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*1/26/2022  
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To: Eileen Donoghue  
City Manager

From: Raymond Kelly Richardson  
Superintendent of Police

Date: January 26, 2022

Re: City Council Motion Response

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**Councilor Robinson - Req. City Mgr. Provide The Council With A Report On What Are The Current Plans To Increase Foot Patrols And Identify Community Based Policing Opportunities For The Upcoming Spring And Summer Sessions.**

On the day shift, the Lowell Police Department currently has four primary walking routes and three DRO's (flexible officers) at the disposal of each sector commander. We also have alternate officers that are placed into walking route positions to fill days off. In the case of additional personnel, we add routes where the commanding officer sees a need based upon crime analysis information, COMPSTAT crimes and hot spot locations. Information is obtained from neighborhood meetings and sector commanders as well to determine needs.

On the early night shift, we currently have four routes downtown; 7 A & B and 8 A & B. Additionally, each sector has a walking route that the sector commander can give specific assignments too based upon community needs and/or increasing crime trends. We also have the Neighborhood Action Unit which consists of four patrol officers and a superior officer. The NAU has the ability to bring four officers to handle any community-based needs or emergency circumstances that may arise on the shift. Their assignment could and has been to have four officers walking and proactively patrolling different neighborhoods around the city.

The late-night shift predominantly only has an officer assigned to the inner downtown area unless otherwise needed and staffing allows.

Over the course of the past year, the Lowell Police Department has seen a dramatic increase in officer retirements. We will have up to twenty-one vacancies and approximately eighteen officers out injured on a daily basis. Add in vacation, sick time, training, court and compensatory time and the shortages only increase. The department has had to reduce the number of detectives and specialty positions by almost a dozen positions. We are consolidating parts of the organization in order to continue to serve the community at the highest level. At the same time, we have to take into account the health and wellness of our officers and their need to utilize their accrued time off. We have been working closely with the union to serve both the community and the officers' needs.

With this in mind, we will be making some personnel/staffing changes in the upcoming bid to better serve the community and allow for officer wellness and time off. We will be reducing the number of walking routes by one on the day shift, but adding an additional downtown patrol car. The vehicle is already in the fleet and will not cost additional funding. We removed route 7 Bravo in order to improve officer visibility, performance and accountability. In its place we are adding a patrol district to assist in handling one of our highest areas of the city for call volume. We also took into consideration the traffic conditions (bridge closure/construction projects) to ensure public and officer safety. When there is extra help, additional walking officers will be detailed as well. In order to increase officers on the street, the department has taken additional measures to ensure proper coverage. Officers are being pulled from specialty positions (warrant unit, licensing, court prosecutors office) several days a week to provide additional coverage and we will continue to do so as long as staffing shortages dictate.

On the early night shift, we are again consolidating/reducing some of the positions. The three sector routes will be eliminated and the NAU will be reduced by two officers. This will help us to adequately staff the shift and provide enough officers to fill the needed walking routes and alternate positions for the February bid process. As staffing increases, we will look to bring the NAU back to its original staffing. The current staffing issues are not only occurring in Lowell, it is a nationwide law enforcement crisis and we have taken proactive measures to ensure public and officer safety. We made staffing decisions based upon crime and call volume, officer pro-active activity and the needs of the community. The current patrol bid is now bi-annual and we will constantly evaluate our staffing and community needs as we move forward.

With regard to Community Based Policing Opportunities for the upcoming spring and summer, the police department is excited to be promoting our newly formed "Lowell Police Youth Services" which comes under our Family Services Unit. The program is being spearheaded by Sergeant Michael Marshall and a host of Lowell Police Volunteers, retired Lowell Police Officers and law enforcement volunteers from other agencies. We started our initiative several months ago with a youth boxing program. We currently train an average of twenty-five to thirty-five inner city youth every Tuesday and Thursday and will continue as a full-time program. We have partnered with the Lowell School Department and have begun a youth wrestling program and have been rotating through several schools in order to provide youth opportunities throughout the city. We will be holding a city-wide mini wrestling camp over February vacation. Lowell Police Youth Services and the Lowell Public Schools started student police academies during the school year at the Stocklosa and Robinson Schools and are continuing to rotate to other middle schools in the city. We are beginning our "Breakfast with Police Officer" in February. This program will target elementary school children who are dropped off prior to the start of school. Sergeant Marshall and Officer Paul Robbins, along with K-9 Mack, will be instructing on health and wellness as well as offering different educational games for and with the students. This program will start at the STEM Academy, McAvinnue Elementary School and then the Pawtucket Memorial School. We are excited to be moving forward in the planning phase of a summer "Learn to Swim Program" for the youth of Lowell. With all the recent tragedies around the Commonwealth, the Lowell Police Department has recognized the necessity of teaching our youth to swim and instruct them regarding water safety. We are partnering with the Sean Collier Foundation, who will be funding the learn to swim program for Lowell. The department will additionally be sponsoring an Ultimate Frisbee league this summer and again will rotate the program to various parks and locations across the city. The program has just begun and we look forward to expanding as we move forward.