

BURLINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Board of Police Commissioners

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**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BURLINGTON POLICE COMMISSION
TO THE BURLINGTON CITY COUNCIL
June 2012 through May 2013**

Mission:

The mission statement of the Burlington Police Commission requires that the Commission ensure that the Burlington Police Department delivers high quality, community-oriented policing services in partnership with the citizens of Burlington.

On-Going Challenges:

The Burlington Police Department ("BPD") currently has 95 sworn personnel, up from 94 at this time last year. BPD's full-authorized strength is 100 sworn personnel.

Annually, the 100 officers and 36 civilian personnel of the BPD respond to and support approximately 40,000 calls for service, 33,000 incidents, and conduct 5,000 criminal investigations. In addition, the BPD handles all emergency communication for police, fire, and rescue operations throughout the City and provides additional services such as coordination of the Chittenden Unit for Special Investigations, the Vermont Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, a variety of drug task force operations, City-wide parking enforcement, and security operations for the Burlington International Airport.

BPD's Training & Recruitment Division continues to work hard to obtain 100 sworn officers. However, recruiting the type of personnel BPD wants is an on-going challenge. The BPD Recruiting Office considers hundreds of applicants for the variety of sworn and civilian positions that are available annually. BPD's recruitment efforts are wide-spread and thorough, utilizing all forms of communication, including its website and such approaches as advertising on the Burlington Free Press website, to reach a broad audience.

Recruiting the best people possible remains a constant effort. The economy is helping at present, however, as the economy improves, recruiting likely will be more difficult. The competition from the federal government locally with its higher salaries for experienced law enforcement personnel continues to contribute to retirements and early departures from the Department.

The Commission supports all of these efforts and the highly selective hiring process and long training period before the Department is ready to put an officer on the streets.

In the past year, five sworn personnel have left the department. This represents an average turnover year.

The Department of Homeland Security requires that the Burlington International Airport have a stable number of Burlington Police Department employees. There are currently seven officers on rotation at the airport and a Lieutenant assigned half-time.

In the wake of a challenging year constructing the State budget, substantial operational changes have been made to the Agency of Human Services with special emphasis on the Department of Corrections and the Department of Mental Health, two systems that already were under extensive stress. The result has been a displacement of costs and operational burden to municipalities, especially local law enforcement and partner social service agencies. The Department saw increases in reports of trespasses, intoxicated persons, ordinance violations, assaults, and burglaries in calendar years 2010 and 2011 from prior years.

The City faces challenges every year as it relates to drug activity. During the past three years the Department increased the size of the Drug Unit by one investigator to bring the unit up to three officers. The Unit also is augmented by detectives from UVM and South Burlington Police who are housed part-time with the Department's drug investigators. In addition, the Department created the Street Crimes Unit, now in its third year of operation. One of this unit's critical tasks is street level drug enforcement.

Highlights of the Past Year:

Milestones, new initiatives and projects the Department undertook during the past year include:

- Work to implement suggestions and ideas identified during the Department's 2008-2009 City-wide re-assessment project. To date, the BPD has implemented the following initiatives as a result of that process:
 - Deployment of a Mental Health Outreach Interventionist, in partnership with the HowardCenter, to respond to an increasing number of calls in which persons suffering from cognitive disabilities are in crisis;
 - Dissemination of immediate public safety information, traffic alerts, and other pertinent communication to citizens of and visitors to Burlington via a messaging system available to the public called NIXLE;
 - Occasional updates via Front Porch Forum;
 - Renewed efforts to combat graffiti and vandalism in partnership with the Center for Community and Neighborhoods, the Queen City Police Foundation, and Burlington Business Association, including graffiti clean-up days and hiring a graffiti remediation coordinator utilizing Justice Assistance Grant funds;
 - Implementation of a pilot project utilizing Rapid Intervention (such as mental health, substance abuse, and employment services) for low-level offenders in partnership with the Chittenden County State's Attorney.
- Continued work in the area of reducing violence against women and children through such projects as Domestic Violence advocacy, the Chittenden Unit for Special Investigation, and the Vermont Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force;
- Continued and enhanced focus on street-level drug interventions in city neighborhoods and downtown, including creation of multi-agency Community Impact Teams and the deployment of a Street Crimes Unit.
- Continued partnerships with a host of service organizations, law enforcement agencies, and other City departments to provide robust services to the community in day-to-day operations;
- Re-deployment of officers to participate in foot patrols and quality of life operations in the downtown, City Hall Park, and neighborhoods;
- Partnered with the Safe Streets Collaborative to provide safety education and enforcement to make the city's streets and sidewalks safer for all;
- Continued services to victims of crime in partnership with Burlington's Community Justice Center via the Parallel Justice project;
- Completed a multi-year project to re-write the Department's 90+ policy documents and consolidate them to approximately 40 updates ones, including policies relating to crowd control based upon national best practices.

In FY2012 and FY2013 the Department deployed new technology that will enhance transparency and ease access to crime reporting City-wide including:

- Creation of an online reporting portal on the Department's website to allow low-level events that do not require investigation to be reported online. This system now handles several hundred calls for service annually.
- Custom design and implementation of a new Computer Aided Dispatch, Records Management, and Mobile Computing application for use by law enforcement throughout the region. To date, fourteen primary law enforcement agencies and over fifty secondary agencies are using the system.

In March 2013, the Burlington Rotary honored BPD employees and others for their outstanding and courageous work during 2012. This is an annual event that recognizes BPD employee efforts above and beyond the call of duty.

In April 2013 the Department received the Burlington Business Association's Business of the Year Award for its efforts to foster safety throughout the city, which contributes to positive business climate.

The Department continues to recognize the importance of its commitment to youth through the School Resource Officer program, a positive presence in the schools.


For FY2013, the Department has continued its five year-old effort to ensure sustainable budget growth through fiscal responsibility. The FY2013 budget was largely level-funded.

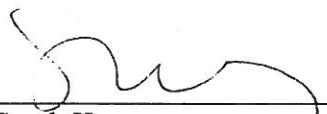
Commission Priorities and Goals:

The Commission's most important goal is to continue to exercise its oversight role of BPD and to work with BPD to bring Burlington the best community policing possible.

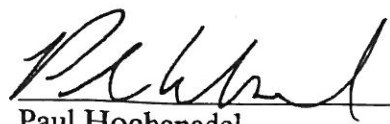
The Commission stresses the importance of achieving full staffing of BPD's authorized strength of 100 officers. BPD will continue its efforts to attract women and minorities to the law enforcement field.



Jerome O'Neill, Chair
Burlington Police Commission


William and Bryant, Vice Chair
Burlington Police Commission


Sarah Kenney
Commissioner

April 30, 2013


Paul Hochanadel
Commissioner


Phillip LaVigne
Commissioner

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