



SPOKANE POLICE DEPARTMENT
CHIEF OF POLICE
CRAIG N. MEIDL

Strategic Initiatives
March 2023 Report



Public Safety and Community Health Committee Briefing
March 6, 2023



Excerpts of Commendations
(Personal Identifying Information has been removed)

I wanted to commend your team for the assistance that they provided to our staff on Saturday morning. We have a very volatile patient, and he was escalating Saturday morning. Our team did a great job of attempting to de-escalate, but the patient was not agreeable to all of the things that needed to be done to ensure his safety and that of our other patients and staff. Realizing that we were going to need to go hands on, our charge requested that police come and act as a standby just in case the patient overpowered our staff. Several of your officers arrived and worked very collaboratively with our staff to get the patient cared for in the safest, most effective manner possible given the circumstances. Our staff could not say enough nice things about the assistance that we received, and about the manner in which your staff stood by to help, should there been a need to do so. This kind of collaboration relationship is exactly what we are working to develop with the police, EMS, and the other mental health agencies in the area, in an effort to provide the best care we can for this group of patients. Please express our thanks to your team for the effort they put forth to help out or staff over the weekend.

This evening, two of your Officers were on a call at for a woman who was found on the ground by a neighbor and was unable to be revived. I arrived on the scene with the woman's sister and was warmly and respectfully approached by Chaplain Amy and **Officer [Neil] Higgins**. We were later joined by **Officer Adam Anderson** as well. In such a tragic and emotional moment, these three compassionate individuals showed us grace and sympathy in ways I cannot put on paper. Each of these Officers went above and beyond their expected duty. Their calm and empathetic demeanor kept emotions and people from escalating, and they were assuring through every step, making sure to be considerate and protective of the woman's family and friends so as not to cause further trauma. They made sure to be as respectful as possible of the woman as her body lay on the ground, giving her one last act of dignity by covering her up and standing over her until the Medical Examiner arrived. What they did tonight cannot be measured for the peace and reassurance it gave us was priceless. Our community is so much better with Officers such as them, I cannot say thank you enough for all they did tonight. Please let them know that their kindness and respect will not be forgotten, I commend their actions and am proud to know it is these Officers and their Colleagues out in our communities making a difference. My sincere gratitude and respect for all of the Spokane Police Officers, you are so appreciated.

Officer [Tim] Schwering, I am writing to give you a huge thank you on behalf of the Emerson-Garfield neighborhood. Those of us that live in close proximity to the Lloyd building have noticed a reduction in overall crime, property theft, and disorderly conduct. We know that you have been a huge advocate for our neighborhood and we would just like to recognize you for your work and efforts. Thank you so much for your care and efforts to make this neighborhood a better and safer community for us all! On behalf of ourselves and our neighbors, thank you!!



January 1 through January 31, 2023, Commendations and Complaints

Commendations Received: Total: 18

Complaints Received: Total: 9 (9 from community)

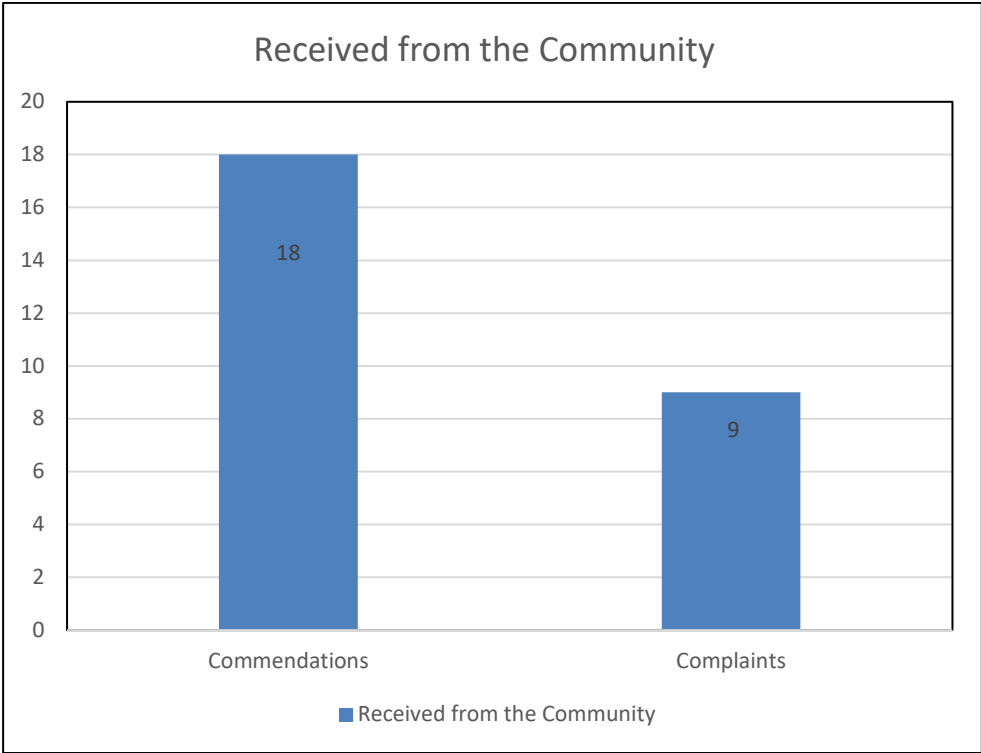
Closed Out as Inquiries: 0 (As of January 31, 2023)

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, 2023

Received by the Office of Police Ombudsman	Total: 5
Received by the Spokane Police Department	Total: 4
Internally Generated by the SPD	Total: 0
Generated by the Community	Total: 9

The department consistently receives more commendations from the community than complaints. In 2023, SPD received double the number of commendations compared to complaints.



Use of Force Update

Deadly Force Incidents (Officer-Involved Shootings)

From January 1- January 31, 2023, there were no deadly force incidents. 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 completed their review and found the shooting to be justified. The case is with Internal Affairs for the 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.

Items of Interest – Hiring and Recruiting

SPD Recruiting Cadre

Below, Recruiters out in the community: Officer Jacquelyn Valencia, Officer Tuan Nguyen, Reserve Officer Mat Allen, Officer Chris Lesser, Officer Marvin Cunningham



Noteworthy Arrests

SPD Arrests Four Suspects in Drive-by Shooting Homicide within 24 Hours

SPD officers identified and removed four violent suspects - who posed a great risk to the community - from the streets and did so within a 24-hour period of the shooting of three people.

On February 8, 2023, just before 8:30PM, SPD received multiple calls from the 1700 block of E 7th Ave regarding a shooting. Officers arrived and located one victim who was deceased, and two victims who were wounded. Officers provided first aid prior to the surviving victims being transported to a local hospital for treatment.

On February 9, 2023, members of SPD's Major Crimes Unit (MCU), Stolen Property Enforcement and Recovery (SPEAR) Unit, Special Investigative Unit (SIU), the Violent Crimes Task Force (VCTF), SWAT, Hostage Negotiation Team (HNT), Drone, and Tactical Operations deployed to apprehend four people believed to be involved in the triple shooting.

SPD had asked for the public's assistance in locating a vehicle that was possibly involved in the incident. An observant citizen called in a tip and the victim's stolen Honda Odyssey was located in the Spokane Valley. During the deployment, officers tracked the vehicle, which was driven by one of the suspects. As officers approached, the suspect abandoned the vehicle and fled on foot. After a brief attempt to escape, he was apprehended without incident.

Later in the day, officers located two more suspects at a house in the 700 block of E. Wellesley and with assistance from SWAT, apprehended the male and female without incident as well. The final suspect was located at a motel in the 7000 block of E. Trent. SWAT members observed the suspect, approached him, and announced commands to surrender. The suspect ignored the commands and fled towards a motel room. SWAT members attempted to control the suspect who fought violently with officers, including pulling a gun from his pocket. SWAT managed to control the suspect utilizing less lethal apprehension tools. One officer suffered a minor injury during the apprehension.

The following individuals were arrested and charged with 1 count of 1st Degree Murder and 2 counts of 1st Degree Assault: Hagen F. Charbonneau (18) – apprehended with the vehicle, Gavin M. McGregor (21) and Sapphire B. Jesfersen (20) –apprehended at the Wellesley location, and a 16-year-old juvenile located at the motel. The juvenile was also charged with 1st Degree Robbery. McGregor has one prior felony conviction for 2nd Degree Robbery.

Suspect with Violent History Arrested for Downtown Assault

On January 27, 2023, just before 9 AM, an adult female was walking near Main and Stevens in Downtown Spokane. The woman was accosted by a male suspect who reportedly made a vulgar sexual comment before abruptly assaulting the victim. The suspect knocked the victim to the ground and struck her repeatedly. Several bystanders heard the assault and quickly came to the victim's aid, apparently interrupting the incident and causing the suspect to flee. The victim sustained serious, but non-life-threatening injuries.



Responding SPD officers began collecting evidence, interviewing witnesses, and searching for the suspect. About an hour later, SPD officers located the suspect near the Monroe Street Bridge. The suspect, later identified as 28-year-old Avondre Graham, was detained. During the detention process, Graham behaved violently; he attempted to kick and headbutt officers, and at one point reached for an officer's firearm while stating that he would take the gun and kill the officer with it. He also attempted to spit on an officer.

Numerous pieces of evidence linked Graham to the seemingly unprovoked assault, and he was booked into Spokane County Jail. Graham is a two-time convicted felon. In 2013 he pled guilty to Murder 2nd Degree after stabbing a woman to death. Graham's criminal history also includes a robbery conviction stemming from a separate attack of a woman which occurred after the murder.

He was booked into Spokane County Jail and is being held on charges that include Assault 2nd Degree (substantial bodily harm -sexual motivation) and resisting arrest. He also faces charges for an unrelated investigation. Additional charges are possible.



Downtown Sector Update

Foot Patrols

Since the new staffing configuration took place, there are more officers in the Downtown sector. Downtown has deployed at least two officers on foot patrol daily from 0800-1200.

Drug Enforcement Emphasis

On Friday January 27, 2023, Team D2, with the assistance of SPD Special Investigative Unit (SIU), Violent Crimes Task Force (VCTF), and SWAT, conducted a drug enforcement emphasis in Downtown Spokane.

During the four-hour emphasis between 7-11 (Division / 2nd) and the STA Plaza, five people were arrested and booked into the Spokane County Jail on charges related to delivery of controlled substances. Officers seized drugs including fentanyl pills and methamphetamine as well as cash and one vehicle.

A sixth suspect with probable cause to arrest from the day before was located by Officers Brad Moon and Casey Jones the following morning, and he was arrested and booked. Drug evidence was collected, and his vehicle was towed pending a search warrant.



Crime Prevention

- The Downtown Precinct focused on the area around 7/11 in February 2023. Officers provided high visibility crime suppression with the focus on the reduction of ALL crime and calls for service in the one block area around to improve the conditions.
- In January, Downtown focused on Short – 2nd/Pine – Division. Officers continued to see high calls for service in the area, and officer-involved activities increased. Part I crimes were reduced during January, starting at five during January 4-17, 2023. There was only one Part I crime between January 18-30, 2023.
- Lieutenant Waters spoke to businesses about Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) improvements to properties, including increased signage, better lighting, tree removal, and security CCTV.
- Downtown officers also focused on vehicle prowling. From January 4-17, 2023, there were 48 vehicle prowling incidents. From January 18-23, there were 23.

Behavioral Health Unit

The Regional Behavioral Health Unit is comprised of Spokane Police officers, Spokane County Sheriff's Office deputies, and clinicians from Frontier Behavioral Health. The unit responds to calls for service with people in crisis, allowing patrol officers to take other calls while BHU members de-escalate the crisis calls for service and assist individuals.

In January 2023, the BHU reported that they responded to 671 calls for service. 79% of their contacts resulted in an outcome other than the hospital or jail. 0.07% were arrested. 15.7% of contacts were emergently detained. No force was used beyond handcuffing. They provided follow up to 106 individuals.

BHU Officer Receives Award



Officer Richie Plunkett was the recipient of the West Spokane Wellness Partnership Community Champion Award. The community member who nominated him wrote that "Officer Plunkett works for the mental health department for police. He is friendly and nice. He treats me how I would want to be treated. He had talked to me about programs with addiction or to talk to a therapist. He talks with everyone and believes in helping. I got into a shelter and got help with addiction because he worked with me." The nomination also said, "He is very big but very nice," and that is certainly the case with Officer Plunkett.

This program is funded by a Washington State grant and gives BHU members opportunities to provide follow-up to assist individuals. BHU teams worked with a U.S. Army veteran suffering from PTSD and Substance Use Disorder (alcohol). This individual made a habit of repeatedly calling 911 when intoxicated. At one point, the individual made 69 calls to 911 in one 72-hour period. Patrol officers arrested and booked the subject into jail for abusing the 911 system.

In the aftermath of the arrest, BHU members, especially one deputy on our team, continued to contact this veteran and encourage long-term solutions. The BHU staff were persistent and communicated with VA hospital staff and drove the individual to a peer support establishment within the community. This organization provides peer to peer meetings, job training, and social outlets four days a week. At the beginning of January, the client flew down to a VA recovery/treatment facility for inpatient treatment. BHU members were very glad to see the individual receive treatment.

Memorial Sign Dedication



Thank you to Spokane County Fallen Officers Memorial Project for a touching memorial sign dedication at the Spokane Police Academy. Family members of Police Officer John Henry Miller were present as he was remembered more than 80 years after his death. Officer Miller served with SPD for 10 years and was attending FBI Investigations School when he was accidentally shot by another attendee while practicing quick draws with their weapons. The memorial sign is located by the firing range as a reminder of the importance of firearm safety.

At Left: Grandson Jeff Upham, SPD Chaplain Denny Klamath, Nancy Upham, and their brother-in-law Duane Bordwell at Officer Miller's gravesite, following the Memorial sign dedication.

Outreach Update

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) Assessments for SPD Partners

Community Outreach Officer Micah Prim recently completed CPTED Assessments for Northeast Youth Center, West Central Community Center, and Thrive International.

CPTED is a proactive crime-fighting technique. Assessments explore access control, surveillance, territorial reinforcement, and lighting. Officers look at fencing, landscaping, lighting, entrances/exits, alarms, and cameras. Officers often make recommendations for adding No Trespassing signs or signage alerting potential suspects of video monitoring. There are usually many opportunities to add LED light fixtures. The CPTED process also includes meeting with agency staff and discussing safety issues.

Leadership Spokane Class

Spokane Police Academy and Community Outreach held training for Leadership Spokane. Members of the class were shown how Spokane officers go through training. Students were introduced to Defensive Tactics, K9, and VIRTRA.

16 Cents Furniture Stores Teddy Bear Drive

16 Cents Stores donated 100 Teddy bears to the Spokane Police Department. Every time they sold a mattress, the store donated a Teddy Bear. Patrol officers will give out these Teddy Bears when they come across children in a traumatic event.



SPD Volunteers

Recently, volunteers gave a safety talk to a Senior Living facility, and stopped by Larry's Barbershop in the East Central neighborhood.



These Reserve Officers also attended the PACERS Special Olympics practice, along with other SPD staff.

