



Borough of Red Bank

POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Memorandum

To: Ziad Shehady

From: Darren McConnell
Chief of Police

Date: January 8, 2020

Re: 2019 Year End Report

During the month of December, we had a total of 19 reportable UCR crimes. Most were simple assaults and thefts, along with one Aggravated Assault and one burglary. The UCR report for the month is attached.

There were no internal affairs complaint filed during the month of December.

We are continuing to move forward with re-shaping our Records Bureau and will be conducting interviews in the coming weeks for civilian positions.

As for the 2019 calendar year, we had a total of 227 UCR crimes which is a nearly 20% reduction from 2018 and continues the downward trend. The annual UCR report is attached. Overall incidents, or calls for service, remains essentially flat. The incidents of traffic summonses is also maintained at the approximate five-year average of 5,500 per year.

Notably, our incidents of Use of Force by officers as well as our internal affairs complaints are at an all-time low and significantly reduced from prior years. We had eighteen (18) use of force incidents in 2019 as compared to the prior five-year average of approximately thirty (30) per year. We had five (5) internal affairs complaints investigated in 2019, four (4) of which were sustained. All the sustained cases were relatively minor in nature and resulted in either minor discipline or re-training and counseling. For comparison purposes, we typically investigate approximately ten (10) internal affairs cases per year.

While it may appear based on the comparisons and trends in Use of Force incidents and Internal Affairs complaints, that officers in the department were previously acting improperly, that is not the case. In previous years, every use of force case was reviewed by command staff and none in those five years were deemed excessive or inappropriate. Additionally, in prior years the vast majority of internal affairs cases were unfounded or unsubstantiated. These outcomes demonstrate that our officers have been and continue to conduct themselves professionally and in accordance with policy in the vast majority of circumstances.

I feel that the reductions we experienced in this past year are the result of a variety of factors, including extensive de-escalation training that our officers now undertake each year, outstanding supervision by our experienced Sergeants and Lieutenants, the quality and caliber of officers entering the profession, the fact that the public is aware that most police officers are equipped with cameras and microphones during interactions, and a certain amount of good fortune.

During calendar year 2019 we began a homeless outreach program within the department in coordination with various community partners. This was the result of a noticeable increase in our homeless population and an attempt to connect those individuals with necessary services. This program has recognized some success and will continue and expand in 2020.

Due to several tragic incidents across the country, as of the beginning of this year our officers have initiated visits to our many houses of worship during their individual services. We have done this for many years in our schools and felt that expanding it to our houses of worship would reassure the community that we are present and watchful for potentially dangerous situations and will also help our officers familiarize themselves with the various locations, the clergy and staff and the congregants.

As we are all aware, the opioid epidemic continues to plague the entire country including our own community as evidenced by the mass overdose incident near the end of 2019. Expanding our ability as a department to bolster our response to these incidents is a priority for 2020. We are working with other local agencies and our prosecutor's office to develop programs to aid both victims of overdose and narcotic offenders in an attempt to curb this issue. Additionally, as a result of funding made available very recently by the Department of Health, we will be equipping every officer in the department with Narcan, a drug used to reverse the effects of opioids. This will insure the rapid deployment of the drug for patients as well as protect our officers who could accidentally come in contact with opioids in the performance of their duties. Currently, we have several vehicles on patrol at any given time, equipped with Narcan, however expanding its availability will enhance our response capabilities.

Finally, during the first half of 2020 we expect to have three retirements of police officers. As those retirements occur I will be looking to backfill those positions. The borough is projected to recognize a significant savings with the departure of senior members of the department, even with the positions being backfilled.