

**FINANCE AND BUDGET COMMITTEE  
NOVEMBER 19, 2020  
CITY OF PLATTSBURGH COMMON COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
MINUTES  
4:15 PM**

**Roll Call:** Chair Councilor Kelly, Councilor Moore, Mayor Read

**Others Present:** Councilor Barbell, Councilor Gibbs, Councilor Brodi

**Absent:** Councilor McFarlin

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**1. REPORTS FROM DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVES AND DISCUSSION WITH COUNCILORS:**

1. Councilor Barbell will have presentation on City Operations. Report on Police and Fire Departments are made part of the minutes of this meeting and posted on the City of Plattsburgh website.

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**2. AGENDA ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD FROM DEPARTMENTS TO BE APPROVED BY COMMITTEE AND RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:**

1. Request for a public forum be made available commencing December 1, 2020 for a period of 40 days at Trinity Park providing free, equal and unrestricted access for holiday displays. The maximum size is 10 x 10, and requests must be filed with the City Clerk's office in advance. A \$20 fee for electricity and Certificate of Insurance are required.
2. **RESOLVED:** In accordance with the request therefore, as a result of the Request for Proposals, as well as the recommendation of the City's health care consultant, the Common Council authorizes the Mayor to sign a renewal pharmacy contract with Pro-Act.
3. **RESOLVED:** In accordance with the request therefore, the Common Council authorizes the Mayor to sign a renewal annual stop loss insurance contract with Blue Shield Northeastern NY.

By Councilor Moore; Seconded by Councilor Kelly

(RC) Roll call: Chair Councilor Kelly, Councilor Moore, Mayor Read

(All voted in the affirmative)

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**3. OLD BUSINESS: None**

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**4. NEW BUSINESS:**

**Councilor Kelly** indicated Chamberlain Marks gave Council budget report of changes discussed at Budget workshops. Would like to schedule another workshop Monday, November 23, 2020 at 3pm in Old Common Council Chambers.

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Motion to Adjourn by Councilor Moore; Seconded by Councilor Kelly  
(RC) Roll call: Chair Councilor Kelly, Councilor Moore, Mayor Read  
(All voted in the affirmative)

**MEETING ADJOURNED: 5:00 pm**

## Police Department Staffing Analysis

The police staffing study consisted of a series of interviews with Department staff, analysis of data provided by the department and a review of research and consulting reports commissioned by city governments seeking an evaluation of police staffing (dispatch, patrol and detective units).

This information, while important, does not provide all the answers. The conclusions on baseline staffing numbers should be supplemented by the Council's development of clear goals and outcomes for the police department that guide strategic decisions about how to align its police force with the staff resources and its particular needs.

Critical policy and operational choices that affect staffing include:

- The approach used by the police department to address the crime, violence, and disorder problems;
- How patrol time should be expended (i.e. How quickly officers should respond to different types of calls for service, how should the department address those calls that are not related to an actual crime, self-initiated activity, free patrol time, administrative tasks, traffic control and enforcement?);
- The level of investigative effort desired to solve crimes;
- The desired role for specialized units (narcotics and major crime detective units) versus the use of generalists; and
- The role and use of civilian staff and community volunteers

The public does not expect that the Police will be able to prevent all crimes or contain all harms. But they do expect them to provide the best protection possible, and at a reasonable price.

This report is provided in an effort to encourage discussion and understanding about what our police department does and how they are staffed to do it.

### **Police department**

The City of Plattsburgh employs approximately 50 FTEs (full time equivalent employees) and 4 contract services to provide all the normal and customary functions of the police department.

Of the 50 staff members, the authorized sworn officer strength is 43 police officers, with the remainder civilian dispatch: (4) support staff finance/records & parking enforcement (3), contracts including, 2 school resource officers, 1 training coordinator and 1 nuisance wildlife.

The two School Resource Officers (SRO), are partially or wholly subsidized by outside funding sources.

The Police Department provides patrol, investigations, dispatch services, school resource officers, training and nuisance wildlife services.

### **Police Department Budget 2019 Summary**

Salaries and wages	\$3,248,169
Overtime	310,725
Separation pay & non pay compensation	159,250
Services and supplies	<u>396,765</u>
Total;	\$4,164,403
Benefits	
Health care	1,916,054
Retirement	673,454
Payroll matching	287,825
Workers' Comp	105,178
Disability	2,970
Cafeteria Contribution	<u>16,609</u>
Total	3,002,091
Total police department cost 2019	<b>\$7,215,537</b>
Police Revenue	<b>\$ 382,133</b>

The 2019 average fully-loaded budgeted cost for one full-time, sworn member of PCPD is \$125,268

### **Police Department Current Staffing**

Chief	1
Captain (part time)	
Sergeants	4
Corporals	4
Patrol Officers	23
<b>Vacancy</b>	<b>3</b>
Housing officer	1
Juvenile officer	1
Community officer	1
Dispatcher	3
Detectives	7
Clerk	2
School crossing guards	<u>7</u>
Total staff	<b>57</b>
Sworn Staff	<b>42</b>
<b>Vacancy</b>	<b>3</b>

The following sections of the report will discuss: Patrol, Dispatch, and Detective Investigations

### **Patrol Staffing and Deployment**

Police Patrol Officers are assigned city sectors to enforce laws and ordinances, regulate traffic, control crowds, prevent crime, and arrest violators. They respond to calls for service from 911 and citizens, identify, pursue, and arrest suspects and perpetrators of criminal acts.

Uniformed patrol is considered the backbone of policing. Officers assigned to this important function are the most visible members of the department and usually command the largest share of departmental resources. **Proper allocation of these resources is critical** to having officers readily available to respond to calls for service and to provide law enforcement services to the public.

When planning patrol allocation, you should answer some of the most important questions facing the department

- How many patrol units should be on duty each shift
- How should they be distributed across the city
- Should one or two officers be assigned per car
- How to officers spend their time when not answering calls
- What citizen-initiated calls merit response by a patrol car, and which ones can be handled by other means (take a crime report over the phone)
- How many cars should be dispatched to each call
- Are there sufficient cars to handle multiple calls in one hour.

PPD does not Prioritize Calls for Service (CFS) unless all cars are occupied at one time. They have sufficient staff to send a patrol car to respond to all calls for service - 911 and citizen-initiated calls

### Available patrol Staff

4 platoons

4 sergeants, 4 corporals, 23 police officers, 4 dispatchers

1 juvenile officer, 1 housing officer, 1 community service officer

Total sworn officers available for Patrol - 26 sworn staff

23 sworn officers

3 special focus officers

### Understanding actual workload requires:

- reviewing total Calls for Service, such as 911 calls for service, citizen-initiated calls
- CFS handling times; and
- officers time to respond to CFS
- officer-initiated activities and administrative tasks.

Performing this analysis allows the activities that are major crime and property crime calls to be differentiated from **other blotter activities**. Understanding the difference between the various types of events and the resulting staffing implications are critical to determining deployment needs.

### Patrol Division: Calls for Service

Major Crime reported to police 2019

Drug cases	64
Sex crimes	52
Assaults	109
Death Inv.	22
<u>Fraud</u>	<u>25</u>
Total	272

Property crimes

Burglary	55
Larceny	327
<u>MV theft</u>	<u>8</u>
Total	390

**Total Major Crime calls for service -- 662 cases**

## Annual Blotter Activity

Blotter Activity Report reflects all activity by police officers by time of day for

Data from the blotter required removing administrative tasks and focusing on 911 and citizen-initiated calls for service. Also, the incident type of the event from the blotter must have sufficiently corresponded to a call for service. Call types that could be identified with a high level of certainty as being either self-initiated (e.g., traffic stops) or other kinds of activity generated by the department (e.g., beat monitoring, prisoner transport), have not been counted as community generated calls for service.

The calls for service reflected on the blotter include major crimes data, misdemeanor crimes, and services to the community

The most common activity reported on the 2019 police activity blotter

Traffic stops	2256
Services	891
Welfare check	766
MV accident	847
Misc calls	661
Noise violation	484
Domestic	422
Disorderly person	366
Door unlocking	339
Aided medical	338
Lost and found	325
Larceny/theft	325
Alarms	307
Suspicious activity	283
Harassment	267

**Total number of patrol related CFS activities on 2019 blotter – 10,029**

### Call for Service (CFS) result

Major crimes –	662 CFS	6%
Other blotter CFS -	10,029 CFS	94%
<b>Total calls for service --</b>	<b>10,691</b>	

### **Average CFS in seven-day week** (Week from activity blotter 9/13-9/20/2020)

249 CFS over seven days

36 CFS/day (rounded up)

18 CFS per 12-hour shift

3 patrol vehicles per shift

4 calls per vehicle / per 12-hour shift

### **2019 CFS year totals**

10,691 CFS in 2019

206 CFS/ week

29 CFS/day

15 CFS per 12-hour shift

3 patrol vehicles per shift

4 CFS per patrol vehicle per 12-hour shift

### **Available Officer time to respond to CFS**

#### **Factors Used to Calculate Patrol Officer Net Availability Work Hours Per Year**

Hours scheduled: 2,080 scheduled work hours per year

Leave (vacation, holiday sick)	280
Meals /breaks	150
Shift briefing	30
Vehicle prep	40
Training	80
Court	22
Dept meetings	8
	<hr/>
	610 hrs

**Net work hours available after all factors: 1470 hrs**

## CFS Service Handling Times

An important element in the patrol staffing analysis relates to call for service handling time – the elapsed time between receipt of the call in the field to completion of service for that call.

The calculations used to determine police call handling times were taken from national research studies focused on police workload as well as review of a number of consulting firms reports commissioned by City governments across the country to analyze police department staffing. As can be expected that data were not consistent across reports due to variance in police policy and community context.

CFS handling times included the response to the call, backup, report writing and proactive patrol time.

### Response to call

Review of literature indicated an average of 30-80 minutes/call

Major crime 60 min

Blotter 30 min

### Backup

Review of literature indicated 60% of calls required back up with 43 minutes /call

We used 50 % of major crime calls and 25% of blotter activity

Major crime 40 min

Blotter 20 min

### Reports Written Per CFS

Literature indicated CFS reports were written 25-50% of the time. Time to complete report ranged from 14min-45 min.

We assumed 100% of Major Crime and 50% of Blotter activity required a report

Major crime 40 min

Blotter 20min

## Summary of CFS Workload Factors

Total Number of Calls for Service	10,691
Major crime	662
Blotter activity	10,029

### Avg. CFS Handling Time (min.)

Major crime	60min x 662 = 662 hrs
Blotter activity	30 min x 10,029 = 5,015 hrs

### Backup Unit Per CFS

50% of major crime	40 min	331 x 40 = 220 hrs
25% of blotter	20 min	2,507 x 20 min = 809 hrs

### Report

Major Crime	40 min	662 x 40 = 441 hrs
Blotter	20 min	10,029 x 20 = 3,343 hrs

### Total Major crime CFS workload Hours

Handling	662
Backup	220
Report	<u>441</u>
Total	<b>1,323 hrs</b>

**Total Blotter CFS workload hours**

Handling	5,015
Backup	809
<u>Report</u>	<u>3,343</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,167 hrs</b>

**Total CFS hours**

Major crime	1323
<u>Blotter</u>	<u>9,167</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>10,490 hrs</u></b>

**Staffing analysis****Patrol officers – 23****23 x 1470 (available work hours) = 33,810 hrs****CFS = 10,490 hrs****10,490/1470 = 7 officers to cover CFS**

Available work hours	33,810
<u>Minus - CFS hrs</u>	<u>10,490</u>

**23,320 hrs of additional patrol office time available**

## Patrol Staff self-initiated activity

Add 40% more hours to CFS calculations to allow for officer-initiated activity, follow up investigations and proactive patrol

### Recommendation:

*The chief of police and command staff should review how uncommitted patrol officers' time is being spent to ensure that these hours are directed toward crime prevention and improving the quality of life for Plattsburgh citizens.*

### Total CFS hours

Major crime 1323

Blotter 9,167

**Total 10,490 hrs**

10,490 x 40% = 4196 hrs

10,490 + 4,196 = 14,656 hrs

**14,656 hrs for CFS and officer -initiated patrol activities**

## Impact of the new Disclosure Law on staffing

Add 1hr additional processing/record time due to new disclosure law for all arrests

### 2019 arrests

Felony arrests - 123

Misdemeanor - 373

Total 496 x 1hrs = **496 hrs for disclosure paperwork**

14,656 cfs hrs + 496 hrs = 15,152 hrs to cover CFS, officer -initiated activity and new state disclosure paperwork

## Officers Required to cover CFS and officer-initiated activity and disclosure law paperwork

**15,152 hrs/1470 = 10.3 Officers to cover patrol activity**

## **Summary of Patrol staffing**

23 sworn officers = 33,810 available work hours

15,152 hrs required to handle CFS, officer-initiated activity and disclosure law paperwork

33,810 – 15,152 = 18,668 **additional hrs available from patrol staffing**

**18,668 /1470 = 12.6 officers**

## **Staff Allocation**

Staffing a 12-hour shifts requires four platoons - 3 staff per platoon

**12 staff** to cover CFS and discretionary patrol activity

*Allocates 2 additional staff beyond the number required to handle CFS*

Add 1 housing officer to patrol with a special focus on Plattsburgh Housing Authority

Add 1 officer to patrol with a special focus on juveniles

Add 1 community service officer to patrol and with special focus community service

**Total staff = 15 sworn officers (22,050 hrs)**

## **Staffing results**

33,810 hrs available hours with 23 patrol officers

22,050 hrs for 15 patrol officers

**11,760 Excess Sworn Officer hours available = 8 patrol officers**

## **Patrol final Result**

Patrol has **eight officers** in excess of the time necessary to staff Patrol, plus three special assignment officers

In addition, the Department has **three vacant patrol officer positions** that were not factored into the staffing calculations

***Recommendation: Use two vacant positions to create two lieutenant positions in the Police Department.***

***Determine the need for the 10 remaining officers identified through the staff analysis***

## Dispatch

911 offers an easy and effective method for citizens to contact police. The dilemma for police is that while 911 was designed for obtaining emergency services and rapid **response most calls for police service are not emergencies and do not require a rapid response**. Research suggests that as few as 5 percent of police calls for service require a rapid response

Dispatch Unit workload expressed in the number of calls for service provides a straightforward and relatively simple method to determine required staffing levels.

### **The Dispatch unit has 4 civilian positions**

Tasks performed by a communications unit are relatively constant from one police department to another. These tasks include:

- Answering emergency, non-emergency and administrative telephone calls,
- Processing community generated calls for service (a request for service from an outside source) and Officer initiated incidents,
- Radio transmissions, computer queries, related to the calls and Officer initiated incidents,
- Outbound telephone calls, and a variety of other information handling and processing.

### **The workload standards utilized in this study include:**

Average dispatch time per call: This includes time on the radio with responding units, as well as time spent processing the call in the CAD system. From research and review of Police staffing studies the Dispatch process above typically averages 3 to 9 minutes.

For each call for service in this review, 10 minutes was allocated for call related and officer-initiated activities. This includes time estimates for processing a service request (911 and citizen generated call for service), radio dispatch transmissions, telephone calls related to the incident, records check and administrative tasks.

This time represents all workloads related to calls for service activity, administrative business calls and transmissions and other tasks associated with the dispatch unit: administrative, computerized records/warrants checks, updating the call record, performing related service requests and other activities.

This time standard was then applied against known or estimated law enforcement calls for service to calculate the total minutes of dispatch workload.

Finally, an allowance needs to be made regarding the proportion of time desirable to have a dispatcher actually involved in call handling and/or radio transmissions.

Therefore, we are using a flex task factor of 15 minutes of actual call/radio activity per dispatch employee per hour (25% utilization target). The basis of this assumption is that a major portion

(75%) of every working hour should be used for direct communications tasks (i.e. telephone calls, CAD case entries, dispatch calls, computer related queries).

Remaining minutes per hour can be dedicated to administrative, follow-up tasks or other duties. This 15-minute factor is factored into the hourly workload in the Dispatch Unit.

### **Dispatch workload for FY 2019.**

The following points summarize the workload analysis:

- The Dispatch Unit handled **10,691** calls for service in 2019  
662 of which were Major crime calls for service
- Average time per call was estimated at 10 minutes -- **100,691 minutes**
- Number of hours required to answer calls – **1678 hrs**
- Apply flex time of 15 minutes per hour  
24hrs x 7days = 168 hrs per week x 52 weeks = 8,736 hrs  
8,736 hr x 15 min flex time = **131,040 minutes/ 60 min = 2,184 hrs**

Number of hours to respond to **10,691** calls for service increases to:  
1,678 response to call + 2,184 flex time = **3,862 hrs**

The Dispatch workload requires 3,862 hrs/1470 = **2.6 dispatchers**

To staff Dispatch requires 4 shifts and 4 dispatchers (1470hrs X 4) = **5880 hours**

**Dispatch need is 3,862 hours/yr. -- 2054 hours of staff time are available for other work activities**

### **Recommendations:**

Patrol Car Computer systems are not functioning properly. Cars call headquarters' dispatcher to run license plates and driver licenses This is a public safety issue for patrol officers and takes time away from dispatch.

Lay off 4 dispatcher positions. Replace dispatch with police officers to maximize use of available dispatch free time to perform sworn office functions.

Explore the development of a shared service agreement with the County, Sheriff, City Police and Union to merge City Dispatch with County Dispatch. A recommendation previously made in the Financial Restructuring Board's Comprehensive Review Report

## Detective Investigations

No matter how much investigative effort is put forth by police officers and investigators, not all crimes can be solved.

### 2019

<b>Cases</b>		<b>Arrests</b>
Drug cases-	64	55
Sex Crimes	52	9
Assaults	109	51
Fraud	25	
Grand larceny		8
Burglary	55	4
Larceny	327	53
MV theft	8	1

### Role of detectives

A police detective, also referred to as a criminal investigator, is a sworn law enforcement professional who investigates felony (and sometimes misdemeanor) crimes and gather helpful data that can be used to help police command personnel and better allocate their police officers, detectives, and other assets.

Police investigators primarily perform the following tasks:

1. Determine whether a crime has been committed;
2. Identify the crime suspect;
3. Locate and apprehend the suspect;
4. Collect evidence of guilt for prosecutor / courtroom use; and,
5. Recover property wrongfully held by suspect
6. Gather tactical intelligence
7. Data analysis

Plattsburgh's Investigation Unit consists of seven detectives separated into two investigative units (Major Crimes (3 detectives), Narcotics (three detectives) and a Forensic/Evidence function staffed by one detective.

## Staffing Levels

Staffing levels for investigative units do not lend themselves to the same sort of analysis as patrol units, which have recognized national standards that can be applied as general guidelines.

Comparisons with other agencies are also difficult given the vagaries of conducting investigative business among differing law enforcement agencies throughout the nation

While some research has been conducted on the desired strength and geographical deployment of uniformed patrol personnel, very limited research has been conducted on the ideal number and assignments of investigative personnel. Most research on the investigative function has examined either the nature of the job in general or the identification of “solvability factors” to assist in case investigations.

**No studies were identified that determined the optimum number of investigators for a municipal police department.**

For many years researchers have sought to better understand the criminal investigation function and its relationship with other police personnel. Police administrators have found it difficult to make substantial changes in how investigations are conducted and how they are organized. In fact, a recent study done by researchers at Michigan State University concluded that, “**the criminal investigation process has remained relatively unchanged in the face of the many paradigm shifts in the profession of policing over the past 30 years.**”

Two of the better known, albeit now extremely dated, studies on the nature of the investigative function were conducted by the President’s Commission on Crime and Administration of Justice in 1967 and in 1975 by the RAND Corporation.

The report, The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society: Science and Technology, did not directly speak to the number of investigators a police department should have, but it did identify several factors that must be considered when making investigative staffing decisions. The study found that **the patrol force made a large portion (90%) of the arrests.** About 25 percent of these were based on detective follow-ups (warrants). Thus, detectives were directly or indirectly responsible for about 35 percent of all arrests.

About **one-third of all arrests were made within 30 minutes of the commission of the offense** while nearly **one-half of all arrests were made within two hours** of the commission of the offense; presumably, uniformed patrol officers were primarily responsible for these arrests.

The research also found that **two-thirds (66%) of all arrests were made within one week** of the commission of the offense; **94 percent of all arrests occurred within one month.** Investigative efforts expended over the next eleven months raised that percentage by only 4.5 percent.

The LAPD study leads to several conclusions.

- **First, in half of the arrests the investigator’s role was largely case preparation not related to the identification of the suspect.**
- **Further, the study revealed that investigative effort beyond one month after the commission of the offense, on average, produces only an incremental difference in arrest rates.**
- **Finally, reactive investigation of criminal incidents was most successful when the identity of the offender is already known i.e. domestic violence.**

As to investigative activity, the RAND study found that, on average, investigators spent 45 percent of their time on non-case work, such as travel and administrative matters. More importantly, of the 55 percent of the time actually spent investigating, 40 percent of the time (22% overall) was expended on investigating matters that are never solved. **Only 12 percent of the time (7% overall) was expended on investigating matters that were solved.** Another 48 percent of the time (26% overall) was spent on cleared cases after arrest. In a detailed examination of the Kansas City, Missouri, Police Department, the RAND researchers found that most cases that detectives worked on were handled in one to two days. Over 86 percent of the cases were placed in a suspended status within one week.

Even more recent, various police organizations such as the non-profit Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) has considered other approaches such as average case hours required based on type and complexity of case (ranging from Contact Only to Typical to More Complex).

Time required ranges significantly based on case sophistication and does not necessarily align well with the previous research. This research recognizes that workload Allocation of Personnel: Methodology for Required Staffing of Detectives, Gribble, 1985, Allocation of Personnel: Investigations, Prummell, 2007, and a Report on the Police Department Staffing Study by Matrix Consulting Group can be within a range with minimum and maximum efforts generally needed. Based on these metrics and others, the Matrix Consulting Group devised an approach where conclusions are drawn in the context of how investigative resources are used in an agency. These comparative measures that can be used to help determine staffing, efficiency and effectiveness are summarized in the following table:

### Comparative Measures for Investigations

Comparative Measures	Comparative Industry Patterns
Part I Offenses per “line” Detective in core investigative functions such as persons and property crimes Detectives. This does not include those assigned to “proactive” units such as narcotics or vice.	The Average distribution of Part I Offenses per “line” Detective developed in police services studies in the U.S. generally ranges from 300-500 Part I Offenses per investigator.

Case Clearance for Part I Crimes.	The Uniform Crime Report provides data on average case clearance by major crime type for various sized jurisdictions.
Active cases assigned to “property” crimes Detectives (e.g., burglary/theft).	15 to 20 active cases per month based on a survey of dozens of law enforcement agencies
Active cases assigned to White Collar crimes Detectives (e.g., fraud).	These have a broader range due to their varied complexity, from 10 to 20 active cases per month each.
Active cases assigned to “person” crimes Detectives.	8 to 12 active cases per month based on surveys. 3 to 5 active cases for complex person crimes such as felony assault (shootings) to include homicides. Domestic Violence cases vary widely dependent upon State mandates. Some DV Units can handle 20 to 30 cases per investigator per month, whereas others can only handle DV cases typically attributed to “felonious person crimes.”
Active cases assigned to “generalist” crimes Detectives.	12 to 15 active cases per month based on the same survey.
Narcotic investigations	Staffing levels for proactive investigations are a city policy issue.

## The Approach used to determine staffing levels in this report

The analysis by Matrix Consulting Group as well as a series of interviews with the Police Chief and Captain as well as a consultant with extensive police knowledge were used to examine Detective workloads. To determine the caseloads for Major Crimes, the total assigned cases for the one-year period of January 1, 2019 - December 31, 2019 was used.

### Department Data - 2019 Cases and arrest data

#### Major Crime

	Cases	Arrests
Drugs	64	55
Sex crimes	52	9
Assaults	109	51
Death inv	22	no arrests
Fraud	25	8
Robbery	?	2
Total	272	125

Property Crime	Cases	Arrests
Burglary investigations	55	4
Larceny investigations	327	53
MV theft investigations	8	1
Total	390	58

All felony Major Crime calls are assigned to Detectives. Property crimes and lesser felonies are handled by Patrol officers. Patrol determine the exact nature of the call and either begin a preliminary investigation or call out the Detective unit. Property crimes investigated by Patrol may be selected for transfer to detectives based on: the seriousness of the offence, whether or not the victim is cooperative and whether the specialized knowledge and training of a detective is necessary.

There remains some uncertainty on our part about how cases are assigned to specialized units. **There appears to be no set policy that describes how cases are assigned to detectives for follow-up, nor any set procedure to manage the timely completion of investigations. The department does not appear to use a formal system of case management based on solvability a strategy widely employed in agencies across the country.**

The Solvability Factor Methodology.

The Police Department should be using a case-screening system and specific criteria for continuing and/or suspending an investigative effort. Research seems to lean toward a twelve-point process. If a crime report has a preponderance of the solvability factors noted below, it should be assigned for investigative follow-up.

- Witnesses to the crime;
  - Knowledge of the suspect's name;
  - Knowledge of where the suspect can be located;
  - Reasonable description of suspect;
  - Identification of suspect probable;
  - Property with traceable, identifiable characteristics, marks or numbers;
  - Existence of a significant modus operandi;
  - Presence of significant physical evidence;
  - Reasonable description of the suspect's vehicle;
  - Positive results from a crime scene evidence search;
  - Belief that crime may be solved with publicity and/or reasonable additional investigative effort;
- and
- Strong possibility and/or opportunity for anyone, other than the suspect, to have committed the crime.

These solvability factors should be incorporated into a formal case screening process whereby the above list, or some derivative, is used as a cover sheet on all cases to determine whether it is an assignable case to a Detective for investigative follow-up. For those cases requiring follow-up, the suggested **prioritization**, as discussed subsequently, should be noted on the cover sheet.

Adoption of a formal screening process will ensure that for those cases with no solvability factors checked, the maximum service received on the case is minimal and has limited impact on staff workload. This may amount to one courtesy telephone call to the victim advising them of their case status and the need for additional information to continue the investigation.

Effective case screening allows for the bulk of investigative resources to be dedicated to solvable cases, thereby allowing time to focus on solving and clearing important crime activities. Case screening based on formal solvability factors and the implementation of a formalized process is a best management practice that should be adopted by PCPD in the short term.

### **The Prioritization Methodology**

Once a case has been screened for solvability, based on those solvability factors checked, as well as a review of the qualitative case circumstances, the case should be prioritized for work based on the following seven-priority rating.

Prioritization of workload has clearly been widely adopted in patrol services throughout the nation through call priority classifications, but is used in a lesser capacity in other law enforcement arenas.

The CPPD has an informal case prioritization process and we believe should assess the implementation of a formal priority-rating tool to augment case screening. One seven-priority rating tool includes:

- Priority 1 – Felony Crime with In-custody suspect or excellent chance of arrest.
- Priority 2 – Misdemeanor Crime with In-custody suspect or excellent chance of arrest.
- Priority 3 – Felony Crime with reasonable chance of arrest.
- Priority 4 – Felony Crime with limited chance of arrest.
- Priority 5 – Misdemeanor Crime with reasonable chance of arrest.
- Priority 6 – Misdemeanor Crime with limited chance of arrest.
- Priority 7 – Courtesy phone call based on no solvability factors.

### **Recommendation**

*Implement a solvability/ priority system to meet the unique needs of the CPPD both in dispatch, detective unit case acceptance and as a framework for prioritizing workload, thereby focusing dispatch, patrol and detective resources on the most important cases. Priority should be assigned on all case screening cover sheets.*

*Implement Formal Case Status Reporting Every 30-days to Facilitate Expeditious Case Closure. An important issue noted previously is that detectives apparently work on active and inactive old*

*cases. Research indicates that the vast majority of cases should be closed within a 30-day timeframe.*

*Such formality will help ensure cases do not languish indefinitely and staff resources are properly dedicated to solving crimes, making arrests and clearing cases.*

The lack of a robust and updated case assignment and case management approach will have an impact on perceived staffing needs as there is no effective linkage between what work should be done and what is actually accomplished.

In addition, the Department has not defined explicit goals for the Detective Division nor for the types of cases, built on historical data on the average time to complete the types of cases.

### **Available Detective time to respond to Investigative work**

#### **Factors Used to Calculate Detective Net Availability Work Hours Per Year**

Hours scheduled: 2,080 scheduled work hours per year

Leave (vacation, holiday sick)	280
Meals /breaks	150
Shift briefing	30
Training	80
Court	62
Dept meetings	<u>8</u>
Net time available:	<b>1470 hrs /Detective</b>

Detective Division employs 7 detectives and contains three distinct functional areas of work: major crimes, narcotics, and forensics/evidence.

**7 x 1470 hours = 10,290 investigative hours available**

Major crime – 3 detectives = 4,410 hrs

Narcotic Unit – 3 detectives = 4,410 hrs

Forensic/Evidence – 1 detective = 1470 hrs

## Major Crime Unit

Major Crimes investigates serious person crimes – sex crimes, assaults, robberies fraud, homicides, and unattended death investigations. Major Crimes also investigates major property crimes such as burglary and larceny when referred from Patrol. Property crime cases tend to be less complex and also tend to have much lower solvability rates. These types of cases typically do not require a detective to respond to a scene and are often handled as follow up a day or more after the occurrence:

Total Major Crime calls for service

272 – 64 (drug crimes handled by Narcotic detective division) = **208 cases**

Total Major Crime arrests -- **70 arrests**

## Assumptions from Comparative Measures Table (p. 16-17)

Major Crime caseload level in the Comparative Measures Table range from 8-12 cases for major crimes.

More recent research on Detective staffing is finding that, due to investigative processes of interviews, evidence collections, writing search warrants, writing arrest warrants, recovering and reviewing video evidence other investigative techniques, and with added consultation with the prosecutors' offices, most person crime detectives cannot effectively work 12 cases per month.

**We applied a standard of 8 new cases per month**

### 2019 Major Crime Case load

Major crimes

272 (minus 64 drug cases) = **208 cases**

**Total 2019 caseload for Major crime investigations -- 208 cases**

208/12 = 17 cases /month for the Unit

17/3 = detectives = 6 cases/month / detective

**2019 Detective case load / month = 6 cases**

**Case load standard for 2019data, applying a standard of 8 cases per month/ detective:**

17 case per month in the unit/ 8 case / detectives == **2 detectives to cover the 17 cases**

## **Forensic/evidence Detective**

The Detective Division has 1 full time Detective working on forensics and managing Property and Evidence. The Detective also assists in Major crime investigations.

Police Property/ Evidence is responsible for the intake, catalog, disposal/ destruction of property and evidence collected by the PCPD.

Forensic detectives, work closely with other Detectives and use scientific methods to analyze and gather physical evidence police detectives need to work their cases

### **Recommendation:**

*Police Departments are hiring civilian staff to manage property and evidence collecting and storage. We would suggest the Police Department examine employing a civilian to manage this department function and use the found time to assign the detective to receive cases and conduct investigations*

*In addition , the Forensic detective could use the freed-up time to conducting crime analysis for the department, which could include compiling monthly and annual statistics and developing current trends that are beneficial to both investigators and patrol staff.*

## Narcotic Detective Unit

The Narcotics Detectives are a proactive unit but are assigned cases as well. The unit consists 3 detectives.

Most of the activity performed by these units is proactive in nature, and is based either on intelligence information, citizen complaints, or investigations conducted in cooperation with area law enforcement commands.

The major functions of a narcotics investigation unit include:

- Conducting follow-up investigations of felony narcotics arrests made by the police department's patrol unit
- Conducting complex investigations of prescription drug fraud and forgeries
- Investigating narcotics offenses through the development of confidential sources and through undercover investigations
- Following up on tips received from a variety of sources, including patrol officers, community members, and confidential informants

In proactive responses, investigators:

- Can decide where and when to start investigative operations
- Can control the direction of the investigation
- Can remain in control of investigations until the final outcome

There is a high degree of cooperation and collaboration with State and federal law enforcement agencies.

### The unit reported the following caseload for 2019.

**Drug cases    64        Arrests        55 (86%)**

### Drug Seizures

	<b>Cocaine</b>	<b>heroin</b>	<b>RX</b>	<b>marijuana</b>
2015	9	35	42	109
2016	24	13	33	80
2017	38	24	41	106
2018	64	19	48	122
2019	58	23	19	177

There is no caseload standard for specialized units, such as narcotics, because these types of cases are more proactive in nature. One case can consume many weeks of staff time generating leads, contacts and suspect information; and they may also often require surveillance and related activities.

According to a review of research and previous staffing evaluations, staffing levels for proactive investigations (Drug Crimes) are considered primarily a city **policy issue**.

**Active Unit cases per month – 5.3 (round up to 6)6 cases/month**

**Active cases per detective/month -  $6/3 = 2$  cases**

**The average Narcotics Detective was assigned or generated approximately 2 new cases per month.**

#### **Recommendation**

Workload levels are low and while each Detective perform various collateral duties, the data would not seem to support the need for three narcotic detectives. Eliminating one detective would lead to a monthly new caseload of 3 cases /month/ 36/year/detective.

## Issues for Council/Mayor Consideration

### Public Policy

A review of the Police Blotter Activity Report shows a wide range of police activities. The Council, with community input, should provide clarity about what the city wants our police department to do and provide outcomes and performance metrics to evaluate progress.

A good performance measure gives the Department, the Council and the Community the ability to connect the budget to tangible results and monitor progress toward achieving the results.

The police department, in 2019, responded to 132 Mental health calls for service and in excess of 200 calls for service involving drug use. The city does not provide mental health nor drug treatment. The council should initiate a conversation with the County legislature about the need for a public health response rather than a criminal response to these issues.

### Consolidation of police functions.

Through the **Local Government Efficiency (LGE) Program**, the NYS Department of State has had the opportunity to invest in hundreds of locally led initiatives. For police services local officials have identified strategies, benefits and challenges.

With PCPD, Sherriff department, SUNY police and State police operating in the County and City there are opportunities eliminates duplicative operational and administrative costs and share expenditures for equipment and eliminate duplication. All of which will result in enhanced police service while reducing financial costs. Potential areas for consolidation include:

- Dispatch
- Forensics
- Special response Teams
- Procurement
- Investigative expertise

## **Expand the use of Non-Sworn Staff**

The growth in non-sworn personnel has led to expanded use of both civilian and volunteer individuals to perform tasks that do not require an armed response. Police Auxiliaries expand the concept of community policing by acting as the eyes and ears of the Department, and freeing up sworn officers to focus on serious criminal activity. NYC has one of the largest Police Auxiliary programs in the country.

These members perform a wide range of tasks and work in conjunction with sworn officers. Police Auxiliary Officers usually wear a uniform but are unarmed. They have limited police authority.

**Assignments of Police Auxiliary Officers include:**

- Assisting patrol officers in non-enforcement activities
- Responding to citizen requests for service
- Perform foot patrols
- Meeting with and assisting citizens in identifying crime/concerns in their neighborhood
- Perform traffic control at motor vehicle accidents and fire scenes
- Respond to minor traffic accidents
- Assist in crime prevention activities
- Maintain order at parades, festivals, street fairs, and other special events
- Identifying and reporting criminal activities
- Recovering abandoned property
- Assisting with Department administrative tasks

**Auxiliary Police officers cannot:**

- Respond to any 911 calls involving any type of weapons or other life endangering situation.

**Some of the benefits of having an auxiliary police program include:**

- Better rapport between police & community because of citizen involvement
- Opportunity for citizens to give back to their community
- Offer a resource for personnel under emergency situations when needed
- Help free up more highly trained officers to do tasks that require their expertise
- Large personnel resource for critical incidents

## Police Department Operation

### Dispatch

#### Develop a Priority system for CFS response

Not all CFS require immediate response. The Police Department currently responds to all calls for service, regardless of the emergency nature of the call. The Department should review current call priority practice. If deemed appropriate, the chief of police should re-align call priority and response to achieve a more efficient dispatch and manage patrol activity.

#### Develop a telephone and on-line reporting system for low priority civilian requests for service.

When citizens call the police, they often do so in order to file a report about an offense or traffic accident. In most communities, police officers are dispatched to the scene of the incident to gather information for the report. For many of these incidents, there is little likelihood that the case will be solved, and in some cases, there will be little or no follow-up. Nonetheless, citizens often need evidence that a report was filed (typically for insurance purposes), and police do want to know about all offenses so as to better understand patterns and hot spots.

Many police departments have found ways to satisfy these needs while avoiding the inconvenience of filing reports. Evidence indicated that such approaches could reduce patrol workload as much as one-fifth, in part because police could take as much as 45 percent of reports over the phone.

All reports are reviewed every 24 hours and if further investigation is needed the caller will be contacted by phone or in person. A final report is mailed to the caller

The types of cases involved in phone or on-line reporting by various police departments include;

- Offences that are not in progress and for which there is no evidence or suspect information (e.g., shoplifting)
- Auto accidents with no injury
- Auto Theft/Vehicle tampering
- Lost Items (i.e. cell phones, purse)
- Vandalism/Graffiti
- Simple Assault and Battery
- Harassment/Threats
- Embezzlement
- Indecent Exposure
- Fraud/Forgery
- Theft/Larceny

- Telephone Harassment

## **Solvability/Priority Systems**

Implement a solvability/ priority system to meet the unique needs of the CPPD both in dispatch, detective unit case acceptance and as a framework for prioritizing workload, thereby focusing dispatch, patrol and detective resources on the most important cases.

Implement Formal Case Status Reporting Every 30-days to Facilitate Expeditious Case Closure. An important issue noted previously is that detectives apparently work on active and inactive cases that are aged. Research indicates that the vast majority of cases should be closed within a 30-day timeframe.

Such formality will help ensure cases do not languish indefinitely and staff resources are properly dedicated to solving crimes, making arrests and clearing

## **Forensic Detective**

Police Departments are hiring civilian staff to manage property and evidence collecting and storage. We would suggest the Police Chief examine employing a civilian to manage this department function and use the found time to assign the Forensic detective to conducting crime analysis for the department, which could include compiling monthly and annual statistics and developing current trends that are beneficial to both investigators and patrol staff.

## **Narcotic Detectives work schedule**

All of the Narcotic Detectives are assigned to work Monday through Friday during normal business hours. This does not align well with the nature of their work, and thus detectives are often called out on overtime. Work to develop work schedules that align with the nature of the Units work and reduce the need for overtime.

## **Implement Alternative Responses to Traffic Accidents**

Traffic accident investigation is a labor-intensive task, often involving more than one officer. Moreover, when vehicles are in the roadway (including emergency vehicles) it causes traffic delays and increases the risk of secondary collisions. Many police departments are revising their policy with respect to minor traffic accidents. In

Minneapolis, for example, officers respond to the scene and ensure that no one is injured, that there are no DUI's and that the participants are willing to exchange information. If the crash

meets these criteria the officer provides a packet of information and forms for the drivers to complete.

In Philadelphia, police do not investigate crashes in which:

- There are no personal injuries, and no damage to physical property surrounding the accident, such as commercial, residential or government-owned property (damage is associated with vehicles only)

The San Diego Police Department responds only to injury and hit-and-run accidents. If it is a minor hit-and-run, drivers may be directed to the nearest police substation to complete a report. If it is a property damage accident, drivers exchange information with the other driver.

Finally, since 2014 the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department no longer investigates or prepares reports on non-injury accidents. It is the responsibility of the drivers in the collision to exchange identification and insurance information.

Police still respond to other types of accidents including:

- Accidents with injuries or fatalities;
- A driver under the influence of alcohol, narcotics or other substances; 10
- A driver who doesn't have a driver's license, proof of insurance or registration;
- A hit and run;
- A vehicle disabled on the roadway as a result of an accident; an
- An uncooperative driver (i.e. will not exchange information) or any other disturbance meriting a police response.

## Fire department

While firefighters working realities have changed profoundly in recent decades, their structure and operating protocols remain largely the same.

### Current Department staffing

1 Chief

36 firefighters

Staff work 8 hours of a 24-hour shift and are on call for 16 hours with the requirement only to provide response to calls for service

### Fire Department cost

Budget for period ended 12/31/19 - **\$6,802,825**

Revenue 930,374

Net cost **\$5,872,451**

Average fully-loaded budgeted cost **per employee for 2019: \$184,487.76**

### Fire Department calls for service

2019 ambulance calls – 3,171

Data in 2020 from January 1 – July 31

Ambulance calls 1,586

Fire 46

Other calls 753

Includes: false alarms (297) – the most frequent call for service, rescue and EMS (293), hazardous conditions (59), explosion (30), service call (44) good intent call (27) weather/disaster (2), and special type (1)

### Percent of Calls for Service that are Fire Calls

$1586+753 = 2,339$

$46/2339 = 2\%$  of all calls to the fire department were for fire related incidents. Approximately 18 of the fire calls involved some type of building fire.

## **2019 Ambulance Service Cost**

Ambulance Service is provided by 8-10 of the 36 firefighters

Ambulance Cost of personnel, medical director and equipment: **610,384**

Ambulance Revenue: **930,374**

Surplus – **319,990**

## **Issues for Council/Mayor Consideration**

- **MOU on the second ambulance:** The income for ambulance service has not substantially increased beyond the revenue received for a single ambulance last year. The council agreed to the MOU with the understanding that the MOU could be terminated if the revenue did not cover cost of the second ambulance and the new firefighters would be laid off.

The council should direct the Mayor to give notice to the Union that to terminate the second ambulance MOU and offer to negotiate another MOU that reduces Fire Department cost and enables retention of the 4 firefighters.

- **Job training:** All new Firefighters are being paid to attend months of training at the NYS Fire Academy and are being trained to respond to emergency services that comprise only 25% of their time when on the job. (if you consider false alarms as a misuse of professional staff time)

The Council should determine if it is cost effective and makes sense to hire EMTs and Paramedics to operate the ambulance service and train the medical professionals as volunteer firefighters to supplement the core professional firefighting staff?

- **Contract Services:** Investigate the impact of contracting with CVPH on the cost and level of emergency medical services to the citizens of Plattsburgh.
- **Other issues**
  - Expand the role of the fire department in fire prevention activity in the city
  - Work with the Union to explore the issues associate with developing a combination Fire department by reactivating Rescue Hose 5 and developing a military staffing model to supplement the professional staff.