

Value Task Force Police Department Final Report

General Summary

The mission of the West Bend Police Department (WBPD) is to work in cooperation with the public to enforce the law, prevent crime, and preserve the peace. It is a very professional, well-trained, and highly dedicated department that relies on 73 full-time (56 sworn and 19 non-sworn) employees. 26 crossing guards and 4 other non-sworn, part-time employees also staff the department.

The WBPD has two divisions: Operations and Support Services. Operations services include patrol and criminal investigations. Support services include dispatch, records, administrative, technical, evidence, and community services.

The department has an approximate 30% impact on the city's total operating budget. Operating expenses for 2011 were approximately \$6.6 million. Salaries, overtime, and fringes consume 92% of the PD's expenses. Department revenue collected in 2011 was just over \$500,000 – the majority generated from municipal court fines and parking tickets.

Chief Kenneth Meuler has led the West Bend Police Department for 10 years. He has an impressive background in law enforcement and strong education credentials which include the FBI National Academy.

Several members of the WBPD demonstrate their commitment to the community by serving on over 60 volunteer boards and organizations.

Findings

1. Vehicle inventory includes 13 marked squad cars, and 22 total vehicles. The vehicle maintenance expenses in the budget are surprisingly low.
2. 3 full-time School Liaison Officers (SLO) staff the department. The current working relationship with the WB School District is very good.
3. Clerical Support
 - A. 9 Dispatchers are assigned around the clock, 3 per shift. Approximately one-third of their time includes clerical and records support and other specific functions.
 - B. Open-records fulfillment functions consume a large amount of time for the 25-cents-per-page fee, which is mandated by Wisconsin State Statute.
 - C. The WBPD conducts annual reviews of staffing needs and makes subsequent staffing adjustments to maximize efficiency.
 - i. In 2012, as technology expanded, the WBPD replaced the Records Section Supervisor position with a Tech Support person to fulfill the demand without adding additional staff.
 - ii. In 2013, the WBPD will change the schedule of the clerical staff to more accurately reflect the duties they perform and their interaction with the public and other agencies.
 - iii. Several clerical duties have been assigned to dispatchers.
 - iv. Software upgrades have lessened the amount of time clerical staff spends on data entry.

4. Overtime analysis

- A. The department significantly over budgets overtime costs each year.
 - i. The department tries to budget enough overtime to ensure there is money to cover most emergencies throughout each year.
 - ii. Predicting overtime is very difficult as it depends on several factors – including factors outside the department’s control.
 - iii. Money that was budgeted for overtime and not spent in past budgets was carried over and applied to help offset Capital Budget purchases.
- B. Overtime allocation is not balanced. Longer-tenured employees have right-of-first-refusal when overtime is available. Per Section 8.07 of the police officers’ contract,
 - i. The employer will use a seniority system when offering overtime and reverse seniority system when ordering employees to work overtime.
 - ii. The procedure to disseminate overtime based on seniority is spelled out in the Department Manual.
- C. Section 5-025 of the Department Manual explains this overtime procedure, and mostly governs overtime that is known more than 72 hours in advance.
 - i. This procedure does not cover emergency overtime, overtime as a result of calls for service, or overtime related to staff meetings, in-service, or other training.
- D. Significant changes in operations have saved hundreds of overtime and staff hours during Chief Meuler’s tenure.
 - i. Year-to-year budget increases were due almost exclusively to employee-related costs.
 - ii. Overtime costs have been carefully managed without sacrificing a high level of service.

5. Training and Education

- A. PD proactive with training – particularly around changes in the law, technology, and tactical functions.
 - B. Very good opportunities are offered for advanced education and training at supervisory and management schools, as well as instructor certifications and specializations. Compared to peer cities, West Bend’s PD completes more comprehensive police training.
 - C. With these opportunities, the city could also risk well-trained employees leaving city after completing their advanced training; however, the benefit of a well-trained police force – including supervisor and management training – likely out-weighs the risk.
6. Part of the PD’s performance measurement includes conducting a random, on-going weekly survey to solicit citizen feedback regarding the service he or she received.
7. To reduce time-off and injury, fitness, health, and nutrition are taken very seriously within the Police Department. A recordable OSHA injury is anything above or beyond general first aid, including the need for a prescription. Lost days include scheduled off days.
- A. Only 20 total hours of lost time had been reported through August 2012.
 - B. 19 actual lost days were reported in 2012 (4 of those days were scheduled).

8. The WBPB maintains a policy and procedure manual that provides standards and guidance to all department employees. The State of Wisconsin mandates that police departments have a number of written policies, but the writing of the policy is left up to individual police departments.
 - A. Although the WBPB attempts to keep all policies current, staying current with manual updates and re-writes is a monumental task.
 - B. Presently, the Captain in charge of Operations is tasked with keeping the department's policies and procedures up-to-date.
 - C. The department has explored contracting for this service, but it is costly.
 - i. In addition to an up-front charge to buy the service, annual maintenance fees are required.
 - ii. Companies that provide this service are national companies that offer some ideas and guidance for writing policies, but the policies have to be customized by local agencies.

Recommendations

1. Estimate future School Liaison Officer costs in anticipation of the potential of schools and citizens requesting increased security. Items to consider:
 - A. Cost-sharing with the West Bend School District
 - i. "Cost sharing" may simply be "cost shifting." (It may save a city of West Bend tax payer a small amount on their total tax bill; however, those in the School District outside the city may see a small increase in their total tax bill).
 - ii. This topic has been discussed during past budget presentations.
 - B. Control over officer assignments and potential conflicts
 - i. WBPB currently responsible for and has control over officer assignments, response, and the option to pull officers from the school when other police service needs are necessary.
 - C. Citizen expectations may demand additional police presence in schools
 - i. Current and future events may impact how the community feels about police presence in schools – which may affect future costs.
 - D. Determine the current School Liaison Officer cost (baseline), and establish a cost threshold for any future increases.
2. Continue the very good practice of assessing department workloads and exploring cost-saving opportunities to maximize efficiency – including additional cross-training for clerical staff and technology upgrades.
3. Consider creating an overtime "contingency fund" in the budget, and apply overtime budget surplus from the previous year to this new portion of the budget.
4. During future contract negotiations, consider stronger language that gives management more rights in assigning overtime.

5. Identify potential cost-saving and networking ideas with the building expansion project.
 - A. One example we discussed was for the city to host training seminars for surrounding agencies or organizations. The benefit to the city is potentially two-fold: 1) Host communities are normally exempt from training tuition, and 2) It provides exposure for the city and local businesses to outside groups.
6. Training and Education
 - A. Provide more time and funding for the continued good practice of proactively training employees – particularly around court rulings and legal updates.
 - B. Continue encouraging employees to complete formal education and complete advanced degrees on their own time and cost.
7. Vehicle Maintenance
 - A. Continue the good practice of keeping vehicle maintenance costs very low. Vehicle Maintenance manager Steve Schmeling has developed an enhanced preventative maintenance program – including extended warranty coverage he has been able to secure. His actions have potentially saved the city thousands of dollars each year.
 - B. Identify vehicle maintenance cost savings through efficiencies within the building expansion project.
8. Citizen Surveys
 - A. Continue soliciting feedback from citizens via surveys. Develop a method to place the surveys on-line, including posting completed surveys on-line where citizens can read them.
 - B. Incorporate citizen feedback when setting and measuring goals each year.
 - C. Consider implementing a similar feedback mechanism for every department – providing citizens with an opportunity to rate their satisfaction and/or recommend potential areas of improvement.
9. Explore ideas to more efficiently revise the policy and procedure manual re-writes. Chief Meuler is considering hiring a service to review and re-write the manual.
10. The Police Department's model of fitness, health, and nutrition should be the gold standard in all departments. Explore partnership opportunities with area fitness centers/trainers and nutrition experts to train and educate employees.