



Berkshire Advisors, Inc.
General Management Consultants

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR THE REPORT OF THE BEST PRACTICES ASSESSMENT OF THE ST. PAUL POLICE DEPARTMENT



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The St. Paul Police Department is a good police department that has yet to reach its full potential. The police chief and his leadership team are capable managers and leaders who are committed to implementing community policing concepts and decentralizing decision-making authority where possible. These policing and management concepts have not been fully implemented for a number of reasons:

- The size of the St. Paul Police Department – it is neither a small nor large department – complicates management and makes it difficult to meet community and employee expectations
- Mid-managers have not been prepared to function in a decentralized policing environment and lack the tools and the management infrastructure needed to function effectively in a decentralized environment
- The department has not adequately invested in the support and supervisory staffing, vehicles and equipment, and systems needed to make its policing vision a reality
- Patrol officers have limited time to support community policing initiatives because the bulk of their time is devoted to responding to calls

Taking steps to address these shortcomings, while also undertaking initiatives to make more effective use of existing resources and to ensure the way resources are allocated reflects department priorities, will, over time, enable the department to maximize its potential in serving the residents of St. Paul. While implementing improvement recommendations will take time – implementing systemic change is always difficult and implementation of some recommendations will require negotiations to change existing contracts – with consistent and committed leadership the department's vision for policing can become a reality.

Significant fact-finding was performed to support the study findings and recommendations. Interviews were conducted with over 175 sworn and civilian police department employees, the mayor, city council members, selected city department heads, the St. Paul Police Federation, and members of the Police Civilian Internal Affairs Review Commission (PCIARC). Focus group discussions were also facilitated with representatives of community organizations, housing and social service agencies, and local business organizations. In addition, three community drop-in sessions were held in which residents had the opportunity to share their perspectives on the police department. Employee surveys were also made available online to all police department employees. (Surveys were completed by 536 police department employees or 73 percent of all department employees.) In addition, patrol officers, traffic officers, and patrol sergeants completed activity analysis surveys in which employees were asked to provide information on how they spend their time. Resource optimization surveys were also completed by the city and department leaders who served as study steering committee members. In addition, extensive best practice information was collected from 44 municipal and four state public safety departments and benchmarking data was collected from eight peer cities.

This executive summary outlines the key recommendations presented in the report. First, management and best practice recommendations are discussed. Findings relating to staffing and resource allocation are then presented.

A – MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presents recommendations for strengthening the organization, operations, and management of the police department. The section is divided into five parts: overall (recommendations affecting the entire department); office of the chief; support services; patrol operations; and major crimes and investigations.

OVERALL

Leadership And Management

Both interviews and the results of the employee survey conducted as part of this engagement suggest widespread concerns about leadership in the police department. In part, these concerns reflect the stark difference in management style between the current and the former chiefs. In addition, these concerns reflect the difficulty of leading a department of the size of the St. Paul Police Department. In small departments, there is an expectation that the police chief will be highly visible and that he or she knows each employee individually. In larger departments, by contrast, employees recognize that their opportunities to interact with the chief will be limited. The St. Paul Police Department, however, is neither a large department nor a small department. Consequently, employees have many of the expectations that smaller department employees have with regard to the visibility of their leaders. However, the department is too large for the chief to meet those expectations and perform his other duties.

More important than perceptions of the department's leadership is that the management systems needed to support the chief's management style are not in place. The current chief seems willing to delegate authority to subordinates and to accept the ambiguity that results from not controlling all decisions. While this approach to management seems appropriate to a police department of the size and complexity of the St. Paul Police Department, the department currently lacks the systems needed to support decentralized decision-making. In addition, managers have not been trained on how to function successfully in an environment in which they will be delegated important responsibilities while being held strictly accountable for their performance.

While addressing the substantive issues relating to department leadership is important to the police department's long-term success, perceptions about leadership among the department's rank and file workers should not be ignored. The department should, therefore, take steps to address perceptions about leadership shortcomings. At the same time, systems needed to support decentralized decision-making should be established. Managers should also receive training on how to function effectively in a management environment characterized by decentralized decision-making and accountability.

Community Policing

At present, there is a stark contrast between the department's stated vision that it is an organization committed to problem solving community policing and the reality of how individual officers spend their time. Based on interviews and surveys, it appears that community policing concepts play little to no role in determining how officers spend their time. Indeed, officers spend only 13.9 percent of their time on activities that might be considered to be related to community policing. While officers might spend more time on community policing related activities if they had more time to do so, this is by no means certain.

To address this issue the department should reassert its commitment to community policing. As part of this process, the department should clearly define what it means by community policing and what it hopes to accomplish by improving the implementation of community policing concepts. In addition, systems should be established to monitor the extent to which community policing concepts are being implemented. Additional resources should also be provided to support the implementation of community policing concepts. (Patrol staffing recommendations increase the time officers have available to perform proactive activities from the current 24 percent to 33 percent.)

Use Of Information

At present, the St. Paul Police Department is "data rich" but "information poor." While the department captures a great deal of data on its operations and on issues that affect crime, this data is not consistently used to support efforts to improve performance. In particular, the department currently lacks the crime analysis capacity needed to support the use of information to drive operational planning and decision-making. The department should take a number of steps to address these issues including assigning one civilian crime analysis position to each patrol district.

Organizational Structure

The current organizational structure has a number of shortcomings. First, the current organizational structure does not fully support the decentralized decision-making needed to embrace community policing. In addition, the range of functions reporting to the chief limits the time he has to focus on leadership and change. Some functions also appear to be miscast in their current organizational placement.

To address these issues the department's organizational structure should be revised. In particular, some functions that are currently centralized should be decentralized and report to the patrol district senior commanders. In particular, a "problem oriented policing" unit consisting of one sergeant, six officers, and a clerk should be assigned to each of the three patrol districts and one civilian crime prevention coordinator should be assigned to each patrol district. In addition, several functions (e.g., the station commander and the training and human resources functions) should be reassigned and a logistics unit should be established to manage fleet management, the property room, and central supply (These functions are currently spread across a number of units within the department.)

Civilianization

As a general rule, civilians should fill police department positions unless an affirmative case can be made that sworn officers are needed. This is true for two primary reasons. First, the annual compensation for sworn employees (and contributions to pension plans) is typically higher than for civilian employees. In addition, the costs of recruiting and training sworn officers are much higher than for most civilian positions. The analysis conducted for this study suggests that seven positions currently held by sworn officers could be effectively filled by civilians.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF

Financial Management

The department currently struggles to manage its budget for three primary reasons. First, existing financial management systems do not provide department managers with timely and accurate data on the department's budget. In addition, the department does not use a position control system to allocate each funded position to a particular work unit and to track the incumbent in each position. Finally, the current financial management operating system and software used by the department (and the city) does not automatically upload information across functions. As a result, the department must manually tabulate data extracted from the payroll system to track overtime expenditures.

To address these issues, the department should work aggressively with the city to implement a new financial management operating system. In addition, the department should establish a position control system that provides real-time information on the status of each department position by unit assignment.

Grants

The department's current approach to managing grants has a number of shortcomings. First, while the department should be commended for its efforts to fund services using grant resources, no process has been established to ensure that grant resources support efforts to achieve overall strategic goals. In addition, in some instances individual units have pursued grant funds without coordinating with department leaders responsible for grants. Moreover, the grants process is not linked to the budgeting process.

Two steps should be taken to strengthen the department's approach to managing grants. First, the department's efforts in seeking grants should be tied to its strategic goals and priorities. Second, the department's research and grants manager should develop a process for reviewing and approving grants prior to them being pursued by individual units.

Human Resources Management

Three steps should be taken to strengthen human resources management operations. First, background investigations should be completed for all civilian and sworn candidates for employment prior to an employee being hired. At present, because the department's first priority is to complete background investigations for candidates for sworn positions civilian staff may be hired before a background investigation has been

completed. In addition, to improve coordination of this effort background investigators should report to the human resources coordinator rather than through the training unit sergeant. Steps should also be taken to ensure that first line supervisors who have responsibility for day-to-day supervision of officers are involved in the early warning system used to identify potentially problem employees.

Training

A number of steps should be taken to strengthen department training. First, the department should restructure the process of assigning officers to the training unit. Positions assigned to the training unit should be posted and applicants should be selected based on their experience, skills, and commitment to the department's training mission. Department leaders should also embrace the need for officers from the field to provide training to new recruits and in-service training. The department should also increase its investment in in-service training (from a minimum of 16 hours to 80 hours), expand its use of roll call training, revise the training new managers and supervisors receive, revise the training curriculum to ensure it is consistent with department values, and develop and implement a comprehensive approach to evaluating the effectiveness of training efforts.

Inspections

At present, the department has only a limited capacity to conduct inspections. Rather than increase the number of inspectors, the department should adopt a "train the inspector" approach to conducting inspections. Inspection templates should be prepared for each unit and each commander and senior commander should be trained in how to use these templates to conduct inspections.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Building Maintenance

The department should assign custodians to work on a task system. Under a task system instead of individuals being paid for the time they are working they are paid for completing a certain number of tasks. Experience suggests that employees who work on a task system are much more productive than other employees because they have a strong incentive to work productively – employees know that they can leave work when their tasks have been completed.

Information Services

The St. Paul Police Department currently provides information services for smaller police departments in the metropolitan area. It is not clear, however, that the police department is fully reimbursed for the services it provides. Information services staff should therefore begin to track the time they devote to serving other agencies. This information should then be used to determine whether contracts for providing information services should be revised.

PATROL OPERATIONS

Role Of Commanders

One challenge that some departments face when implementing community policing concepts is that individual patrol officers are expected to lead problem solving efforts. Patrol officers, however, tend to view the city from the perspective of their shift while a geographic orientation that considers policing needs from a 24-hour perspective is needed to develop and implement effective community policing strategies. In addition, the coordinated efforts of a number of officers are often needed to address problems.

Patrol commanders are well placed organizationally to lead efforts to address community needs. They can, with the support of their senior commanders, help direct how officers spend their time between calls, direct activities of the recommended “problem oriented policing” units, and access the support of other city and department resources. Each patrol commander should therefore be assigned to an area of the city where they will be responsible for solving problems and addressing community needs.

Supervision

Patrol supervisors are among the most important positions in any police department. Indeed, because patrol supervisors influence how patrol officers spend their time they are crucially important to the success of any initiative that involves patrol officers (especially community policing). At present, however, patrol supervisors only spend about 11 percent of their time providing street supervision. To address this issue, administrative sergeants should be assigned to each patrol district. These sergeants will perform many of the administrative functions currently performed by line supervisors which will allow patrol sergeants to focus their attention on supervising patrol officers.

Scheduling

The existing patrol schedule is not efficient in terms of ensuring the number of patrol officers working matches the call-for-service workload. Of the scheduling alternatives evaluated for this study, an eight-hour shift schedule would be the most effective at matching the number of officers deployed with workload, a modified schedule in which officers work a set schedule of four days on and three days off would be the second best alternative, and retaining the current schedule would be the least effective scheduling approach. When staff are added back to the schedule to ensure officers can devote 33 percent of their time to proactive activities (as previously recommended) however these scheduling inefficiencies are masked. (Fewer staff are added back to the current schedule and more staff are added back to the more efficient schedule.) The implications of retaining the current schedule therefore is that patrol managers have less flexibility with regard to managing the patrol force’s proactive capacity than if a more efficient scheduling approach is employed.

Deployment

The department currently allows individual patrol officers to decide if they wish to be deployed in a one-person unit or with a partner in a two-person unit. Assigning officers to two-person patrol units is expensive and may actually reduce officer safety. The

department should therefore discontinue the practice of deploying officers in two-person units (except when conducting field training).

In addition to the preference of some officers to work with a partner, officers are often deployed in two-officer units simply because not enough vehicles are available to assign each officer to an individual unit. Indeed, while the city has provided funding to increase the number of sworn officers assigned to the department it has not provided funding to proportionately increase the size of the department's fleet. As a result the impact of the increase in sworn staffing has not been fully realized. Implementing this recommendation will therefore require the size of the department's fleet to be increased.

Shift Bidding

The department's approach to bidding shifts does not ensure the expertise of veteran officers is leveraged across shifts. To address this problem, the department should work with the police federation to modify the shift bidding system to ensure veteran officers fill a percent of positions on each shift.

Functions

Some functions performed by patrol officers do not appear to be a good use of their time. For example, in at least one patrol district dedicated officers are assigned to look for truants from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Moreover, the St. Paul Police Department responds to minor traffic accidents. (Many other police departments no longer respond to such incidents.) The department should assess whether continuing to perform these functions is a good use of department time.

Traffic

The department should implement several changes to traffic operations. First, the deployment of traffic officers should be based on the location and time of traffic accidents. Traffic officers should also report to work where their vehicles are stored to reduce travel time after roll calls and increase their time on duty. (They currently report to work at a location different from where their vehicles are stored.) Finally, traffic enforcement officers should typically be deployed in marked patrol vehicles.

Canine

The number of canine officers the department deploys is far larger than the number deployed in most benchmark departments. Canine staffing can be reduced while still providing ample capacity (two officers in each patrol district during the busiest 10 hours of the day and three officers deployed on a city wide basis during other hours).

Mounted

While mounted officers have some public relations values and are helpful in crowd control situations and in supporting searches, the demand for mounted officers is limited. In addition, the mounted unit provides little benefit in addressing needs the department considers to be the most important. The department should, therefore, strongly consider discontinuing the mounted unit.

Take Home Cars

All patrol officers who live in St. Paul should be provided a take home car. There are many benefits associated with allowing officers to take cars home including: increasing visibility; reducing maintenance costs; reducing downtime at the end of each shift spent driving to the patrol station to turn in a vehicle; increasing the department's ability to respond quickly in an emergency situation; increasing the department's ability to respond to high priority calls; improving service to residents; and improving morale. In addition, establishing a take home car program for patrol officers will provide a strong incentive for officers to live in St. Paul (since only officers who live in the city will be provided take home cars).

MAJOR CRIMES AND INVESTIGATIONS

Decentralized Investigations

While assigning responsibility for handling some types of investigations to detectives assigned to districts (as the department currently does) is consistent with the department's overall management philosophy, some of the benefits of decentralizing investigative responsibilities have not been achieved. To address this issue, the department should modify some aspects of its approach to decentralizing investigations. First, supervision and accountability over decentralized investigations should be strengthened. In addition, patrol senior commanders and commanders should focus increased attention on facilitating communication between patrol officers and investigators. The types of cases handled by decentralized investigators should also be modified. In particular, the department should consider assigning simple assault investigations to district detectives while centralizing responsibility for investigating business robberies.

Rank Structure

Promoting investigators to sergeant positions rather than assigning them investigative responsibilities creates numerous problems. The department should, therefore, discontinue the requirement that all investigators be sergeants.

Career Criminals

Increasing arrests of career criminals has the potential to significantly enhance the department's ability to achieve its goals and objectives. To free the resources needed to focus on career criminal arrests the department should consider reassigning resources currently assigned to task forces – many of which do not focus on areas that are department priorities.

Shift Schedule

Assigning investigators to work ten-hour shifts creates a number of operational problems and reduces the incentive for investigators to become patrol supervisors. The department should therefore consider reassigning investigators to work eight-hour shifts.

Felony Response

Due to the limited time that suspects who have been arrested can be detained, investigators must put aside work on ongoing investigations to focus on a new investigation when a suspect is being detained. In addition, investigators assigned to centralized units must be called in from off duty to respond to some types of incident scenes during hours when no investigators are working. Rather than have investigators assigned to individual investigative units perform these duties, a felony response unit should be established to provide an initial response to after-hour incidents that require an on-site investigator and to interview detainees.

B – BEST PRACTICE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section summarizes findings and recommendations from the best practice review that was done as part of this engagement. The section is divided into several parts: civilian review boards; closed circuit TV; community outreach; community policing; diversity recruiting; domestic violence; limited duty/fitness; overtime; rank structure and responsibilities; school resource officers; and secondary/off-duty employment.

CIVILIAN REVIEW BOARDS

The best practice findings suggest that several changes should be considered to the Police Civilian Internal Affairs Review Commission (PCIARC). These recommendations include the following:

- The PCIARC should report in the mayor's office or to the mayor's designee
- Department employees should be excluded from serving as voting members of the commission
- The composition of the commission should consist of seven voting members and one ex-officio non-voting representative who is a department employee
- New members should be appointed to the commission in a timely fashion
- The commission should have the ability to select and appoint an independent investigator when the members have determined a case should be investigated by an objective third party
- The commission should be provided a budget that is independent of the police department's budget
- The training commission members receive should be increased
- The workings and actions of the commission should be transparent to the community and members of the department

CLOSED CIRCUIT TV

The experience of other departments with closed circuit television is mixed. Some departments have had excellent experience with CCTV while other departments have been disappointed by the results. Efforts to expand CCTV in St. Paul should therefore be coupled with analysis to ensure expectations are met.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

A number of factors should be considered when structuring community outreach activities. Resources should be focused on priority areas, support for needed resources should be obtained from a range of sources (e.g., grants, forfeiture dollars, and volunteers), outreach approaches should be systematically developed and implemented, resident surveys or other techniques should be used to help evaluate satisfaction, and statistics should be used to measure program success.

COMMUNITY POLICING

Several factors should be emphasized when implementing community policing. First, the department must be willing to commit the resources needed to support community policing efforts. In addition, officers must be prepared to implement community policing concepts. Finally, community policing approaches should be tailored to the individual community being served.

DIVERSITY RECRUITING

Two themes emerge from the best practice findings relating to diversity recruiting. First, the broader the range of recruiting strategies that are used the more likely recruiting efforts will be successful. Second, incentives are widely used to recruit a diverse workforce. Consequently, if recruiting a diverse workforce is a department priority, the department will need to invest in this effort.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Best practice findings suggest that the broader the array of services available to address domestic violence issues the better. Effective programs include the following components: outreach focused on prevention and deterrence; effective response; and supportive follow up. St. Paul appears to provide effective response but is somewhat limited in what it does in terms of outreach and follow up. Focusing additional resources to strengthen delivery across the service continuum would be beneficial (if doing so is consistent with department priorities).

LIMITED DUTY/FITNESS

Two themes emerge from the best practice assessment relating to limited duty/fitness: the medical status of individuals on limited duty should be evaluated on a consistent basis and, whenever possible, officers should be given limited duty assignments. The department appears to do a good job of providing limited duty assignments to officers. Other issues relating to monitoring the status of limited duty officers are managed by the city's human resources department.

OVERTIME

The best practice findings suggest that the St. Paul Police Department should establish a more rigorous approach to managing overtime. First, the department should ensure overtime policies are consistent with the policies of best practice organizations. More importantly, systems should be established that managers and supervisors can use to track overtime on an ongoing basis. In addition, managers should be held strictly accountable for adhering to overtime budgets.

RANK STRUCTURE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

While St. Paul has fewer ranks than other police departments there is no compelling need to reinstitute the lieutenant position. The best practice analysis does suggest, however, that if the department wishes to continue to promote officers to a detective rank a corporal position might be an appropriate alternative to the sergeant position.

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS

Schools pay 90 percent of the cost of school resources officers (SROs) in St. Paul . No significant changes to the SRO program are suggested by the best practice findings.

SECONDARY/OFF-DUTY EMPLOYMENT

The best practice findings suggest that a more centralized approach to managing off-duty employment should be established. In particular, an office of off-duty employment should be established and all off-duty employment should be pre-approved through this office. Other changes to off-duty employment should also be made: fees should be charged to cover the administrative costs associated with managing the program; off-duty employment should be limited to the rank of commander and below; off-duty hours should be tracked to ensure maximums are not exceeded; and employers should be required to have appropriate insurance.

C – STAFFING AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION

The police department's staffing needs were systematically assessed as part of this study. Staffing models were developed for the patrol and investigative functions that linked staffing needs with service expectations. A resource allocation framework was also developed that provides a systematic approach to ensuring that the way the department allocates staff reflects department priorities. The results of this analysis, combined with the management and best practice recommendations previously presented, suggests some modifications should be made to how the department allocates its staffing resources. This analysis assumes that the department will authorize 614 sworn and 140.2 civilian positions.

| Division | Current | Recommended | Difference |
|------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| Office of the Chief | 80 | 88 | 8 |
| Patrol Operations | 432 | 415 | (17) |
| Major Crimes and Investigations | 129 | 159 | 30 |
| Homeland Security/Support Services | 93.2 | 92.2 | (1) |
| <i>Total</i> | <i>734.2</i> | <i>754.2</i> | <i>20</i> |