



FENNIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Operational Plan, Challenges and Possibilities

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Abstract

This document describes the current operational plan of the Fennimore Police Department and provides information on future challenges, possibilities and resources needed to address them.

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Document Abstract

This document has been written for the 2015/2016 Wisconsin Law Enforcement Command College. This six-week course of instruction is a joint venture between the Wisconsin Department of Justice, Training and Standards Bureau and the University of Wisconsin.

Command College provides management development and is intended to educate and challenge law enforcement administrators. This nationally accredited program is part of the UW Certified Public Manager Program and graduates are recognized with the professional designation of Certified Public Manager.

The primary purpose of this document is to describe the current operational plan of the Fennimore Police Department. The operational plan is meant to clearly explain the functions of the department for employees, city supervisors and community citizens.

The secondary purpose of this document is to provide a foundation for future strategic planning. By explaining current department capabilities and discussing challenges the department will face and services the department could offer, a realistic understanding can be gained of what level of resources are needed to maintain and/or increase law enforcement services in Fennimore.

All department employees and all council members will have an opportunity to offer input into this document before it is finished. Once completed, the document will be made available to the public through the department's website and community input will be encouraged to help enhance community law enforcement services.

May 2021 Update

2021 will most likely be the last update of this document. The report has served its purpose and guided the department for the last five years. We have accomplished most of the change desired and FPD now focuses on maintaining those changes while continuing to adjust to community needs.

Along with the support of the Fennimore Community and Common Council, all full and part time FPD officers have contributed to changes made in the police department. We look forward to maintaining professional standards and continuing to offer quality law enforcement services to the community.

History of Department

The village of Fennimore was incorporated in 1886 and law enforcement services were originally provided by an annually elected village marshal. In 1919, the city of Fennimore was organized and the first police chief was appointed in 1920.

By 1967, the police department was staffed by the police chief and three full time patrolmen. By 1974, the police department had added a sergeant's position and the police department's number of full-time employees has remained at five for the last 44 years.

In 2015, the Sergeant's position was replaced with an Assistant Chief's position to more accurately reflect job duties. The department has no clerical or support staff, maintains one crossing guard and about ten part-time officer positions employed for a variety of purposes. Dispatching is handled by the Grant County Dispatch Center.

The population of Fennimore has grown by about 500 people from 1975 to 2016. Having five full time positions allows the police department the minimum staffing needed to provide 24-hour law enforcement coverage for the city.

December 2019 Update

The Fennimore Common Council has provided funding for a fourth police officer with a start date of January 2020. The addition of another police officer will address scheduling concerns, stabilize the school liaison program and free up time for administrative duties.

Department Purpose

The purpose of the Fennimore Police Department has never been clearly defined and has always been open to interpretation by those working for the department, supervising the department or being served by the department.

The police department is currently operating under the interpretation its purpose is to provide law enforcement services to area citizens through the protection of life, preservation of property and maintenance of order in the Fennimore community.

The police department is often requested to intervene in civil disputes between friends, families or neighbors. The police department does not become involved in civil disputes and we encourage people to mediate these complaints through communication between involved parties or seek resolution in court.

The police department is frequently called to settle domestic or other relationship disputes along with problems such as drug addiction, homelessness or mental health issues. The police department does not have resources or training to address these important concerns and officers try to refer the complainant to a social or support agency which does.

A vision, mission and values statement would be very helpful in formalizing the purpose of the police department. This statement would then be used to guide department activities and should be created with input from those working for the department, supervising the department and being served by the department.

Resources needed to accomplish a vision, mission and values statement would include administrative and officer time along with a willingness of all people involved to create department expectations that can be accomplished with the resources available to the department.

October 2017 Update

With input from the department and an opportunity for city council members and the Fennimore Community to provide feedback on the creation of the document, the following Vision, Mission, Values statement was adopted by the department:

Vision (what do we want for the community)

Maintain Fennimore as a safe community where people are free to raise families, build businesses and enjoy life free from the impact of excessive crime or disorder.

Mission (how are we going to achieve our vision)

Actively support the protection of life, preservation of property and maintenance of order for the Fennimore Community.

Core Values (what ideas will heavily influence our operations)

Community - Communicate and partner with Fennimore residents, businesses and civic groups to achieve our mission and maintain support.

Crime Prevention- Reduce and deter crime through proactive policing and community awareness.

Professionalism – Meet or exceed modern law enforcement practices and standards

Preparation - Actively train and prepare for success in all that we do.

Integrity - Remain accountable to the same legal and ethical standards applied to the community.

Productivity - Manage efficient and effective strategies to achieve our goals.

Change – Evaluate current practices, look for ways to improve and remain open to new ideas.

Dedication – Always maintain a positive attitude and commitment to duty.

Department Personnel

All six full time employees of the police department work weekends and holidays. Officers usually work by themselves. Back up is provided by surrounding law enforcement departments and extra officers can be scheduled to assist with significant events. Supervisors are always available by phone for consultation or call out if needed.

Police Officers

Police officers are responsible for all calls for service received during their shift. As such, Fennimore Police Officers are required to be knowledgeable in a wide variety of law enforcement matters and are frequently expected to make decisions which would only be authorized by a shift supervisor in a large department.

Officers serve as investigators and handle complex complaints from start to finish. The entire department will work together to contribute to a case when needed and all logical leads are expected to be followed up on.

Officers are expected to engage in preventative patrol activities when not busy with calls for service. Preventative patrol activities include traffic enforcement and other forms of criminal interdiction and crime prevention through in-squad and out-of-the-car patrol activity.

When not busy outside the office, officers stay busy by reviewing training material or assisting the department through additional responsibilities. Some of these responsibilities include bad check enforcement, overdue library material enforcement and equipment maintenance.

Training is an additional responsibility we would like to see increased police officer involvement in. Having department trainers on staff is a cost-effective way to offer training to the entire department.

Eventually, we hope to have officers certified to train the department in all recruit level tactical proficiencies. We would also like to see officers take over the responsibility of field training new officers.

Resources need to accomplish this goal are experienced officers willing to accept additional responsibilities and resources to send these volunteers to initial and ongoing training.

December 2018 Update

Five full time officers are certified LESB instructors and have become more involved in department training responsibilities. Officers have also taken on more responsibility regarding records submissions for DOT grants and field training tasks.

Assistant Police Chief

In addition to covering a shift and handling the same responsibilities a police officer, the assistant police chief is a significant contributor to the administration of the department by working with the chief on all administrative decisions and matters.

The Assistant Police Chief is a significant contributor to training activities, policies and supervision and assumes sole responsibility for some administrative tasks such as scheduling, E-Time compliance, TraCS maintenance, payroll, Times report and WIBRS grant/compliance activities.

Police Chief

In addition to covering a shift and handling the same responsibilities a police officer, the police chief is responsible for all matters related to the police department by either supervising what is being done or completing tasks that are not already being done by somebody else.

Administrative tasks include personnel matters, budget, records requests, equipment maintenance, grants, training, council reports, citizen complaints and ensuring department compliance with state and federal laws.

School Resource Officer

The school resource officer (SRO) is a contract position paid for by the educational facilities served. For the 2015/2016 school year, the Fennimore Community Schools contracts 3 hours per week and the Southwest Wisconsin Technical College (SWTC) contracts 20 hours per week.

The school liaison officer program started several years ago with SWTC contracting 6 hours per week. Contracted hours were increased from 6 to 12 hours/week during the 2013/2014 school year and increased again to 20 hours/week during the 2014/2015 school year. The community schools started SRO contracting for the 2014/2015 school year.

This position was originally filled by several different part time officers. Although the officers provided a law enforcement presence and interacted with staff/students, having several different officers work this assignment did not allow for close relationships to develop between the officers and schools/staff/students.

For the 2015/2016 school year, all 23 hours/week were assigned to one part time officer and this has allowed the assigned officer to develop lasting contacts with students/staff and become more involved in and extremely familiar with school activities.

The SRO breaks up the 3 hours/week for the community schools between the elementary school and high school/middle school. The SRO has been a beneficial addition to the schools and the police department for several reasons.

The SRO enhances school safety by investigating many school related complaints, working with school staff on safety plans/procedures and by directly addressing safety concerns observed while in the schools. The SRO is also available to provide educational presentations to students/staff on a wide variety of topics.

Another benefit of having an SRO in the community schools is relationships created with staff and students are established in a non-law enforcement setting. Students and staff are able to interact with the SRO in an environment free of the stresses commonly associated with law enforcement contact. *In 2018, this relationship directly contributed to the successful removal of a child sex predator from the Fennimore Community.*

The purpose of the SRO at SWTC is to provide a visible law enforcement presence on campus. The SRO handles most SWTC related complaints, interacts with students and staff and is a member of the SWTC Behavioral Intervention Team which meets weekly to discuss campus safety issues.

The SRO position at SWTC has become involved with college matters such as planning, safety evaluations, Clery crime statistic reporting, educational presentations and other student matters related to individual or campus safety.

The SRO program has received positive feedback from SWTC and the community schools. Having an officer on campus allows more in-depth interaction and significant attention to complaints as the officer on duty is usually limited in time available to spend in the schools.

It is our hope the SRO program continues to grow to a contract which includes more hours per year. We currently have a veteran part time officer with school experience and training working as the SRO. Having a veteran and experienced officer in this position allows the department to provide the level of service requested by the schools.

At 23 hours per week, the position would be very hard to fill if we lost our current SRO. It is difficult to find an experienced officer willing to work for anything less than full time employment. It is our hope the contract will expand as the SRO successfully takes on more responsibilities at the schools.

Resources needed to maintain and grow the SRO program include a willingness of the schools to contract more hours and the ability of the department to retain a qualified officer to work this position.

October 2017 Update

During the spring of 2017, the SRO was removed from the SWTC Behavioral Intervention Team due to conflicts between the college's requirement to keep student behavior records confidential and the police department's legal requirement to honor open records requests.

The department and SWTC continue to work together to honor the different legal standards regarding records requests and other procedural matters each agency must comply with.

Unfortunately, we did lose our veteran SRO to outside full-time employment. We were able to fill the position with a seasoned part time officer and she has successfully taken on the responsibilities of the position. For the 2017/2018 school year, SWTC increased the total SRO hours contracted to 840 hours or about 23 hours/school week. We hope to see the hours continue to grow for the 2018/2019 school year as the need for health insurance will eventually take our current SRO to outside full-time employment.

December 2018 Update

As anticipated, we did lose our seasoned part time SRO to full time employment with another agency due to the need for health insurance. We were able to fill the position for several months with another part time employee but lost that officer to full time employment also. We are currently using a mixture of veteran and new part time officers to fill the position. The shortage of law enforcement recruits across the US has made it very difficult to retain well qualified part time employees.

December 2019 Update

Due to the unavailability of part time officers, we were unable to meet our contracted SRO hours for the 2018/2019 school year. The 2019 school year started without an SRO and no contract with SWTC for an officer. After the 2019 school year started a veteran part time FPD officer made himself available to cover six to eight hours/week to keep the program alive.

As a result of the reduced availability of part time officers, the city and schools reached new agreements in the fall of 2019. The new contracts with the schools have reduced hours (150 hours FCSD and 128 hours SWTC). This provides about six to eight hours of coverage per school week. SWTC is moving forwards with plans to create an in-house position to address security related concerns while maintaining a working relationship with FPD.

Over the years, revenue from the SRO program has been set aside and it has been used to pay for SRO related uniforms, equipment and training. This fund is also intended to cover liabilities such as unemployment, retirement, health insurance or other costs the city could incur.

By the end of 2018, this fund had reached an amount large enough to address Council concerns described above. As a result of having an adequate reserve fund to cover unexpected SRO costs, the city is now charging the schools "true costs" which contain no revenue. This allows both schools to make their SRO budget go further.

Moving forward in 2020, the addition of a 6th officer to the department and reduction of contracted SRO hours will allow us to assign SRO duties to one or more full time FPD officers. The FCSD has requested one veteran officer to work with their school and SWTC has requested all full-time officers work together to fill the SRO position in their school.

The addition of a 6th officer has also reduced the need to maintain an adequate reserve fund. For the remainder of the 2019/2020 school year, the reserve fund will be used to absorb the cost difference between a full time and part time police officer. This will avoid any unexpected cost increases for the schools for the remainder of the school year.

May 2021 Update

SWTC chose not to renew their liaison officer contract for the 2020-2021 school year. The COVID pandemic forced most classes to be taught on-line and the police reform movement has re-ignited the debate regarding law enforcement officers in education settings.

Unless student behavior is dangerous or involves an alleged criminal/ordinance offense, FPD does not involved itself in student behavior matters. These types of student conduct issues are best served by the school staff themselves without law enforcement intervention.

A liaison officer's purpose is to keep the school environment safe and build rapport with students and staff in a non-law enforcement environment. These relationships serve the school and community well when having contact with the students or staff in matters that are a genuine safety concern for the school.

SWTC has moved forward with an in-house security service staffed by students. Tasks include security checks, safety inspections, parking enforcement and security patrol. FPD will continue to respond to criminal/ordinance violations and safety concerns and we look forward to seeing the security program evolve and grow in the future.

Counter Act Program (Update October 2017)

For many years, the Grant County Sheriff's Office provided substance abuse prevention education to Fennimore 5th graders through the DARE program. In summer of 2017, we learned Fennimore Schools will no longer receive this service due to scheduling, staffing and other challenges at the Sheriff's Office.

Because of local problems with methamphetamine, opioids and prescription drugs, the department believes it is very important area youth receive some form of substance abuse prevention education. FPD intends to provide this service to Fennimore 5th graders through the Counter Act program. The Counter Act program is being used in other area schools and we believe it is a cost-effective replacement for DARE.

We estimate the cost of the Counter Act program to be about \$15 per student (workbook and graduation t-shirt). The elementary school will be using their contracted SRO hours to pay for officer time spent teaching the Counter Act program.

During a fall 2017 fund raising effort, local businesses, civic organizations and a private donor quickly raised more than \$2,000 to pay for the student materials for the 2017/2018 school year.

December 2018 Update

The 2018 Counter Act program was successful, and we learned a lot about presenting to 5th graders. We were also able to present the program to the 6th graders who did not receive the DARE program when they were in 5th grade. The elementary school was successful in obtaining grant money to pay for the 2019 Counter Act program and we look forward to continuing with the program in the future.

May 2021 Update

Unfortunately, COVID-19 caused us to end the 2020 Counter Act program without a proper graduation and cancel the 2021 program all together. An on-line presentation does not provide the face-to-face interaction between law enforcement and students as desired and students/teachers simply have enough challenges this year for us to add another new responsibility.

Part Time Officers

The police department maintains about ten part time officers. These part time officers assist the department by fulfilling a variety of purposes. We have one part time officer who works the SRO position explained above and one part time officer who is able to bring training and tactical experience to the department in an affordable manner.

The remaining part time officers are a mixture of veteran officers who have full time employment with another department or new officers fresh from recruit school. These officers were hired to help cover open shifts and provide extra officers for special events.

The veteran officers bring valuable knowledge and experience to the part time position. Veteran part time officers need less training and supervision but are less available to fill shifts for FPD as they are already working evenings, midnights, weekends and holidays and can accept overtime shifts in their own department to earn extra money.

Newly certified officers are more available to cover shifts but are not as capable as full time officers due to lack of training and experience. Newer officers need more supervision and other full time officers often assist them with complaints to maintain a level of service the community expects.

Part time officers fresh from recruit school are also looking for full time employment. After spending department resources to train and equip newly certified officers, they often receive full time job offers elsewhere and are no longer available to us.

A possible solution to this problem is to develop an intern program with SWTC. The intern program would be run similar to a field training program. This would allow the department to get to know potential part time employment candidates and provide some training prior to their completion of recruit school.

If a candidate makes a positive impression on the department during the intern program, he or she could be hired for part time work upon completion of recruit school. We would still lose newly certified part time officers to full time positions, but if we accept a few interns per year, we may be able to maintain an adequate pool of part time officers.

Resources needed to accomplish a successful intern program include administrative time to set up the program and officer time to act as field training officers during the intern program.

December 2018 Update

The police department has explored an intern program and has been unable to find a suitable candidate who would be available for part time employment after completion of the recruit academy. We will remain open to developing an intern program for a suitable candidate.

December 2019 Update

The lack of young people entering law enforcement careers has caused an applicant shortage. Well qualified applicants no longer have to work part time to gain experience and are hired into full time positions straight from the basic recruit academy or even hired without having completed the academy.

Unwilling to reduce hiring standards, FPD has been limited to qualified applicants who restrict themselves in the departments they apply for (they want to stay in the area). This worked for a while, but the recruiting shortage has affected full time positions in Southwest Wisconsin, and we are hiring, training and then losing part time officers to full time positions in less than 12 months' time.

In addition to being unable to staff the SRO position described above, we have been unable to fill open shifts. Full time police officers already work evenings, midnights, weekends and holidays and being able to take a day off for family or other events is important. In order to fill shifts, we have used a significant amount of overtime and officers are giving up their days off so another officer can take off a day important to them.

In order to address this and other problems associated with being short staffed, a 6th Officer Proposal was submitted to the Common Council in October. Council recognized the challenges facing the department and provided the support needed by making funding available in 2020 to hire an additional police officer to relieve our need to rely on part time officers to fill open shifts.

May 2021 Update

Adding a 6th officer has made significant impact on the department's ability to fill shifts. The 6th officer position has become a "flexible" shift filler and helps with liaison duty. FPD only used 16 hours of part time help with no overtime to fill open shifts in 2020.

For the past five years, full time FPD officers have work hard to expand their knowledge of specialized law enforcement functions and we are able to handle most of our own training and tactical response needs without bringing in outside resources.

FPD is currently down to 4 part time officers and we have stopped looking for suitable candidates for the many reasons described above.

Crossing Guard

The police department maintains one civilian crossing guard to assist children walking to and from the elementary school in the morning and afternoon as they cross HWY 18/61. This has not been an easy position to keep filled and we are lucky to have the dedicated crossing guard we currently have.

The crossing guard works every school day and is outside in all kinds of weather. If unavailable for duty, the on-duty police officer will cover crossing guard duty. Unfortunately, this puts the only officer on duty in a position where he/she must choose between crossing guard duties and responding to emergency calls.

Resources needed to maintain the crossing guard position is a dedicated person willing to work every school day in all kinds of weather.

May 2021 Update

Over the years, we have noticed a significant decrease in the number of children walking to school. By spring of 2019, we were crossing two children in the morning and not many more in the afternoon. Parents frequently drive their children to school and older students were crossing at other intersections.

With this in mind, the crossing guard position was eliminated at the end of the 2019/2020 school year. Using budget money saved through the help of DOT grants, money was set aside for a pedestrian crossing light to be installed. These lights will then help all pedestrians crossing Lincoln Avenue whenever they are needed.

We originally planned on this project being completed in summer of 2020. Unexpected costs associated with installation delayed the project and we are planning on the pedestrian crossing lights being installed this summer.

Canine Officer

The department does not have a canine officer, but this is an enforcement tool we would like to have. Having a canine officer on staff will provide enhanced detection of drug related crimes. Unfortunately, the initial set up/purchase of a canine program can be expensive and there are reoccurring expenses associated with a canine program.

A possible solution to providing Fennimore with an affordable canine position would be to purchase a drug detection-only dog as opposed to a dog which also bites and tracks. This would save a considerable amount of initial and ongoing training time for the handler.

A drug detection canine can be used during vehicle contacts, school sniffs and search warrants. As of the writing of this document in April of 2016, FPD officers have arrested more drugged drivers than drunk drivers. All members of the community have a significant interest in keeping impaired drivers off area roads.

Funding for the initial set up, purchase and training of the drug dog could be raised through community donations. Fundraising efforts would continue throughout the career of the dog, but the city would have to assume responsibility for most of the operational expenses.

A canine officer would be selected from one of the three full time police officers. This officer would be the only officer able to work the dog and would be expected to maintain, train and work the dog in addition to regular shift duties. Being a dog handler is a significant amount of extra responsibility and would be a five to seven year commitment.

The Boscobel Police Department has successfully implemented a canine officer program in a manner similar to the process described above. BPD has found the dog to be an effective tool in combating drug problems along with an excellent community relations tool.

Resources needed for a canine program included private donations in an amount sufficient to complete the initial outfitting, purchase and training of a drug dog along with a willingness of the city to provide operational expenses for the service lifetime of the dog.

December 2018 Update

The Lancaster Police Department has added a drug dog to their department and the Grant County Sheriff's Office maintains two dogs. This has provided 4 dogs to assist the Fennimore Police Department when requested and has reduced the need for us invest resources in our own canine program.

Department Training

FPD primarily uses department employed instructors to provide law enforcement training to all department officers in a cost-effective manner. Outside instructors or conferences are used to provide training in areas that benefit the department, but require special instructor certifications, experience or equipment not readily available to the department.

The purposes listed below guide the department in maintaining a comprehensive training plan which meets the needs of the Fennimore Community. A training plan meets the needs of the Fennimore Community if it satisfies statutory requirements, reduces city liability and prepares the department/officers to handle all common and foreseeable community complaints or emergencies.

- Satisfy Law Enforcement Standards Board requirements for annual officer recertification.
 - o Duty pistol qualification
 - o Bi-annual EVOC requirement
 - o 24-hour minimum recertification training

- Satisfy department policy required training
 - o Patrol rifle qualification
 - o Child safety seat use
 - o Policy matters

- Allow officers to maintain recruit level proficiency in all basic academy curriculum areas.
 - o Foundations of Professional Policing
 - o The Legal Context
 - o Tactical Skills
 - o Patrol Procedures
 - o Investigations
 - o Physical Fitness and Officer Wellness

- Maintain a proficient level of tactical readiness.
 - o Provide officers with the tactical skill set needed to act as first responders to any active threat incident.
 - o Allow the department to work as a team for the purposes of search warrants, arrest warrants and active threat incidents.

- Provide officers with advanced skill sets in areas commonly encountered during their duties.
 - o Impaired driving detection
 - o Interviewing and Interrogation
 - o Evidence collection
 - o Investigations
 - o Community relations
 - o Criminal interdiction
 - o Department administration
 - o Equipment maintenance

- Provide officers with instructor certifications or other specialized knowledge needed to maintain this plan.

A Training Matrix has been completed to organize and schedule department training by documenting what training topics will be covered and how often they will be trained.

The Training Plan and Training Matrix are kept as an appendix to the Fennimore Police Department’s Training Policy and updated by the Chief of Police as necessary to meet the needs of the Fennimore Community.

When possible, training materials are forwarded to officers for preparation before training in order to maximize use of actual training time. The department is encouraged to address more than one topic during each training session in order to provide variety and increased frequency in topics trained.

Training Matrix

Training Topic	Frequency
• Firearms (pistol and rifle)	Once every 12 months
• Department Policy and Procedure	Once every 12 months
• Vehicle Contacts	Once every 12 months
• Tactical Response	Once every 12 months
• Defensive and Arrest Tactics (DAAT)	Once every 12 months
• Less Lethal Tactics (TASER/shotgun)	Once every 12 months
• Professional Communication	Once every 12 months
• Recent Case Law	Once every 12 months
• Impaired Driving	Once every 18 months
• Tactical Emergency Services (TEMS)	Once every 18 months
• Physical Fitness and Officer Wellness	Once every 18 months
• Emergency Vehicle Operation	Once every 24 months

The department invites all part time officers to training, but does not pay part time officers for training. Most part time officers are not attending department training. Part time officers who already have full time employment with another law enforcement agency receive training through their primary department. Newly certified part time officers are not receiving the same level of training full time officers are.

Resources needed to provide newly certified part time officers with the same amount of training would include funds to pay for part time officers to attend department training and necessary outside training.

October 2017 Update

As of summer of 2017, five full time officers have received or applied for certification as General Law Enforcement Instructors with the LESB. As of fall 2017, the department is in the process of adding a new Handgun & Rifle instructor along with a new DAAT instructor to the list of department instructor certifications.

December 2018 Update

All five full time officers are LESB certified instructors and contributing to department training responsibilities.

December 2019 Update

Due to difficulty filling shifts, FPD has started to fall behind on our training matrix. Officers are covering shifts on their days off and simply not enthusiastic about training on days off. The addition of a sixth officer will take care of this and we will be back to training as usual for 2020.

May 2021 Update

The addition of a 6th officer has relieved the pressure on our schedule and allowed for us to continue to pursue our training goals. Unfortunately, COVID has impacted in-person training as we attempt to limit the size of gatherings.

On-line training has been used to supplement training during the pandemic. On-line training is not a substitute for in person training and we look forward to returning to in-person presentations with hands on exercises as soon as possible.

Officer Evaluation

The department has an Evaluation of Employees policy which provides written documentation regarding an employee's work performance in comparison against established department standards. This documentation is used to ensure the department only employs skillful and effective police officers with the ability to provide a proficient level of law enforcement service to the Fennimore Community.

Performance Assessment Categories are maintained by the administration as written standards to evaluate an employee's performance. These standards are reviewed annually and updated or changed to ensure the effectiveness of the evaluation process. These standards are available to the public and are posted on the department's website.

Full time probationary employees are evaluated daily, weekly or monthly during the probationary period as prescribed by the department Field Training Program. Full time, non-probationary employees are evaluated at least once per year and special evaluations may be completed if beneficial to the employee or department.

Continued coaching and feedback provide supervisors and employees with opportunities to correct concerns or performance issues as they arise. Recognition of good work or constructive criticism is an ongoing process and should not be held until the formal evaluation.

Part time officers do not receive formal written evaluations and are debriefed or recognized as necessary depending on the frequency they work for the department and the nature of the work they provide.

Officers are expected to meet department standards as described in the performance assessment categories. Deficiencies or areas of weakness are identified, documented and discussed with employees. If needed, a written training plan is developed to overcome problems areas. Officers who fail to meet standards may be subject to discipline, demotion or termination.

Recently, officers have been asked to document their performance for half of the assessment categories on their evaluation report. Documentation is then reviewed by administration for accuracy. This provides officers an opportunity to take credit for strengths and weaknesses and be more involved in the evaluation process.

Officers also complete a two-part evaluation supplement as part of their written evaluation. The first part provides the officer with an opportunity to express concerns or provide suggestions regarding anything in the department along with possible solutions to the concern or suggestions. The second part of the supplement asks the employee to set career related goals and develop a plan to achieve the goals.

The department administration remains open to alternative forms of employee evaluation. This could come in the form of more self-evaluation, peer evaluation or opportunities to provide feedback to supervisors (360-degree feedback). The department also remains open to community surveys or other forms of feedback regarding the department's service to the Fennimore Community.

Resources needed to explore other forms of evaluations would be administrative time to complete research on other methods and possible changes to the department's Employee Evaluation Policy

May 2021 Update

Finding a meaningful evaluation process for well performing employees has been a challenge and we remain open to new ideas.

Officer Wellness

The nature of police work makes it a very stressful job. Officers frequently respond to situations where people are in crisis, agitated or otherwise upset. Victims, witnesses and suspects are often hostile to police and all veteran FPD officers have had the experience of being verbally and physically attacked by the people they encounter.

FPD officers are expected to make immediate decisions on matters which will then be analyzed, criticized, debated and litigated by supervisors, attorneys, judges, juries, media and members of the public who are able to review the incident from a controlled environment with unlimited time constraints.

FPD officers are called upon to immediately resolve domestic, juvenile or neighborhood problems that have had years to develop and deteriorate. Officers are expected to prevent crimes before they happen, solve crimes that do occur and resolve all complaints in a manner which leave all parties involved satisfied.

Movies and television glamorize police work and provide unrealistic public expectations by producing fictional law enforcement shows where maverick officers refuse to follow rules and solve crimes in a one or two-hour time period. News media then villainize the entire law enforcement profession by sensationalizing a very small fraction of the use of force decisions made by officers across the country every year.

FPD officers work evenings, midnights, holidays and weekends on a regular basis. This excludes them from being present for many "normal" family activities such as evening meals, family holidays, school presentations and athletic meets. Shift work is extremely hard on an officer's sleep schedule and officers frequently deal with the challenges of sleep deprivation in addition to the challenges of their shift duties.

Carrying 25 pounds of duty gear every shift leave officers with back problems and dealing with frequent stress and maintaining a constant heightened level of awareness can lead to a lack of job satisfaction. Law enforcement officers are more likely to get divorced when compared with other professionals and have higher suicide rates than the general public.

Employers have an economic interest in supporting the good health of their employees. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, healthy employees are more productive, have reduced absenteeism rates, decreased rates of injury and enhance an employer's image.

The city of Fennimore invests a significant amount of resources in the hiring, outfitting and training of police officers. By the time an officer retires, he/she will have spent 25 or 30 years working for the city. It is beneficial to the city's financial interests to encourage and support the good health of an employee for this long-term relationship.

Fitness Incentive

Starting in 2016, the city of Fennimore is offering an annual \$200 fitness incentive to any full-time city employee who can pass the fitness test adopted by the Wisconsin Law Enforcement Standards Board at a 100% proficiency level. The test consists of a vertical jump, agility run, sit ups, push-ups, 300 meter sprint and 1.5 mile run.

Resources needed to continue this fitness incentive is funding at a level high enough to keep employees interested in maintaining this level of fitness.

December 2019 update

Participation in the fitness incentive has decreased since its initial offering. Another area department offers the same incentive for officers who can pass the test at an 80% proficiency level and this may be a more realistic goal for officers who simply aren't as young as they were when they started their career.

Employee Assistance Program

According to the US Office of Personnel Management, an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a voluntary, work-based program that offers free and confidential assessments, short-term counseling, referrals, and follow-up services to employees who have personal and/or work-related problems.

EAPs address a broad and complex body of issues affecting mental and emotional well-being, such as alcohol and other substance abuse, stress, grief, family problems, and psychological disorders. EAP counselors also work in a consultative role with managers and supervisors to address employee and organizational challenges and needs.

Many EAPs are active in helping organizations prevent and cope with workplace violence, trauma, and other emergency response situations. EAPs provide annual presentations to employees explaining what services are available and how to obtain services when needed.

EAPs are typically contracted with mental health providers from outside the community to ensure confidentiality. EAP counselors are available 24 hours a day and provide immediate assistance when needed and coordinate long term services with an employee's normal health insurance plan.

EAP services are available to family members of employees and benefit the employer by providing employees with assistance resources to address issues before they have a significant impact on job performance or absenteeism. The city of Fennimore does not have an EAP.

Resources needed to provide Fennimore employees with an EAP is funding.

December 2019 update

The growing challenges we faced filling shifts in the last few years has caused unhealthy stress to the department. Working sick or injured simply because there is nobody else to cover your shift along with difficulty in getting days off and giving up days off so somebody else can take off has started to affect morale.

FPD appreciates the Common Council's approval to add a 6th full time officer to the department. We all look forward to working a less hectic work schedule in 2020 and enjoying days off with our families.

May 2021 Update

The 6th officer has significantly helped relieve pressure on the department to keep the police department staffed 24/7. Officers have been able to obtain days off that are important to them and use sick time when needed. Time off is very important in maintaining a healthy balance between work and home.

We expect pressure on employers to better protect employees against mental health and other employment related health challenges will increase in the future. As turnover and disability claims increase, it will simply become cheaper for employers to address employee health in a proactive rather than reactive manner.

Law enforcement can look to other stressful careers for examples. It is not uncommon for nurses to be considered "full time" and receive full benefits but work significantly less than 40 hours/week. Some private employers offer sabbatical leave to keep employees fresh and give them an extended break from employment responsibilities.

Officer Recruiting and Retention

Because Fennimore Police Officers are expected to handle a wide variety of law enforcement matters by themselves and make independent decisions while working, the department has experienced several challenges in hiring candidates capable of fulfilling these expectations with limited training.

In a larger department, new officers have the luxury of being supervised in a field training program which lasts six months or more. Unfortunately, FPD does not have the personnel resources available to accomplish this and field training usually last a few weeks.

In a larger department, officers have the benefit of working with other officers and one or more on-shift supervisors. FPD officers work by themselves and must handle complaints without the benefit of assisting officers and make decisions without the assistance of an on-shift supervisor.

Because they work alone, FPD officers operate as shift supervisors, lead investigators and frequently handle complex law enforcement situations by themselves. Finding independent and motivated officers capable of successfully working under these conditions has been difficult.

The current status of law enforcement recruiting across the state has negatively affected all sizes of law enforcement departments in their recruiting efforts. Recruit academies and criminal justice programs have reported reduced enrollment and departments big and small are having a hard time filling open positions for several reasons.

Compensation packages for all public sector employees have been reduced in recent years, the current national media and political climate is very negative towards law enforcement and the Law Enforcement Standards Board have significantly increased recruit academy training/testing requirements for graduation.

Add these reasons to traditional complaints about law enforcement work (shift work, holidays, weekends, lawsuits, constant conflict, etc.) and it is easy to understand why there has been a significant reduction in the number of young people pursuing law enforcement careers.

In an effort to overcome hiring challenges, the Fennimore Police Department has put together a lateral transfer package which rewards a new hire with full officer pay and paid time off depending on their previous years of law enforcement experience. This is becoming a common practice among law enforcement agencies.

In effort to retain officers, FPD offers an independent working environment where officers are free to run their shifts in a manner which meet department expectations. Officers are encouraged to participate and offer input in department decisions, become trainers and attend other specialized training which benefit the department.

As benefits associated with lateral transfer packages become more attractive, it is going to be hard for agencies to recruit and retain qualified officers. Officers with five or more years of experience are going to be heavily recruited and tempted to leave by larger departments offering better compensation packages, specialized assignments and more advancement opportunities.

Resources needed to recruit and keep quality officers is the maintenance of a competitive compensation package and an independent work environment which encourages officers to enhance their career through extra training.

May 2021 Update

The city of Fennimore has consistently rewarded good work with a competitive compensation package. Combine this with a positive and independent work environment and FPD has been successful in recruiting and retaining quality law enforcement officers. Good employees are a valuable commodity and should never be taken for granted.

Facilities and Equipment

The police department moved to its current location in 2007. The office area of the department consists of one large room and a multipurpose conference room. The large room provides three workstations, a copy area and reception area. The office layout does not allow for controlled access into the work areas/computers of the police department. Access to these areas should be restricted by physical barriers.

The police department's garage provides indoor parking for two squad cars, a storage room, an evidence room and an impound room capable of storing one vehicle. The impound room also provides space for temporary evidence lockers and a workbench with a negative air flow workstation.

The police department provides adequate workspace and evidence storage for five full time employees. Unfortunately, the storage room is inadequate, and we are limited in our ability to store items that are not currently in use. The small storage room also limits our ability to store paper records.

Resources needed to address storage concerns would be funding to purchase additional storage cabinets for the garage and space made available in neighboring garage space.

Resources needed to provide physical barriers to restrict access to department work space and computers include funding to modify the front and rear entrance to the police department.

October 2017 update

For the 2017 budget, the city put aside \$6,500 for physical improvements to the police department. We do not anticipate accomplishing these goals in 2017 and will request the city carry over and add to these funds for possible improvements in 2018.

December 2018 update

The police department facilities improvement fund has grown to a level we believe will allow us to make the necessary access changes described above in 2019. The department also purchased a ductless fume hood in 2018 to protect officers from the hazards of recent drug trends such as fentanyl.

December 2019 update

We built an entryway in 2019 to control public access to the officer work area and a larger storage room was added to the department. These changes have addressed the concerns described above and we do not anticipate any other changes.

May 2021 update

FPD received grant funding to purchase and set up additional workstations in order to promote social distancing during the pandemic. Paper files are being condensed and scanned into digital format to reduce the need for bulky file cabinets. The current police department should meet our needs for many years to come.

Vehicles

The police department maintains two fully equipped squad cars. This provides for a fully equipped spare should the primary squad car need to be taken out of service. It also provides for a properly equipped squad car for use by the school resource officer.

During times we have two officers and a school resource officer on duty or special events such as search warrants, officers use their personal vehicles for transportation. This has created concerns regarding lack of radio communication and liability issues as personal vehicles have no radios, lighting, siren or other emergency equipment.

A possible solution to this problem is to maintain an unmarked squad car. If the exterior markings and lighting are removed from a decommissioned squad car, the vehicle can still be used for transports, training, special events or other times needed by the department.

Resources needed to provide access to a reserve squad car for the department include funding to turn the next decommissioned squad into an unmarked squad.

October 2017 Update

In January of 2017, \$4,000 of DOT grant money was used towards the purchase of a new squad car. This allowed us to keep an old squad car without significantly impacting our budget as we usually receive about \$4,000 for the sale of used squads at auction.

Although the old squad we kept is no longer equipped with a video camera or computer, the vehicle has been extremely helpful to have during search warrants, special events, training or times when a primary squad is in the shop. Use of personal vehicles for work related activities has decreased significantly.

December 2019 Update

Earlier this spring, we set up our new squad car as an unmarked squad car. Unmarked squads are used for patrol by other departments in our area and have been found to be an effective tool in criminal and traffic interdiction activities.

The unmarked squad was met with criticism by some members of the Common Council who received citizen complaints about the vehicle. We recognize the need to maintain support from the community, and decals were put on the side of the new vehicle.

We now run a marked "clean top" squad. This seems to have addressed criticism expressed by some members of the community and provides officers with a squad with a non-traditional profile.

It is possible a news release regarding the unmarked squad car would have better prepared residents for the unexpected change. The police department will continue to work with the Fennimore Community to provide effective (but supported) service to the community and an unmarked squad can always be revisited in the future.

May 2021 Update

We ended up revisiting the unmarked squad car sooner than we thought. 2020 has brought civil unrest in metropolitan areas. Marked squad cars have become a target for vandalism and violence in these areas.

While Fennimore PD enjoys significant support from the Fennimore Community, officers need to be able travel to metropolitan areas for training, court, transporting evidence and other law enforcement business. Officers are usually in “plain clothes” while traveling and lose radio contact with dispatch shortly after leaving Grant County.

The light bar and decals have been removed from the third “spare” squad to make officers less obvious while traveling for city business. FPD still maintains two marked and fully equipped squad cars for patrol, but the spare squad will also be seen doing work around town from time to time as needed.

Computers/Records

Squad video and the addition of body cameras in fall of 2015 produce about 100GB of data per month. To protect the officers and department from lawsuits, these videos need to be kept seven years. The computer set up we were using in the office was unable to handle this amount of storage.

In early 2016, the police department switched to a server-based system. In addition to providing the space needed to accommodate video storage, the server provides drive redundancy and daily back up for data preservation. The server also allows for a server-based squad car video program which allows video to be viewed at any workstation.

In fall of 2015, the department received a new phone system. This gave the department the ability to use more than one line at a time and provided for automatic recording of all incoming and outgoing phone calls. These records are also kept on the new server.

In summer of 2015, the department received a \$23,000 WIBRS grant to purchase a web-based records management system (RMS). The RMS being used by the department had not been updated for several years and was no longer supported by the original vendor. The new RMS stores department data off site with the RMS vendor, Core Technology.

The new RMS also allows the department to participate in the Wisconsin Incident Based Reporting System (WIBRS). WIBRS is part of a nationwide program to enhance the quantity, quality and timeliness of crime data collected by law enforcement agencies. The department received WIBRS certification in December of 2015, just six months after going live with the new RMS!

We are still using the old RMS to track parking citations and will have to replace this program eventually as it has not been updated and is no longer supported. It is difficult to justify the purchase of a new parking program as parking citations do not produce enough revenue to pay for a new program.

Duty logs are maintained in the squad car by the on-duty officer and we are looking for other options which would allow multiple officers to work on the same duty log from different locations. This would allow the school resource officer to access and contribute to the logs from a remote location and would also allow an officer to access and contribute to the logs from a secondary squad or the office.

The department still maintains a variety of paper records. We have offense reports to 1960, incident reports to the mid-seventies, OWI reports to 1978 and Duty logs to 1989. It is not known what happened to earlier records and it is possible they were destroyed by water damage many years ago when stored in city building attic space.

The department switched to an incident number-based system for records filing in 2000. This made records much easier to locate and organize. Records prior to 2000 were filed or organized in several different manners. We occasionally receive records requests for these old files and locating them can be very hard and time consuming.

Resources needed to maintain department records in a secure manner include funding to maintain modern record management software and server hardware.

Resources need to replace the parking RMS include funding to purchase a new program.

Resources needed to deal with department records prior to 2000 include administrative time to research best practices related to retention of old law enforcement records.

December 2018 Update

Unfortunately, the computer containing our parking RMS crashed this year and was taken out of service. This has left us without a parking RMS. Changes made to the alternate side parking ordinance greatly reduced the amount of citations issued each year and has allowed us to track parking citations on a simple spreadsheet instead of paying for an expensive RMS.

We have been able to use a cloud-based service for our duty logs and time sheets. This has allowed several officers to access and contribute to the same document at one time. These documents are downloaded to our server for permanent storage and removed from the cloud.

December 2019 Update

Grant money from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation has allowed us to purchase new body cameras. The new cameras work off a program similar to what we use for squad videos and securely stores the videos on the department server. The new cameras and software will integrate with the squad car video camera we anticipate

installing in the next squad and eliminate the need to maintain two video programs and separate audio recording equipment.

May 2021 Update

In 2020, we had some network problems and decided it was time to update in order to provide better reliability and security. Due to the cost of the project, we thought this would be a good opportunity to combine resources and install one enterprise level device to update/protect the entire city building.

Goals of the project were to organize and label the network wiring in order to more easily troubleshoot problems in the future, provide reliable wifi for the PD, City Office and Public Access in the building along with upgrading security for the City Office and PD.

The city building now has fiber optic internet lines entering the building. The improved internet service should handle the transfer of large video files and we anticipate changing to a cloud-based storage system when the server we purchased in 2016 needs to be replaced.

An audit of the evidence room was also completed in 2020. While all evidence was found to be present, the audit did reveal some tracking challenges regarding evidence related to older investigations as FPD was not using a computerized evidence management system until the end of 2015.

The RMS used by the PD from 2007 to 2015 did not inventory evidence, but these files have since been updated in the new RMS. Evidence associated with investigations prior to 2007 are tracked with paper logs kept in the paper case files. In addition to processes described above, all evidence is tracked on paper logs kept in the evidence room.

Department Policy

The Fennimore Police Department's policy manual has been completely rewritten since fall of 2013. The policy manual provides direction for officers while they are on duty and is available in the squad car, office and on the city's website.

The department recognizes no policy manual can provide for every manner of incident an officer may encounter while on duty and our policies are meant to assist officers in the decision-making process while not limiting options in special or unusual circumstances.

The department has eleven policies required by state law and ten additional policies. These policies are reviewed every other year to keep them current with state law and industry best practices. In addition to these established policies, there will always be a need to create new policies as technology or law enforcement best practices change.

A possible goal for the department would be to obtain an accreditation certificate from the Wisconsin Law Enforcement Accreditation Group (WILEAG). Achieving this certificate requires the creation of a policy manual consistent with best practices recommendations from Wisconsin law enforcement peers.

The accreditation process can be time consuming as the policies need to be researched, created, approved and implemented by the department. Some of these policies could require the purchase of extra equipment or training for the department.

Resources needed to achieve accreditation for the department include administrative time and commitment from the city to provide resources needed to follow all policies adopted.

October 2017 Update

During summer of 2017, a biennial review and update of the policy manual was completed to maintain it in a manner consistent with professional standards. Although department policy is not officially accredited, we have had other departments request to copy parts or all of FPD policy for their own use.

December 2018 Update

The policy manual continues to be reviewed and updated to remain consistent with state laws and current law enforcement best practices and professional standards. On average, one or two policies are completely rewritten each year to remain current with industry standards or community needs.

December 2019 Update

Four policies were updated/rewritten this year to maintain consistency with best practices and legal standards. Reviewing/researching policy is time consuming and some departments have chosen to pay attorneys who specialize in law enforcement legal services to write/maintain their policy manuals.

Examples obtained of policies produced by outside sources are very thorough and well put together. Unfortunately, these policies tend to be very long and too cumbersome for officers to follow or supervisors to enforce. FPD will continue to attempt to maintain a balance between a comprehensive, but usable department policy manual.

May 2021 Update

Having a 6th officer gave us the time to review and update the entire policy in 2020. A statute mandated Body Worn Camera policy was added, and all twenty-two policies were updated for content and format. Policy will continue to be updated to remain consistent with professional and legal standards.

In December we received notification our Use of Force policy was certified by the Wisconsin Law Enforcement Accreditation Group as being compliant with the 2020 Presidential Executive Order on Safe Policing for Safe Communities. This is required to maintain access to certain forms of federal DOJ grant funding.

Drug Enforcement

Fennimore has regular problems with prescription drug abuse, marijuana, heroin, cocaine and methamphetamine. This problem will continue to adversely affect Fennimore residents if not addressed by the community.

Drug use has had a significant negative effect on the quality of life of Fennimore residents who are addicted to drugs or have friends or family members affected by drug addiction or drug related incarceration or overdose death.

Residents who don't have an immediate connection to somebody using drugs are still exposed to property crimes such as theft, fraud and vandalism as the majority of property crimes in Fennimore are committed by persons associated with drug use.

In 2013, the Richland, Iowa, Grant Drug Task force donated a prescription drug drop box to the city. The drop box is located in city hall. The drop box is meant to provide a safe location to dispose of unwanted or unused prescription drugs and keep them from being diverted to other uses.

This drop box is maintained by the police department under a two person/two lock system and annually collects about 80 pounds of unwanted medicine. Although the contents of the drop box are never recorded, it has been noticed the drop box is successful in removing prescription opioids from the community.

FPD will never be able to solve the problem of drug abuse and addiction alone. Law enforcement is one of the many community resources needed to address drug concerns. Law enforcement can hold accountable people associated with drug related crimes, but enforcement without treatment will not solve Fennimore's drug problem.

Addiction is a very hard condition to combat without counseling or treatment support. Research shows drug users receiving treatment generally commit less crime than they commit while untreated. Some law enforcement departments have taken an active role in making treatment options available to drug users.

Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse (AODA) treatment options in Fennimore are limited. There are no inpatient AODA treatment facilities in the immediate Grant County area and inpatient treatment is often cost prohibitive to addicts or their families when openings are located in other areas of the state.

Unified Counseling Services (UCS) in Lancaster and Dodgeville does have AODA counselors on staff who will meet with people by appointment. UCS also has emergency counselors able to meet with people during normal business hours if an AODA counselor is not available.

If an emergency counselor is unavailable or a person is seeking after-hours assistance, UCS contracts with Northwest Connections to provide a 24-hour mental health crisis line which enables people to speak with a counselor by phone.

UCS will not deny service if a person is unable to pay and fees are determined on a sliding scale that is based on a patients' income. The Southern Consortium Call Center can be contacted for assistance with Badger Care applications or to receive referral information regarding open-market health insurance.

Resources needed to increase treatment options for drug users include outside funding to pay for support/treatment services and officer time to assist in connecting users with these resources.

December 2018 Update

As of January 2018, The Fennimore Police Department provides Counter Act education to Fennimore 5th graders. The community schools also contract with FPD for 100 hours of School Resource Officer time as described in a previous section of this report.

May 2021 Update

Drug abuse and mental health related problems remain a significant response challenge for law enforcement. We are optimistic current discussions regarding police reform will provide funding for local assistance/response programs which will then partner with law enforcement to share responsibility for these problems in our community.

Community Policing

Community policing has many different definitions, but at the core of all of these interpretations is the practice of having the same officers consistently work the same geographic area with intentions of becoming more familiar with and establishing a rapport with residents and businesses.

FPD has been engaged in community policing since the department was created in 1920, well before the philosophy was adopted by larger departments in the 1980s. The city of Fennimore is about 2 square miles in size with a population of 2,500 citizens. Most FPD officers live in Fennimore.

Community safety is a top priority for FPD officers because they are tasked with maintaining the peace and security in neighborhoods they live in, schools their kids attend and streets their families use on a regular basis. FPD officers remain highly motivated in addressing crime and disorder in their own backyards.

Living in the community in which you work results in constant contact with the citizens served by the police department. FPD officers maintain off duty relationships with neighbors, friends, acquaintances and businesses in Fennimore. Although these relationships can be stressed while on duty due to the nature of police work, most of these relationships are a valuable resource to the department.

FPD officers become extremely familiar with the physical layout of the neighborhoods and businesses they respond to. Officers engage in squad patrol, foot patrol, bike patrol and door checks and this helps them gain knowledge necessary to spot suspicious persons, vehicles or situations not normally present in Fennimore.

Officers have success solving crimes by using detailed knowledge of their jurisdiction to develop a likely suspect. Officers also used their personal relationships to contact residents, business or property owners ahead of time in effort to solve problems before they require law enforcement intervention.

FPD officers have the training and experience needed to succeed in larger departments. The personal relationships established while off duty help keep FPD officers from leaving. Fennimore is a great place to live and raise kids and this is what keeps most of us here.

There are more formal community policing programs the department could participate in. The Fennimore Optimist Club organized a National Night Out in 2015 and this was an appreciated community event. Other suggestions have included hosting a bike rodeo, citizen police academy, offering home/business security assessments and creating an organization for youth interested in pursuing a career in law enforcement.

The Fennimore Optimist Club, Fennimore Area Chamber of Commerce and Fennimore Lions Club have all donated money to purchase a patrol bike and their support is greatly appreciated. The police department would like to repay their support by being available for group presentations tailored to any topic of concern or interest any Fennimore civic organization may have.

While officers maintain informal contact with the community on a regular basis, we have been unable to find time to organize events or presentations. Because FPD officers usually work by themselves, it is hard to commit to appointments or find the time to organize events as officers are busy handling calls for service, completing associated paperwork or engaged in proactive patrol.

Resources needed to involve FPD with formal community policing efforts include officer time to organize and attend presentations or programs.

October 2017 Update

In Spring 2017, FPD received a \$1,000 grant from the Fennimore Area Foundation. The grant money was used to purchase bike helmets to be distributed to children who agreed to wear them and gift certificate awards were purchased to reward children observed wearing bike helmets.

This is the 2nd \$1,000 award for bicycle safety the FAF has provided the department. The original request was made in 2014 after officers responded to an accident where a child suffered head injuries which may not have been as extensive if the child had been wearing a helmet.

The free helmets and gift certificate awards have been an extremely popular give away within the community and a great way to increase helmet use. In addition to the grant money provided by the FAF, Casey's General Store of Fennimore donated several dozen free ice cream and cookie coupons to be distributed as awards.

December 2018 Update

The Fennimore Optimist Club continues to organize an annual National Night Out event. Officers from the department have participated in events such as Shop with a Cop, Law Enforcement Night at the Races, Fun Runs and Food Drives.

December 2019 Update

A county-wide citizens academy was organized by the Lancaster Police Department this year and was open to all grant county residents. An FPD officer volunteered time and participated as an instructor in the citizen's academy. The citizens academy received positive feedback from participants, and we will try it again next year.

May 2021 Update

Social distancing requirements has eliminated any attempts to hold gatherings or formal presentations of any kind. We have made attempts to maintain relationships with citizens by meeting with them individually. We have also been able to maintain contact with the community through normal off-duty activities.

With donated money and some department funds, we have had success engaging Fennimore's youth by handing out "FPD" sunglasses, draw string bags and masks. The cost of doing this has been minimal and has been a fun way to interact with kids we see around town.

2020/2021

COVID-19 Pandemic

When other parts of the world experienced the beginnings of the COVID-19 pandemic, FPD ordered extra PPE and cleaning supplies for the department as a precaution. When the pandemic hit the United States, the Federal Government's limited reserve of supplies went to medical personnel. Law enforcement and other first responders were told we would not receive PPE and it would be up to us to obtain what we need.

FPD had some supplies on hand and several organizations and businesses in the community made their supplies available to us. By the time government supplies were available, FPD had already secured what we needed through Amazon.com. Amazon saw the crisis coming, provided an easy procurement process for law enforcement and quickly shipped the supplies we ordered.

During this time, we also had to sort through federal, state and local guidelines on how to flatten the curve and reduce the damaging effects of the pandemic. Disagreement over mitigation efforts resulted in political disputes and confusion ensued regarding what laws were legal, who is responsible for enforcement and what penalties or sanction would apply.

Politicians had press conferences and bureaucrats held meetings while front line workers figured things out on their own. The Fennimore Community stepped up and worked together to support first responders, businesses, families and schools. I'm sure this occurred in countless small communities across the nation and shows just how resilient small communities can be.

Police Protests

On Memorial Day 2020 an officer in Minneapolis caused the death of George Floyd during an arrest. This led to unprecedented anger and protest in the United States and abroad. Choke holds are not used by FPD, not taught in Wisconsin's recruit academy and there is simply no way to justify kneeling on a handcuffed person's neck for any amount of time.

All law enforcement officers have a duty to intervene when they become aware a person is the subject of unlawful use of force by another law enforcement officer. As part of our 2020 policy review, FPD formally added De-escalation techniques and Officer Intervention responsibilities to our policy manual and training.

While the reasons for the protests are complex, at the core of most complaints is a lack of trust and respect between a community and the law enforcement agencies which serve them. Most FPD officers live in or near Fennimore. Our connection to the community does not end when our shift is over.

FPD officers understand the importance of being professional while on duty simply because the people we have contact with at work will be the same people we see within the community when we go home. Officers who live in the community they serve are simply better connected to the community because of the bonds formed while off duty.

Police Reform

Law enforcement has become the default agency to address problems such as mental health, homelessness, addiction, juvenile/family/neighbor disputes and other complex conflicts. These types of complaints can include a safety concern or criminal violation that requires a law enforcement response, but fully addressing these matters require long term interventions and support from a variety of specialized professions.

Being proactive is always better than being reactive. New ideas, agencies and funding are needed to address the varied causes of crime and disorder in any community and it is unrealistic to expect law enforcement to solve these problems alone. FPD welcomes assistance in addressing these challenges and looks forward to seeing other agencies help shoulder responsibility for these complex problems.

Conclusion

The Fennimore Police Department has experienced significant changes in the last few years. Support from the city council and community has provided resources needed to establish the foundation of a modern and model law enforcement agency capable of meeting community expectations.

By the time the process of putting this document together is complete, members of the department and city council will have had an opportunity to offer input on the current operational plan of the department along with suggestions on enhancements which could be made in the future.

This document is the beginning of a strategic plan and will assist in guiding the operation and development of the department by the current administration for the next five years. This document is also meant to provide realistic expectations for the department based on current resources available.

By making this document available online, the department hopes to provide the public with a better understanding of the operation and capabilities of the Fennimore Police Department. Members of the Fennimore Community are also encouraged to provide the department with suggestions on how law enforcement services could be improved.

Members of the Fennimore Community should feel free to provide feedback on this document by contacting Mayor Boebel or their city alderperson. Chief French can be contacted directly by using the police contact form on the www.fennimore.com website or by email at cfrench@fennimore.com.

December 2018 Update

After several years of significant change, the department has optimized law enforcement services provided to the Fennimore Community based on the resources available as described in this document.

During 2018, we transitioned from being a department experiencing significant change to a department maintaining the change which has already occurred.

We are proud of the positive contributions we make to the community and recognize the need to continually adjust to the needs of the citizens we serve and incorporate new ideas or practices to accomplish the goals of our Vision, Mission, Values statement.

We understand progress and professionalism is always an ongoing process in any organization and there will never be a static "completion date" for this Operational Plan.

Thank you for taking time to review this document.

Christopher J. French
Fennimore Police Chief
November 2016

*Updated October 2017, December 2018 & December 2019
Final Update May 2021*