



“Excellence in Police Service”

POLICE DEPARTMENT
222 South Walnut St., Appleton, WI 54911-5899
(920) 832-5500

Date: October 9, 2020
To: Director Karen Harkness
Re: Homelessness and Transient Challenges

Director Harkness,

The Police Department continues to work on the transient and homeless issue in our community. Our contacts with these individuals are daily and frequent. We have some individuals who are chronic offenders and excessively consume our services. Almost on a daily basis we deal with the same individuals repeatedly causing disturbances or creating calls for service for our officers. This is a community issue and we have been discussing them for many years with our local providers with varying levels of success and failure.

The Police Department has been very progressive and innovative in addressing this issue.

- We have created the **Behavioral Health Officer** position to identify and work with those individuals with mental health and/or substance abuse issues, which are some of the core issues and root causes for this problem.
- We have created the **LEAAP program** to assist those with heroin and opioid addictions, and we have done street outreach through our Community Liaison Officers.
- We have created a “no-serve” list and a chronic offenders list to try and prevent businesses from serving these individuals, and when they do commit offenses we try and get them under supervision by referrals to circuit court.
- We do **street outreach** in the area of the transit center/library, parks, and day resource center.
- We are going to work more with their street outreach workers, continue to focus on chronic offenders, be aggressive in our enforcement tactics, use CPTED, and continue to engage the courts and other service providers in holding offenders accountable.
- We have done over **30 Coordinated Entry** forms doing our “street outreach”, trying to get individuals into the service system to get them the resources they need.
- Community Liaison Officer Greg Ryan and Behavioral Health Officer Sgt. Enriquez have started attending weekly meeting with Pillars to discuss the issues occurring and do case manager work on the individuals we are dealing with.
- We are partners in the Motel Voucher program.
- We have made recommendations to the Library staff for security improvements inside the building and assist their staff with training their security personnel on responding to these individuals and when to involve law enforcement.
- For the last two summers we have had to assign staff, full time, to address problems in the parks and around the Transit Center and Library. These tie up police resources during our busy month that we can't use to address the major issues our community wants us to address like drug abuse and traffic complaints.

Core Values of the Appleton Police Department: “Compassion, Integrity, Courage”



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We knew COVID would impact the number of homeless individuals on our streets and our interactions with them. But what we have experienced the past several months in our parks, parking ramps, and other public areas is unprecedented and much of the behavior has been extremely disturbing and unacceptable.

- We have had to go back to having staff physically clear out and close multiple park pavilions in the downtown area because of people sleeping, damaging, and involved in criminal activity at night in the parks.
- We have staff doing Community Prevention walks in the parks on every shift because of repeated calls for service and complaints from neighborhoods.
 - In the last 24 hours we have responded to or created 169 calls for service. We are tracking the “Crime Prevention” calls in the parks, officers walking through the parks to make sure they are clean and safe and engaging with citizens. Of the 169 calls, 44 of them have been in the Parks – that is 26% of our 169 calls.
 - Since this initiative we have seen a significant decrease in actual crimes and disturbances in the parks, as those causing the problems have moved to other areas. Unfortunately many of the problems have moved into our parking ramps as we have seen an uptick in activity in the ramps.

We will continue our programs and will ensure we practice compassionate accountability; treating everyone with respect and understanding while making sure they are not being enabled to stay in this lifestyle.

Chief Todd Thomas