
Line-Level Vertical Staffing Committee

Morale in the Spokane Police Department



Final Report

June 27th 2022

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About This Report

The Spokane Police Department (SPD) has been a 'Destination' organization for decades. Once the premier law enforcement agency in the region, women and men sought to join the ranks of the department because of the world-class training they would receive, the way the department equipped its members, and how the city valued its employees. Pride in performance and morale within the organization was strong. Unfortunately, morale within the department has been on a consistent and significant decline for several years. Decisions made at the city council and organizational level have seemingly had the most impact on reducing morale for SPD employees. These decisions and the lack of support from the city council has allowed other law enforcement agencies in the region to employ thoughtful and decisive measures to increase organizational effectiveness in hiring and performance that has helped them surpass SPD as the premier and preferred agency.

As the City of Spokane and SPD has struggled to foster healthy working conditions within the department, the members of SPD and their families have shouldered the burden of navigating an increasingly difficult climate for the law enforcement profession with little to no guidance from the department. This burden has manifested itself in employees retiring before they initially planned, resigning before 'retirement age', and officers leaving for other employment opportunities. The departure of these experienced employees has left the department lacking in operational experience with little connection between the experience-laden administration and the junior patrol staff. SPD has also failed to adequately staff these departed positions, leaving the city at a compounded disadvantage when competing with more desirable agencies in the region. More importantly, the lack of staffing has had a major impact on the ability of the department to maintain peace and order in the community. Our entire city is suffering from the lack of commitment to the police services and some of on the city council's outright interference in maintaining an effective police department.

This report is a combined effort by commissioned and non-commissioned, non-supervisory employees. It was completed for the purpose of bringing attention to what this committee has identified as the leading causes of low morale within the department. Identifying these issues and consolidating them into this report is not meant to personally criticize or attack any individual. It is meant to draw attention to critical issues within our agency and propose solutions. It is this committee's hope that the report can bring much needed, positive changes to our department and within our city. Our employees deserve to work for an agency where they feel valued and fulfilled in their careers. The citizens of Spokane deserve an agency that is adequately staffed with capable, competent, and confident police officers who are equipped to face the challenges of twenty-first century police work.

Formation of the Committee

The Spokane Police Department Morale Committee was created in March 2022 after an outpouring of complaints being voiced by employees regarding low morale, and the high number of employees leaving the agency. Department leaders were asked by line-level employees if there was a plan for dealing with the low morale. The answer, in essence, was “no”. Some of the most common complaints were brought to the attention of Chief Meidl. The Chief acknowledged the issues, and rather than ignoring them (as the department has done in the past), he chose to listen. He directed the creation of the morale committees to formally identify and document these organizational issues.

The following three committees were formed to address the low morale:

- 1) Captains / Lieutenants
- 2) Sergeants / Supervisors
- 3) Commissioned and Non-Commissioned Line-Level Employees

This design allowed employees the opportunity to voice their frustrations and concerns without worry of supervisory influence. This would allow each committee to capture the true feelings of the employees and shed light on areas where the department could leverage opportunity.

Each of the three groups met over the months of March, April, and May to discuss issues destroying morale within their spheres of influence. Each group was directed to report their findings to the Chief’s Office. This report details the result of the line-level employee committee’s findings.

Corporal Widhalm led the line-level employee’s discussion. Members of this committee were selected from volunteers in nearly every division of the department. This includes, patrol, detectives, neighborhood resource officers, SWAT, corporals, academy instructors, dispatchers, crime analysis, and police records employees. Volunteers came to share their experiences based on their experiences within SPD but also lessons learned from the private sector and military. Members are well respected at the department and were known to be professional and hardworking.

Committee members were asked to meet with their co-workers and solicit observations and anecdotes they feel are causing low morale within their respective divisions. Divisions with no volunteers were contacted in person by a committee member for feedback. Each member reported their findings to the committee - the results of this report are a formalized product of these efforts.

Committee Members

Corporal Holt Widhalm Has been a police officer since 2001. He has worked as a Field Training Officer (FTO) and FTO Coordinator. Corporal Widhalm has been the president of the Spokane Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) for the last 10 years where he represents Spokane law enforcement officers at a local, state, and national level. This experience has given him insight into issues law enforcement is facing all over the country, which include both positive and negative morale conditions as well as staffing issues.

Dispatcher Kyle Steinmetz was a Co-op volunteer for the Spokane Police Department for 5 years before becoming a police dispatcher. He has served as a dispatcher at SPD for 14 years and also assists with training at the Spokane Police Academy.

Crime Analyst Jaime Lamanna started with the Spokane Police Department as an intern in the fall of 2012 and then was hired as a temp seasonal analyst in the spring of 2014. In the fall of 2016, she was hired full time by the department. Since becoming a full-time employee she has certified in her field, was employee of the quarter in 2020, currently sits on the conference committee for NORCAN (Northern Regional Crime Analyst Network) conferences and was recently elected as the VP of Membership to the NORCAN board.

Records Specialist Leslie Baker has been with the Spokane Police Department since April 2012. After completing the one-year training she has worked in all work groups within the Records Department. Beginning in 2017 her primary area of responsibility has been processing and completing public records requests. In addition, she is currently attending continuing education to receive WAPRO certification as a Public Records Officer.

Senior Police Officer Jeremy McVay has been employed with the Spokane Police Department since 2007. He has been assigned to Graveyard Patrol a majority of his career. He has been a member of the TAC team, CART team, and SWAT team. He is the current team leader of the CART team and Assistant overall team leader of the SWAT team. He is a level 1 Defensive Tactics instructor, lead Less Lethal instructor, Criminal Justice Training Commission (CJTC) Patrol Tactics instructor, and current Field Training Officer.

Detective Dave Dunkin previously worked for the Kootenai County Sheriff's Office and lateraled to the Spokane Police Department 2013. He has worked patrol until being promoted to Detective in 2020. Detective Dunkin is the current Spokane Police Guild President.

Detective Brandon Rankin has been a member of the Spokane Police Department since 2015. He worked the graveyard patrol shift (FTO) until he was promoted to Detective in 2020. He worked in the Special Victims Unit before being selected for the Major Crimes Unit in 2021. Detective Rankin has a B.S. in economics, an M.A. in Organizational Leadership, and is currently in the final semester for a Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree.

Committee Goals, Expectations, and Report Outline

Goals of the Line-Level Morale Vertical Staffing Committee:

1. Identify Morale Eroding Sources
2. Identify Solutions for Morale Issues
3. Prioritize Issues and Solutions
4. Memorialize Recommendations in a Formal Report for Future Reference
5. Present Formalized Recommendations to Department and City of Spokane Leadership

Expectations and Meeting Procedures:

1. Confidentiality (if desired).
2. Professionalism, respect, and collaboration during meetings.
3. Bi-weekly meetings to discuss issues and ideas generated within individual departments.
4. Leveraging expertise to complete a thorough report of issues and solutions.

The first order of business for the committee was to determine the root causes of low morale. The committee planned to discuss this in the first of several planned two-hour meetings. Each member brought forward the initial concerns of their respective divisions - so much was discussed at the first meeting that it took nearly four hours to document all the concerns. An interesting dynamic was recognized early on: while each division had their own unique concerns and issues, the concerns from each division could easily be consolidated into similar categories. There were general themes that were engrained within SPD (and the city in general).

These shared concerns drove the committee's dialogue moving forward as we identified the following significant issues within SPD:

- Issue 1:** (A Lack of) **Leadership**
- Issue 2.** (Inadequate) **Staffing**
- Issue 3:** (Not) **Valuing Employees**
- Issue 4:** (Lack of) **Culture of Excellence**

As just noted, it was interesting that these issues were not only prevalent in each division, but significant enough to erode morale throughout the department. The committee also recognized how interdependent and connected these topics are in relation to morale within SPD. For example, poor leadership can lead to employees not feeling valued in the workplace. Inadequate staffing can make it impossible to ensure there is time to properly train employees as they are needed in their primary role. The nature of this relationship was crucial in narrowing down the most significant issues and solutions in an attempt to leverage future change for maximum effect.

There has been some support voiced, and change promised from those within the City of Spokane's executive branch, but little has materialized. Often, some members of the City Council have railroaded efforts to increase the effectiveness and ability of the police department. This includes failing to negotiate labor contracts in a timely manner, failing to adequately fund the department, restricting the use of asset seizure funds, and inhibiting the chief's ability to run the department. These can often be seen during city council meetings and public forums.

It is also important to note that there does not seem to be an obvious intention on the part of the police administration to ignore poor morale. Nevertheless, previous attempts to address morale within the organization have appeared inauthentic and proven ineffective. This committee and SPD line-level employees have a deep desire to improve the morale within the organization, bring a sense of pride back to the agency, and create an environment conducive to providing world-class service to the people of Spokane.

Identified Issue 1:

Leadership

The committee struggled with whether to list Staffing or Leadership as the number one factor affecting morale. Ultimately, the committee chose leadership because we believe it was a major cause of low patrol staffing and an issue that SPD could tackle even without the support and funding from the City Council. The women and men of the Spokane Police Department largely agree on one thing: they need competent and capable leadership as they navigate the challenges of modern law enforcement. Members want to feel fulfilled and operate within an environment where everyone is thriving. There is a resounding belief among the members of SPD that our organization can be the premier law enforcement agency within the state. To fulfill these desires and strive towards these goals, we need engaged leadership to help us grow as professionals, thrive as employees, and most importantly: to provide modern policing solutions to the citizens of Spokane. During this vertical staffing committee process, line-level employees have noted how a lack of leadership within SPD has made the current tumultuous environment for law enforcement even harder to operate within.

The demands for societal change that have risen across the nation, and the politics from all levels of government, have created a trying environment for SPD employees. Leaders are essential in not only forging a path ahead for the police department but also shepherding the members of the department forward, so they are better equipped to serve the citizens of Spokane. Again, the most consistent concern voiced during this vertical staffing committee process was the lack of this leadership and how it is diminishing the capabilities, readiness, and morale of the department's members. Members crave engaged leadership, input on a shared vision for the future, and an organizational culture where members feel valued and supported by their organization.

There is no cultural emphasis on leadership within the Spokane Police Department. While SPD models an organizational structure similar to that of the military, it neglects all the benefits of this type of structure, save discipline. SPD fails to implement the institutional knowledge developed throughout the military, one of the best leadership laboratories on the planet. The military has developed continual professional and leadership development courses as well as opportunities to ensure their members are equipped to handle increasingly complex leadership positions. Military leaders are paired with mentors to ensure they can complete their assigned duties while supervised, before left to their own devices. Conversely, SPD employees feel there is little guidance and professional growth as they navigate their careers - a concern shared within every aspect of the department (dispatch, records, analysts, patrol, and investigations). There is no one to "show us the way," or develop us to be the leaders of tomorrow. The failure to ingrain the importance of leadership within our organizational fabric has begun to cause unwanted secondary and tertiary effects. Looking at many major US corporations such as Microsoft, Google, Costco, and many others, one can find a culture of leadership where all leaders know what is expected of them so they can help guide the mission of their organization. SPD should be no different.

Employees' most consistent observation is that their direct supervisor is just that - a supervisor who doesn't display the leadership characteristics necessary to keep a law enforcement organization

thriving. Compounding the issue of poor leadership is the concern that many officers who promote to first-line supervisors are ill-equipped to handle the litany of supervisory functions demanded of them. Even when supervisors attend training, they come back to the agency where the lessons learned are rarely practiced. There is no structure or culture of leadership for the new supervisor to be held accountable to. Without strong leadership above these first-line supervisors (lieutenants guiding sergeants, sergeants guiding corporals, etc.) the organization becomes stagnant, a standard of mediocrity is set, and individual employees are left to navigate (professional, administrative, and technical) challenges on their own. This often leaves informal leaders, who have successfully navigated these challenges, to step in and assist their peers while supervisors remain largely ineffective in handling these issues. This burden is on top of the employee's normal responsibility, creating an environment conducive to chronic stress loads and emotional burnout.

Fostering an environment where burnout threatens is counterproductive to recent messaging from police department administrators, placing importance on officer-wellness and individual mental health. These efforts are incongruent with supervisors' (and front-line employees') actions in creating our current work environment. While listening to employees' concerns and hearing that deflated morale is a step in the right direction, the fact that the organizational readiness has had to degrade to such a low level is symptomatic of the larger leadership issues identified above.

The separation between department leadership and line-staff tends to be too great. It is rare to see one of our command staff at roll calls, or meeting with non-commissioned staff. Communication with employees tend to be through emails but this is not an effective way to have two-way communication and is a key factor contributing to low morale. Without consistent in-person communication with employees, we are left to wonder and interpret why the department is making the decisions they are. There are certain leaders in our department who are good at communicating with the line-staff, but it is not the norm. The appearance to the line employees is that the non-communicating, "leaders don't really work and go to these positions to hide," as one employee put it. While in reality this is probably not always the case, we think our leaders need to practice better communication with an emphasis on it being in-person. Another officer said, "Officers expect their administration to be approachable and seen." There is no legitimate reason why a member of command staff cannot be at all the roll calls at least once per month to communicate what is happening at the department and be available to questions from employees. If a schedule becomes standard practice, employees will know what to expect and can bring questions and concerns to them.

Again, these observations and beliefs are not meant to demean or insult any individual supervisor within the department. Every participant in the vertical staffing committee had glowing examples of leadership from supervisors within the department - identifying a lack of organizational leadership isn't meant as a directed personal attack. Still, these examples were the exception rather than the norm. Many of these individuals found themselves in the chronic stress environments identified earlier, being utilized (and leveraged) by the department without substantial or meaningful institutional support. We are humbly asking supervisors within the Spokane Police Department and officials within the City of Spokane to make leadership a priority. Members of the Spokane Police Department are looking to grow and support new leaders, grow professionally, and thrive while serving the citizens of Spokane. We aim to accomplish this by adopting and implementing an organizational leadership program. We want the best for the department and even better for the citizens of Spokane - for these reasons we

propose a meaningful change in how the Spokane Police Department thinks about leadership development.

Takeaway:

Prior Spokane City Councils have shown an unwillingness to adequately equip and staff SPD, and the current Council is no different. A department-wide leadership program could be partially instituted even without support from City Council. We propose the creation, adoption, and implementation of an internal leadership training program for members of the Spokane Police Department. Investing the time and resources in developing such a program would weave the importance of leadership into the culture of the department, provide significant financial savings to the city, and make the department a more effective organization.

We believe the most prudent path forward in creating such training would be to adopt a servant leadership emphasis within the program. Servant-leadership is a means of nurturing people while they execute an organization's mission. Developed by Robert Greenleaf in the 1970s while an executive at AT&T, the foundation of servant leadership is rooted in the fact that "the servant-leader is servant first... it begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead." Larry Spears, a servant-leader with ties to both Robert Greenleaf and Gonzaga University, identified the following ten characteristics that the servant-leader possesses:

1. Listening: a servant-leader listens first, thinks, and then acts if necessary. "The servant-leader seeks to identify the will of a group and helps clarify that will."¹
2. Empathy: through thoughtful listening and understanding, the servant leader strives to empathize with those around them.
3. Healing: through empathy and the deep desire to serve, one of the key components of servant-leadership is making people *whole*. Serving those that need support to grow as individuals.
4. Awareness: servant-leaders strive to be aware of not only their immediate surroundings, but to maintain a significant level of self-awareness as well.
5. Persuasion: the servant-leader attempts to steer an organization through persuasion rather than coercion. Servant-leaders humbly influence those around them because what they believe in is morally "right."

¹ Greenleaf, R. K. (1998). *The Power of Servant Leadership*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

6. Conceptualization: servant leaders strive to “dream great dreams.” Servant-leaders look at organizations from more than one perspective, reflecting on the group’s role in society, and seeking to be visionary in their progress forward. ²
7. Foresight: “Foresight is the “lead” that the leader has”. Servant-leaders hone in on the other characteristics to ‘see the unseeable’ and use the past, present, and future to guide their decision-making process. ³
8. Stewardship: servant-leaders are stewards of the most precious gift bestowed upon this Earth - its’ people. Good stewardship means recognizing the significance of this asset and acting as a leader accordingly - with respect, admiration, and hope.
9. Commitment to Growth: servant-leaders appreciate the value of each of their teammates. Servant-leaders understand that each member is a vast potential for greatness; as such, each individual is encouraged to grow and strive for something great.
10. Building Community: servant-leaders recognize some of the disjointedness and pain caused by abandoning our smaller communities for our current state. Servant-leaders attempt to rebuild the human connection and sense of community that is essential to individual, organizational, and societal health.

These are characteristics we desperately need from our twenty-first century law enforcement leaders. In a profession so embattled with trauma, and entrenched with challenges, leaders that exemplify these ideals not only shepherd organizations through trying times but also address the current deficiencies of the organization - low morale, stifled professional development, deficient officer wellness, and lack of congruency between what organizational *messaging* and *action*. These are the characteristics we expect to see in leaders of an increasingly diverse organization that entered the law enforcement profession with the desire to *serve*.

The department is fortunate there is a world-class servant leadership program in the heart of Spokane, at Gonzaga University. Curating our training program to implement servant leadership principles would be an excellent opportunity to leverage the proximity of Gonzaga University while building meaningful relationships within the Spokane community. The knowledge, research capabilities, and experience within the Spokane community are benefits that we are lucky to have ‘right in our own backyard.’ Several SPD administrators have utilized Gonzaga’s leadership program for advanced degrees in the past and surely see value in integrating the essence of these programs into the department. The participation of members of the department in Gonzaga’s program could also provide a source of expertise in designing, building, and implementing our own leadership training - helping ensure the training is the right fit for our organization.

² Ibid.

³ Greenleaf, R. K. (2002). *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*. New Jersey: Paulist Press.

Utilizing internal and community resources to implement this program will also address financial and content consistency issues. Leadership training typically costs thousands of dollars per student. With an internal training program, we will be able to exponentially reduce the cost of education, especially when implemented at scale. We can also ensure that most of the department is receiving a consistent message, tailored to our specific needs, and tailored to develop a strong organizational culture. With the Washington State Criminal Justice Commission consistently changing their education content, and that content not necessarily being aligned with content taught at the FBI's Law Enforcement Executive Development Association (LEEDA), a lack of consistency in education / training content has not proven to be beneficial. Additionally, conducting our own training program, with vertical and horizontal integration, can help ensure supervisors are exercising their leadership skills while developing others within the department. A leadership training program could be implemented and shared with any city department. A consistent and strong leadership culture is needed and desired by employees, so they know what to expect in their daily work lives.

Potential Training Program Framework

As stated earlier, the potential of implementing our own leadership training program not only across the ranks (horizontally) but up and down the chain of command (vertically) can assist in fostering organizational / cultural growth, individual professional growth, while simultaneously providing an opportunity for supervisors to grow as leaders. The framework of the program would intend to introduce the broad concepts of servant leadership to patrol officers, prepare non-traditional supervisors (field training officers and corporals) for increased leadership opportunities, equip first-line supervisors (sergeants and department managers) with the skills to effectively lead their teams, and provide staff-level supervisors (lieutenants and above) with opportunities to mentor junior members while implementing programs / processes that further ingrain leadership within the organizational culture.

Collaboration and mentorship would be utilized in various degrees throughout the program, intended to weave leadership as a cultural norm not only vertically but horizontally as well. The initial vision for the program consists of individual study / reflection, group mentorship, and systemic problem-solving to meet the goal of developing leaders. This type of work could be formalized in the form of training / study guides - the line-level vertical staffing committee has prepared an example of such a guide as a possible example of this framework and attached as Appendix A of this report.

Introduction to Patrol

Once patrol officers are established in their careers, the intent of the program would be to introduce those interested in the foundational principles of servant leadership. An easy way to do this would be to have patrol officers read *The Journey to the East* by Hermann Hesse. This short novella was foundational in Robert Greenleaf's work on articulating the principles of servant leadership to the world. A story of the importance of a servant during a group's long journey (and the devastation that unfolds when the servant disappears), *A Journey to the East* is an accessible work and fantastic means

of starting to think about what it means to be a leader. Reflection could be accomplished with a departmental study guide. Mentorship could be provided through corporals and sergeants going through the training - fostering camaraderie, encouraging insight, and providing opportunities for leaders to lead.

Support Services Training Course

Non-commissioned employees have also voiced the desire for early, consistent leadership training within their ranks. Utilizing the same framework as the commissioned training program while taking advantage of the diversity of perspectives from the 'Foundational Works' and 'Supplemental Works' below, the program will seamlessly integrate all employees of the Spokane Police Department. In turn, this will emphasize the desired cultural changes the training program aims to effect. Employees in the support services training program should expect to progress through introductory, supervisor, and staff-level training programs. There should also be opportunities for joint non-commissioned / commissioned training, fostering organizational camaraderie and leveraging institutional knowledge.

Field Training Officer (FTO)/ Corporal Training Course

As officers begin filling supervisory roles as FTOs and corporals, they will follow a similar training framework that they were exposed to as patrol officers. Reading books covering principles of servant leadership (identified in the 'Foundational Works' section below), these individuals will complete departmental study guides, begin mentoring those beginning the program, and identify means in which they can give back to the organization and lead those around them.

Sergeant Training Course

The framework will remain the same for those aspiring sergeants completing the program. The goal will be to provide additional training to officers before they take on the responsibility of leading others. 'Sergeants' can expect to integrate additional 'Foundational Works' as well as supplemental readings (identified in the 'Supporting Works' section below) to reflect on servant leadership, their own leadership experiences, and how other's experiences might support or conflict servant leadership ideals. Sergeants will also have the opportunity to adopt a more significant mentorship role with members that are at the beginning of their leadership training - this will allow junior members to learn from the senior member's experiences, while simultaneously providing the aspiring sergeant leadership opportunities to hone their skills. Individuals in this phase of their career should also look at leveraging their 'systemic problem-solving' opportunities to create possible solutions for organizational problems.

Staff Training Course

The staff training course (lieutenants and above) will follow the same framework while adopting a more strategic outlook on adapting future content and integration of the program. Staff-level participants will share the lessons they've learned throughout their career with the sergeants, corporals, FTOs, and patrol officers. Once the program is established this population will be responsible for curating the content of the program while fostering relationships with external training partners. Leaders in this group should be examples of 'commitment to growth, foresight, stewardship, and building community to ensure the program stays relevant, impactful, and adaptive as changes occur within / around the organization.

Higher levels of leadership are responsible for mentoring and holding their subordinates accountable for practicing the Spokane Police Leadership culture and values.

Proposed Training Material

Foundational Works

1. *The Servant as Leader* by Robert K. Greenleaf
2. *Servant Leadership* by Robert K. Greenleaf
3. *Martin Luther King Jr. on Leadership* by Donald L. Phillips
4. *The Journey to the East* by Hermann Hesse
5. *Dare to Serve* by Cheryl Bachelder
6. *The Leadership Challenge* by Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner
7. *The Serving Leader* by Kenneth R. Jennings and John Stahl-Wert
8. *Multipliers* by Liz Wiseman
9. *The Servant Leader* by James A. Autry
10. *Give and Take* by Adam Grant

Supporting Works

1. *Extreme Ownership* by Jocko Willink and Leif Babin
2. *Dare to Lead* by Brené Brown
3. *It's Your Ship* by D. Michael Abrashoff
4. *Leaders Eat Last* by Simon Sinek

Field Training Officer (FTO) Supervision

The standard for the San Jose model FTO program that the SPD utilizes is to have FTO supervisors in the field to deal with training issues and be a resource for FTO's. SPD lacks this fundamental of the FTO model and can open the department up to liability. Having FTO supervisors in the field during each shift gives FTO's and student officers access to this valuable resource 24 hours a day. FTO supervisors need to understand the FTO model and should attend the FTO Academy to better understand the fundamentals of the program.

With the current process, probationary officers who have moved to Phase 3 of the FTO program (solo-patrol) do not have adequate monitoring of their progress as they navigate the rest of their probation period. Sergeants are asked to complete monthly progress reports, but this rarely happens and issues that arise with a new officer's proficiency can go unnoticed until after the end of their probationary period. This can lead veteran officers to perceive that the department "just pushed through" an inadequate employee on purpose. Patrol sergeants often do not understand the basic concepts of the FTO program because their only experience was when they went through the program as a new officer years ago.

Currently the FTO Coordinator is held by a patrol officer as outlined in the SPD Policy Manual. This position is typically held by a sergeant or lieutenant when following the San Jose FTO model. The work our FTO Coordinator is expected to do can easily exceed a single person's capabilities if it is to be done adequately. This is one of the only positions in the department where a single person manages and oversees, 20 plus new employees and their training, as well as 20-30 FTO's and their schedules. The scope of responsibility should be split in half. There is more than enough work for two full-time employees at this point and should consist of a sergeant for supervisory issues, and a senior FTO for training and scheduling. While there is a sergeant assigned to the FTO Unit, their primary job is hiring and training for the department so the attention they can provide the FTO Unit is extremely minimal. Increasing staffing on the administration portion of FTO could help bolster the morale of FTO's as well as provide more stability and reduce liability.

Our department now has the ability to host FTO basic academies and FTO leadership classes in conjunction with the Spokane County Sheriff's Office at immense savings. Utilizing this resource would help with implementation of FTO supervisors both in the field and leading the FTO Unit.

Identified Issue 2:

Staffing

While the seemingly inadequate staffing of the department is the second issue identified in this report, the committee felt that staffing had an equal impact on morale as that of leadership within the organization. Again, leadership decision within the organization, city council, and city hall have guided the staffing environment of the department to its current state. The interconnected nature of these issues cannot be ignored.

The general belief among members of SPD is that the organization is significantly understaffed. Being understaffed is a direct result of pulling resources from the patrol teams in order to fill other 'specialty' teams that don't fulfill traditional patrol roles. During a period where the desire to be a law enforcement officer is waning, and in an environment where the City of Spokane is decreasingly competitive in recruiting the limited talent, the allocation of resources is critical to ensure the Spokane Police Department is fulfilling its obligation to the citizens of Spokane. Consensus among line-level employees is patrol and investigations should be fully staffed before allocating additional officers for specialty positions. Allocating resources in this way would help the department fulfill its mission.

The mission statement of the Spokane Police Department⁴:

The Spokane Police Department is committed to providing excellence in policing, enhancing the safety and security of individuals, and building partnerships to better the lives of our community members as a whole.

Line-level employees feel we are increasingly unable to honor our obligations to the community at our current patrol staffing levels. This belief was anecdotally supported by citing crime rates, call response times, overtime costs, and the quality of service the criminal justice system is providing to the citizens of Spokane.

Patrol Staffing

The City of Spokane has a population of approximately 230,000 residents.⁵ Using the latest available data provided by the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), the average number of officers serving their communities was 2.3 sworn officers per 1,000 residents.⁶ As of June 2022, the Spokane Police Department had approximately 340 sworn officers meaning the City of Spokane is deploying 1.46 officers per 1,000 residents. Of the 340 sworn officers filling the ranks of SPD, only 108 officers are

⁴ <https://my.spokanecity.org/police/mission-statement/>

⁵ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/spokanecitywashington/PST045221>

⁶ <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2019/crime-in-the-u.s.-2019/topic-pages/tables/table-71>

assigned as patrol officers. Fifty-eight individuals in the rank of "officer" were assigned to areas outside of traditional patrol roles.

If the Spokane Police Department was staffed at the national average, there would be over 500 sworn officers employed by the city. The committee does not believe we necessarily need 500 sworn officers within the department, but this shows there is room for improvement in how we staff the organization in order to fulfill our mission statement and meet our obligation to the citizenry.

These numbers don't reflect the unique situation that Washington State law enforcement officers are now operating in. With the legislation implemented in July 2021, the staffing situation worsened. At the recommendation of state law enforcement leaders, three officers started to respond to priority calls when a suspect is or may be still on scene. This is to keep officers and those involved safe, as well as reduce liability. We are reducing the number of available officers to handle other criminal complaints while we adapt to these new changes. Officers are required to spend more times with barricaded or resistive suspects and as a result there is an increase in the number of times people take these actions. This significant drain on available staffing in the field causes an increase in delayed response times to other crimes and is a safety issue for officers not assigned to those calls.

Often there is no back-up available for other priority calls or for doing any proactive policing. Spokane is at a boiling point when it comes to resources to respond to violent crime and endangered persons. There have been numerous instances each month where available resources have been stretched to the limits. An example is the increase in drive-by shootings. The majority of patrol is needed to safely and effectively respond to these incidents. There have been a number of incidents where there is retaliation in the form of another drive-by before officers have finished processing the first shooting. Officers are then pulled from the first incident to respond to the second. If there are more incidents that occur during these investigations, officers will be stretched further, and safety and investigations suffer. We are very lucky that more officers haven't been seriously hurt or killed due to these dangerous incidents that occur in our city, coupled with the inadequate number of officers to respond to them. Luck tends to run out and we cannot count on luck to keep officers safe.

Minimum staffing levels for patrol currently dictate that eleven officers are mandatory for each of the four shifts to provide law enforcement services to the citizens of Spokane. If eleven officers are unable to report for duty, supervisors broadcast overtime opportunities for those not scheduled to work. If those vacancies are still not filled, supervisors order officers from the last shift to remain on duty for an additional four hours in order to mitigate the staffing shortage. Anecdotally, it is not uncommon for patrol to operate below staffing minimum requirements - the data required to support this observation is beyond the scope of this committee's report, but it can be collected. During the week between May 8th and May 14th, 2022, there were 49 requests to fill patrol vacancies. During the week between May 15th and May 21st, 2022, there were 32 requests to fill patrol vacancies. The number of vacant patrol positions creates a morale issue on several fronts.

The primary concern with continually operating around or below the minimum staffing level is the fact that those consistently reporting to work their scheduled shift are confronted with an increased workload. Consistently working in an environment of unrealistic demands is one scenario that can create chronic stress situations within employees, leading to 'burnout.' This concern is compounded in a different way when officers are required to hold-over an additional four hours after their normal shift. This results in being on duty for nearly fifteen hours and increases the odds of negative outcomes

within law enforcement encounters.⁷ Another concern is the lack of ability for officers to take time off for vacation, education, training, and professional growth opportunities. Not being able to take time off during reasonable periods erodes morale and effects employee wellness. Not being able to go to training or education, and not being able to leverage job shadowing or other professional growth opportunities erodes morale. All these concerns reduce the effectiveness of officers and diminish the capabilities we should be leveraging to serve the citizens of Spokane.

Compounding the inability to consistently staff patrol at minimum acceptable levels, there are additional draws on patrol resources. These come in the form of obligations the city has agreed to fulfill - these obligations are year-round and often aren't planned in conjunction with patrol officer's normal schedule, causing increased stress on individual officers as they navigate scheduling conflicts and lack of sleep. Some of these obligations include:

1. Bloomsday (80-90 officers)
2. Hoopfest (83 officers)
3. Lilac Parade (66 officers)
4. Jr. Lilac Parade (45 officers)
5. Pride Parade (30 officers)
6. 1st Night New Years Celebration (30 officers)
7. 4th of July Celebration (30 officers)
8. Martin Luther King Jr. Parade (30 officers)
9. Weekend Bar Patrol (5 officers)
10. Various Concerts (3-5 officers per concert)
11. Multiple Free Speech Demonstrations (5-30 officers)
12. City Council Meetings (1-2 officers)
13. YPI (5 officers per session)
14. GU Patrol (4-6 officers per weekend)
15. GU Game Security
16. Graduations (2-5 officers per event)
17. Various Sporting Events (4-15 officers per event)
18. Camp Hope Security Detail (2 officers per day)

⁷ <https://policechiefmagazine.org/human-fatigue-in-247-operations/>

Hot Spots - or Missions - are a tool the department uses to address high crime area. The purpose is to put officers where there is a high level of calls for service. This is a sound tactic to combat crime, but the SPD does not have enough patrol staff to effectively work these areas. The crime typically increases in these areas during peak call load times making it difficult to get officers deployed to the Hot Spots. With increased staffing, officers would have more time and resources to focus on these areas in hopes of decreasing crime in a shorter amount of time.

There are many reasons the amount of overtime that is required by the department should be addressed. This included officer wellness (both physical and mental), budgetary concerns, and many more. In the long-term, this can cause more low morale issues as well as many other officer wellness concerns.

The low staffing numbers not only affects the SPD's ability to do our jobs, but it has also affected other agencies who rely on our department to perform their jobs. Repeatedly other agencies coming into Spokane to perform essential functions have requested assistance from the SPD and have been told there are no resources available to assist. For instance, the Spokane County Sheriff's Office (SCSO) recently had an armed wanted subject run from deputies in the city limits. They requested the SPD assist with securing the scene but there were no units available, and our call load was too high for us to provide the assistance. This was a safety issue for those deputies and caused a strain on our relationship with them because of the inability to assist with the dangerous situation. There have been other agencies also affected like Child Protective Services, mental health professionals, and adjoining law enforcement agencies.

Officers working the street know the majority of our city's residents support the department and its employees. This is evident by the thousands of community members who have come in contact with our officers and line-staff. On a daily basis the community tells officers how much they appreciate them and more often than not, they know that we are not supported as we should be. Everyday our employees go above and beyond to make life in Spokane a better one. For years they have been working 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, often under life-threatening conditions, just to make our city safe and one of the best places to live in the world. We need to support these employees and work to improve their working conditions. Officers need to have adequate back-up to respond to calls for help safely. Citizens want adequate officers to respond to their calls for service.

Detectives Staffing

The investigative branch of the department also has concerns about not being fully staffed with detectives. There are individuals who have been promoted to detective that have worked their entire probationary period on patrol because the staffing crisis prevented the department from moving them to the investigative branch. Nevertheless, consensus among detectives was that patrol needs to be fully staffed before meaningful change could be implemented in other portions of the department. Until SPD is able to align their resources to meet their patrol obligations to the city, the general belief was that there should be at least enough detectives to work each solvable felonious assault and sexual assault within the city.

The lack of staffing in the detective division means there are a large number of felony cases that don't get assigned to a detective, and except in rare cases, misdemeanor cases are not being investigated at

all. This means the majority of crimes reported by our citizens do not get investigated. With increased patrol staff, some crimes that only require minor follow-up could be completed at a patrol level. Unfortunately, there is insufficient patrol staff to handle the number of incoming calls for service and perform follow-up work. This leaves the required follow-up to fall upon the detective division.

For example, most of domestic violence (DV) crimes and arrests are misdemeanors. Only in rare circumstances do any of those get assigned, and almost all of them need additional work. There are felony level DV crimes that are solvable but there are not enough detectives to work all of these cases.

Dispatch Staffing

There are currently only four supervisors and seventeen dispatchers for a total of twenty-one dispatchers employed. Supervisors work twelve hour shifts with four days on, three days off, three days on, and four days off. This scheduling means supervisors have weekly overtime already built into their shift.

There are currently eight dispatchers on dayshift and eight dispatchers working nightshift with 1 in training. To maintain staffing, dispatchers are required to work a fluctuating work week. Dispatchers have a schedule that rotates between 8, and 12-hour shifts. A dispatcher's Monday and Friday are 8-hours, and their Tuesday and Wednesday are 12-hours. There is also a constant supply of overtime which makes life outside of work difficult to manage.

The minimum staffing levels are two dispatchers and one supervisory between 0200 hours and 1000 hours. Staffing requirements increase to four dispatchers and one supervisor between the hours of 1000 hours and 0200 hours. This increased requirement allows the data channel, Channel 2, to be operational during these hours.

There is concern among dispatchers that their division has not grown with the increased call volume in Spokane. While SPD has added additional sworn officers over the years, Dispatch has had three supervisor and five dispatching positions eliminated. This has created an environment where dispatchers are asked to do more work with fewer resources. In dynamic patrol situations where information coming into dispatch and relayed out to officers is of dire importance, it is unfair to diminish Dispatch's capabilities while placing their employees in a chronic stress environment.

The consensus in dispatch is that at least one more supervisor position needs to be added to the division. This would allow the supervisors to have some more flexibility in their schedule while reducing their long stretches of mandatory overtime. Additionally, if dispatch was given the five positions previously taken away, it would bolster the readiness and capabilities of the division. First, Channel 2 could be operated around the clock, allowing reducing dispatcher burnout, increasing officer safety, and allowing the city to handle critical incidents more adequately. Additionally, having more dispatchers on duty would allow for better operations of special events or tasks without effecting patrol dispatch functions. These include all the parades, demonstrations and other large gatherings that require significant dispatch services. It would also assist with the significant increase in emergent

operations throughout the day that require a separate dispatcher to help ensure the safety of responding personnel.

Filling these lost positions would also prevent burnout during the summer months when individuals typically take vacation. When a dispatcher uses their vacation time, one dispatcher is placed into on-call status and an additional dispatcher may be required to fill mandatory overtime. There were multiple dispatchers that worked or were on-call for an entire month during 2021 due to the lack of adequate staffing within dispatch.

It is important to remember there are three dispatchers that are currently eligible to retire. Dispatch is considered “fully staffed” at this time but if someone separates from service it will take six months to a year to hire a replacement, followed by an additional nine months before they are trained to perform on their own. Being staffed at historical levels would allow more flexibility in the event a dispatcher decides to retire, will reduce the already incredible burden placed on our dispatchers, and improve morale.

Finally, employees working in dispatch have concerns that the city may be interested in eliminating their division and contracting with the Spokane Regional Emergency Communication (SREC) service. This concern causes understandable worry that their jobs are not secure. As a result, some employees have contemplated the need to find more secure employment in the region. With the documented turmoil experienced at SREC and the inferior service they provide, there has been no interest in our staff moving to that agency. It would be beneficial for morale if the city publicly supports our dispatch service and announced that they were not interested in joining SREC. We feel our in-house services are above and beyond what an outside entity can provide.

One example of this dysfunction is apparent in SRECs handling of Crime Check reports. With SPD not responding to many crimes, SREC has been tasked with taking reports through Crime Check. Members of the committee have become aware of SREC not fielding the reports as citizens call in their complaints. Complainants will call Crime Check to report a property crime. Crime Check will then give the complainant a temporary report number and inform them someone from Crime Check will call them back to take their report over the phone. If the victim doesn't answer the return call, the report goes no further unless the victim calls back in. This has recently been as long as one week for the callback. This is an immense disservice to our community and is unacceptable. How are we to expect the support of the community if this is the service they are receiving?

Another example is when someone calls 911 to report a crime. If 911 is at “Red Status” due to their staffing issues, then only basic information is obtained and relayed to officers. This can be extremely dangerous because the officer is not getting the needed intel to safely respond to the call for service. This also required Dispatch to call the reporting party back to obtain this information. These types of circumstances occurred on a regular basis and caused a strain on Dispatch with all the return calls.

Records Staffing

Records staff voiced concern over the amount of overtime they were exposed to so their peers could utilize their time off. There also appeared to be a lack of concern from supervisors in proactively filling vacant shifts or volunteering to help fill vacancies to ease the burden on line-level employees.

Payroll and Accounting Staffing

Employees in payroll and accounting also felt they could use more staff. When payroll is busy, they could use another person to help process payroll. When payroll is dealing with significant issues like processing retroactive payments or payroll systems becoming inoperative, they used an accounting employee to help catch up. It may be possible to hire one employee who can be cross trained to work accounting or payroll depending on where the need emerges.

Crime Analysts Staffing

With the small number of crime analysts working for the SPD, we are limiting the amount of information that is coming in or being worked. Crime analysts can assist in numerous areas of investigations for both patrol and detectives. This would be an area to look at increasing staffing to increase efficiency.

Purchasing/Quartermaster Staffing

Current procedure for purchasing authorizations consists of the purchaser or quartermaster requesting approval from a captain. This captain can have so many different tasks that the approvals may not get done for an extended period. This can cause delays for equipping new hires in time to go to the academy, getting needed equipment and many other purchasing needs.

Speaking with employees in this area we found that in the past there was an admin sergeant who could handle the day-to-day approvals, and this made the process easy and streamlined. Since the removal of the admin sergeant, the approvals were needed from the captain. There are numerous reasons to bring back the admin sergeant position and this should be considered.

Retention

The committee feels there needs to be a much better emphasis on retention, especially with how young the department is trending. In many ways you can't make up for twenty years of experience until the 'five-year officer' has worked another fifteen years. It takes over a year for a new hire to be ready to fill a commissioned officer position alone. This does not include the time it takes for the hiring process to be completed. The dynamic can create a gap in staffing coverage that impacts the department throughout. Improving working conditions, timely contract negotiations, providing opportunity, and bolstering employee growth will combat the current leading cause of officer departure - low morale.

Career development can help with retention and morale in general. If patrol staffing were improved, officers could request to spend time working with other units to gain experience and have a change-of-pace. These opportunities would reverberate throughout the organization as institutional knowledge was shared and spread throughout the ranks. Under many circumstances, the department and employees would be best served in limiting the time staff are in "specialty" position. There should be a standard rotation schedule for these opportunities to ensure officers stay engaged and to provide opportunity for all interested. Obviously, some of these specialty positions require extensive training specific to their duties so these positions could have a longer probationary periods with a structured transition plan. Having a single employee in a specialty position for many years limits the ability for others to expand their knowledgebase. It also makes it difficult for those who may already bring significant experience in the field to work in these positions.

Recruitment

Recruiting capable and suitable recruits into the law enforcement profession is a challenge across the nation. As a result, proactive municipalities and agencies are using economic strategies to recruit the best talent for their jurisdictions. The Spokane Police Department is lagging behind other agencies in the region in the compensation packages presented to new hires. Numerous agencies in Washington are offering higher signing bonuses, higher pay, take-home cars, increased entry longevity for lateral hires, and various other incentives to recruit the best talent. Agencies in Idaho, once far inferior in compensation, are now comparable to Spokane and actively recruiting current employees. For example, here is a comparison of the Spokane County Sheriff's Office and the Spokane Police Department's lateral-hire recruiting packages:

- The Spokane County Sheriff's Office gives laterals equal longevity to their previous department, offers a take-home car, and gives \$25,000 signing bonus. They offer a \$15,000 signing bonus to new hires. - This is highly attractive to current SPD employees because the work is nearly identical, the pay is similar, there would be no need to move their family, the signing bonus would help cover the increased cost of living, and a take-home vehicle is highly desired.
- SCSO dedicates a large amount of resources promoting their job openings. There is a lot of information on the benefits, opportunities, and requirements on their website and other promotional material. Their job website is informative and easy to navigate.
- The Spokane Police Department advertises "Lateral Police Officers with less than 5 years' experience start at \$63,308 (two-year longevity). The city advertised \$15,000 signing bonuses for lateral employees in the recent months, but that stipulation isn't currently listed in current job listings or hiring information. SPD does an extremely poor job advertising police jobs and can do much better. Our website is difficult to navigate, and jobs are buried beneath information on our demographics.

Takeaway:

There needs to be a paradigm shift in how the City of Spokane and the Spokane Police Department staffs and deploys the members of the agency. We believe the city needs to make a concerted effort to

align more with the national average for law enforcement employees deployed per 1,000 residents. There also needs to be an honest discussion about SPD's mission and how we want to fulfill that obligation to the citizens. Are we comfortable diminishing the Patrol Division's effectiveness in order to fill specialty positions sought after by city leadership? It is the belief of this committee that patrol is the heart and soul of the organization. We are doing a disservice to the people of Spokane, and they aren't receiving the services we've promised them in our mission statement.

Communication with other segments of the vertical staffing process (lieutenants and captains) has revealed comprehensive plans to address some of this committee's concerns. The plans address the heart of our concerns by increasing patrol staffing and limiting the 'specialty' positions until the city can recruit more officers to fill the ranks. The committee generally agrees and supports this line of thinking and recommends the city and administration look at these plans as frameworks to create a progressive solution to address our current staffing shortcomings. We would also recommend a representative from dispatch attend labor management meetings to provide input on their staffing.

If we don't address the issues outlined in this report, Spokane may end up with bigger retention and hiring issues that are being seen in agencies across the country. We should pay close attention to the dire position cities like Portland, Seattle, Chicago, New York, and many others are facing today. All of these cities failed to adequately support criminal justice and their police departments. These agencies saw a rapid decline in employees who were fed up with the lack of support, being overworked, and left to fend for themselves as the governments restricted their abilities to address crime. Now these cities are faced with the enormous hurdle of trying to re-staff their departments while their crime rates soar.

Some say this won't happen in Spokane. We can tell you with certainty, backed by statistics, that this has already begun here. It is up to the citizens to let their elected officials know that they want these issues to be addressed. It is up to the elected and appointed officials to make the changes in a thoughtful manner. As anyone can see in the cities listed above, the leaders are now left to make the difficult changes. Those that are unable to do this are being voted out of office so there is some incentive to work with the department and the community.

In order to attract and retain a competent, diverse workforce we need to promote our department in a positive light, backed with the support of the city leaders. This is what we expect, and it certainly is what the citizens expect. There will always be room for improvement, and we believe our department has demonstrated the willingness to improve by the changes we have already made.

Identified Issue 3:

Valuing Employees

Lack of Current Contract(s)

A very significant impact on morale over the last decade, is the inability to get the city to enter into timely labor negotiations with the Spokane Police Guild, or the majority of the other bargaining units of city employees. Yet the City Council can repeatedly come to an agreement to raise their pay and benefits. It has been nearly impossible to get the city's negotiation team to meet with the guild consistently. Requests to bargain went unanswered by the city leaders for several months after the 2012-2016 contract expired. When the city finally agreed to meet, they would not agree to meet more frequently than once a month, but usually, it was about two to three months between meetings.

The city frequently cancelled and put off negotiation meetings to suit their needs. When a proposal would be made by the guild, it would often take months for the city to respond, whereas the guild would normally have a response within days. The city doesn't have any decision-makers on their negotiating team which causes more delays. The city was barely able to meet the PERC requirement of bargaining in good faith, and their tactics have certainly called into question if they are meeting the ethical standards of bargaining in good faith.

The 2017-2021 Spokane Police Guild contract took over four years to negotiate with the city, and in no way was delayed by the guild. At one point the guild and city's negotiation committees believed there was a deal in place. The guild was under the impression that the city had negotiated in good faith, and they said they had the council sign off on it. But it ended up being voted down by the council 7-0. The contract was finally signed on March 18th, 2021, just nine-and-a-half months before the 5-year contract expired.

A tactic often used by governments is to delay contracts so the budgeted money for pay and benefit's packages can be bank-rolled. Money gains interest for the city to profit on but not for the employee. When the last contract was settled, the city opted for one lump sum payments to employees for the previous 4 years (51 months) of back-pay. This caused for a much larger tax bill and pushed many employees into the next tax bracket. All guild employees were taxed higher, and some lost out on stimulus payments that they otherwise would have received had the contract been settled on time. The delayed contract was a win for the city but a disservice to its employees.

The city should be fully prepared to negotiate contracts before they expire. This would show they value their employees. Waiting nearly 5-years to come to an agreement is devaluing to their employees. We would hope the city could agree to have at least one meeting a week until a contract is negotiated. The city should have decision-makers at the bargaining table, such as the City Administrator, CFO, and the Chief. The city paying an outside attorney that handles all negotiation meetings, and appears to play interference most of the time, inhibits the ability to negotiate a timely contract.

Employee Wellness

There appears to be no congruency between what is voiced to employees about best practices for officer wellness and what the organization actually practices. The department implores their officers to 'recharge their batteries' and play an active role in balancing one's work life against personal time and time with family. The department then drafts officers to fill bar patrol vacancies each weekend, holding employees over at the end of shifts, and drafts officers to cover all the special events the department has committed to. This eats away at the opportunity to find a meaningful balance. Of note, this is also against identified best practices for shift workers.⁸ As outlined in the staffing issues, officers and non-commissioned employees are expected to work so much overtime that their weekends are constantly interrupted.

The stress of the job coupled with shift work, family issues, and lack of time off has taken its toll on a significant number of our officers. The Peer Assistance Team (PAT) has seen a dramatic increase in officers requesting assistance to cope with the stress and burnout. Suicide is a very real concern amongst police officers and the rate of suicide for police is higher than that of the general public. This is not new information and there is a lot of training out there that brings attention to the issue and suggests help. There is little being done, however, to address the causes of low morale that significantly contribute to this problem.

Our police officers interact with people at their lowest point in their lives on a daily basis, and for long hours. Many of our officers have held dying babies, mothers, fathers, brother, sisters, friends, and family. Our officers have been shot at, assaulted, persecuted, and worse. Most of the time they are expected to get back to work and often be forced to hold over to cover the next short-staffed shift after all of this. Most of our officers do so without complaint because we hire very good people. After years of being exposed to these conditions, it takes its toll on the body and mind. There is no wonder why divorce, suicide, and alcoholism are more prevalent in law enforcement officers than the general public when one looks at the environment they work in for their entire career.

While this section was being written, in less than an hour, there was one drive-by shooting, one stabbing, one officer assaulted, a missing endangered child, two people brandishing firearms, and nineteen calls for service holding with no officers available to respond. These types of situations are not rare in Spokane, yet our officers continue to work in these conditions every day because they see the greater good and know the safety of our city is at stake, regardless of the political climate. With the current environment of criminals not being held accountable, lack of support for law enforcement, and inadequate staffing to safely respond to emergency incidents, it is only a matter of time until the next officer is seriously injured or killed. If the city doesn't make some changes soon, they will shoulder some of the burden in the event another catastrophe happens in Spokane. The city and department need to support our officers as best they can. This can be done by implementing ways to improve morale, supply the department with the needed staffing and equipment, and having the great leadership it takes to make these things happen.

⁸ <https://policechiefmagazine.org/human-fatigue-in-247-operations/>

There is a specific health screening for first responders that can be very beneficial for our officers. The screening checks for health issues that first responders are prone to which could lead to a traumatic injury or death if not discovered early. A handful of law enforcement die every year from the effects on the body that result from the extended workloads and stressors related to the job. In 2022 the Spokane County Sheriff's Office covered the cost for any Deputy who wanted to attend. Our department was unwilling to cover the cost so officers had to pay for the \$650 screening themselves. Health insurance doesn't typically cover these tests since they are specific for military and first responders. The reason given for SPD not covering the cost was that it wasn't in the budget. This is a budget augmented with federal funds to help mitigate the damage unleashed on communities during the COVID 19 pandemic and funds from the state marked for first responder wellness. This type of screening should be standard for police and fire employees who are exposed to these types of conditions. We would like to see them budgeted for the future.

Another health program that would be of value to SPD one recently instituted by the Spokane Fire Department called "Ready Rebound." This program gets injured employees into services sooner in hopes of getting them back to work as soon as possible. We would like the department to consider this option for the police department as well.

Sleep Consistency

Staff working nightshift have distinct issues that affect both the body and morale. Officers work adverse conditions, and often with little sleep. There are numerous health issues with nightshifts in law enforcement that are highlighted in many studies. Advice for officers working nightshift is to maintain a consistent sleep schedule. Huberman Lab's podcast with Dr Matt Walker (cited at SPD Officer wellness in service training) advises that nightshift workers stay on a consistent sleep schedule for at least 14 days in a row.

Podcast

[Shift Work: Disrupted Circadian Rhythms and Sleep-Implications for Health and Well-Being - PubMed \(nih.gov\) https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29057204/](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29057204/)

[Find Your Temperature Minimum to Defeat Jetlag, Shift Work & Sleeplessness - Huberman Lab https://hubermanlab.com/find-your-temperature-minimum-to-defeat-jetlag-shift-work-and-sleeplessness/](https://hubermanlab.com/find-your-temperature-minimum-to-defeat-jetlag-shift-work-and-sleeplessness/)

This is an in-depth look at sleep hygiene, strategies for shifting your sleep, and general sleep health.

Timestamps:

21:30 - he talks about jet lag and how changing your sleep time impacts your health, mood, ability to function. Jet lag effects on longevity (shifting sleep patterns shortens your life).

58:00 - He talks about shift work and the most important thing is to stay on the same consistent schedule for at least 14 days.

SPD routinely schedules officers for mandatory training at times completely contrary to this advice. Example: In-service training is scheduled for patrol officers starting at 0700 hours on Fridays. For nightshift officers, this means they must flip their sleep schedule 180 degrees over their days off to prepare for training on Friday. After this training, nightshift officers then must change their schedule back to report to work on Saturday evening.

Mandatory In-Service Training:

It would be beneficial to schedule mandatory training for nightshift as close as possible to their scheduled shift time. This would allow officers to stay on a more consistent sleep pattern in accordance with current health advice. The training staff that supplies this training would be the only group that would need to adjust their schedule. Even if the nightshift in-service started later in the afternoon or there was this option, it could be less stress on the body than a complete opposite schedule than what these officers are accustomed to.

Specialty team training and events:

Example 1: TAC currently trains at 1000 hours. Some graveyard officers use a vacation day the night before TAC training to get some rest. A change of start-time to 1400 or 1500 would allow night shift officers to get more sleep prior to training and maintain a more consistent sleep schedule.

Example 2: Current plan for the 2022 Earth Day demonstration. Officers on graveyard are allowed to flex off two hours early (off at 0440 hours), they are due back at 1100 hours (likely the middle of their normal sleeping time). Officers are then on flex time for two hours before earning OT until the end of demonstration at 1800 hrs. Graveyard officers are then expected back on their normal shift two hours later unless they choose to take discretionary time off.

A possible solution would be to give officers 8 hours minimum admin time off prior to a large, planned event where they are forced to alter their sleep schedule.

Vehicle Fleet

Deficiencies

SPD fleet is another issue that can be seen playing out constantly at council meetings as they look at every spending request from SPD with a microscope. The Council is more critical of requests from SPD than the fire department or other city departments. They frequently defer SPD funding requests or block them with a new resolution. The issue is not that they question spending requests, the questions they ask, or the “public input” they request. We think these are valid and required to be good stewards of the public’s money. The issue is that they mainly have these questions of SPD, and not the other department.

The double standard the City Council applies to SPD is painfully obvious. Take for instance the Council’s recent discussion on SPD’s request for funds to purchase 66 badly needed police vehicles. The Council would only approve 25 vehicles and made so many restrictions on obtaining more that the department will have a difficult time obtaining them. Agencies have placed their orders for new vehicles this year so manufactures will be focusing on these orders rather than accepting new ones. The police department will hit a critical level for police fleet next year as a result. Services to the city will suffer and officers will continue to use old, unsafe vehicles. Even Spokane Fleet Services recommended the police department purchase significantly more vehicles, but the City Council would not accept this recommendation.

Patrol has recently had multiple police vehicles become inoperable while responding to emergency calls. This has meant that another officer needs to be found to replace the one that went out of service. It also required a city garage staff member to go get the vehicle and another officer to pick up the stranded one.

One incident of significance was a patrol SUV that was repeatedly taken out of service because the electrical system would randomly go out. This would cause the vehicle to become inoperable, even at high rates of speed. The vehicle kept getting put back into service until one day the system went down again as the officer was rounding a corner and the vehicle nearly crashed into a building because there was no steering or breaks available. Had there been other vehicle or pedestrians in the crosswalk, someone could have been seriously hurt or killed.

SPD fleet is in such disarray that vehicles end up going un-serviced because there are not enough vehicles to use while service is performed. Many of our police vehicles that get used under extreme conditions every day, are older than the average citizen vehicle on the street. SPD still has police vehicles operating in patrol from 2004 (vehicle 425486).

We ask that the council makes a better effort to ensure the police department has the needed cars and equipment to do our jobs efficiently and effectively. We don’t think the requests that the Chief has made are unreasonable.

Take Home Cars

One very popular suggestion the committee received was take-home cars. We reviewed the topic and documented a significant amount of information. There is not only a positive morale aspect of take-

home vehicles, but also significant efficiency and cost savings advantages. The Tacoma (WA) Police Department performed a study on take-home vehicles and a lot of the topics are very closely related to the SPD today. We have included a copy of their study for reference (Appendix B).

Patrol utilizes a pool vehicle program where officers across all the shifts share a single vehicle. This causes vehicles to be in constant use over extended periods of time. Every year there is also a lot of wasted time and money because of our use of pool police vehicles. Everyday patrol officers spend a significant amount of time preparing to go on and off duty with their assigned pool car. A typical day for those officers consists of arriving early enough to find a parking spot for their personal vehicle in the already limited parking around the Public Safety Building (PSB). They then make their way into the PSB where they change from civilian clothes into their uniform. Officers retrieve their body camera, laptop and test their Taser. Officers then meet for roll call at the start of their shift. All this time getting ready is not part of paid duty but is required by the department to be done before the start of shift.

After roll call, pool car officers search the parking lots to find their assigned car. They check the car for damage, and weapons that may have been left behind from previous prisoners. If there is undocumented damage, then the officer documents it. The officer then retrieves their gear from their personal vehicle and loads it into their pool vehicle. There are many reasons this is a safety issue for both the officer, their vehicle, and their gear. The officer must retrieve any assigned gear from the armory. Officers often must clean up the vehicle because the previous officer did not have time to clean it out at the end of their shift. If the previous officer was unable to fuel the vehicle, then the oncoming officer must take it to a gas station or the city pumps to get fuel. The average time to complete these tasks every day is approximately 20 to 30 minutes. The expense adds up for these duties and will be summarized below.

With the limited supply of pool vehicles, officers often have no vehicle to drive, and they must pair up with another officer. There are many times when officers are held over to cover another shift so the oncoming officer no longer has a pool car to drive and must find something else. On many occasions officers have waited over an hour to get a vehicle to drive.

The department instituted an app to help track where vehicles are parked but they are not very reliable because officers may forget to check out or return their vehicle using the app. This typically happens when an officer is already at the end of their shift trying to get off on time or they may be on overtime and trying to get home to their families and forget to utilize the app.

By looking at a low-average amount of time it takes to prepare and return pooled vehicles each day, one can see how much money and manpower is wasted every year. The following shows how much time is being utilized for the process and how much money is being spent each year.

- Factoring in 30 minutes per day, multiplied by 44 patrol officers each day equals 1,320 minutes spent on pool vehicles every day. Divide this by 60 minutes in an hour, equals 22 hours every day spent on preparing pool vehicles.
- Taking 22 hours per day multiplied by 365 days in a year, equals 8,030 hours per year wasted on pool vehicles
- Multiplying 8,030 hours per year times \$36 per hour, equals \$289,080 per year wasted on pool vehicles.

- 8,030 hours divided by patrol's 10.667 hour shifts, equals 752.58.
- This means SPD pays 752.58 officers every year to be off the streets doing non-public safety tasks for a full shift when using pool vehicles.

These numbers are minimums for illustration purposes and in reality, are higher because you must factor in higher rates of pay for officers with more longevity, overtime, longer wait times for an available vehicle, and many other scenarios. It would not be unrealistic to estimate that the department spends over \$400,000 per year for a decrease in service by using pool vehicles. Taking from the data in the Tacoma study, which documents the higher cost of maintenance on pool vehicles, the excess can easily be closer to a million dollars spent each year utilizing a pool vehicle policy. While take-home vehicles have a higher up-front cost, over the long run, the cost and benefits vastly outweigh this cost according to the research. There are ways of gradually transitioning to a take-home vehicle program that will be outline below.

A take-home car program has numerous other benefits for the investment. These include recruiting/retention, less long-term expenses, and less time loading/switching cars as listed above. There is a vast decrease in the need for secure parking spaces and this can make room for non-commissioned employees and non-take-home vehicles to be safely parked. Citizens often appreciate having a police car parked in their neighborhood. This can deter crime and adds to their sense of security. Not only are these benefits for the department, but it also results in higher morale. Refer to the Tacoma study for pros and cons that they identified which relate to Spokane.

The Spokane County Sheriff's Office was consulted because they already have a take-home car program. Retention and recruitment are a significant benefit they have seen from their program. Additionally, they see longer life of their vehicles due to deputies taking personal care of the assigned vehicle. Below is a brief overview of the SCSO take-home car program.

SCSO Take Home Car Program Guidelines

- Deputies should not travel more than approximately 20 miles out of the county.
- The car should only be used for work related purposes.
- When it is used, deputies must be prepared to respond to an emergency such as school shooting or another emergent event.
 - Deputies don't necessarily have to wear a patrol uniform if they are going to training on a regular day off, but they must have their equipment ready if they do have to respond to an incident.
- Don't end a shift with less than ¾ of a tank of gas for emergency responses.
- The vehicle should be left at a station before an extended period of time off (leave of absence, injury/surgery, etc.) if requested by a supervisor.

Recently at SPD, many patrol officers and sergeants who had been issued take-home cars had them taken away recently. Having take-home cars was a significant morale boost that was lost and caused angst amongst patrol.

Instituting a take-home car program

The department could implement a take-home car program in steps. To start, pool vehicles could be assigned to two officers who work opposite shifts. During officer A's work week, he would be assigned the vehicle as a take-home. Officer B would then be assigned the same vehicle during their work week. SCSO took this approach when they started their take-home car program. Some of the issues that would need to be worked out are how to transfer the vehicle from officer A to officer B at the beginning of their work weeks and then back again at the end of their work weeks. There would still need to be spare vehicles in case a vehicle goes down for maintenance or is taken out of service.

SCSO purchased numerous used police vehicles from departments that sell their fleet after they reach a certain mileage (50,000 to 70,000 miles). This allowed those agencies the ability to recoup some of the costs of adding more vehicles, and SCSO to build a temporary inventory at a fraction of the cost. Once all deputies had a take-home vehicle and new vehicles were purchased, the old ones would be decommissioned and used by non-commissioned employees who needed transportation for job assignments.

At SPD, some civilian employees have been using their personal vehicles to travel back and forth for required duties because they have no department vehicles to use. We received reports that there is little or no reimbursement of fuel and wear-and-tear on their personal vehicles. They should not be expected to perform work related functions with their privately owned vehicle. For a department our size, we should have pool cars for these individuals to use. While we understand some groups have this option, it appears others do not. At the very least, the department should encourage employees who are required to use their personal vehicles for work purposes to be able to submit for reimbursement following the federal mileage program.

Having a consistent supply of police vehicles has been a significant issue in the department. There seems to be a disconnect between City Council and the Police Department when it comes to this issue. It appears the City Council is very interested in electric vehicles, which is understandable. The problem with the electric vehicle option is that there are no dependable ones in police-ready production. Not just any vehicle can be used for police work. There are many different reasons for this which include: durability, charge-to-distance ratio, room for officers - other occupants and gear, available hardware, and safety under heavy police use to name a few.

The committee received no negative feelings towards electric vehicles, and they are something officers desire, but not at this time due to the numerous issues described above. Other agencies in Washington have already tried electric vehicles for patrol officers, such as Mukilteo, and have found that they are not ready for general police work yet. Even SPD has tried the Tesla's but they failed to be adequate for patrol. The feeling amongst most line-level officers is that the department should continue to purchase hybrid and gas vehicles until the time comes when electric vehicles are effective in police work. The fact of the matter is that we need police vehicles to get to emergencies and operate safely under hazardous conditions. There is a reason none of the major automotive

manufacturers have marketed all-electric police ready vehicles to agencies, they simply are not ready yet.

COVID First Responders

The failure to properly value first responder employees is also evident after the city began coming out of the depths of the COVID-19 pandemic. Police officers and firefighters reported to work every day when a lot of the other city staff were able to work from the safety of their homes. In a time when the fabric of society was strained and infrastructure was faltering, police and fire personnel had to figure out daycare and other services because they had to come to work. The women and men of the Spokane Police Department reported for duty without creating an impact of services rendered in the city.

The mayor sent a thoughtful email as the pandemic waned, announcing all employees were getting a free day off for their commitment to the city during this stressful time. Many officers read this email with gratitude for the mayor's leadership and a sense of camaraderie as we all made it through trying times together. Unfortunately, and without explanation, police and fire personnel were denied this time off. This was a significant insult to employees, and when combined with the fact that the police guild was working outside of a current contract once again, a truly disrespectful outcome. There has been no leadership surrounding this situation, with no leader willing to provide an explanation about why things unfolded the way they did - there has been no effort in opening a dialogue to right the missteps that took place.

Headquarters

Operating out of our own headquarters has been a desire consistently raised by members of the department and even those at City Hall. Having a secure building to call our headquarters would create a sense of ownership and pride. Simultaneously, a secure headquarters building would reduce the stress members of the department must always deal with as they transition between their on and off-duty lives.

The direction the department wants to go with precincts has a significant impact on the needs for a new headquarters. If precincts are self-sufficient then the need for space at a new headquarters would be lower. If it is decided that the department wants to maintain the current configuration, then the amount of space and parking at one building would be significantly greater.

Campus security is a legitimate concern for patrol and civilian employees. Parking for these employees is limited and there are no secure solutions currently in place. Employees are often met by offenders being released from jail. Off duty officers have been confronted by people they have arrested and there have been many near altercations. Employees have had their personal vehicle broken into and vandalized. A couple of years ago, a subject was found walking around by the parked patrol cars and was taking items that were laying around. When confronted by an officer, it was found that the subject had somehow obtained documents with personal information of officers and detectives. This included home addresses and phone numbers. It is not known where he got these items or what he intended to do with them, but this is obviously concerning for employees. The department completed an evaluation of the PSB and gave some suggestions to increase safety. See Appendix C "Courthouse Complex CPTED 2021."

Employees desire a secure parking solution for many reasons, in addition to those outlined above. Take-home cars could be one solution for officers, but non-commissioned employees would still need a secure place to park. This issue needs to be addressed, not only for morale but for personal employee safety. Nightshift female records employees for instance often must park on the streets surrounding the PSB. When their shift is over, they walk out to their vehicles to go home and are often confronted by criminals being released from jail. These types of incidents have increased over the last few years.

Gates around the PSB and at Dispatch are constantly out of service and left in the open position. Often it can be weeks or months before a repair team is sent to fix the issue which makes the "secure" areas useless. All one has to do to drive into the PSB is drive around the small pillars at Jefferson and Broadway and make their way to the building.

There are plans to build a shelter at 4320 E Trent, which is in close proximity to the Dispatch Center and the camps along the river continues to grow. In addition to the gates at dispatch not functioning, there are also some overhead parking lot lights have been broken for numerous months. This is a safety hazard to the employees at dispatch.

The PSB has numerous issues that have gone unresolved for years. The men's locker room showers run rapid with mold and non-functioning faucets or shower heads. Hot water is constantly less than adequate. Often it can take nearly 30 minutes to get hot water to the showers or faucets which is a massive waste of the water resources. This has been brought to the attention of County Facilities on numerous occasions, but it has yet to be fixed. Toilets, faucets, soap dispensers and other fixtures go un-repaired for month.

Storage is another issue at the PSB. Equipment is stored in numerous areas and items get misplaced. If officers or staff need an item, it may take hours or days to locate which storage area the item is in, if it can be found at all. Quartermaster offices are packed to the walls with uniforms and equipment, leaving little room to move around.

Valuing employees enough to provide secure parking (so they can safely load their patrol vehicles), warm water in the showers (in order to decontaminate themselves from the blood and other biological contaminants encountered on patrol), and a workspace that encourages the formation of a healthy organizational culture shouldn't take decades - and shouldn't take a tragedy to induce meaningful change.

Ergonomics

Workstation ergonomics are deplorable throughout most of the SPD. Patrol has long worked in poor ergonomic conditions. This has caused many physical wellness issues with officers. There are no ergonomically friendly work stations available for patrol officers to use. Every COP shop has folding tables, kitchen tables, counter tops, makeshift "desks", coffee tables or whatever else the officer can find to type and do paperwork. When there are desks, they are often from pre-ergonomic times. Officers must sit on folding chairs, kitchen chairs, or couches. If there is an office chair, they are all very old and torn. When an officer is doing computer or paperwork in their patrol cars, they have to sit at an angle and cannot sit in an ergonomically friendly position. Seats in patrol cars quickly become uncomfortable and many lean to the right from all the officers leaning into their computers for hours each day. When pool cars are considered, this means an officer is leaning to the right on these seats every day for hours-per-day.

Officers' complete numerous reports every week and most need to type for extended periods of time on a daily basis. This situation has been addressed with Risk Management in the past but with each election, all the previous work has gone away. There is very little-to-no training and no oversight of ergonomics at the SPD, and this must change for the health of the employees and to reduce risk for the city.

Detective's Office

When the detective's office was remodeled, there were cubicles left without power or internet and other issues with the construction. It did not appear that the appropriate amount of planning was made to make these "improvements."

Property Facility

The property facility is another area that should be addressed soon. It has been overrun with bugs and staff constantly have them crawling on their bodies. It is likely that these were introduced through the jail refuse property. If a person is arrested and has property on them, jail will only accept what fits into an approximately a 6 inch by 6-inch box. This means a lot of purses, backpacks, and other items must be booked into property, bugs and all. Pocket knives, and any other "dangerous" item must also be booked into property.

The property facility is located approximately 10 minutes east of the jail. If an officer makes an arrest, they must transport the subject to the jail at the PSB and if there are any prohibited items listed above, they must transport them to the property facility. The officer then returns to the PSB to finish reports and secure. This is the cause of a lot of overtime due to the round-trip distance.

The property facility has constantly been over capacity in vehicle evidence storage. On weekends officers have trouble finding places to put evidence vehicles and they must be left outside where they are open to the elements and damage/theft. This can affect an investigation. Staff at property have also had their personal vehicles damaged by upset customers because the secure area does not include parking for their personal vehicles.

Jail Facilities

The symptom of the "revolving door" jail system where offenders are booked and released - sometimes before the officer has left the jail - is another issue contributing to low morale. Officers work hard to investigate and arrest chronic offenders, but they are rarely held for a meaningful amount of time. Often charges are dropped altogether due to so many hoops prosecutors are required to go through. We understand some causes of these issues are overcrowded jails, money, available - or unavailable services, legislative agendas, and laws.

The current jail facility is too small and understaffed to house the number of offenders the Spokane area is getting. This is a key reason why these offenders are often released without bail on their own recognizance. While we understand this is a bigger issue that concerns the entire county and cannot be

singly addressed by city leaders, there are options the city can look at to combat overcrowding. One solution has been discussed before and that is a municipal, low-security detainment center. Officers could book on new misdemeanor crimes or warrants where the subject could be held to see a judge if needed. During the holding time the offender could be screened and connected to available services. This would help them navigate the court system better and be paired with services that could help them avoid criminal behavior in the future. A municipal detention center would help hold offenders accountable for their actions and this is a key factor in the rehabilitation of individuals working through the justice system. The price tag for a municipal jail is high but could be something for the city to explore.

Failing to Hold Offenders Accountable

Another morale issue stems from officer making arrest for crimes they spent time investigating, only to have the arrestee be released from jail immediately after being booked. When officers arrest offenders for warrants, they are more likely than not to be booked and released immediately. Crimes will also often go unpunished by the prosecutor's office, and this gives the perception that the officers should no longer pursue charges for these types of crimes. For instance, there have been numerous cases where the prosecutor refuses to charge offenders who flee from a lawful traffic stop. Legislations prohibits pursuits except for very narrow circumstances, yet it is still illegal to elude a police vehicle. Officers have resorted to getting a positive identification on the driver before initiating the traffic stop with lights and sirens. When the vehicle flees the stop in a reckless manor, the officer now has probable cause to arrest the driver. Officer have made these arrests with solid probable cause only to have the prosecutor drop the charges.

This is a huge concern for the police officer and the public who expects something to be done within the scope of the law. It also tells the offender they can flee a traffic stop without worry of any consequence. This is likely a key factor in the increase of eluding incidents and puts our citizens at greater risk, thus reducing the benefit the law intended to address. Suspects are still causing crashes that injure citizens even without officers pursuing. This also impacts officer morale in that they no longer feel they should even attempt to charge offenders with eluding.

Takeaway:

SPD and our city government must work better together in a collaborative effort to address the issues above. Implementing a leadership program like the one outlined earlier in this report, could help provide the groundwork to start addressing these issues. We need to develop leaders and other members of the organization who build meaningful relationships and foster a culture of valuing one another in addition to the organization as a whole. We need to develop leaders as they ascend the chain of command so they can effectively communicate the needs of the organization. These leaders need to know how important it is to respect the members of the department and advise the city appropriately when it comes to maintaining a healthy and effective law enforcement organization.

It comes down to authenticity and congruency - are leaders' actions matching their message? And do members trust that their leader's messaging is coming from an honest space, as opposed to a self-

fulfilling one? When leaders begin truly valuing the efforts of their employees and take a vested interest in seeing employees succeed, morale will begin improving within the Spokane Police Department. The benefits can already be seen in the few supervisors who try to follow this model. These are the supervisors that have subordinates follow them wherever they go because they know what to expect and know that they are valued as individuals. This should be the norm.

Identified Issue 4:

Fostering a Culture of Excellence

Training

The Spokane Police Department has been known for implementing phenomenal training in areas like K9 handling, firearm instruction, defensive tactics, and patrol procedures. Unfortunately, staffing levels and inferior, outdated facilities have limited the organization's ability to continue to stay on the cutting edge of training its members. There has also seemingly been a reduction in funding to send patrol officers, analysts, detectives, dispatcher, records clerks, and property technicians to training that keeps them competent in their respective fields. As technology and case law continue to develop, become more nuanced, and more complex, it is critical for the department to adequately train its members. There is too much individual and organizational liability for failing to train members of the police department.

FTO

Field Training Officers are a fundamental necessity for any department. They are responsible for training all new officers hired by the department. Over the last 10 years, the department has hired and trained hundreds of new officers. This has taxed the FTO Unit and has caused burnout from back-to-back trainees with little to no break. Being an FTO is a great responsibility, and it takes a special trainer to be able to effectively guide our new officers into the career. There is a lot of liability on the FTO and the department when it comes to training.

The FTO Unit needs to be adequately staffed for the number of new officers being hired. Attention needs to be given to burnout and free time for FTOs. The SPD policy manual states: "In an effort to maintain and enhance the skills of FTOs an effort will be made to send them to outside training and/or conferences to enhance their skills." This is very difficult to do given the low staffing numbers and training budgets. FTO's rarely get to go to special training that could benefit them as trainers and benefit the department by being able to provide better training.

An effort should be made to seek for, and provide, extra training for FTOs who have shown the commitment to the program. FTOs should also have more benefits than the 3% pay increase, which only amounts to about \$12 per workday. By comparison, SCSO offers 5% pay increase incentive for FTOs. The committee believes the department should provide the FTOs with an assigned take-home car as soon as possible so they can set it up for the training environment specific to them. This also helps get the trainee more time on the street to better utilize their training time. Using pool cars for FTOs is a significant disadvantage for FTOs and their trainees.

Career Development

Implementing a career development plan that places patrol officers in different divisions to gain non-traditional experience (assisting investigations division, analysts, specialty teams) would improve their performance in traditional patrol roles by giving them a broader perspective in how the Spokane Police Department operates. Demanding high levels of performance from these officers and ensuring a consistent rotation into and out of these positions would ensure officers don't settle in a 'low-stress' position off patrol.

The department should also create a meaningful mentor program as they develop their leadership training plan. Ensuring new supervisors can access an engaged mentor that will provide on the job training, necessary feedback, and an honest evaluation on their performance is critical to performing at a high level.

Unauthorized Release of Department Information

It is well known among the employees at SPD that information has been leaked to the community in an unauthorized fashion. Information about the department and its employees contained in emails sent within the department have shown up on the internet from unauthorized people in the community.

There are many ways to obtain unauthorized access to the email system that needs to be investigated. For instance, if an employee gives their username and password to an unauthorized person, this person can currently set up access to the account on nearly any browser or email client for unauthorized access. To combat this loophole, the city could utilize a device-specific access code for adding email access on any device. Each client would need a specific code to access email on that device. This would help control who has access to the email system and tighten this loophole.

If an employee is forwarding emails to unauthorized people, then this could be discovered in an email audit. There are many other ways for unauthorized release of email, or any document for that matter, and this should be addressed. While we believe in the public's access to government information, there is a legal records request process to follow for this. Unauthorized access should be investigated thoroughly.

Team Building and Comradery

While most of this report has covered things the department or city can do to boost morale, in the end employees must work to recognize the positives aspects of the job and people we work with. There are things employees can do themselves to help boost their morale.

With sufficient levels of staffing, teams could return to special assignments on double-up Fridays. Sergeants can pre-schedule training, special assignments, and team building for these days. There are vast benefits to this which include:

- Training

- Career development,
- Team building
- Crime reduction emphasis that improves safety in high-crime areas
- A break from routine patrol duties
- improved comradery, and morale

These bonus days would need to be pre-scheduled to help with staffing so patrol would be adequately staffed. Officers looking to take a double-up Friday off would be less likely to take the day if they knew it would affect the ability of the teams to perform this function. The officers would have their day to do the same. If staffing was adequate, then officers could still have the day off if needed.

We need to rebuild a culture of comradery amongst teams and workgroups. Often teams who gather periodically outside of work tend to function at a higher level at work. These teams have shown to have a high level of performance, be more mentally and physically fit, and have a higher satisfaction with their job. Whether it be dinner/breakfast after work, or team barbeques and holiday gatherings, building comradery is very important in our profession. Teams should have a focus on healthy behaviors during these gatherings.

Thinking “outside-the-box” on morale can lead to positive activities. A couple of the agencies the committee spoke to recommend a shift breakfast, lunch or BBQ. One department holds these weekly with the help of volunteer supervisors, officers, and support staff. These volunteers prepare and serve the food so officers can stop by for something to eat and drink during their busy patrol shifts. It also provides a great sense of comradery amongst the staff. These are ideas we as employees have some control over and can implement immediately.

Takeaways:

The department can no longer settle for simply hoping to have enough bodies to fill the current vacancies. In order to perform at a high level, the department needs to demand excellence from each member of the organization. Simply collecting a paycheck shouldn't be tolerated. We are either growing and getting better as an organization or deteriorating and becoming less effective as an organization.

Members of the department want to be part of a winning team. They want to be proud of where they work and what they accomplish. The department can no longer afford to have weak performers slide through probationary periods without intervention, training, or direction. We need to be proud in all we do, how we do it, and how we present ourselves to the public.

This committee recommends that the department makes their effort to promote positive morale a permanent endeavor to help avoid these situations in the future. Like the military and many corporations, we believe the department should establish a board that meets a couple of times a year to assess the current morale, and work to promote a positive working environment. This is a draw for new employees and retaining current employees at business' like Google, Microsoft, and many others.

We have already seen positive changes from the formation of this committee and believe a permanent committee with representation from line-level employees would be beneficial.

Other recommendations for the department is to perform a yearly climate survey so employees can voice their thoughts to the department from a line-level perspective that administration may not be experiencing. Exit interviews with separating employees has seen some inconsistency when they are performed. Many people believe these are unreliable, so they do not participate in this very valuable process. We would like to see a better process for this to make the exit interviews more beneficial. We would suggest Civil Service or Human Resources perform these upon separation of employees. The information obtained could then be sent to the department to be used for evaluation purposes. This would lead to more credibility in the process and a higher likelihood of participation since it would be handled by a neutral party.

Conclusion

The Spokane Police Department currently finds itself in an organizational morale crisis. If morale is low within one officer, that is an individual problem. If morale is low across the entire department, that is an organizational problem to address. This committee has spent the last three months speaking with individual members of each division of the Spokane Police Department. While each division faced their own unique challenges, all divisions could agree that four macro-level issues are causing undue and damaging effects on morale:

1. Lack of Leadership
2. Inadequate Staffing
3. Not Valuing Employees
4. Lack of a Culture of Excellence

This committee recommends developing an internal leadership training program that would insulate the department from unnecessary budgetary constraints while simultaneously incubating an environment where a culture of organizational excellence can thrive. Engaged and authentic leaders will ensure their teammates feel valued while they progress towards common goals in service of Spokane. Authentic leaders will also be able to have difficult conversations with the community (and City Council) and make difficult decisions when it comes to staffing the department. One thing is clear throughout this three-month process: the patrol division cannot be further reduced to fill special interest projects around the city. We owe it to the people and employees of Spokane to deploy a fully staffed patrol division.

After the release of this report there should be difficult discussions and hard work ahead of us. Our committee respectfully requests an estimated timeline from the department for addressing the issues of low morale outlined in this report. Our commitment to the people of Spokane is to strive to see these recommendations implemented and work with the stakeholders involved to provide the best law enforcement services possible with the resources provided. The Spokane Police Department can once again be a destination department and a leader in public safety.

The Line-Level Morale Committee is available to answer questions or elaborate on this report. Please refer requests to Corporal Widhalm or Detective Dunkin.

Respectfully,

Members of the 2022 Spokane Police Line-Level Morale Committee

Chair: Corporal Widhalm (hwidhalm@spokanepolice.org)

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