

Council Communication

May 5, 2015, Business Meeting

Report to Council on crime in Ashland, Use of Force by the Ashland Police Department, the Enhanced Law Enforcement Area and on-going issues on Will Dodge Way

FROM:

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SUMMARY

In 2008, the Council directed the Police Chief to make an annual report on crime in the City of Ashland and use of force by the Police Department.

BACKGROUND AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

During 2014, the APD used force a total of 32 times. This is up slightly from 2013 (28) and still down from 2012 (41). Twenty-nine percent of these incidents did not involve more than a subject being forced to the ground or against an object. There were two TASER deployments and only one activation of the TASER. Two subjects were pepper sprayed. Nine subjects were subjected to control holds and eight to targeted strikes by officers. There were a total of 17 injuries reported due to confrontations in 2014. Six injuries to officers were reported and 11 to suspects. None of the injuries rose above the level of minor cuts and scrapes. Drugs and/or alcohol were a factor in 50% of the incidents. In 2014, each Ashland officer received approximately 22 hours of use of force training.

Crime rates are based on the number of Part One crimes occurring in a jurisdiction. Part One crimes are those that are reported annually to the FBI for inclusion into the Uniform Crime Report. They are Homicide, Rape, Robbery, Aggravated Assault, Burglary, Auto Theft and Larceny. In 2014 the Police Department took 630 reports of Part One crimes occurring in the City of Ashland. This is a 10% decrease from 2013. Violent crime is defined as Homicide, Rape, Robbery and Aggravated Assault. There were 21 violent crimes reported in Ashland in 2014 and 25 violent crimes reported in 2013. This is a 16% decrease. In 2014 the Police Department cleared 35% of all Part One cases, and 90% of violent crime.

The Enhanced Law Enforcement Area ordinance has been in effect since August of 2012. 2014 gives us our first look at a year-by-year comparison to examine how the ELEA is performing. In 2014, 16 expulsion orders filed were granted by the municipal court. This was the result of 147 violations or crimes occurring in the downtown area that qualified under the ELEA ordinance. The best way for us to track problems in the downtown area is through calls for service of disorderly behavior. This is because a call for service is generated anytime an officer takes action, or a citizen complains regardless of the outcome of the complaint. In 2014, APD responded to 199 calls for service in the downtown area for disorderly behavior. This is a 25% decrease from 2013 (264) and a 35% decrease from 2012 (310).



The APD has been working with the City Administrator and the City Attorney's office to address some issues that have come up regarding particularly negative behavior exhibited by a small number of people in the downtown area. We have examined several options to address this on-going problem, such as expanding the geographic boundaries of the ELEA to include Bill Patton Gardens, expanding the list of qualifying violations to include smoking marijuana in public, addressing architectural and use issues at the Black Swan, and considering an ordinance that requires dogs in the downtown area be vaccinated or licensed.

There have also been a significant number of complaints arising out of the operation of the Vinyl Club and O'Ryan's Irish Pub, which are now operated by the same owners. In response to these complaints staff has tried several different approaches to mitigate the problems. The APD has been working with the City Attorney's office to amend the city's chronic nuisance ordinance to include overcrowding and certain right-of-way-infringement violations as qualifying violations. The APD has run several plain clothes operations in the downtown area, with an emphasis placed on investigating violations by bar staff/management as well as violations by patrons and pedestrians. Each operation has seen multiple incidents generated for a wide array of violations.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

N/A.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION AND REQUESTED ACTION:

The Council can accept the report as presented or request the Police Chief provide additional information.

SUGGESTED MOTION:

N/A

ATTACHMENTS:

None

