Letter of Award
Chief's Citation Award
2021

To: Michelle Loucks
From: Craig N. Meidl - Chief of Police
Date: February 21, 2022
Re: Chief's Citation Award

Law Enforcement Technology and Operations Manager Shawna Ernst nominated the Telestaff/Payroll Recovery Team to receive the Chief's Citation Award. This award is intended to recognize members of a team or unit for participating in an incident, event, or series of events, or project which has a substantial, positive impact on the community or police department. It must be superior in nature and further the department's mission and overall effectiveness. When the Special Awards Committee reviewed this nomination, it was clear that the Telestaff/Payroll Recovery Team is most deserving of this award.

"During the weekend of December 11, 2021, our payroll/staffing vendor, Kronos, was hit with ransomware, impacting millions of people who use their system including employees in the public and private sector and both major companies and small businesses. That system remains completely unavailable. December 13th was payroll processing day. Without a system in place, Maria and Mel had to process payroll by hand in order to make sure that commissioned and civilian staff received their last paycheck before Christmas. They quickly determined the best course of action and started entry. Due to the volume of work, they recruited a lot of help from Kiley Friesen, Angie Napolitano, Michelle Loucks and Chris Wheeler. The next day they came back early for finalization and SPD employees received the most accurate paycheck possible.

At the same time, Lisa Smith and Chris Seidel from TARU developed a course of action for standing up an interim system using Spokane Fire Department's Telestaff servers. Chris worked closely with Bradley Dilg from SFD to stand up an instance of the software so that Lisa could begin the painful process of schedule entry into the interim system. Lisa hand entered schedule information for the 450 people at SPD. She had to account for all staff-related changes that have occurred in the last year and a half – from schedules to promotions to name changes. Through all of that hand entry, only 15 people reached out for corrections.

The interim system was deployed on December 21st, but we ran into software-related issues with approvals and a few other features. Once again, Mel and Maria, with the help of Kiley Friesen, Angie Napolitano, Michelle Loucks and Chris Wheeler, processed our payroll by hand to ensure that everyone got their paychecks on time. They worked very long hours including during their regular days off as well as their holidays showing that they are incredibly dedicated to the employees of our department. They maintained a positive attitude even though this had to be done in addition to their regular duties. Without their efforts it would have been impossible to get the men and women of the police department their checks during the holiday season.

Due to the software issues, we turned to Bradley and he was able to determine the cause of those issues and put a fix in place by building out a brand new server for our use. Bradley was quick to act, incredibly helpful, and with assistance from Rex Franklin (Network) and Cylas Engeland (Enterprise Administration) from ITSD, had us ready to go on the 28th. With support from SFD leadership, Bradley set aside projects he was working on for his own department to help us handle this major cybersecurity crisis.

Thanks to this group of hard-working, dedicated, meticulous people, we all received paychecks during the holiday season and we have an interim system that is fully functional. Payroll can be done using our normal process now. If we were to take on a server move of this magnitude, we would normally take several months to implement. To have an interim system just over two weeks after the initial cybersecurity event is remarkable."

Michelle , I am honored to present you with the Chief's Citation Award. A copy of this document will be placed in your personnel file.

Craig N. Meidl
Chief of Police