



Office of the Town Manager

Tommy Cureton

STAFF REPORT

Warrenton Town Council

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Council Meeting Date:	September 12, 2023
Agenda Title:	Warrenton Police Department Overview
Requested Action:	Receive the report from the Police Department
Department / Agency Lead:	Police Department
Staff Lead:	Timothy M. Carter, Chief of Police

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This staff report provides an overview of the Warrenton Police Department and its current and future initiatives and programs.

BACKGROUND

The mission of the Warrenton Police Department is to work in partnership with the residents and businesses of our community to provide a safe and secure environment. With community service as our foundation, we are driven to enhance the quality of life by providing effective law enforcement services through transparent and impartial policing.

Service Level/Policy Impact

The Warrenton Police Department has an authorized capacity of 28 sworn officers and 4 civilian personnel. Currently sworn staffing is at 27 officers, two of which are in the law enforcement academy and one who will be attending the next academy in October. It is anticipated that the remaining vacancy will be filled shortly. That vacancy was created by the retirement of a tenured officer.

This year the Police Department has promoted Lt. Andrew Arnold to Deputy Chief of Police, Sgt. Justin Pierce to Lieutenant, Officer Stephen Hall to Sergeant, Officer Maribeth Howser to Corporal, and Detective Corporal Michael Gemmell to Detective Sergeant. These promotions all fill important operational needs and allow the department to maintain an acceptable level of service.

The Warrenton Police Department is currently accredited through the Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission (VLEPSC). Accreditation is a systematic, internal review of policies, procedures, training, and operations measured against an accrediting body's standards manual to prove compliance. Accreditation helps police departments operate more professionally, justify their operations, and promote trust in their community. The Warrenton Police Department has been a State-accredited agency since 2007.

The Police Department has several programs designed to foster community engagement. Two of them are the Community Action Team (CAT21) and the Police/Church Coalition. The Community Action Team was

formed in June 2020 to align the Warrenton Police Department's Policies with 21st Century best policing practices. The ultimate objective of the Community Action Team is to help enhance the level of trust and understanding between the community and the Warrenton Police Department. To that end, the Team meets regularly to discuss Warrenton Police Department events and operations, and to review Police Department policies and procedures to make sure they comply with present standards and the community's expectations.

The Church Coalition is a police-community outreach initiative created several years ago to create unity and understanding, break down divides, increase mutual respect, and spur ongoing collaboration through the faith community. The group meets quarterly and welcomes all local faith leaders. Police Department events, initiatives, and policy/procedures are addressed in this group as well as ways to deal with community challenges such as those facing the unhoused and those battling with addiction.

The Police Department is involved regularly with numerous community policing initiatives to include Drug Take Back initiatives, our Community Police Academy, See It In a Different Light, TRIAD, National Night Out, Shop with a Cop, Coffee with a Cop, police bicycle patrols, Special Olympics events such as the Law Enforcement Torch Run, Project Lifesaver International, holiday shopping security details, commercial surveys/security assessments, patrol checks (businesses and residences, and community walks, to name a few. Our agency also incorporates the following programs/strategies to further meet the needs of the community:

- Processes to reciprocate the flow of information to citizens and communities (PIO & Town Traffic emails, social media, and Town website)
- Methodologies to solicit, evaluate and act upon feedback from citizens and communities to better measure effectiveness of services, and community perception (GuardianScore program)
- Crisis Intervention Team training (mental health response)
- Narcan/Naloxone Training and Deployment (in partnership with Department of Health)
- Body Worn Camera program (increase transparency and accountability)
- Community Meet & Greet events

On August 1, the Police Department hosted National Night Out (NNO) at the Warrenton Aquatic and Recreation Facility (WARF). National Night Out is an annual community-building campaign that promotes police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie to make our neighborhoods safer, more caring places to live. For this event, the Police Department partnered with the Parks and Recreation and Public Works Departments. Also participating in the event was the Fauquier County Sheriff's Office, Virginia State Police, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Warrenton Volunteer Fire Company, and numerous local businesses, civic groups, and community organizations. The event was a huge success and drew the largest crowd for a NNO event in the post-Covid era.

Looking to the future, the Police Department is focusing on working with the Department of Social Services and other community partners to create a more effective response program for engaging with and assisting our unhoused population.

The Police Department is also working toward national accreditation through CALEA, the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies. While state accreditation is a proud achievement, accreditation at the national level is a more rigorous and time-intensive process. Obtaining such accreditation is a sign of an agency's investment and commitment to excellence at the highest level.

The Police Department is committed to keeping the Town's crime rate low and, using crime data as a starting point, uses a combination of focused deterrence, proactive policing, building/strengthening community trust, and strengthening relationships with community partners to do so. Our current response time is below the national average for law enforcement agencies.

Traffic safety and enforcement continue to be among the most important issues for Town citizens. Traffic enforcement went through necessary changes during the Covid pandemic and is now returning to its pre-Covid form. As a result, enforcement efforts and numbers have significantly increased this calendar year. The implementation of a formal traffic safety program, in conjunction with the more efficient handling of traffic complaints/issues, will yield a more effective response and lead to safer streets.

The Police Department is focused on accomplishing the goals set forth in Plan Warrenton 2040. In particular, the Police Department meets goal CF-2 by its responsive nature, community engagement, and the effectiveness of its programs. Goal CF-2.1 is met through the Department providing an acceptable level of service through the proper staffing and acceptable response times. And Goal CF-2.5 is met through the Department's continued cooperative agreements with the Fauquier County Sheriff's Office, Fauquier County Department of Social Services, and other County agencies to meet the public safety needs of the community.

Fiscal Impact

There is no fiscal impact to the Town at this time. The Warrenton Police Department is implementing the aforementioned programs and initiatives using current funding sources.

Legal Impact

There is no legal impact to the Town at this time.

ATTACHMENTS
