-building our futures without her. Although the memory of that morning will forever be seared into our minds, the compassion and human decency extended to us by these outstanding representatives of the Spokane Police Department during the worst moment of our lives, will never be forgotten. Thank you for sending them to us.

I wanted to take the opportunity to point out the exceptional efforts of **Detective Dion Mason**. The Spokane County Prosecuting Attorney's Office recently completed the successful prosecution of defendant X. The case against X was based on a domestic violence harassment incident and subsequent witness tampering and No Contact Order violation incidents to which Detective Mason was assigned. The exceptional work done by Detective Mason was a primary reason that the Spokane County Prosecuting Attorney's Office could successfully hold X accountable and have his case brought to justice. The contents of our office's case file depict an extensive domestic violence follow up investigation that included additional field work, court appearances, testimony preparation, and extensive screening and review of jail call recordings. Detective Mason's follow up work proved to be pivotal because the contents of jail call recordings and evidence produced against an accomplice left the defendant with no viable defense to the charges. As a result, X was brought to justice without the victim, who greatly fears the defendant, needing to testify at trial. It is due to such exceptional efforts that the Spokane County Prosecuting Attorney's Office can achieve successes such as this in the fight against domestic violence. Therefore, I would like to commend Detective Mason for his efforts and commend the Spokane Police Department for its support in our continuing fight against domestic violence.



Internal Affairs Unit Update

January 1 through January 31, 2022 Commendations and Complaints

Commendations Received: **Total: 20**

Complaints Received: **Total: 6 (4 from community)**

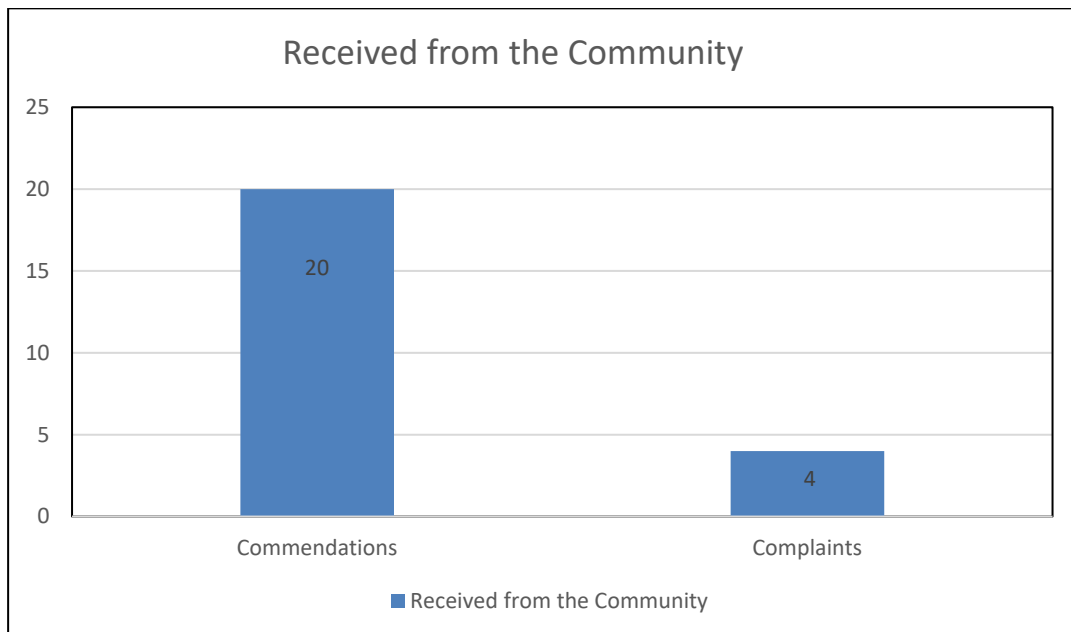
Closed Out as Inquiries: 0 (As of January 31, 2022)

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 January 31, 2022

Received by the Office of Police Ombudsman	Total: 0
Received by the Spokane Police Department	Total: 6
Internally Generated by the SPD	Total: 2
Generated by the Community	Total: 4

In 2021, the department received three times more commendations from the community than complaints.



Use of Force Update

2022 Non-Deadly Reportable Use of Force Incidents

From January 1- January 31, 2022, there were 6 non-deadly use of force incidents, including K9 contacts and other types of force (e.g., TASER).

2021 Non-Deadly Reportable Use of Force Incidents

From January 1- December 31, 2021, there were 66 non-deadly use of force incidents, including K9 contacts and other types of force (e.g., TASER).

2022 Deadly Force Incidents (Officer-Involved Shootings)

From January 1- January 31, 2022, there was one deadly force incident.

Incident 2022-20012711 (Pending Criminal Investigation)

Incident 2022-20012711 took place on January 24, 2022 in the area of 2400 E. Desmet. The Spokane Independent Investigative Response (SIIR) is conducting the criminal investigation.

2021 Deadly Force Incidents (Officer-Involved Shootings)

From January 1- December 31, 2021, there were two deadly force incidents.

Incident 2021-20002320 (Pending Deadly Force Review Board)

Incident 2021-20002320 took place on January 5, 2021 in the area of 5100 N Ash. The Spokane Independent Investigative Response (SIIR) conducted the criminal investigation. The Spokane County Prosecutor ruled the use of deadly force justified. SPD conducted an administrative investigation and found the incident to be within policy. A Deadly Force Review Board will be convened for a secondary review.

Incident 2021-20059960 (Pending Deadly Force Review Board)

Incident 2021-20059960 took place on April 17, 2021, in the area of 500 S Cannon. The Spokane Independent Investigative Response (SIIR) conducted the criminal investigation. The Spokane County Prosecutor ruled the use of deadly force justified. SPD conducted an administrative investigation and found the incident to be within policy. A Deadly Force Review Board will be convened for a secondary review.

2020 Deadly Force Incidents (Officer-Involved Shootings)

From January 1-December 31, 2020, there were three deadly force incidents. One is still open.

Incident 2020-20160038 (Pending Deadly Force Review Board)

Incident 2020-20160038 took place on September 11, 2020 in the 6300 block of East Broadway. The Spokane Independent Investigative Response (SIIR) conducted the criminal investigation. The Spokane County Prosecutor ruled the use of deadly force justified. SPD conducted an administrative investigation and found the incident to be within policy. A Deadly Force Review Board will be convened for a secondary review.



Items of Interest

HIRING

Recruiting and Hiring Report

Spokane Police Academy compiled the 2021 Commissioned Officer Recruiting and Hiring Report. The report includes information about:

- the increase in applicants
- the increase in the diversity of applicants
- the high retention rate of officers hired
- the comparison of SPD officer demographics with the City of Spokane demographics
- details of the recruiting efforts in 2021
- upcoming recruiting efforts

The link to the report is here:

<https://static.spokanecity.org/documents/police/officer/2021-recruiting-and-hiring-report.pdf>

Recruiting Video

KSPS Public Television produced a video about careers in law enforcement, free of charge, as part of their Career Explore Northwest Program. This program highlights work in various workplaces.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y5D_uEB15zl

Hiring Story in the Spokesman Review

Want to be a Spokane police officer? So do more than 700 other people

<https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2022/feb/14/want-to-be-a-spokane-police-officer-so-do-more-tha/>

New Hires

On January 24, 2022, SPD welcome new employees: Officers Shane Holtshausen, Ricky LaBelle, Nathan Thompson, Mackenzie German, Sally Richards, Garrett Harris, Devon Hill, Will Mitchell, Alexander Braatz, and Bryson Trautman. These new recruits have begun their training at the Basic Law Enforcement Academy in Spokane.

TRAINING

Mental Health – Building Resiliency Training

Due to the new partnership between SPD and Northern Arizona University, SPD was invited to participate in, free of charge, a virtual training hosted by NAU and the Tempe Police Department regarding “Mental Health – Building Resiliency,” that is focused on officer and dispatcher mental health.



Upcoming In-Service Training

During March and April 2022, the department holds In-Service Training. Officers attend a ten-hour training that includes legal updates, officer wellness, critical incidents, firearms training, defensive tactics (Level 1 recertification, ground survival tactics, weapon retention, de-escalation) and reality-based training.

ABLE Training

From May 18-June 17, 2022, SPD will hold 8-hour in-service training on the Active Bystandership for Law Enforcement (ABLE) Project. The ABLE Project is Georgetown University Law Center's national training and support initiative for U.S. law enforcement agencies committed to building a culture of peer intervention that prevents harm.

Behavioral Health Unit Update

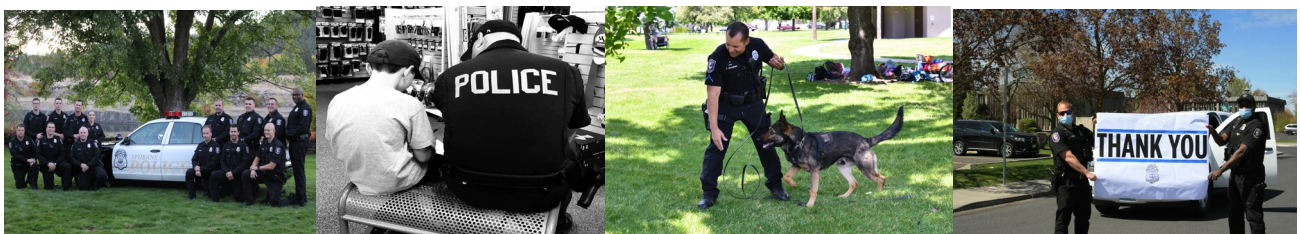
During the month of January 2022, the BHU contacted 367 individuals in crisis. 67 were involuntarily detained for mental health services; 7 were voluntarily detained. 5 people were arrested. 249 individuals received referrals. 105 received follow up from the unit. The unit saved 307 patrol hours by responding to these calls.

Example of Helping Individuals in Crisis:

BHU recently received a call involving a 31-year-old female wrapped in a trash bag sitting outside a gas station crying. When BHU arrived on scene, the female was found sitting on the ground covering herself in a trash bag because she had no clothes or shoes. She responded that she had taken off all her clothes and shoes because they were soaking wet and were making her freeze due to the snowy conditions.

This female was sober at the time of engagement and did not want to go to a shelter at this time. In talking with the female, they let her identify her goal/needs of getting food and new clothing. BHU transported the female to Spokane Valley Partners, who opened their clothing bank early to assist her. The female was able to get multiple outfits including new boots and a new jacket. She was also introduced to their food bank and other resources Spokane Valley Partners could provide. The female was then transported to the dollar store to get additional self-care items. She did not want to go to a shelter at this time because she had some errands to do but stated she would go to the Cannon shelter later that night.

The female was provided information about different shelter services, mental health facilities, was provided a Regional Crisis Line card and two bus passes to get to a shelter. This female was able to get her immediate needs met and was thankful for BHU engagement.



Precinct Highlights

North Precinct

Collaboration with Neighborhood Residents Addressing Quality of Life Issues

- Two houses in the West Central neighborhood were concerns for neighbors due to the drug traffic. In both cases, the NRO issued a Chronic Nuisance notice. In one case, the signed abatement is pending. In the other, the NRO got a signed abatement. The landlords are currently working with an attorney and eviction process. This property is on its way to being resolved.
- Another active drug property in West Central has been an issue for neighbors dealing with extensive foot and vehicle traffic. The NRO worked with the property owner. He evicted the tenants and will remodel and sell the house. The property is resolved.
- A residence in the Hillyard area became problematic when the owner went into an assisted living facility. The NRO worked with Code Enforcement to get a Do Not Occupy order for the house due to deplorable living conditions. The NRO will continue to work with Code Enforcement.
- Several properties in the Northwest neighborhood have been issued Chronic Nuisance Notices and are in the process of abatement.
- An NRO is working with businesses and neighbors in the Logan neighborhood, specifically the 2000 block of North Ruby, where there is a lengthy history of Camping, Trespass, Littering, Assaults, Disorderly Behavior and a list of other criminal activity. Some businesses have made substantial improvements to deter crime. Officers are posting No Trespassing signs, working with the Homeless Outreach Team, cleaning up garbage, and conducting prowling checks. It is a work in progress, but officers have seen some improvement.
- In the first six weeks of 2022, 34 abandoned vehicles were towed by NROs.

North Precinct Partnerships

- Neighborhood Resource Officer Tim Schwering is working with different organizations to help families using the Family Promise program for homeless families. He is currently working on a program between Family Promise and The Way to automatically work with parents that are unlicensed to get all the necessary trifecta of a license, registration, and insurance. He worked with the Northwest Carpenters Union about their apprenticeship program, to see if this can be established as a streamlined program for people in the Family Promise program that are looking for work.

Downtown Precinct

Downtown Precinct Officer Chris Lesser was recognized as the Employee of the Quarter, 2021 4th Quarter

In his nomination letter, his sergeant, Craig Hamilton, wrote:

Ofc. Lesser has been a police officer with the Spokane Police Department since July of 2013. I had the honor of working alongside Ofc. Lesser on Swing Shift Patrol Team 8, in 2020. I was so impressed with Ofc. Lesser's leadership, professionalism, and work ethic that I asked him to come to the Downtown



Precinct and work with me after my promotion to sergeant. Ofc. Lesser's oral board interview and the way he presented himself was second to none and extremely impressive. Ofc. Lesser came with an "all in" attitude and does an amazing job, exceeding all expectations.

Working in the downtown area of Spokane is challenging at times and is different than what we all have been accustomed to in patrol work; it takes a well-rounded officer to excel. Chris has demonstrated this since the beginning. He is quick to be the first to volunteer for special assignments, whether it's doing follow-up with businesses to address their issues or helping investigate crimes that our Downtown Precinct detective doesn't have time to tackle herself. Chris was the one officer that made the connection with local services to get a homeless man out of his shelter so the man could receive medical treatment. This man had refused to move or exit his shelter for several months and no other officer or precinct had any luck, just Chris. Chris is well rounded enough that he is on a first name basis with the homeless man now and I would say that this man trusts Chris, which is exactly what we are working towards as Spokane police.

Other examples: Chris saw a call holding reference illegal activity going on near Sprague Way and Erie. Chris took lead on addressing the issue, even though it was not in the Downtown Precinct's area of responsibility. With the help of several other Downtown Precinct officers and Code Enforcement, that area was clean by the end of the day. Chris also led the NRO's with numerous arrests over Memorial Weekend, which made a drastic improvement for the quality of life in the downtown area for Spokane residents and businesses. 101 arrests were made from that Friday through Monday, most of which were referred to Community Court, with the intent of getting offenders the correct services, yet still holding them accountable.

All of the officers that I'm lucky enough to work with at the Downtown Precinct are mind-blowingly excellent at their jobs. I will be the first to talk their praises as I'm continually impressed. Ofc. Lesser's leadership and professionalism impresses me week after week and I am thankful I get to work with him."

Crime Prevention Missions

The Downtown Precinct has been focusing on the area around Schweitzer Haven. Officers are trying to combat the drug dealing in the area. Emphasis patrols have resulted in reductions in calls for service and Part I crimes.

Precinct Outreach

- Mental Health Stabilization Project team meeting
- Downtown Community Court triage meeting
- Hot spotters meeting
- Downtown security group meeting
- Spokane Treatment and Recovery Services Board meeting
- Business Improvement District Board meeting
- Salvation Army Board meeting
- Continuum of Care Board meeting
- Washington State Public Safety Review Panel meeting
- Riverside Neighborhood Council meeting



South Precinct

The South Precinct received 120 new referrals of problem addresses during January 2022.

Crime Prevention Missions

- The South Precinct has been focusing on the Cannon Hill area, due to recent burglaries and vehicle prowls, and Garry Park, where there have been several Part I crimes like stolen vehicles, prowling, burglaries, and a shooting. The South Precinct is teaming up with patrol to look for suspicious behavior. Officers report their activities, contacts, and arrests at the end of each shift to their supervisor. Since starting emphasis patrols, both areas have been quieter in terms of calls for service and foot traffic.
- The Comstock neighborhood is also a current focus, due to recent shootings, burglaries, vehicle prowling and stolen vehicles. NROs have teamed up with Power Shift patrol to respond to the areas during the hours of darkness.

Precinct Meetings and Partnerships

Precincts regularly collaborate with various Neighborhood Councils, and attend a variety of meetings, including Mental Health Stabilization Project team, Downtown Community Court triage, Hot Spotters, Downtown Security Group, Spokane Treatment and Recovery Services Board, Business Improvement District Board, Salvation Army Board, Continuum of Care Board, Washington State Public Safety Review Panel, YWCA, Homeless Coalition, and the East Spokane Business Association.

Outreach Update

Recent Outreach Activities

Spokane Juvenile Court Coordination of Services

PAL Boxing

Refugee Connections

Big Brothers Big Sisters

Northeast Community Center Coalition

Youth & Police Initiative (YPI) Session with Excelsior Wellness Center

SPD looks forward to the upcoming YPI session at Excelsior, March 7, 8, 10, 14 & 15, 2022. The Youth & Police Initiative (YPI) is a prevention program for at-risk high school and middle school youth, designed to meet them where they are and help them prepare for their future. YPI curriculum involves an honest discussion about peer pressure and positive decision-making relating to school, gangs, and drugs.

PAL Boxing

PAL Boxing meets every Tuesday at the Spokane Boxing Club (115 S. Jefferson) from 3:00-4:30 pm. We welcome youth between the ages of 12-17. We'd love to have them down to get a workout in with our officers! Please reach out to spdccommunityoutreach@spokanepolice.org for more information.



Lunar New Year Celebration

Officer Jen Kerns was grateful that Spokane Police Department was invited to the event. It was a great turnout, and the overall mood was friendly and joyful. She had many meaningful conversations throughout the day.

With the location of the SPD booth, she was lucky enough to take in the traditional cultural delights that hit the stage. The performances and the traditional ethnic garments were fantastic. It was beautiful to see the community come together and really enjoy this celebration.

