

# Chief discusses officer-involved shootings

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## FULL TEXT

FARGO With three of his officers on paid administrative leave after shooting two suspects in the past month, Police Chief David Todd on Monday, March 26, gave city commissioners a behind-the-scenes look at what happens next.

The state Bureau of Criminal Investigation and the Fargo Police Department are both investigating the officers' use of force, according to the chief. The department also is providing psychological support to the officers in the wake of what are also traumatic incidents for them.

Sgts. Shane Aberle and Troy Hannig, both members of the Red River Valley SWAT team, are on leave after the fatal shooting of Justin Dietrich, 32, during a March 12 standoff in West Fargo. Moorhead Officer Brandon Desautel and Clay County Deputy Kyle Diekmann are also on leave from the same incident.

Officer Jacob Rued is on leave after the recent shooting of Orlando Estrada, 28, during a domestic incident in south Fargo. Estrada survived the shooting and is in the Cass County Jail.

Todd said the BCI will determine if the officers followed state law. That should take three to four weeks. He said his department will determine if the officers followed its policies and training.

The department also has to take care of the officers because they faced deadly threats and feared for their lives, he said. Typically that takes the form of a talk with their peers after the shooting and a visit with a police psychologist within 24 to 48 hours of a shooting. A more intensive debriefing with other officers on the scene comes later, Todd said.

The department will also check on them during their leave and conduct a psychological fitness test to see if they're ready to return, Todd said. When they do return, they'll be followed for the first few nights to see how they're feeling.

The goal, he said, is for officers to continue with their career for many years to come.

The chief also gave the City Commission a report on 2017 crime statistics, which shows a higher rate of petty crimes but a small decrease in serious crimes.

His report shows the number of Part I crimes, which include homicide and gross sexual imposition, decreased by seven compared to 2016, a 0.2 percent decrease. The number of Part II crimes, which include shoplifting and burglary, increased by 1,104, an 18 percent increase.

The chief said he thinks the increase in petty crimes is, in part, because city leaders funded more officers who can do more patrolling. But, he said, some of it is because many criminals are drug addicts stealing to feed their habits and some because mentally ill people don't get the treatment they need.

There are also what he called "career criminals" who make a living stealing, he said, giving the example of one suspect with 50 cases last year. He said he feels their jail sentences aren't long enough.

Todd said he expects that these petty crimes will level off as his officers continue their work.

CREDIT: Tu-Uyen Tran Forum News Service

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