



SPOKANE POLICE DEPARTMENT

CHIEF OF POLICE

CRAIG N. MEIDL

Strategic Initiatives

January 2023 Report



Public Safety and Community Health Committee Briefing

(No January 2023 meeting)



Excerpts of Commendations
(Personal Identifying Information has been removed)

A couple weeks ago we had to call the SPD because someone from our building was in the middle of a major manic episode. It had been building for a long time and culminated that day with us having to call SPD to get help with taking him to the hospital. **Officer [Ryan] McLucas** and his team that day responded with so much care and consideration of all the people coming and going that morning, as well as this individual too. He also reminded me to ask for the keys so we wouldn't have to worry about them having access to our buildings. It's a small thing but I would have forgotten about the keys at the time and it has saved us a bunch of hassle going forward. This person is now in treatment and on the way to recovery and we are really grateful for the part the SPD played in getting him to the hospital that day. They will be able to return to their job without fear or embarrassment because the way everything went down was pretty calm, efficient, and peaceful, given the circumstances. I just really appreciated Officer McLucas and all the responders that morning and I wanted to say thank you.

I attempted to pull my 2000 Ford explorer on the sunset bridge. Anyways my truck caught the tiny little lip on the cement median that separates vehicles and pedestrians. And my front right tire was on the very tippy top of it well my other three tires weren't the ground. My truck was literally inches from tipping over on its side. I was absolutely terrified and mortified. Anyways two of your officers that responded [**Officers Dave Kaurin, Tyson Setzler**] were absolute and complete angels. I would just like to say that I have not always had the easiest time dealing with the police. But I was able to sit in the back as one of the officers asked me if I would like to get in to stay warm while we waited for the tow truck. I kept crying and stressing that for some reason I may get in trouble and he kept reassuring me that I'm not in any trouble and it was just an accident. I appreciate that they were kind and helpful. They didn't need to stay there with me they really had no need to be there they clarified that they were staying there to see it out and make sure that I was okay and had somebody with me. I just think that something needs to be said to these officers so that they understand that they were more than just doing their job that day ... they were my guardian angels that day and I'll always remember them, and I will always be an advocate for them.

Chief Meidl, I had the great opportunity to go on a ride-along with **Officer Nathan Clark** on power shift. I found him to be courteous, professional, and extremely competent in his work. My ride-along with Officer Clark restored my faith in people. In each call, Officer Clark treated each person he encountered with respect, empathy, and approached every interaction with a, 'What can I do to help you?' attitude. I also got to observe the teamwork in Officer Clark's team. These officers trust each other and work well together. On the flip side, I witnessed how well community members respond when treated with kindness. Officer Clark explained how he has been responding to calls on his own for a few months. His enthusiasm for his work, getting along with his fellow officers, and serving his community was palpable throughout my ride-along. If Officer Clark is representative of the new generation of officers, the future of law enforcement is in good hands.



Use of Force Update

2022 Deadly Force Incidents (Officer-Involved Shootings)

From January 1- December 31, 2022, there were five deadly force incidents.

Incident 2022-20012711 (Pending Administrative Investigation)

Incident 2022-20012711 took place on January 24, 2022, in the area of 2400 E. Desmet. The Spokane Independent Investigative Response (SIIR) completed the criminal investigation. The Spokane County Prosecutor's Office ruled the deadly force was justified. SPD is conducting an administrative investigation.

Incident 2022-20134271 (Pending Criminal Investigation)

2022-20134271 took place on August 3, 2022, in the area of 2nd and Sheridan. The Spokane Independent Investigative Response (SIIR) is conducting the criminal investigation.

Incident 2022-20156670 (Pending Criminal Investigation)

2022-20156670 took place on September 4, 2022, in the area of 2900 E. Wabash Avenue. The Spokane Independent Investigative Response (SIIR) is conducting the criminal investigation.

Incident 2022-20184192 (Pending Criminal Investigation)

2022-20184192 took place on October 16, 2022, in the area of 100 S Cedar. The Spokane Independent Investigative Response (SIIR) is conducting the criminal investigation.

Incident 2022-20214924 (Pending Criminal Investigation)

2022-20214924 took place on December 4, 2022, in the area of Morton and Illinois. The Spokane Independent Investigative Response (SIIR) is conducting the criminal investigation.

Year-End Statistics for Internal Affairs will be published in the February 2023 report.

Items of Interest – Hiring and Recruiting

Lateral Officers Join SPD



Officers Blake Minor, Nathan Bell, and William Dowsing (pictured at left) joined Spokane Police Department on November 21, 2022.

Entry-Level Hires

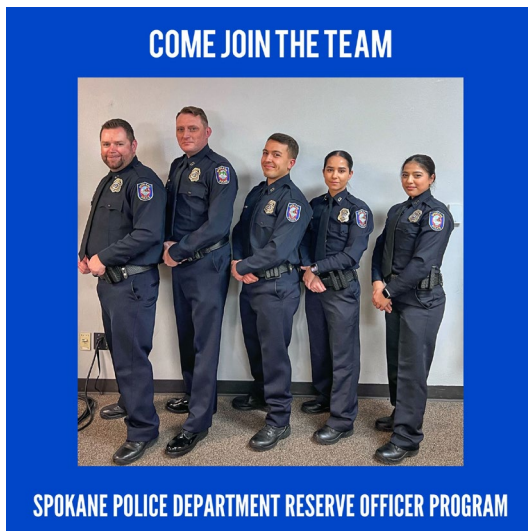
SPD is excited for the seven new officers sworn in on January 3, 2023, who begin Basic Law Enforcement Academy January 10, 2023. Three of the new officers are pictured below: Ashley Tappa, Javi Reyna, and Matt Siegel.



Civilian Employees

In the last two months, SPD welcomed civilian employees Police Dispatcher II Melonie Wilson, Clerk II Brooke Wallace, and Records Specialist Caitlin Sinclair.

New Reserve Officers graduated in December 2022



These volunteers from our community provide incredible support to the department. Reserve Officers are fully commissioned while on duty and volunteer their time to serve on the front line. SPD held a Reserve Academy from June to December this year to certify more Reserve Officers. Applicants must pass a background check, physical ability test, a polygraph, oral board, psychological testing, medical screening, and a review by the Chief of Police. Applicants then attend the 370-plus hour Reserve Officer Academy on evenings and weekends. The program culminates with a certification examination administered by the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission prior to graduation. Reserve Officers continue monthly training and volunteering to maintain their status. With

the graduation of these Reserve Officers and one other Reserve Officer joining the ranks earlier in the year, SPD grew its Reserve Officer program by 60%, adding 6 Reserve Officers.

SPD adds a third Police Academy

In 2023, SPD will put on a third Basic Law Enforcement Academy (BLEA) for the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission (CJTC). A third yearly academy will assist law enforcement agencies throughout the state, and particularly Eastern Washington, in addressing hiring challenges by expanding their training pipeline for entry level officers. SPD has long held two academies a year. There are 30 spots in each academy of which SPD has 10. That means 20 officers a year can be graduated to the Spokane Police Department. With the additional BLEA, SPD will be able to add up to 30 entry level officers a year to the force. With the

current officer staffing level challenges, the additional 10 spots are much welcomed. In 2022, SPD hired 20 entry level officers and 8 laterals, up from 18 and 6 respectively in 2021.



SPD Achieves Re-Accreditation

Spokane Police Department has successfully completed a rigorous accreditation program that certifies it is operating under best practices and standards for law enforcement. The program is administered by the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) and involves a multi-phase process over several months.

“We are proud to be accredited by WASPC,” said Chief Craig Meidl. “It means our department has achieved the highest professional standards for policing.” SPD is one of 67 law enforcement organizations, which make up approximately 25% of all Washington law enforcement, that is currently WASPC accredited.



Benefits of accreditation include administrative and operational effectiveness, fair recruitment and employment practices, better records management, improved use of technology, health and safety, training, codes of conduct and prisoner security, among other important law enforcement tasks.

SPD achieved initial accreditation in 2014 and reaccredited in 2018 and 2022. Pictured above, WASPC Director of Professional Services Mike Painter, Chief Craig Meidl, and Accreditation Managers Kathy Armstrong and Captain Dave Richards.

Investigations Update

Violent Crimes Task Force

In response to an increase in several violent crime categories in Spokane, including drive-by shootings, SPD set up a Violent Crimes Task Force (VCTF) in late April. Mayor Nadine Woodward announced the formation of the unit to rapidly address violent crime trends. The unit identifies and arrests the most active and dangerous offenders. Working closely with other law enforcement entities, the VCTF is addressing violent crime incidents and those suspected of being associated with the commission of violent crimes. Addressing

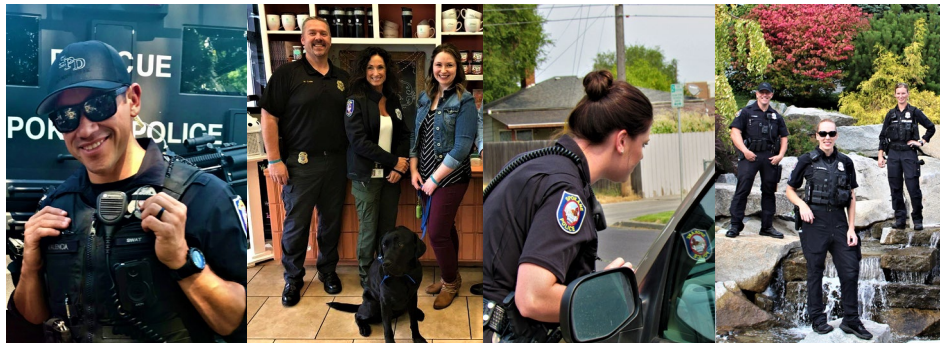
violent crime inherently addresses the accompanying drug and property crime. The unit was built on the philosophies and successes of many other specialty teams within the department.

Stolen Property Unit

In January 2022, SPD put together a property crimes unit called SPEAR (Stolen Property Enforcement and Recovery) specifically to address the increase in property crime. The Spokane Police Department understands the sense of intrusion and loss people experience when they are a victim of theft. The unit focuses on property crimes, trafficking in stolen property, retail theft, and forgery, identity theft and other fraud related crimes. The unit has been very effective in investigating and arresting thieves and recovering stolen property. Property crime remains a priority for SPD. Often, those committing property crimes are also involved in other criminal acts including drug offenses. So far in 2022, SPEAR issued 941 new felony charges and 117 new misdemeanor charges. The Unit also returned countless thousands of dollars' worth of recovered stolen property to owners including the recovery of \$75,000 worth of valuable art.

SPD Solves 40-year-old Cold Case

Major Crimes detectives working on a four-decades old Spokane murder developed probable cause to arrest a suspect living in California. Officers traveled to Los Angeles in October and arrested 62-year-old Tracy Sabron Pruitt on Fugitive charges stemming from a 1st Degree Murder warrant. On May 25, 1982, a 58 year old Spokane businessman was found murdered in his South Hill home by his wife. Archie Rutherford suffered fatal stab wounds, a skull fracture, and was discovered with an electrical cord tied around his neck. Spokane Police investigated the murder but did not make any arrests. Pruitt was arrested in Ohio for an unrelated rape and robbery charge later that year. He was convicted for those crimes and spent 27 years in prison. Pruitt remains in custody in California awaiting extradition. This is the third decades old cold case SPD has solved in as many years.







Precinct Highlights

SPD Creates Reorganization Plan to Increase Officer Availability

Spokane Police responded to some 273 calls for service (CFS) every day in Spokane in 2022. To date this year, that's a 5.2% increase from CFS in 2021. With SPD officer staffing levels well below the national average per population, SPD is looking at creative ways to continue to provide excellent service and enhance safety and security for community members. SPD has designed a plan intended to more efficiently schedule officers to decrease response time to calls for service, to put more officers on the streets to respond and be pro-active, to address officer fatigue, and to reduce mandatory overtime. The plan means re-assignment

of some officers, units, and command staff to various sectors within the city that each team is responsible for.

The overarching goal is for SPD to return to a truer form of Community Oriented Policing with officers developing relationships and ownership in their assigned neighborhoods. The reorganization goes into effect January 8, 2023.

Northwest Adam Sector	Northeast Baker Sector	South Charlie Sector	Downtown David Sector
Captain Tom Hendren	Captain Mark Griffiths	Captain Matt Cowles	Captain Dave Singley
			

New Tactical Flight Officers



Both Makalia McKitrick and Caitlyn Anderson were pinned as full-fledged Tactical Flight Officers (TFO) for the Spokane Regional Air Support Unit (SRASU). They not only completed a rigorous one-year training program, but also had over fifty hours of flight each. They are a great asset to SPD as well and the SRASU team.

Officer McKitrick recently helped find a missing person. On November 11, while on a scheduled patrol flight, Post Falls Police Department called asking for help searching for a missing hiker somewhere in Q'emiln park. With about 30 minutes of fuel remaining, the SRASU flew directly there and searched the surrounding area while PFPD officers searched on foot and with air support.

About 16 minutes after arriving on scene, TFO Makalia McKitrick, using the thermal camera, found the missing person standing in a small clearing on a narrow trail set back from the river's edge. The SRASU illuminated the subject with our searchlight and guided a pair of PFPD officers to the missing person's location.

Outreach Update

Embrace Washington – Lunch with a Cop

Five-year-old twins Romeo and Reuben love everything about police officers. So, meeting one in person and going for a ride in his police cruiser was a dream come true. "They were so excited," said their mother, Lana Annis. "It was a great way to celebrate their fifth birthdays."

Reuben's lucky raffle ticket won the law enforcement-themed basket at Embrace Washington's Santa Breakfast for children in foster care. The gift basket included lunch with a police officer at Longhorn Barbecue and a ride-along in a police car.

Annis and her husband, James, adopted the twin boys earlier this year after several years in foster care. The couple brought them home to foster when they were just ten weeks.

The unforgettable police-themed birthday party included lunch with City of Spokane Police Department Officer Prim. After lunch, the boys slid into the police vehicle with Officer Prim, who blared the sirens and flashed the lights as part of the boys' ride of a lifetime.



The organization's mission is to fulfill the unique needs of children experiencing foster care to build healthy foundations for a brighter future. The organization offers support services to over 1,400 children experiencing foster care and their families in Eastern Washington. Support services include car seats, new beds, duffel bags, educational tutoring, and therapy equipment for children with disabilities, as well as events for foster families.

Adopt-a-Family

With the help of Les Schwab, Christian Brothers Automotive, and Spokane Police Foundation, SPD was able to help 18 local families with Christmas. Families were recommended by school counselors and resulted in approximately 100 individuals receiving Christmas gifts. Below, Officer Jen Kerns celebrates with kids, and Officer Kerns and Sergeant Rogan are pictured with presents.

