



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: April 15, 2024

TO: City Council Members

FROM: Turu VanderWiel, Chief of Police

SUBJECT: 2023 EMPLOYEE RECOGNITIONS.

RECOMMENDATION

Receive the Sonora Police Department's 2023 employee recognitions.

DISCUSSION

Each year, the Police Department recognizes exceptional performance in the following categories: Officer of the Year, Reserve / Part-Time Employee of the Year, Civilian Employee of the Year, Marshall McMaster Community Service Volunteer of the Year, and Ronald Billings II Police Explorer of the Year. These recognitions are peer-nominated and leadership-endorsed.

The following individuals were selected as the Sonora Police Department's employees of the year for 2023.

Ronald Billings II Explorer of the Year (N/A) – Due to limited program management, opportunities to achieve this recognition were limited. There will be no nomination in this category for 2023.

Marshall McMaster Community Service Volunteer (CSV) of the Year, David Ernst – David joined our department in October 2022. In 2017, he retired as the Director of Support Service for the Boy Scouts of America after spending 17 years in that capacity. Before that, he worked in the retail grocery industry for 28 years. David is not new to community service or volunteer work. He spent numerous years as a Cub Scout and Boy Scout leader, stayed active in the churches serving as an Elder and Chairing Committees, and has traveled to New Orleans to help restore and revitalize after Hurricane Katrina. David also volunteered with the Manteca Police Department before relocating to Sonora with his lovely wife, Cindy. He notes he enjoys the opportunity to invest his time as a Community Service Volunteer for the Sonora Police Department and support the great work our Emergency Services personnel do. "A jack of all trades," "works well with everyone," "helped out tons," and is "consistent and reliable," is how our Police Department staff describe him. We are all grateful that David is representing our agency and that he is willing to share his years of experience with others.

Reserve / Part-Time Employee of the Year, Ashley Brandow – Ashley started with us as a Community Service Volunteer. She was hired as a full-time Police Officer in 2016 and was selected for the Detective position in 2020. In 2022, Ashley decided to take some time to raise her family but wanted to stay engaged and help out where she could, so she transitioned to Reserve Police Officer. Ashley is described as always being the first to volunteer for vacant shifts, which is greatly appreciated by all, especially during the staffing shortage. Her teammates commented that she is "thorough and detailed," "a pleasure to work with, and that "she provides the best service to the community." I appreciate her dedication and enthusiasm for sharing her knowledge with others, which includes assisting patrol staff

with complex search warrants and investigations. In the capacity of Reserve Police Officer, as with others she has held, Ashley continues to be a highly valuable asset to the department and the City.

Civilian Employee of the Year, Part-Time Dispatcher Cyndi Nordvik – Cyndi has been a part of our team since 2009, when she was hired as a part-time Dispatcher and records Specialist. She loves dispatching but has taken on the additional responsibility of Computer Network Manager and the challenging task of maintaining our information and technology systems. Cyndi goes beyond just maintaining our IT needs; She takes leading roles in the execution of projects such as Body Worn Camera upgrades, Mobile Video Upgrades, creating emergency readiness backup systems, modernizing our digital evidence storage, and the implementation of our public safety video project. She manages our webpage, coordinates secured connectivity with DOJ, and dabbles in radio communications and repeater site management. She fills vacant dispatch shifts, works on-site and remotely to address urgent issues, and conducts follow-up maintenance on critical equipment.

Cyndi's teammates say she is "efficient and knowledgeable," "always willing to help at a moment's notice," "works like crazy," and "makes life easier for officers." Other comments include that she "has a truly caring heart," that she is "all over the place," and that she "gets very little sleep but always has a smile." I appreciate Cyndi's unwavering commitment to our mission and her ownership in treating the department's budget as if it were her own, finding the best products for the lowest price, and then haggling with vendors for a better value. Without her, we would not be functioning at the level we are today, and I wholeheartedly concur with this nomination.

Officer of the Year, Officer Mikale Bell - Mikale was hired in 2019 as a part-time sworn School Resource Officer, and by the end of 2020, his work ethic opened the door for him to become a full-time Police Officer. He is passionate about his job, cares about people, and dedicates much of his time to supporting various community functions. "Courteous and respectful," "always pleasant to others," "professional," "fun to work with," "knowledgeable," and "shows compassion but with a strong police presence when needed." The department leadership recognizes Mikale's positive attitude and customer service skills, willingness to take on complex investigations, and ability to keep pace with large caseloads without complaining. As the Chief of Police, I value Mikale's professionalism and ownership of our department's values.

Lifesaving Commendation, Corporal Thomas Brickley – On Tuesday, February 15, 2022, at approximately 7:20 a.m. Corporal Brickley was dispatched to a report of a possible death at the Sonora Gold Lodge at 480 West Stockton Street. When he arrived on scene, Corporal Brickley discovered an unresponsive 57-year-old male on his hotel room bed. Corporal Brickley quickly assessed the patient and determined the patient did not have a pulse. He repositioned the patient onto the floor, made appropriate notifications, and began administering CPR. The patient regained a pulse just as medical personnel arrived on scene. According to hospital personnel, Corporal Brickley's actions resulted in the patient surviving the initial medical episode and allowing his wife time by his side before he passed.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact on the General Fund.