

Management Operational Study Suffield Police Department

VII. SUMMARY - FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The report prepared by Daigle Law Group, LLC. identifies a total of ten (10) Fundamental Findings with forty-two (42) corresponding Recommendations, which the team believes if implemented, will collectively transform the Department. While all the Findings and Recommendations contained in this report are important and represent best practice, the following Fundamental Findings and Recommendations lie at the foundation and core of the reform necessary to begin the process of addressing the shortcomings of the Department.

1. DEPARTMENT MORALE

Finding #1 *The morale of the department is significantly low which has an operational effect of disharmony, distrust and their desire to successfully police the community*

Recommendation 1A: Town administration and the SPD should singularly and collectively acknowledge existence of the various factors affecting morale expressed in the Employee Questionnaires and further identified within this report, openly discuss them with staff, and develop a plan to address them in a methodical, open manner.

2. OPERATIONAL CLARITY

Finding #2: *There is a significant need to clarify the operational and reporting responsibilities of the Chief of Police*

Recommendation 2A: The First Selectman and the Board of Police Commissioners agree to and set forth decision-making authority of each on the variety of both day to day and long-term administrative and operational matters that affect the chief's ability to effectively lead and direct the Police Department.

3. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Finding #3 *There is a significant need to revise the organizational structure of SPD for effective operational continuity.*

Recommendation 3A: Revise the organizational structure to include two equal command level supervisors – i.e., lieutenants or captains – each with a clear understanding of the responsibilities encompassed in both the Operations and Support functions.

Recommendation 3B: Operations should include patrol and investigative functions

Recommendation 3C: Administration/Support Services should, in addition to non-sworn administrative staff, be staffed with a sergeant responsible for internal affairs, training, and policy development.

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Recommendation 3D: Effective operations depend on effective first-level supervision; SPD should ensure adequately trained, competent supervisors to cover all shifts.

4. PATROL STAFFING AND ASSIGNMENT

Finding #4 *The staffing levels and scheduling of the patrol shifts do not allow for consistent, effective supervision and are inadequate to effectively meet the needs of the department and the community.*

Recommendation 4A: Increase to five Sergeants – four assigned to Patrol and one assigned for support services and accreditation.

Recommendation 4B: Recruit and hire additional officers, preferably already certified officers to reduce overtime costs and increase experience base at the department.

Recommendation 4C: SPD should abolish the six-week bid and identify a more effective permanent shift for at minimum 12 weeks, but preferably of six months.

Recommendation 4D: SPD should adopt an approval process for shift “exchange” requiring approval of the two affected shift sergeants and Operations Captain/Lieutenant.

Recommendation 4E: SPD should continue flexible shifts to cover such as a 6pm – 2am for more effective coverage.

Recommendation 4F: SPD should schedule and *generally* require a three-person minimum for evening and midnights shift, especially of Friday and Saturday night, for efficiency, effectiveness and officer safety.

5. CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

Finding #5 *Criminal investigations are not completed in a timely and/or effective manner.*

Recommendation 5A: Select and assign a member, based upon his/her interest, demonstrated investigative skills, training, and work ethic to conduct specified serious crimes, identified as a Detective.

Recommendation 5B: The assigned member must be willing to work a varied schedule to accommodate off hour follow-up interviews of victims and witnesses and out of town inquiries, i.e. varied flex shifts.

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Recommendation 5C: The assigned member should assume case management responsibilities to assure the investigations conducted by shift personnel are completed in a timely manner.

Recommendation 5D: Revise the policies and procedures relating to the duties of the Detective to specifically clarify/address that:

- This position is an assignment
- Varied hours are required
- Investigation of felonies and other identified serious crimes
- Oversee/manage investigative timelines for cases assigned to patrol
- Assure timely completion/follow-up on all cases

6. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Finding #6 *SPD lacks effective policies and an efficient process for developing new policies, while reviewing and updating existing ones.*

Recommendations 6A: SPD should revise and update its policies and procedures to reflect generally accepted police practices and assign ongoing responsibility for ensuring that they maintain a current level applicable to state and federal law and constitutional policing.

Recommendations 6B: SPD should at a minimum become certified under CT accreditation standards and CLESP requirements.

7. EFFECTIVE TRAINING

Finding #7 *SPD fails to conduct a department training needs assessment to ensure department members receive training to progress in development as an officer or supervisor.*

Recommendation #7A: Conduct an annual training assessment to determine the training necessary to strengthen the competencies of officers and supervisors at SPD.

Recommendation #7B: The annual training plan should include training to enhance investigative and other specialty skills required in a contemporary police department.

Recommendation #7C: Provide additional training on conducting criminal investigations, search & seizure, crime scene processing and report writing to prepare patrol officers to appropriately conduct preliminary and specified follow-up investigations.

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Recommendation #7D: Identify potential staff for attendance at mandatory and discretionary, skill building, operationally beneficial training.

Recommendation #7E: Budget for attendance at both mandatory and discretionary, skill building, operationally beneficial training.

Recommendation #7F: Budget for newly developed or available training opportunities that may arise during the year, attendance at which would be beneficial to SPD and staff.

Recommendation #7G: Revised training related policies, General Order 12-1, Chapter 12, Training and Career Development, Section 1, Training, dated June 21, 2006 and General Order #12-2, Chapter 12: Training and Career Development, Section 2: Field Training Program, dated June 21, 2006 should be reviewed and revised for consistency with recommendations provided in this report prior to assigning any newly appointed officers to field training.

Recommendation #7H: Review and update the Field Training Program to assure consistency with current field training practices relating to subject matter, performance standards, and program duration.

Recommendation #7I: Assure members assigned as Field Training Officers are appropriately trained and willing to competently fulfill the duties assigned.

8. INTERNAL AFFAIRS AND DISCIPLINE

Finding #8 *SPD needs to ensure the effectiveness of their internal affairs process to timely and consistently investigate complaints of misconduct to ensure effective discipline in the department.*

Recommendation #8A: Ensure the department has the capacity to meet the requirements of an effective IA and disciplinary process through a comprehensive IA policy.

Recommendation #8B: Department should ensure that all supervisors receive necessary training to ensure they conduct a complete and fair investigation into allegations of misconduct.

9. DATA AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Finding #9 *SPD is currently using a data and records management systems that is not fulfilling or being used to enhance operational effectiveness.*

Recommendation 9A: Research and consider changing the current SPD records management system to a more effective system that ensures accountability of members.

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Recommendation 9B: Establish a reliable maintenance/repair program to assure the record management system, including in-car units, are operationally reliable.

Recommendation 9C: Assess whether information regarding patrol and investigative activities is accurately collected and accessible for the management of resources

Recommendation 9D: Assure the in-car capabilities are sufficient to provide officers with the capability to efficiently complete specified reports in the patrol car in the field rather than returning to the police station.

10. COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT

Finding #10 *Multiple areas of the SPD Current Collective Bargaining Agreement are ineffective, inconsistent with contemporary policing principles and detrimental to the operation of the department.*

Recommendation 10A: Review Articles III, IV, VI, XV, and XVII to assure consistency with contemporary police practices, operational effectiveness and the well-being of staff.

Recommendation 10B: Revise Article XIV to include clarify of authority and responsibility of decision makers at each level of the grievance process.

Recommendation 10C: Revision of the present eligibility requirements and testing process for the position of sergeant to assure the most qualified candidate(s) is promoted.

Recommendation 10D: Eliminate the awarding of seniority points to an applicant's final score. Seniority is a factor to be considered when all else is equal.

Recommendation 10E: The chief of police has overall responsibility for operational effectiveness; therefore, the requirement for the chief to promote the top scoring candidate should be revised to allow the chief to select one of the top three scoring candidates.

Recommendation 10F: The present testing process for sergeants should be revised to include the development of an agency-specific examination process. A competent, independent firm should be engaged to construct the process.

Recommendation 10G: Adopt a contemporary promotional process for lieutenants to assure the most qualified candidate(s) is promoted.

Recommendation 10H: The present testing process for lieutenant should be revised to include the development of an agency-specific examination process. A competent, independent firm should be engaged to construct the process.

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Recommendation 10I: Recommend the conducting of a competent salary and benefit assessment to determine the need for and/or the amount of adjustment required to provide SPD competitive compensation and benefits.