

DODGEVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Chief of Police Brandon Wilhelm

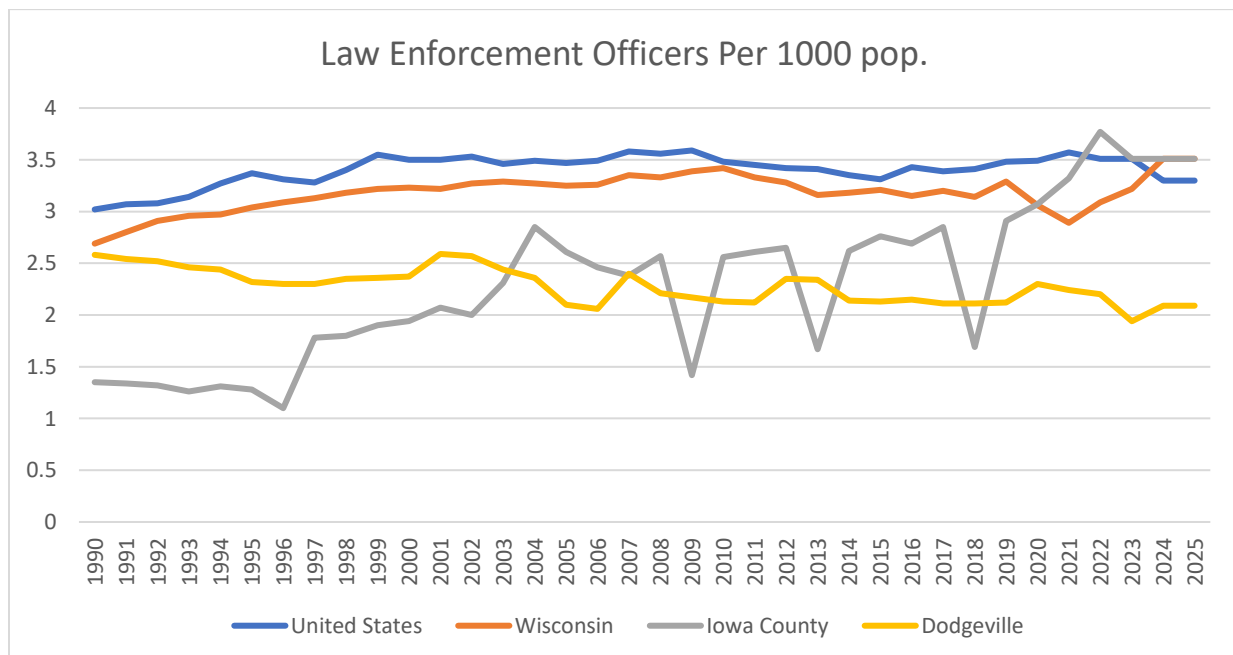
To: Finance Committee, Administrative and Personnel Committee, Common Council
From: Chief Brandon Wilhelm, Dodgeville Police Department
Date: October 8, 2025
Subject: Request for Additional Officer and Departmental Restructuring

As Chief of Police, one of my primary responsibilities is to identify strategic areas for improvement to ensure that the Dodgeville Police Department continues to meet the growing needs and expectations of our community. After a year and a half in this role, I have identified both a need for additional staffing and restructuring within the department. This report is intended to summarize the reasoning behind these recommendations.

Law Enforcement Staffing Ratios

The chart referenced below (data sourced from the FBI) illustrates the number of law enforcement officers per 1,000 residents on national, state, and county levels. While these ratios are increasing across the board nationwide, in Wisconsin, and within Iowa County: they are decreasing in the City of Dodgeville.

- **Current Dodgeville staffing:** 11 full-time officers
- **Estimated 2025 population:** 5,119
- **Current officer-to-population ratio:** 2.15 per 1,000



For context:

"To protect and serve, in partnership with our community, through integrity and compassion."

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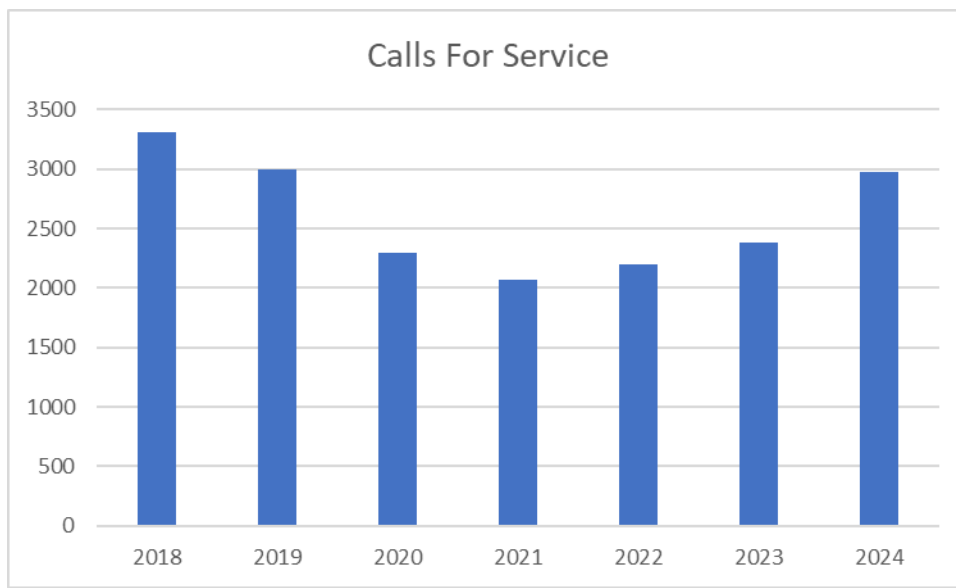
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- In 2019, cities with fewer than 10,000 residents had an average of 4.2 officers per 1,000 inhabitants. (*Criminal Justice Information Services Division, n.d.*)
- In 2020, a U.S. Department of Justice study found that local departments in similarly sized cities averaged 2.8 full-time sworn officers per 1,000 residents. (*Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2022*)

While the two sources differ in methodology, both suggest that Dodgeville is below average for our city size, especially as the population continues to grow, indicating a clear need for additional personnel.

Calls for Service



Call data was obtained through Iowa County Dispatch, with records dating back to 2018 (the first year available through our current system).

- In 2018, calls peaked before declining during the pandemic years.
- 2024 calls for service: 2,971
- As of October 8, 2025: 2,807 calls have already been received, with two months still remaining in the year.

At this trajectory, 2025 will likely surpass previous years and demonstrate the increasing demand on our officers.

Investigative Demands

Investigations have grown significantly more complex in the last 10–20 years. Cases that once took a few hours now take exponentially longer due to:

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- Proliferation of digital evidence
- Increase in cyber-related crimes such as harassment, threats, and stalking via social media
- Expanding volume of video surveillance and digital media requiring thorough review and documentation

These factors demand more time and specialized attention, increasing the workload for officers and supervisors alike.

Current Command Structure

The department currently operates with:

- 1 Chief of Police
- 1 Lieutenant
- 1 Sergeant
- 8 Patrol Officers-1 of which is dedicated to the School district during the school year.

In comparison, peer agencies in similarly sized cities such as Richland Center, Milton, and Viroqua maintain a structure that includes a Chief, Lieutenant/Assistant Chief, Sergeant, and a dedicated Investigator.

Currently, our Lieutenant balances multiple roles:

- Leading and assisting investigations
- Overseeing training, policy review, and monthly/annual reports
- Handling general administrative duties

Additionally, the current Sergeant supervises seven officers, many of whom work on different shifts. Appointing a second Sergeant would:

- Improve span of control and direct supervision
- Promote internal career growth
- Ensure consistent leadership and support across shifts

Assigning a dedicated Investigator and additional patrol sergeant would allow the Lieutenant and Chief to focus on higher-level departmental efficiency, while still contributing to complex investigations when needed and assisting Officers on calls throughout the day.

As Chief of Police, it is important that I maintain a level of separation from investigations that could lead to court appearances, citizen complaints, or other legal proceedings. However, over the past year, I have been involved in 187 calls for service, which is an unusually high number for our department. By comparison, the average number of calls involving the Chief over the previous eight years was just 16.25 per year.

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This increase is not a reflection on the diligence of previous Chiefs, but rather a result of growing call volumes, longer response times, and increasingly complex investigations. These factors often tie up patrol officers for extended periods, leaving few, if any, units available to respond to additional calls for service.

In addition, as the department's official records custodian, the Chief of Police is responsible for responding to an increasing number of records requests. The rise of online platforms that share body camera footage and police reports has led to a sharp uptick in such requests. Each request demands significant time and resources to ensure all materials, documents, reports, and video, are thoroughly reviewed and properly redacted in accordance with open records laws. For example, fulfilling a single request involving just 30 minutes of body-worn camera footage can take up to six hours to process for legal compliance.

Recommendation

Based on the data and departmental needs, I respectfully recommend the following additions and restructuring for inclusion in the upcoming budget:

1. **Addition of one full-time Patrol Officer in 2027**, bringing our total sworn staff to **12**.
2. **Promotion of a current officer to Investigator**, per the union-approved structure.
3. **Promotion of a current officer to a second Sergeant position** to improve oversight and succession planning.

These changes are critical to meeting current service demands, ensuring officer wellness, and maintaining the high standards our community expects. I have attached a proposed budget outlining the subsequent increases required to provide these positions. I will also be available at the October 14th meeting to answer any questions you may have and further discuss this matter.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Brandon E. Wilhelm

Chief Brandon Wilhelm
Dodgeville Police Department