



Legislation Text

File #: ID-54-20, **Version:** 1

Department of Police

Reference: Presentation by Chief Southard regarding the Brighton Police Reserve Unit

To: Mayor Gregory Mills and Members of City Council

Through: Marv Falconburg, Acting City Manager

Prepared By: Paul Southard, Chief of Police

Date Prepared: January 29, 2020

PURPOSE

To discuss the recent stand down of the Brighton Police Reserve Unit.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA

Safe, Active and Engaged Community

BACKGROUND

In 1968 Brighton Municipal Code 2-24 created the Brighton Police Department Reserve Unit. The unit was established to provide additional officers to protect the city. At the time, reserve officers outnumbered the small compliment of full-time officers. Over time the unit has varied in size. Its membership was at 9 officers by the end of 2019.

Reserve units used to be rather commonplace in Colorado as many smaller cities and sheriff's offices supplemented their patrol force with the volunteers. Over time the Colorado Peace Officer Standards and Training Board (POST), began upgrading training requirements for Peace Officer certification. Initially academy training was nearly non-existent. This progressed as training academies and POST gradually lengthened programs to the current level of nearly 4-6 months. In addition to academy training, POST requires a minimum of 24 hours of continuing training each year. Of this 24 hours 12 hours has to be skills related, i.e., firearms, driving and use of force/ arrest control.

In 2019 the reserve officers struggled to comply with this requirement. Many were still working toward completing this task near year end. Staff time was diverted from other tasks in order to facilitate completion of this training. Failure to complete the training would result in the loss of POST training grant funds for the department.

The training deficiency was the impetus for a discussion about the reserve unit and its current state. Command staff members submitted their recommendation for moving forward with disbanding the unit based on the following concerns:

- Full time officers receive ongoing training in a variety of formats to include in-service training, briefing training, daily training bulletins, and outside training. This amount of training and content is nearly impossible to replicate for reserve officers.
- The skill set necessary for an officer in today's law enforcement environment is not compatible with the original intent of the reserve units' founding.
- Historically a Police Sergeant has managed the reserve unit as an ancillary assignment. Currently sergeants are responsible for numerous ancillary duties along with their primary job responsibilities.

- Given current circumstances surrounding modern policing the department's existing priorities and objectives make it difficult to justify diverting resources from more pressing programs and ongoing supervisory responsibilities.
- The department lacks adequate time and resources to devote to the needs of the reserve program due to daily demands.

Early in its existence the Reserve Unit was staffed by local citizens. This is no longer the case. Of the 9 members at the end of 2019, only two were actually residents of the City of Brighton. With the retirement of one of them only one member is a resident.

CRITERIA BY WHICH COUNCIL MUST CONSIDER THE ITEM

A failure to adequately train police officers places the City of Brighton at risk. While the City and the police department value our volunteers the risk of liability outweighs the benefit. In addition to risk we must take a cost/benefit approach to the question. In 2019 two members put in zero hours patrol time and overall the unit put in an average of 4.53 hours per month, per person. At minimum the sergeant assigned as a liaison put in 5 hours a month.

The police departments of Broomfield, Thornton, and Northglenn, do not have Police Reserve units. Commerce City's unit was disbanded 7 years ago. Westminster's unit was disbanded 15 years ago. Federal Heights and Adams County are the only north metro departments with a reserve unit.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The Police Department recommends retiring the reserve unit.

OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL CONSIDERATION

Provide the Brighton Police Department command staff with direction on this topic

ATTACHMENTS

NA