



Town of Farmville, Virginia Police Department

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Farmville Police Department

*State of the Department Report
2013 – 2014 Fiscal Year
Five Year Progress Report*

Prepared by Chief Douglas E. Mooney

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Message from the Chief

As the Farmville Police Department has finished the 2013 – 2014 fiscal year, and I am finishing my 5th year as chief of police I reflect on where we were in 2010 and how far we have come since then. This report serves as a five year progress report as well as an outline of future goals.

To understand where we started and how far we have come as a department you must read the assessment requested by Farmville Town Council, and completed by Retired Chief Gregg E. Jarvies (Chapel Hill, N.C.) on April 28, 2009. While the report was critical of department and town leaders, we have shown great progress in improving upon each and every deficiency listed in the report.

Accreditation

Accreditation is the single, most important accomplishment of this department in the last five years. It encompasses all other into the one solution. Accreditation, if done correctly, will result in a remedy to most of the individual points to follow in this report. The Farmville Police Department entered the accreditation process in March 2010 and worked hard towards this goal for three years. We were awarded accredited status through the Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission (VLEPSC) in March 2013. Accreditation is not only about policies, but how well we follow our policies, document our work, interact with the public and hold ourselves accountable. Accreditation encompasses everything we do to provide the most professional services possible to the visitors and citizens of Farmville. This is an official stamp of approval from an outside entity that the Farmville Police Department is an elite, professional agency. The members of this agency worked hard and cut no corners to achieve this accreditation.

While lawsuits and mistakes may be inevitable for any police department, accreditation minimizes the frequency of successful suits by ensuring that we constantly strive to do our best and not make mistakes. Additionally we receive a 5% reduction in our law enforcement liability insurance premium by attaining accreditation status. This is a savings of approximately \$1,400 a year.

Policies and Procedures

Within the first quarter of 2010 the policy manual had been re-written to conform to accepted standards, both statewide and nationally. Each policy meets standards recommended by the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), and required to become a professionally recognized police department. Since that time additional policies have been added, and all policies are reviewed annually to ensure that they remain up-to-date and correct. This review includes policies concerning high liability issues such as use of force, vehicle pursuits, chain of command, and code of conduct.

“To provide a safe and secure community through excellence in public service”

This mission statement was created and is found at the bottom of our letterhead (see directly below), memorandums, police identification cards and on our lobby wall. This is the basis of our department and the primary reason for our existence. Each officer has been exposed to this

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statement and should be aware of its importance. The primary goal of the department is to “**form a partnership with the community to achieve this mission.**” Our vision is “**to maintain a close working relationship with the citizens, businesses, Longwood University and other law enforcement agencies to provide professional and unbiased service to the community. This department will constantly pursue advanced technologies while improving our quality of training, and demonstrating innovation and operational flexibility.**” The goals and objectives to guide this department in its daily activities are:

1. GOAL 1. To increase citizen safety and perception of safety.

Objectives:

- a) To reduce and control criminal activity.
- b) To provide effective policing and ensure continued public safety.
- c) To maximize operational efficiency and deliver excellence in customer service
- d) To increase the proportion of crimes cleared by arrest.
- e) To provide safe public highways through directed traffic enforcement.

2. GOAL 2. To be the premier law enforcement agency of this region.

Objective:

- a) To maintain accredited status through the Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission.

3. GOAL 3. To establish, maintain, and enhance community partnerships.

Objective:

- a) To increase the agency’s participation with citizen and business organizations whose goals strive for increased quality of life and citizen safety.

Core values were developed and read as follows:

1. Integrity – We are committed to uphold our positions of trust by maintaining the highest ethical standards as set forth in the law enforcement code of ethics (see GO 104).

2. Community Safety – We are committed to public safety through community partnerships, preparedness, crime prevention strategies and steadfast enforcement of violations of the law.

3. Service – We are committed to prompt, professional and courteous service, unbiased and effective in our response to community concerns.

4. Quality – We are committed to the highest standards of excellence through recruitment, training, teamwork, leadership, innovation and accountability.

The mission statement, vision statement, primary goal, goals/objectives and core values are found in our policy manual (General Order 102) as the second policy, right after the policy outlining organizational structure and command. Each of these items are reviewed by command staff each year, including 2014 and updated as necessary to keep up with changes in the community and crime trends.

Organization and Personnel

January of 2010 saw a change of the organization structure of the department. A second lieutenant was promoted to oversee the newly formed Special Operations Division. This resulted in a lieutenant in charge of both divisions, and sergeants or corporals in charge of each shift or section of detectives. A supervisor was required to be working at all times, day or night to provide supervisory oversight. In May 2011 patrol began 12 hour shifts, with 4 squads, each supervised by a sergeant and corporal.

This change in organization provided for a clear chain of command, where each officer was aware of his/her supervisor, and policy was clear about using proper chain of command. Each sergeant was required to take control of situations and provide leadership and guidance to each of their officers. Supervisors were better able to observe their officers and correct weaknesses through mentorship and training. Notification of activities to command staff was accomplished through daily shift e-mails outlining calls for service. Roll calls were formalized, instead of being held in the break room, to ensure proper and professional pass on of information, and supervisory evaluation of the squad. Assignments were given based on past criminal behavior and directives from command staff.

In May 2012 a beat structure was formed, dividing the town into 4 geographical areas. By assigning officers to areas we were able to reduce the number of calls where all working officers showed up when this was not necessary. Officers were responsible for their areas and all business checks and neighborhood patrols in their area in addition to any enhanced enforcement. This resulted in more uniform coverage of the town and better services provided to the citizens and visitors of Farmville.

Promotional and hiring processes were formalized, and involve members of the department in the interview panel process, as well as members of outside departments to provide objective results. The scoring of candidates are now recorded using a numerical scale to evaluate areas pertinent to the position being sought. Department policy outlines eligibility requirements for all assignments and stipulates who should be present on interview panels. No longer is there any influence by elected officials to promote based on “who knows who”.

Every member of this department is held to a high standard of conduct as written in our policy manual. Sergeants are tasked with leading, guiding and disciplining as necessary. An Office of Professional Standards was created and assigned to the captain. All complaints are taken, whether from the public or internally, and investigated thoroughly. Citizens are kept up-to-date on the complaints they bring forward and, if a complaint is found to be true corrective actions are taken based on the type of offense, any prior incidents and demeanor of the officer – at totality of all circumstances.

Crime Analyzation, Documentation and Prevention

Staff meetings are held on a regular basis to review crime trends, reports and departmental efficiency. Additionally, lieutenants meet regularly with their sergeants to review reports, trends and allocate resources to deal with changing variables. During these meetings reports are reviewed and discussed to improve our documentation of crimes and incidents. In this manner information and problems and compliments flow freely, up and down the chain of command.

In 2010 the computerized Records Management System (RMS) was a poorly designed system for police to document crimes and incidents. Narratives were limited to a very limited number of characters, resulting in officers leaving out information to fit in the designated space instead of fully documenting information. The system was not user friendly and only several officers knew how to use the system. Instead of using the RMS database officers were writing “complaint sheets” for the documentation of crimes. These sheets were not forwarded to the Virginia State Police as required for Uniform Crime Reporting, causing our crime rate to be significantly lower than it was. At the beginning of 2011 and 2012 I had to write letters to the Virginia State Police explaining why several classes of crimes (assaults, larcenies, burglaries and shopliftings) had greatly increased, which was due to the previous poor reporting of crimes not forwarded to UCR. In May 2011 we were able to switch to DaPro as our RMS provider. This database, which is used by most departments in this

region, is far easier to use for the officers to document their reports. We are now able to provide citizens and visitors a true and accurate report of crime statistics for Farmville.

The sergeant of Special Operations was assigned as the Crime Prevention and Community Outreach Coordinator. Neighborhood Watch groups were cultivated and meet with our assistance and guidance. We are able to give citizens information concerning their neighborhoods, and receive information from these groups that can be helpful in our investigations.

Community / Campus Outreach Programs

Five years ago the Farmville Police Department suffered from a lack of community and campus outreach programs as outlined in Chief Jarvis assessment. Campus relations consisted mostly of negative encounters via arrests. There was a need to develop our relationships with the citizens and students to help foster the trust of the community. We began by making our third goal “To establish, maintain, and enhance community partnerships.” Detective Chris Moss was assigned as the coordinator of our community outreach programs and we initiated a number of programs during the last 5 years. Some of these programs include:

- National Night Out – completed our 5th annual event on August 5, 2014
- Operation Blue Christmas – scheduled to complete our 5th annual event December 2014
- TRIAD
- National Drug Take Back
- Guns and Hoses Blood Drive – completed our 5th annual event last April
- Leadership Farmville presentations
- Ride-along program
- Citizens Police Academy – completed 2nd annual academy May 2014
- Police Explorer Program – founded 2012 by Cpl. Barry Radden and Off. Christie Mouser
- Informational Booths at HOV, Prince Edward County Schools, Rock the Block
- Conduct numerous speaking engagements for civic organizations, local primary schools and other groups
- Coordinated and managed Neighborhood Watch groups throughout town
- CSI and Police Cadet camps for Farmville Parks and Recreation each summer
- Fingerprinting workshops for children

Members from this department also participated in educational and outreach functions for students at Longwood University and Hampden-Sydney College. We altered our enforcement techniques against university students to provide fair enforcement to combat specific problems, while adding educational opportunities to help reduce the number of students committing crimes or being victims of crimes. We have initiated the following programs to enhance our relationship with the university:

- Speaking at new student orientation each fall
- Speaking at off-campus orientation each spring
- Speaking to the SGA, Greek council and other student groups
- Internship program
- Conduct interviews for students for school papers and projects
- Job Fair
- Mock interviews and resume reviews for Criminal Justice majors

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Equipment / Police Fleet

In 2011 the department trained and equipped patrol officers with Tasers. Since that time the number of assaults on officers and injuries to officers and suspects has dropped significantly. We are in the process of upgrading our sidearms to Gen 4 Glocks from our current firearm issued in 2007.

In 2011 we outfitted every officer assigned to patrol in the field a body worn camera. While these cameras are the base models, they do provide a good method of recording our actions in citizen interactions. We are looking to upgrade to better cameras through grant opportunities. Approximately 50% of our patrol fleet is outfitted with high quality in car video cameras.

The patrol fleet is still in need of high milage replacement, however we have established a rotation schedule of 3 cars a year to ensure a 9 year rotation of each vehicle. The “rainbow fleet” has nearly disappeared, with only 2 off-color marked vehicles in service

Conclusion

The Farmville Police Department is staffed with professional, highly trained officers who want to provide the best services to the citizens, students and visitors of Farmville. The generous benefits and perks offered by the town enable this department to attract and keep highly qualified officers. Accreditation and outreach programs have elevated this department to a status enjoyed by the best of departments making this department the “premier law enforcement agency of this region” (department goal #3). This doesn’t mean that we can relax our progress, but just the opposite. A lot of hard work and dedication has gone into the last 5 years and department and town leaders must continue our commitment to continue to excel and promote the professional appearance of the department.

I give credit to the wisdom of Town Council in 2009 for asking for the departmental assessment by Chief Jarvies. Each and every deficiency that was outlined in his report has been addressed in some way. As a town, department and community we must continue on this course.