**Federalsburg Police Department**

**Annual Report on Community Policing**

**Year 2020**

***1) How is community policing integrated throughout your agency and how does your agency incorporate community policing into its daily operations?***

Response:

The patrol guidelines contained in the General Orders for the Federalsburg Police Department identify “Community Policing” as an integral function of patrol. The FPD stresses an “Eyes Wide Open” concept of community interaction which constitutes the backbone of our law enforcement focus. By encouraging staff to identify potential problem areas as well as immediate threats to the community we police, many problems are avoided or mitigated. Staff who identify areas of concern are often challenged to develop a response or recommend administrative review of the identified concerns for a broader, agency-wide approach. As a smaller department, we have developed relationships with the community we serve. Our staff is constantly cultivating these relationships to provide a more detailed picture and feedback on the effectiveness of our policing efforts. We have an active social media presence and staff is encouraged to forward timely information, photographs, video clips, and brief press releases for inclusion in our regular distribution of media to the public. We have staff that monitors our social media platform constantly for messages which assist in identifying threats to the community or assist the department with tips for ongoing investigations. Public dissemination of information and constant communication is one of our principle areas of focus to ensure the community we serve is fully involved with policing of their own community. The utilization and expansion of surveillance cameras throughout our community promote a sense of safety and security for our residence along with a strong deterrence to criminal activity. Through active monitoring and constant review of recordings, our staff has been able to identify perpetrators and fine tune our patrol deployment to better impact our community. We promote ownership of problems as opposed to passing the buck to another. When our staff models this behavior, we recognize it in meaningful ways to reinforce to our staff that this is the behavior of a professional law enforcement officer in our community.

***2) How does top management emphasize or support community policing within your agency?***

Response:

Smaller police departments are heavily influenced by the actions of the Chief of Police and those appointed to serve as command staff. In Federalsburg, the leadership focus is on communication with staff and the community we serve. The chief models an “open door” policy for the public with an eye toward directing resources to solve or mitigate problems before they multiply. When areas of concern are identified, leadership targets a patrol response. When opportunities for positive police involvement are observed, a staff response is developed and implemented. A primary focus in Federalsburg is on positive public contact as opposed to confrontational contact. This is encouraged by leadership focusing attention and evaluations of personnel with an emphasis on holistic professional policing as opposed to traditional metrics of productivity.

***3) Describe training your agency has received in community policing and future plans to provide additional or specialized training to agency members to improve interaction with community members or problem solving efforts.***

Response:

Many of our efforts at effectively policing our community find their genesis in partnerships with allied organizations. Most of our staff has received Crisis Intervention Training (the few that have not are scheduled for this training in 2021). We have found this to be a very effective tool in training our staff to view the broader picture of addressing problems in our community. We have ensured all of our staff has received training in the administration of Narcan to provide immediate assistance to overdose victims in the current opioid crisis. This type of training has helped change the way staff relate those who succumb to addiction in our community and to better aid the drug abuser and their family in addressing the issue. To address fears in our school environments, our staff receives Active Shooter training on an annual basis to ensure they can respond effectively to save lives in a crisis. This year, a member of our staff will attend Crime Prevention training with an eye toward crafting an outreach to our community to provide security reviews for our residents and to develop Community Watch groups within the town. Our CID staff will attend training in utilizing social media as a crime solving tool to assist the community in taking ownership when it comes to solving crimes and identifying problem areas in the communities we serve. Our department was one of the early adopters of body worn cameras and recently invested in an upgrade to enhance our capabilities. Our staff has received training in how to better utilize the cameras while they are in service for the collection of intelligence, and to enhance the de-escalation of force. Recordings have been effective in assisting with quick resolutions of any complaints made of officer conduct. Speeding up the process of accountability and openness for our department has made transparency real for our agency and not simply words expressed in documents.

***4) Describe how crime problems or community issues are identified and addressed, and the method of communicating any trends with communities the agency services.***

Response:

Weekly reviews are conducted of all criminal activity to identify areas where police resources need to be focused. This review is conducted by the command staff. Any developed patterns or other concerns are immediately addressed to the patrol supervisors to better direct assets in the field. These reviews include calls for service, reports of criminal activity, patrol observations, and historic information based upon previous trends. Surveillance cameras may be directed to focus on a specific area or target. Social media broadcasts requesting tips and other information assistance have been very effective for drumming up support and instant feedback from those we serve. We can also utilize a robo-call message for anyone in the community who signs up to receive messages, texts, or direct phone calls to relay information on community concerns or criminal activity. If a problem is isolated to a specific area served by management, such as an apartment complex, our staff contact the persons in charge directly and seek their assistance and support. Further, we often involve our local ministerial association to assist us in getting out our messages and to encourage the public to pray for the needs of our community in specific, targeted ways. This has been a very effective tool in helping involve congregations in a very positive, meaningful way to support the community policing efforts in town.

***5) Identify how your agency partners with all segments of the community to prevent crime and address identified community problems. Segments of the community should include residential and business communities, schools, youth, minority groups, hospitals, senior population, faith based organizations, etc.***

Response:

The only truly effective policing in small towns involves direct involvement with individual members of the community and the various organizations in which they serve. In Federalsburg, we partner with any group, organization, or individual that expresses an interest in doing so. The police department is often the first place people look for information in small towns and we pride ourselves on being the conduit for directing folks to the right door. Because our resources are limited, we encourage the various organizations we serve to identify areas where we can provide directed assistance that will affect the greatest impact. This has often involved speaking engagements to address specific subject matter including race relations, crime prevention, personal defense tactics for women, active shooter training for area churches, directing charitable giving in support of various clubs and organizations. We have worked with minority support groups targeting at risk youth in our community to provide mentoring assistance. When schools are physically meeting, our staff often interacts during lunch periods at our local elementary school to help break down any barriers to communication with the coming generation. We have worked diligently with business owners to assist them with crime prevention and serving as their property agent through signed agreements to better facilitate and address trespass and nuisance loitering issues. We have also provided safety lectures, specifically addressing Active Shooter training for some of our large scale industrial employers in coordination with their own safety personnel. We have partnered with our local power company to enhance street lighting in at risk neighborhoods by surveying and identifying those areas that would most benefit from improved lighting. We have partnered with the Caroline County Board of Education to improve pedestrian safety near our elementary school by identifying the need for enhanced traffic controls and securing the funding to see the project through to fruition. Our agency model is to find a way to say “yes” to any group or individual who asks us if we can help them address an issue or ongoing problem. If we must pass the concern onto another agency, we ensure that we follow up with the group or individual to check on the progress.

***6) How does your agency measure the effectiveness of its community policing program?***

Response:

Community Policing in Federalsburg is quantified statistically by observing crime rates and specific numbers and types of crime being committed. We believe we can impact certain criminal activity in our community that involves a more public expression. To that end, we are diligent and robust in our patrol activities and visibility. By conducting aggressive investigations and follow up on case work, we often remove criminal elements from our community before they are able to strike another target. By the metrics of overall crime, the community policing focus the Federalsburg Police Department began implementing two years ago has paid strong dividends. Violent Crime Rates have been reduced by 50% during the past two years and Property Crime has been reduced by 36% during the same time frame. Those numbers are holding in our town, providing further evidence of program and focus effectiveness. Perhaps the greatest thermometer for measuring effectiveness is morale. We certainly look to that in our department and the same can be said in a community. Do people feel safer? Do people in neighborhood express optimism through investment in their properties? Are local businesses prospering? Does the social media feedback reflect positive comments directed at the police activities and the community? In Federalsburg, things these metrics would have been fairly negative a few years ago, but that has been changing; and that change reflects a morale shift toward optimism and a strong sense that the community is safe and on the right track.