



SPOKANE POLICE DEPARTMENT
CHIEF OF POLICE
CRAIG N. MEIDL

Strategic Initiatives
November 2023 Report



Public Safety and Community Health Committee Briefing
November 6, 2023



Excerpts of Commendations
(Personal Identifying Information has been removed)

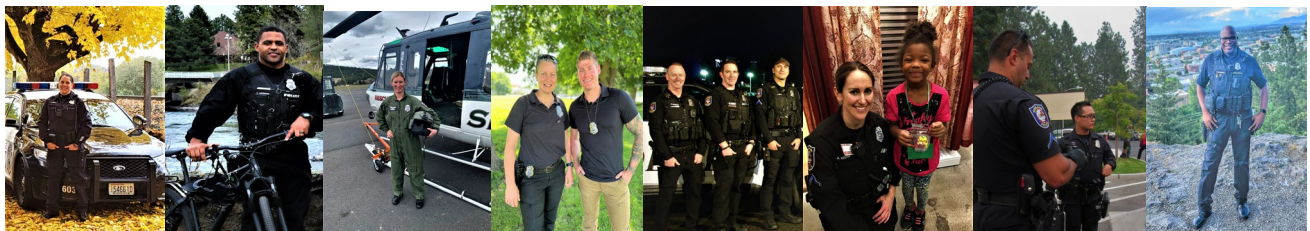
I would like to report a couple of officers [**Corporal Shane Oien and Officer Michele Kernkamp**] who responded to a wellness check. My friend had the wellness check, and he didn't make it. These officers were kind and personable. They took a difficult situation and handled it very professionally. I unfortunately have had to encounter police more often than I would like. I just want you guys to know, whatever you guys are doing, you're got some good officers. They were so professional, personable, kind, and sensitive. They treated everybody there like human beings.

Dear Mayor and Chief, Last week at the corner of 44th and Martin, at Hamblen Park, a very serious event occurred where a multi-warranted felon hiding in a neighbor's garage was apprehended. My wife and I observed the whole event from across the street. It lasted well over an hour until the **SPD SWAT** team was able to take the suspect into custody. No shots were fired, and no one was injured. I wish to highly commend the exceptional professionalism and skill we observed by the city police for the methods and training they employed to take this accused felon down. Sadly, this event was not given much local press due to the Hallett fire occurring on the same day. I am in hopes this letter will bring some attention to a job exceedingly well done.

Good afternoon, We were contacted by **Officer Jesse Cahill** who said he found our bike (that was stolen early Sunday morning) and has it ready for us to pick up on Monday. We are not from the area, but will be leaving early Monday morning to pick it up. I'm sure our chances of finding and recovering our bike were slim to none. As you can imagine, we are extremely grateful! We would like to offer our appreciation to Officer Jesse Cahill and his fellow officers and other coworkers for their heroic efforts and service.

I wanted to leave some feedback for **Ms. Jenetta Alford**. I've been in the Army for 18 years and have been all over the country. She is by far the best public records technician that I've encountered in 18 years. If she is going to put in for retirement any time soon, she is going to leave some pretty big shoes to fill.

Officer Tyler Heiman, I was at a recovery walk and ran into a gentleman. He stated he has been sober and in recovery for many months now. He credited the start of his recovery with you arresting him for shoplifting and trespassing earlier this year. He wanted to pass on his thanks to you for interrupting his addiction cycle, and for treating him kindly while holding him accountable. Thank you for doing your job well, and you never know how people may change their lives when given an opportunity.



January 1 through September 30, 2023, Commendations and Complaints

Commendations Received: **Total: 148**

Complaints Received: **Total: 65 (56 from community)**

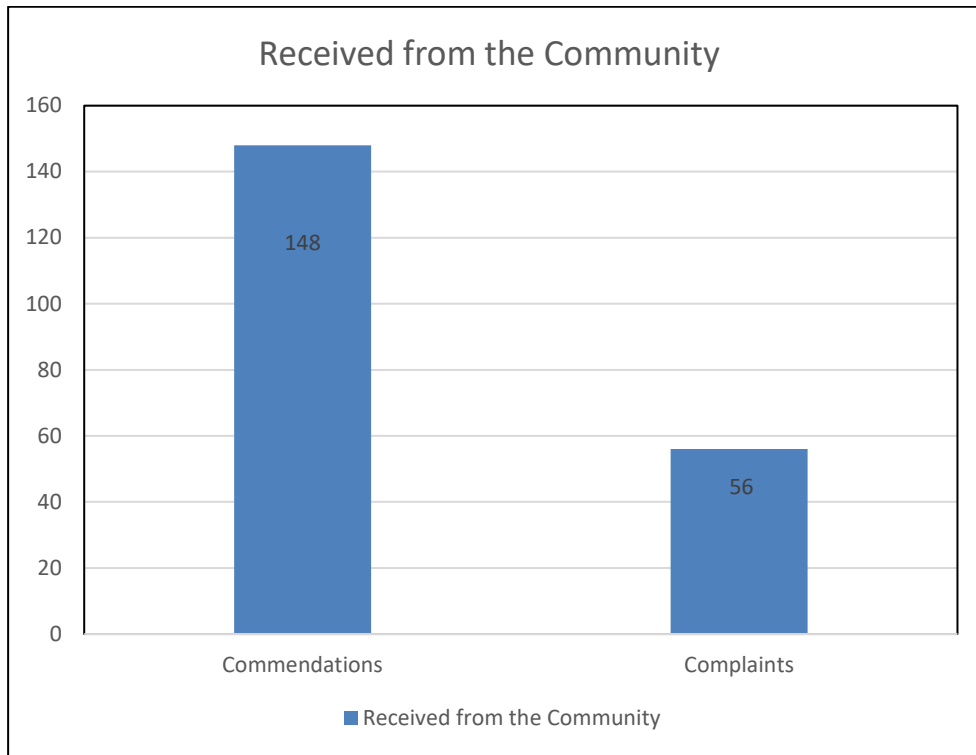
Closed Out as Inquiries: 2 (As of September 30, 2023)

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 September 30, 2023

Received by the Office of Police Ombudsman	Total: 31
Received by the Spokane Police Department	Total: 34
Internally Generated by the SPD	Total: 9
Generated by the Community	Total: 56

The department consistently receives more commendations from the community than complaints.



Deadly Force Incidents (Officer-Involved Shootings)

2023

From January 1 - September 30, 2023, there was one deadly force incident.

Incident 2023-20088146 (Pending Criminal Investigation)

Incident 2023-20088146 took place on May 10, 2023, in the area of 5th and Browne. The Spokane Independent Investigative Response (SIIR) is conducting the criminal investigation.

2022

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

Incident 2022-20012711 (Pending Deadly Force Review Board)

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 Administrative Investigation is complete and will be scheduled for a Deadly Force Review Board.

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 Prosecutor Review)

2022-20214924 took place on December 4, 2022, in the area of Morton and Illinois. The Spokane Independent Investigative Response (SIIR) completed the criminal investigation. The case is with the Prosecutor's Office.



Recent New Non-Commissioned Hires:



Please welcome Barbara Wayant, Records Specialist; Cheyenne Gillespie, Victim Advocate; Ryan Patrick Gold, Dispatcher I; and Shealeigh Visten, Dispatcher I. They joined SPD in August and September 2023.

New Officers Sworn in September 11, 2023:

After the finalization of the Spokane Police Guild contract, SPD fielded interest from many lateral officers hoping to join our department. We recently welcomed officers from Post Falls; WSU Spokane; Mesquite, TX; Metropolitan PD, Kalihi, HI; and Prosser, WA.



These new hires bring extensive experience, and two of the officers are fluent in other languages – Spanish and Russian.

Increasing our Reserve Officers:

We will add more Reserve Officers to the department in November. The 2023 Reserve Officer Academy graduation takes place on November 11, 2023. Our graduates complete the 370-plus hour program on evenings and weekends. They pass a certification examination administered by the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission prior to graduation. We are grateful for the time that our dedicated community members have volunteered to become Reserve Officers.

These volunteers are unpaid, but they still complete a rigorous hiring process. 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.

Below, Reserve Officer applicants during training:



Reserve Officers continue monthly training and volunteering to maintain their status.

Our current Reserve Officers at monthly training:



Recent Recruiting Events

- Unlock Your Future Event at the HUB, involving 1200 area middle schoolers from various school districts.
- Recruiting at Gonzaga University
- Career Fair at Eastern Washington University
- Career Fair at Joint Base Lewis McChord
- Public Safety Test in Pasco, Washington

Drug Education for the Community at the DEA Citizens Academy

The Drug Enforcement Administration - DEA/SPD Joint Citizens Academy, taking place throughout October and November 2023, is teaching community members about the fentanyl epidemic as part of Operation Engage Spokane. Operation Engage Spokane is a comprehensive community-level approach to address the drug epidemic through prevention strategies, facilitating conversations and collaboration with local

partners. The Citizens Academy and Fall Festival are part of the community activities to raise awareness about fentanyl and combat increasing overdoses and overdose deaths. Academy participants got a close-up look at the dangerous drugs threatening our community.

Sector Updates

Adam Sector (Northwest)

Captain Tom Hendren worked with Council Member Karen Stratton to get a new parks ordinance passed to make it a misdemeanor to be in the parks during the overnight hours. This was done to help lower some of the violent crime, specifically shootings, that had taken place our parks over the past couple of years. SPD graveyard teams did an excellent job issuing warnings to people that were in the parks overnight.

One of Adam Sector’s hotspots was the area around Maple/Maxwell. There is a 7-11 and a DSHS building in that area that were the main congregation areas for people. The 7-11 is enforcing a no loitering policy, which allowed SPD to move people along from the area. Sergeant Maplethorpe from mid-shift worked with DSHS to put up No Trespassing signs. These two measures, along with a lot of pro-active work from officers, has helped to cut down on the crime in that area.

Another area that was extremely active was around the intersection of Indiana/Division, specifically the Dollar Tree, Salvation Army, Red Bench Bible Church, and Hennessey Funeral Home. Adam Sector leaders worked with those businesses to put up No Trespassing signs, which lowered the number of people camping in that area but more importantly, reduced loitering for the purpose of drugs sales.

Adam Sector leaders are working with Volunteers of America to help reduce trespassing and other drug related crimes at two of their permanent supportive housing units, 1310 W Boone and 1529 N Maple. Officer Prim completed Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) evaluations at both properties and VOA is in the process of making some improvements to those properties. Adam Sector leaders are also working on meeting with the tenants of both locations to discuss crime prevention and hopefully empower them to report crime at their homes.

In addition to regular Neighborhood Council Meetings, Adam Sector leaders have met with a group of businesses from the Shadle area to discuss crime prevention, tenants, and businesses from Kendall Yards to discuss some of the issues they were dealing with. Leaders are also meeting regularly with Transitions to discuss ways to make their properties safer.

Downtown Sector

Sergeant Yamada’s team created a team photo at the end of August. Community members wanted to join in.



Noteworthy Arrests

On October 9, 2023, SPD officers investigated a domestic violence incident which occurred in Northeast Spokane. An adult female reported her ex-boyfriend had assaulted her the day prior and at the time was armed with a machete. The following day, the ex-boyfriend returned and entered the victim's apartment before assaulting her multiple times, including via strangulation, and causing multiple injuries that were visible to officers.

Investigating officers were able to establish probable cause to arrest the suspect for Burglary 1st degree – DV, and Assault 2nd degree – DV. Officers also obtained information the suspect may be armed with a firearm, and that he had expressed a desire to have a violent confrontation with law enforcement.

A little after 8PM, SPD located the suspect, who was in a vehicle, in the 6700 block of N Division St. Due to the nature of the incident multiple resources, including SWAT, were utilized to effect the arrest.

Officers were able to immobilize the suspect's vehicle, but he refused to surrender, instead remaining in the vehicle and indicating he wanted a violent confrontation with officers. A chemical agent was deployed and the suspect exited his SUV, but he was still not compliant. A canine unit was used to apprehend the male, and he was taken into custody without further force being utilized. The suspect, a 38-year-old male, has 11 felony convictions in Washington, to include assault, violation of protection orders, and burglary.

Due to the sensitive, domestic violence, nature of this investigation, the suspect's name is not listed in order to avoid tacitly identifying the victim. This is an on-going investigation, and additional charges are possible.

Behavioral Health Unit Update

The Behavioral Health Unit (BHU) was created with grant funding in 2019. The goal of this grant was to establish a regional multidisciplinary team that will more efficiently and effectively respond to people in behavioral health crises, resulting in reductions to emergency department and jail stays. The BHU pairs law enforcement with mental health clinicians. Both the Spokane Police Department (SPD) and the Spokane County Sheriff's Office (SCSO) operate co-deployed teams with Frontier Behavioral Health (FBH) to respond to individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis.

In September 2023, the BHU responded to 431 calls, including Suicidal calls, Crisis calls, and Welfare Checks. 167 unduplicated individuals were contacted. 83 individuals were contacted for follow-up. 1.4% of contacts resulted in an arrest.

The BHU shares anecdotal stories with the grant funders explaining how unit de-escalates calls for service and assists involved individuals. Officer Ben Manning and clinician Bree Carbury, one of our co-deployed teams, provided the following information:

The Behavioral Health Unit (BHU) was alerted about a ten-year-old child with developmental delays who within a week caused nine calls for service (mostly handled by Patrol teams) due to his behavioral incidents where he assaulted his mother and siblings. The child's violent behavior came on suddenly, so the family



didn't have resources in place. The family was suddenly scrambling to get connected with DSHS, mental health services and other services, but were finding long wait lists.

BHU worked to get the family connected with Frontier Behavioral Health's Children, Youth, and Family Mobile Crisis Team and assisted them getting a priority case manager through Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA). The child was quickly teamed up with a virtual Wraparound Intensive Services (WISE) team through Excelsior Youth Center. BHU also assisted with the setup for DDA services starting next month. The officer and clinician visited the child several times a week to build a positive relationship and observed him starting to use coping skills we had previously discussed. Since that first week, there has been only one call for service and that was de-escalated almost immediately when BHU arrived on scene. No hospitalization or arrest was needed. BHU will continue to keep tabs on the child and the rest of the family, striving for early intervention.

Community Outreach

Outreach in the Middle Schools

Community Outreach officers have been busy teaching CCLR classes at Salk and Glover Middle Schools. CCLR stands for College, Career, and Life Readiness. This curriculum helps kids learn about careers, explore their interests, prepare and train for their next steps, and end with being ready to transition to life after high school or graduation.

Youth Safety Education

- The Community Outreach Team put on a presentation at Lutheran Community Services Northwest (LCSNW) for refugee youth about laws, driving safety, and overall safety.
- Officers presented safety education to a local Cub Scout troop.
- Officers visited four classes of preschoolers and kindergartners at Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church's school.



Drug Take Back Event

SPD is participating in the local Drug Take Back Event, in partnership with ESD 101 and the DEA, at the Northeast Community Center and West Central Community Center locations. Drug Take Back events are organized to prevent unused prescription drugs finding their way into the wrong hands. It allows people to clean out their medicine cabinets and safely and anonymously dispose of prescription drugs.

Trunk or Treat Events

Community Outreach officers and SPD volunteers will be attending multiple Trunk or Treat events in Spokane, at community centers, elementary schools, and the American Indian Community Center.

Crime Prevention Education

Detective Tim Schwering created a presentation about what he's seeing as he's investigating fraud cases, with people being victimized by crypto currency scams. Recent scamming methods often start out as a "wrong number" text or call, where the scammer tries to connect, or victims are targeted through social media and LinkedIn and dating sites. Detective Schwering explains how the scammers try to gain trust and then victimize people, how scammers try to get them to mail prepaid cards or invest in cryptocurrency, as well as what to do you if you are a victim. SPD has reached out to several community groups and all the neighborhood councils to see if they are interested in hosting a presentation. Many of the neighborhood councils are interested in future dates.

Presentations so far have included

- Regional Special Investigation Unit Teams
- Spokane C.O.P.S.
- Lutheran Community Services Northwest
- City of Spokane Public Safety and Community Health Committee
- Spokane Aurora Northwest Rotary Club
- Spokane Area Jewish Family Services
- Spokane United We Stand (Asian communities)
- West Hills Neighborhood Council
- Lincoln Heights Neighborhood Council
- World Relief
- Later in Life and Vulnerable Adult Task Force
- Carl Maxey Center



SPD Volunteers

As we approach Veteran's Day, we celebrate Citizen Volunteer and Former SPD Reserve Officer John Case, a U.S. Navy Veteran.

John served in the U.S. Navy in Vietnam. He later became a Reserve Police Officer for SPD in November 1985 and served until November 2013 (28 years). He then transitioned to our Citizen Volunteers. He has volunteered for 38 years with SPD.

