



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

September 20, 2022
Police Department

TITLE: BI-ANNUAL UPDATE TO THE CITY COUNCIL REGARDING POLICE DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS, SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

SUMMARY

The Pleasanton Police Department presents an update to the City Council on community policing and department operations twice per year. This report provides a programmatic update on School Resource Officer, stop data collection, and hiring initiatives.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Receive update on Police Department operations, services and activities.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Receiving the report does not create immediate impacts to the City's operating budget.

BACKGROUND

This bi-annual report provides an update on key initiatives to include the School Resource Officer (SRO) program, stop-data collection and the current challenges in hiring new police positions.

DISCUSSION

Toward creating consistency in the biannual reporting, each Spring report will summarize and compare year-end data points and each Fall the report will focus on programmatic areas of interest and identify the most significant challenge(s) facing the Police Department. The areas of focus in this September 2022 report are the School Resource Officer program, the Racial and Identity Profiling Act (RIPA), and hiring and staffing of new police positions.

School Resource Officer Program

In November 2021, the City Council approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City and Pleasanton Unified School District (PUSD). In addition to other areas, the MOU outlined how PUSD will collaborate and be involved in the selection process of the SRO. A recent opportunity to involve PUSD staff in the selection of a new SRO was presented when one of the SRO's terms was completed at the conclusion of the 2021-2022 school year. The selection panel included two PUSD employees and a police department employee who recommended Officer Nicole "Nikki" Olah to fill the open position at Amador Valley High School. Consistent with the MOU, Officer Olah completed the 40-hour basic SRO training class prior to the start of the school year.

The MOU also recommends joint training for officers and school staff. In July 2022, the Police Department hosted a two-day training at the Firehouse Arts Center for school administrators, campus supervisors, SROs, and other school personnel on topics related to managing a school environment, including rights of the school and police personnel, search and seizure laws, drug recognition, gang intervention, and current case law for school administrators and best practices when working in a school environment. This class was recommended by prior PUSD attendees who participated in the training in 2017.

The MOU also encourages the involvement of SROs in classroom presentations. At the beginning of this current school year, SROs partnered with school staff and presented to students in the middle schools about their respective roles on campus and relayed important information on how to be successful in middle school and beyond. The SROs are also in the process of planning similar presentations to high school freshman to introduce themselves and provide an overview of the SRO role at the high schools.

Another area of focus was sensitivity when making arrests of students on campus. Since March 2022, officers have made three arrests at Pleasanton schools. One case was a fight between 15-year-old and 16-year-old males witnessed by the SRO. The juveniles, who had run away from the officer, were later identified and were recommended for diversion through Horizons Family Services. The other case was the arrest of a 15-year-old student for drug sales. The drugs were discovered after the

student was searched by a school administrator for being in a bathroom with other students who had been vaping. The suspect in this case was arrested and booked at Juvenile Hall due to the seriousness of the crime on campus. Then in May, the SRO made three additional arrests of students (two 15-year-olds and a 16-year-old male) for theft of other student's bicycles. The cases were diverted to Horizons Family Services. All of these arrests were made in private (not in front of other students).

As discussed in the most recent City Council update, the Alternate Response to Mental Health Unit (ARU) was established in January 2022 and is continuing to see positive results in schools. Since then, ARU conducted 32 mental health evaluations for students who may have been in crisis; of those calls, only two students were placed on a mental health hold. This is in comparison to seven students out of 32 instances as noted in the prior update to Council.

An SRO MOU Think Tank was created that is comprised of a cross section of stakeholders specifically to implement and report on initiatives in the MOU. The Think Tank has representatives from PUSD that include district staff, social workers, high school principals, parent liaisons and SROs. This group met several times to discuss SRO uniforms and options for an alternative look. Although no formal recommendation was made, the consensus of the group was to keep the SRO uniform traditional for the day-to-day interactions, but to have a "softer look" (i.e., polo shirt, khaki pants) for some calls for service where it may be more appropriate. The group discussed several incidences where officers already use this approach, such as mental health crisis evaluations, interviewing victims, and in some classroom presentation settings. The group highlights how SROs are no longer the primary responding person to students in crisis as this responsibility is now being handled by ARU whose officers do not wear a uniform.

In the previous update to Council, police department staff shared the new curriculum being developed and taught in collaboration with police officers and PUSD faculty in elementary schools to replace the DARE program. Dependent on staffing, staff plans to have an officer in this new role for the 2023-24 school year.

Racial and Identity Profiling Act

In 2016 Governor Brown signed Assembly Bill 953 titled the Racial and Identity Profiling Act (RIPA). RIPA requires peace officers in California to collect data on all instances where a person is stopped and has been phased in during the past five years based on the number of sworn officers. The data collected includes 16 potential fields. The Police Department began collecting data, in accordance with state mandates in January 2022, and although the department had collected stop data for more than 20 years, the requirements of RIPA are far greater. The collection form also has a timer to determine the amount of time officers spend completing the form to quantify the amount of time spent fulfilling the state mandate. Since RIPA is an unfunded state mandate, the City submitted for reimbursement in the recent SB 90 and anticipates receiving up to \$90,000 in funding from the State. Data from Pleasanton and other police agencies will be compiled by the State Department of Justice and included in the 2024 RIPA

report. The RIPA report primarily benchmarks officer stop data against the American Community Survey (ACS) demographic data. While a comparison of this nature makes for an easier comparison, it does not consider some of the variables that exist in Pleasanton such as being located at the intersection of two interstates and the retail draw of several shopping areas. The effects of the aforementioned variables are evident in that historically approximately 75 percent of the people arrested in Pleasanton are not Pleasanton residents.

The Police Department began collecting RIPA data on October 1, 2021. Staff reviewed data up to August 15, 2022, for this report. During this time period 9,605 records were collected. Table 1 below breaks down stop data based upon ethnicity of those stopped as compared to Pleasanton residency, and those who were stopped associated to a call for service and not officer initiated.

Police and Information Technology staff are developing a tool for deeper analysis in order to conduct multi-variable analysis for future reports. This is an important component as it will allow for police managers to look deeper into the data without waiting until the stop data report is published 12-18 months after the data is collected. Some of the additional data points to consider are discretionary officer actions post-stop, comparison of demographic data against known offenders, and call for service stop data compared against stops that are officer initiated.

Table 1

Ethnicity	All Records	Pleasanton Resident	Requests for Service	ACS Data Comparison
Asian	12.5%	14.2%	7.5%	37.4%
Black/African American	8.3%	5.9%	17.8%	1.6%
Hispanic/Latino(a)	20.6%	15.7%	23.6%	10.4%
Middle Eastern or South Asian	14.8%	16.8%	10.4%	Included
Multiracial	1.2%	1.5%	1.5%	6.6%
Native American	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.5%
Pacific Islander	0.9%	0.5%	1.0%	0.1%
White	41.7%	45.3%	38.3%	46.2%

Recruitment and Hiring

The biggest challenge facing law enforcement in general, and the Pleasanton Police Department specifically, is the hiring of officers. The Police Department is authorized for 83 sworn peace officer positions and 35 professional staff. The 83 sworn positions include three administrators, five managers, 13 supervisors and 62 officers; of those, 13 are presently unable to perform the daily work of their assigned role due to injury or training status. The 35 professional staff members are comprised of two managers, four dispatch supervisors, 11 dispatchers, six community service officers, three records clerks, three administrative support positions and one property and evidence technician. The hiring process for a police officer or police dispatcher is more involved than other

positions in the City and requires more time to fill. While every City employee undergoes a background check, the background requirements for police officers and dispatchers are more onerous. Additionally, police officer classifications require the completion of psychological, polygraph and medical exams, while dispatchers complete a psychological exam. The hiring process for both positions generally takes between three to four months from post-interview to final offer letter.

Law enforcement agencies regionally, statewide and nationally are challenged with officer recruitment and retention – fewer applicants are applying, and more people are leaving the profession prior to retirement. The Police Department is not immune from this trend as the department has seen fewer people responding to job postings and current officers moving to other police departments or leaving profession entirely. As an example, in the last two years two officers left the profession to move out of state, another resigned to run a family business, and two left the Police Department to continue their policing careers in cities within Placer County. While medical and service retirements are a normal part of personnel management, the trend of officers leaving the profession prior to retirement or pursuing a policing career in other cities is new to the Pleasanton Police Department likely a new on-going trend as a result of increased Bay Area housing prices, a change in generational priorities, and the new California retirement formula.

The reduced pool of applicants and unexpected departures created seven vacant officer positions earlier this year. The impact of vacancies was compounded by an additional eight officers unable to work their assigned duties as a result of injuries. Presently, the department has four vacant officer positions and has seven officers out on injury. The combination of vacant positions and those unable to work necessitated an emergency staffing schedule during the busy summer months and extensive over-time to cover patrol shifts and special events. While the recent addition of five new officers has eliminated the need for the emergency patrol schedule and allowed for better contingency planning for unanticipated vacancies, extensive over-time for patrol and special events is still occurring.

The reduced number of applicants has led to a highly competitive recruitment landscape among police agencies in the greater Bay Area for both entry-level and tenured officers. The Police Department has taken some proactive steps to aid in the recruitment of officers to include increasing the capacity of background investigators, assigning a dedicated recruitment officer, and re-instatement of the recruitment team to attend recruitment events. Staff anticipates using additional recruitment strategies including directed efforts to attract members of under-represented groups and an increased profile on LinkedIn and other professional networking platforms to increase the number of applicants. In addition to strengthening recruitment, staff also plans to over-hire for officer and dispatcher positions as well as using recently retired officers to help bridge the gap between training and filling a position on patrol.

While significant progress has been made to fill current vacancies by hiring eight new officers in the past 12 months, the recruitment landscape remains challenging. In the

past month, one applicant chose to work in another community even though it meant a longer commute and less money. Staff anticipates the need for focused recruitment to continue through 2024 based on anticipated service and medical retirements and general attrition as more officers prioritize a work/life balance and the reality of not being able to afford a home in the Bay Area.

CONCLUSION

This report provides a snapshot of key programs and initiatives in the Pleasanton Police Department. Staff plans to return in March 2023 with the next biannual update that will include annual comparative data points for crime trends, response times, use of force and personnel complaints and commendations.

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