

**CITY COUNCIL AGENDA
REPORT OF DIRECTORS
INFORMATIONAL REPORT**

DATE: April 28, 2015
TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Alex Diaz, Chief of Police
SUBJECT: Review of Banning Police Department

BACKGROUND:

My time as Chief of Police for the Banning Police Department has been a time of productive change, fresh visions and new beginnings.

The Banning Police Department is a full service law enforcement agency, providing police services twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. The goal of our department is to meet the highest ethical and professional standards, and prides itself on the quality of law enforcement services provided to the citizens of Banning. The Banning Police Department continues to strengthen its relationship with the community by establishing a partnership of law enforcement, citizens, community agencies, civic leaders, and public information services. The programs outlined in this report stand out as valuable resources toward implementing the changes we envision for our future. No police department can solve crime or quality of life issues alone. Effective police community interactions, communication, and engagement are critical components to our success.

Our goals in our first year of transition are to continue providing the best customer service to our citizens and visitors alike, to actively recruit the best employees to fill future sworn and non-sworn positions, and to build partnerships with our community, our businesses, and our leaders in order to attract business to our city.

Departmental Reorganization

In the past year, the Banning Police Department has gone through a transformation period, with a change in leadership and a change in direction.

Administration

During the departmental reorganization, and due to patrol staffing shortages, our department transitioned from a Chief of Police-two Lieutenant model to a Chief of Police-one Lieutenant model.

- The goal of the department is to return to a Chief of Police-two Lieutenant model in the near future. During the same time frame, our department established an Executive Assistant position, to handle numerous administrative functions previously handled by the Department's long-time Executive Secretary who retired then returned part-time (and also volunteered) in the department, up until the time we established the Executive Assistant position. This position serves as the primary point of contact for the Chief's office and is

in frequent contact with public officials, representatives from various agencies, executives, managers, employees and members of the community. This position provides advanced administrative support for responding and handling issues received both internally and externally and is vital to the department's administration in ensuring workflow continues smoothly and without interruption.

Sworn Personnel

Police Officers comprise the largest number of sworn officers in the Department. The Police Officer rank is divided into four advancement ranks: Police Officer, Corporal, Sergeant and Lieutenant. A Police Officer may be assigned to a patrol car, a motor traffic bureau or a specialized unit such as the Gang Task Force or the Investigations Bureau. A Police Officer assigned to a patrol unit performs basic duties such as: Responding to the scene of a crime or an accident, Interviewing suspects, witnesses, writing crime reports, responding to radio calls, monitoring any suspicious activity of ongoing crimes, coordinating vehicular traffic, visiting open businesses such as banks, markets, department stores, service stations, and other types to establish a rapport with owners.

The Police Department is staffed by twenty-six police officers with two of those positions currently out on medical leave. The twenty-six officers currently comprise three positions in Administration (chief, lieutenant, administrative sergeant), four positions in Investigations (detective sergeant and three detectives), Gang Unit (one detective), Patrol (a sergeant, and two officers on Team 1, a sergeant and three officers on Team 2, a corporal and four officers on Team 3, and a sergeant and three officers on Team 4); and a School Resource Officer. The twenty-six officers equate to approximately .83 officers per 1000 inhabitants, significantly below the national average of 1.2 officers. Our goal before the end of our first year of reorganization is to have a fully staffed, sworn force of twenty-seven police officers; the number budgeted for the police department. Within the next three years, our goal is to increase our sworn personnel levels to 30, effectively giving us a ratio of 1 officer per 1,000 residents. The 30 position goal would allow us to implement a fully staffed, three-officer, Problem Oriented Policing (P.O.P.) specialized team within the department which deals with a range of community problems and crime prevention, i.e. issues dealing with narcotics, human trafficking and any other problems dealing with quality of life issues.

- The goal of increasing the Department from 27 sworn to 30 sworn is in part a recommendation based on new laws (AB109, and Prop 47) voted into effect by California residents. As of March 2015, our state prison system has released approximately 27,000 inmates under AB109; over 2500 inmates have been released under Prop 47. Property crime has increased throughout the state as well as in our city. In a comparison of Part 1 crimes for the month of March 2014 and March 2015, our city has seen an increase of 56% (18 in March 2014, 28 in March 2015) in burglaries. During the same time frame, our city has had a 36% increase in vehicle theft (11 in March 2014, 15 in March 2015).

AB 109 is a bill that shifts responsibility of housing and supervising a wide variety of inmates from the state to the local level. These changes were required by a federal ruling requiring California to reduce its prison population. The population has been described by the state as non-violent, non-serious and non-sexual offenders. As these felons return from state prison, they will now be supervised by the local county probation departments instead of a state parole officer. In addition, many felons who would have been sent to state prison will now be housed locally. In January 2014, we implemented a software mechanism, allowing us to monitor contacts related to

AB109. To date, our department has had contact with approximately 256 AB109 registrants, dealing with casual contacts, drug related arrests, and criminal related arrests.

Prop. 47 allows inmates serving sentences for crimes affected by the reduced penalties to apply to be resentenced and released early. Those crimes include shoplifting, grand theft and writing bad checks, among others. About 150 inmates a week are being released under the relaxed laws. Initially, 250 to 300 inmates a week were being let out.

Police Reserve Program

Police Reserve Officers are civilians who volunteer their time to a police department and do not receive financial compensation. They perform a variety of functions for a police department, some of which include assisting at fire scenes, medical emergencies, and traffic accidents; patrolling the city via the use a squad car; enforcing parking violations, and assisting police officers with a variety of other tasks; reserve officers have arrest authority and are armed. During our reorganization period, we increased our non-paid Police Officer Reserve positions from one to four; our goal is to increase this program to five before the end of the year.

- Our future goal is to increase our program to ten active non-paid Police Reserve positions.

Dispatch

The Dispatch Center at the Banning Police Department is staffed 24 hours a day. It is the responsibility of the police dispatcher to accurately and as quickly as possible, identify the nature of a call and assist in solving the problem. The dispatcher is the critical link between the citizen and the police officer, as they are responsible for screening calls and transferring that information to the police officer. Because each incoming call may vary from a request for general information to a report of a life threatening incident, the dispatcher must ask specific questions (or control the conversation) to accurately prioritize the call and assign it to a police officer. The faster this information is obtained often determines how quickly an officer is able to respond. During the reorganization period we fully staffed our dispatch center. A recent retirement has opened a dispatch position which we are diligently looking to fill. Our Dispatch Center is currently staffed by one Lead Dispatcher position, five full-time dispatch positions, and one part-time position. Recently, we transitioned one full-time dispatch position to the Code Enforcement team.

- We are currently looking at alternatives to offset the cost of a Code Enforcement Officer position to free a full time dispatch position allowing us to once again fully staff our dispatch center with 8 full-time positions.

Code Enforcement

The goal of Code Enforcement Division is to improve the quality of life in the City of Banning through strategic application of civil code regulation; permitting, inspection, enforcement, and abatement practices; and local government oversight of property use/safety and maintenance, business, event, professional, and construction industries. The City of Banning has a comprehensive code enforcement program, which helps to protect property owner investment, promote general health and welfare; enhance the quality of life and overall appearance of the city. The Code Enforcement Division is currently staffed by one Code Enforcement Officer and a dispatch position.

- We are currently working to transition the dispatch position to a Code Enforcement position.

Records Bureau

Records personnel perform a variety of specialized clerical and technical duties involved in processing various police records and reports; receive, enter, and research data in a records management system; identify and maintain crime activity and known offender information and statistics; and, perform a variety of related duties involved in the maintenance of highly confidential records. Other duties assigned to our Records personnel include Live Scan fingerprint services as well as disseminating reports to our citizens. During the reorganization phase we fully staffed our Record's Bureau, allowing us to open our lobby to the public, Monday through Thursday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Fridays from 8:00 to 12:00 pm; our Records Bureau is currently staffed by three non-sworn personnel.

Property/Evidence Room

The Property/Evidence program is one of the most essential programs within the department. The handling of evidence is of paramount importance to the mission of the Police Department. Our Evidence Room is currently staffed by one non-sworn personnel. This staff member has received specific training focusing on procedures dealing with the storage and disposal of property/evidence. Future goals for our property/evidence room include partnerships with accredited schools to implement a training/externship program.

Chaplain Program

The Police Chaplain Program creates a partnership with various faith-based leaders of a community to respond and assist police and other law enforcement agencies providing faith-based outreach to the citizens of cities and communities. The goal is that by having the Police and Clergy working together during times of crisis or incidents, that a more comprehensive response will be given to those in need. Recently, we added a second Chaplain to our program, bringing the program to a total of two.

- Our goal is to increase the program to three chaplains before the end of the year.

Citizen Volunteer Program

The Citizen Volunteer Program offers a variety of interesting assignments throughout the Department. To date, many volunteers have served the Banning Police Department in a wide range of administrative functions. Citizen Volunteers may serve during the day, at night, or during weekends. The Department may utilize their present skills, or train them in new skills which benefit the Department and the community. Volunteers are recognized as an integral part in assisting the Department in ensuring public safety, and in strengthening our relationship with the community who we serve. The members of the Citizen Volunteer Program help support our officers so that they can remain focused on providing efficient police service to the community. Our Citizen Volunteer Program had a dramatic increase in membership during this transition year; our program grew from ten to twenty volunteers.

- Our future goal is to increase the program to 30-40 citizen volunteers.

Community Outreach Programs

The Banning Police Department is committed to strengthening the community's trust and confidence, and to partner with residents, business owners and other stakeholders to reduce crime. A welcomed and effective community presence is one of our top priorities. These highlights are in addition to the numerous meetings that the Police Department participated in, which included Neighborhood Watch meetings, Fraud Prevention meetings, Disaster Preparedness meetings, faith-based outreach meetings and meetings with school faculty and administrators.

Banning Police Activities League (BPAL)

The Banning Police Activities League (BPAL) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization comprised of police officers and citizens from the City of Banning joining together to provide the youth of our city the tools necessary to succeed in life. This objective is met by involving the youth in sports and other activities by surrounding them with positive influences.

Safe Streets Now!

Safe Streets Now! Is a community driven program that relies heavily on citizens working together to resolve nuisance and criminal activity in their neighborhoods. The department provides a facilitator to assist neighbors in accessing resources and, if needed, guiding them through the civil process.

Neighborhood Watch

Neighborhood Watch is a program in which citizens directly participate in the detection and prevention of crime. Police personnel mobilize neighborhoods to be more aware of criminal activity in their areas and to provide them with the means to report this information to the police department.

WeTip

The basic purpose of WeTip is to provide an absolutely anonymous crime reporting source to residents, students and businesses throughout the nation. WeTip was created as an effective tool for law enforcement, not to circumvent law enforcement but to help law enforcement. This tool is for the segment of the population that will not contact the law enforcement agency directly.

Online Crime Reporting

The Banning Police Department's online reporting system allows citizens to submit an online report that occurs in the City of Banning's jurisdiction. A valid email address is required to submit an online report. We strongly encourage citizens to be thorough and accurate when submitting the report.

- The Online Crime Reporting portal can be reached at www.banningpolice.org.

Technology

PSEC Communications System

Public Safety Enterprise Communication (PSEC) is a standards-based digital radio system that will provide greater geographic coverage, greater reliability, access to data, and enhanced interoperability. Our goal this year is to implement the PSEC system in our city, to this measure we have acquired grants that have fully funded the purchase of our handheld and vehicle based radio systems. These radio systems are interoperable with the PSEC communication system. Our next goal is to upgrade our Dispatch center with equipment interoperable with the PSEC system, allowing us unparalleled communication with other regional law enforcement agencies and full implementation of the system by August 2015.

- We are looking for funding options to upgrade our dispatch centers communications system (back end). Our handheld radios and vehicle radios are compliant with the interoperability system of PSEC and have been purchased through grants.

Body-Worn Cameras

Among police executives whose departments use body-worn cameras, there is an overall perception that the cameras are a useful tool. These reported benefits include the following:

Strengthening police accountability by documenting incidents and encounters between officers and the public; preventing confrontational situations by improving officer professionalism and the behavior of people being recorded; resolving officer-involved incidents and complaints by providing a more accurate record of events; improving agency transparency by allowing the public to see video evidence of police activities and encounters; identifying and correcting internal agency problems by revealing officers who engage in misconduct and agency-wide problems; strengthening officer performance by using footage for officer training and monitoring; and improving evidence documentation for investigations and prosecutions.

- It is our goal to implement body-worn cameras within the next six (6) months utilizing Supplemental Law Enforcement Services Allocation (SLESA) Grant Funds.

FISCAL DATA: N/A

RECOMMENDED BY:

PREPARED BY:

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