

**Department of Public Affairs and Safety
Plainfield Police Division Reorganization 2007
Martin R. Hellwig, Director**

This document will give a brief synopsis of the proposed reorganization plan for the police division.

The "bureau" structure of the division remains intact. However, the "Special Operations Unit" has been reorganized and placed directly under the command of the Chief of Police.

Highlights of Reorganization

Community Oriented Policing

This unit has undergone a complete transformation. I judge that community policing was dysfunctional prior to reorganization. The unit had lost sight of its goals and was not at all focused upon the original mission.

There is new and revitalized leadership placed in the unit. Originally, the unit consisted of one sergeant and six officers. The new configuration calls for two sergeants and ten police officers. Additionally, the COP unit is being led by a highly motivated lieutenant. This lieutenant will report directly to the Chief of Police. This also is a change in the chain of command. The original unit reported to a lieutenant who in turn reported to the Uniform Bureau captain.

The COP unit was given a new mission statement, goals, and a strategic action plan that I authored specifically for this unit. (See attached)

Street Crimes Unit

The unit consists of a sergeant and five officers. It is an active and effective tactical group. However, I was concerned that it, like the COP unit, was losing focus and command accountability. Their original mission was to support the patrol function. At some point in time a change in uniform was requested and granted. Under the reorganization plan the unit is shifted from the Special Operations Group to Uniform Bureau and will be accountable to the evening watch commander. The unit will work the exact same hours as the night platoon. They will continue to patrol in unmarked police vehicles. However, the group will be required to dress in the uniform of the day. The original configuration had the unit's lieutenant working a day tour of duty. I am directing that the Uniform Bureau Captain, the Narcotic Bureau Captain, and the Criminal Investigations Captain meet on a weekly basis to discuss "ComStat" statistics and direct the Street Crimes Unit toward tactical concerns based upon the needs of the city.

The above steps will ensure a significantly more effective, focused and disciplined unit.

Security Unit

This is a new proposal.

Recently, additional responsibilities and personnel demands have been placed upon the division via Municipal Court security concerns.

Two additional officers have been added to court security detail which brings the total to four officers.

There is one division officer who is assigned to security concerns at Plainfield City Hall.

Finally, there is the Mayor's Security detail which is comprised of a sergeant and one police officer.

I recommend that all the security detail officers be grouped into one unit. The sergeant in charge of the Mayor's security detail would act as their supervisor. Thus, the unit would consist of a sergeant and six police officers. This unit would now be accountable to the Lieutenant in the Special Operations Group.

This reorganization structural change would address several management concerns in a positive manner.

- A. There would be direct accountability and supervision for both the court and city hall security details
- B. The sergeant in the mayor's security team would be fulfilling the supervisory responsibilities of his rank by adding five additional officers to his span of control.
- C. The SOG lieutenant would be able to address the concerns of this group with regard to direction, training, and accountability.

Traffic Unit

As presently deployed, the traffic unit is nearly non-operational with respect to the goals of enforcement of motor vehicle violations. The two officer unit is almost completely occupied with clerical and investigative duties. The unit has lost focus with regard to its mission.

Reorganization brings this unit to five officers. A sergeant would be in charge of the unit. The two additional officers would allow the unit to concentrate on the numerous complaints of lax motor vehicle law enforcement in the City of Plainfield.

***I would also recommend a clerical position to be added to the unit's organizational chart. This position would address the high concentration of paperwork associated with public auctions, towing, accident reports, etc. associated with the traffic unit.

Service Bureau (See Chart)

The original table of organization for this bureau was skewed. It was comprised of a captain, lieutenant, three sergeants and three police officers. The responsibilities of the Service Bureau are wide ranging and directly effect the entire division. Two major concerns are the telecommunications operation (911) and the detention center.

I am not in agreement with the sergeant's supervisory roles or the manner in which they are deployed in order to carry out their responsibilities. Each sergeant is accountable for the supervision one police officer.

One sergeant supervises the telecommunications unit, and a police officer assigned to the unit.

One sergeant supervises the "Evidence/Property Room" police officer. However, this sergeant is completely focused upon division financial matters, Requisitions, budget, and overtime reports fall within his responsibilities.

One sergeant supervises the "Crime Analysis/Uniform Crime Report" police officer.

Unfortunately, there has been tension within the unit with regard to the utilization of its lieutenant. Actually, he has complained of "under utilization" treatment.

The detention area is presently of major concern. Management of this space is woefully lacking. Supervision policies are routinely ignored. And, the area is a potential breeding ground for civil litigation against the city.

Reorganization of the Bureau would address all of the above concerns to a large degree. I propose the following changes: A captain would be the bureau commander. The lieutenant position is eliminated from the current table of organization. One sergeant would be assigned to supervise telecommunications as is presently the case. The second sergeant would be moved to the area of the detention center in order to supervise and manage the critical issues facing that space. Additionally, a strict adherence to written policy should be applied and maintained by the Service and Uniform Bureau commanders.

Finally, the third sergeant, who is about to retire, should not be replaced. The salary savings would be applied to the hiring of a civilian clerk to maintain the "fiscal" responsibilities of the division and the hiring of an additional police officer.

Narcotics Bureau

This is a highly effective tactical branch of the police division.

The bureau consists of a captain, lieutenant, two sergeants, and seven officers. Because of the nature of this line of police work, close supervision is required. However, this bureau also is skewed in its table of organization.

Reorganization would bring the unit into a more reasonable supervision span of control; yet not sacrifice accountability. (See Chart)

Conclusion

It is my professional opinion that a reorganization of the division in the manner described will yield tremendous results in economy, efficiency and productivity.

The redeployment of all bureau commanders will also have a positive impact upon organizational health and viability. However, structural changes in the organization and rotation of assignments at the highest levels of command should serve only as a catalyst in effecting professional growth, organizational integrity, and sound management principles.

I will direct the Chief of Police to address the following very real concerns of the division:

- Each Bureau and organizational unit will be directed to write a “strategic” plan that will be utilized to navigate the various bureaus and units to a success conclusion with regard to its mission and goals.
- The Community Oriented Policing strategic plan will serve as a model for the entire division. That plan has already yielded gratifying results in its application.
- Rotate personnel in special assignment positions. This rotation will be based upon merit, productivity, and the needs of the organization and management. I would suggest that rotation begin in the Street Crimes Unit and expand to other assignment.
- Training is a critical component of morale. Two areas that are still problematic are first line supervision and report writing. That will be readdressed in ‘07
- ComStat meetings are no longer taking place. The meetings were eliminated in ‘06 for unknown reasons. We will reconvene those meeting using an entirely different format. Crime analysis and criminal intelligence must not only be gathered; it must also be share. The entire division will be benefit by the new approach to intelligence sharing as proposed by my plan.

- Address the deficiency of planning and research. Our captains do not spend enough time practicing this important management tool. By dedicating one hour a week to this process, all five captains in concert can significantly contribute to the overall improvement of public safety within the city. By approving the contents of this reorganization, redeployment, and management plan; the administration and council will have taken a major step forward in improving public safety services to the city.

In the past year, I have researched several programs that hold promise and potential for reducing crime within our community. The High Point Crime Reduction Program is one of these programs. I will seek funding and approval to implement this initiative during the '08 fiscal calendar year. There is a need within the division to further address the needs of the Latino population within the City of Plainfield. In the '07/'08 fiscal year, I will petition the administration and council to create a position which will address the needs of the Latin community. I see the need for a civilian employee to address the concerns and challenges associated with domestic violence and communication issues as they impact this population. The most vulnerable among us, women, children and the disenfranchised will be served by an appointment to this proposed position. I am creating a job description that should be scrutinized and discussed by our administration and council.

Patrol is the backbone of security in our community. Police officers in uniform, visible to the public act as a crime deterrent. Last year I redeployed a number of officers back into the patrol function. This reorganization absolutely maximizes the number of officers in uniform addressing crime abatement issues

Once adopted, this plan will address the most salient challenges and deficiencies within the division of police. The plan also speaks to the revenue generating potential of the division. Court revenue to the city has been spiraling downward for several years. Morale within the division is not at a proper plateau.

Both the upward and downward flow of communication is unacceptable. Focus and direction in key areas of public safety has been lost. The perception of bias and favoritism within the department is rampant. Sound management principles are not being applied in too many instances.

In closing, the past year has afforded me the opportunity to experience and observe the challenges confronting public safety within the City of Plainfield. Last year during a public safety forum held at Muhlenberg Hospital, Union County Prosecutor Theodore Romankow publicly stated his dismay that the City of Plainfield had dismissed a number of police officers from its employment in previous years. I do not have a historical reference as to the reasons or rationale for those layoffs.

However, currently the police division's table of organization is 153 sworn officers. In 2003 the city employed 168 officers.

I would respectfully suggest that the division of police would be in a much better position to deter criminal activity and serve the citizens of our community at a personnel level of 158. That is not an arbitrary number. It reflects a level of staff that would accommodate "small town" services to a urban environment. Thoughtful deployment of resources and strict accountability for the delivery of services has been a missing ingredient in the administration of police resources. I intend to end that practice. The redeployment of all captains and reorganization signals a new way of doing business in the police division.