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Report recommends changes to Shelby Township Police Department

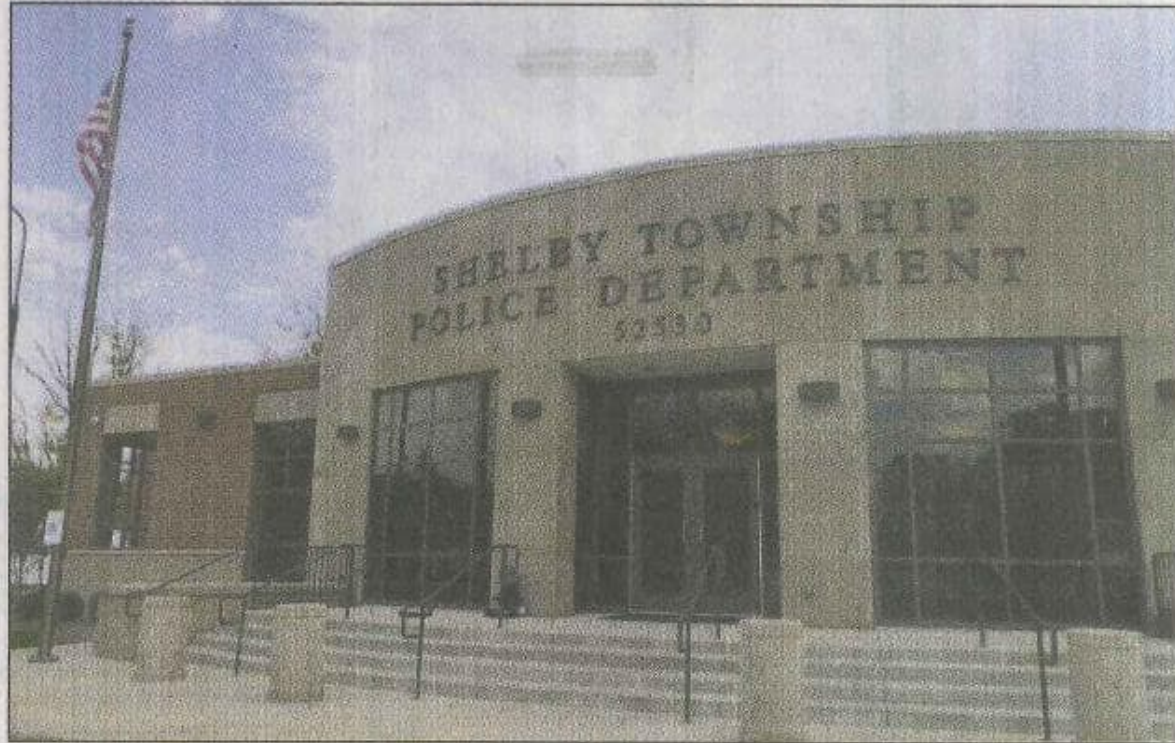
By **SEAN DELANEY**

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Hiring additional officers, increasing diversity, and restoring the motorcycle patrol are among the recommendations contained in a 139-page report recently compiled by Lt. Scott Trumbo of the Shelby Township Police Department in response to a “needs analysis” study designed to help improve the department’s overall operations.

“Lt. Trumbo has done a fantastic job,” Chief of Police Robert Shelide said. “This report is a masterpiece.”

In the report, Trumbo notes that recent changes in economic conditions has created new opportunities



for the department to restore services and reframe priorities that may have been shifted or eliminated as a result of substantial revenue declines that began in 2008.

“In the face of these new economic opportunities, the

chief of police commissioned a needs analysis study to assist with staffing decisions and charting organizational priorities in the years ahead,” Trumbo wrote in the report. “The analysis thoroughly examined staff-

ing needs from a variety of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints.”

According to Shelide, input was sought via surveys and interviews from residents, business owners,

A 139-page report contained several recommendations designed to improve the overall operations of the Shelby Township Police Department.

PHOTO BY SEAN DELANEY

Analysis

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lected officials and department heads in Shelby Township, as well as other law enforcement officials in comparable communities such as Waterford Township, Chesterfield Township, Canton Township, St. Clair Shores, Troy, Sterling Heights, Bloomfield Township, Farmington Hills and West Bloomfield.

"What Lt. Trumbo did was compile information from our peer departments and review it," Shelide said. "He did some tremendous research to show that the average community - of the ones we studied - has approximately 1.11 officers per 1,000 residents. In Shelby Township, we have approximately .77 officers per 1,000 residents, so we were off by a lot."

In the report, Trumbo notes that the Shelby Township Police department was found to have the second smallest department size (.77 officers per capita versus an average of 1.11) and the third highest workload (600 calls per officer versus an average of 429).

"Due to run volume, arrest and accident workload, and assigned time spent on calls, officers have little time to perform proactive and directed patrol efforts targeting specific criminal trends and problems centers," Trumbo wrote.

According to Trumbo, the police department should have a staff of approximately 70 officers given the township's current population and call volume. It currently has 60 sworn officers, with six more expected to be sworn in by the end of the year.

"Increasing staff will allow the department to realize substantially improved capacities in the areas of planning, policy development, narcotics enforcement, computer crimes, identity theft and fraud investigation, park patrols, crime prevention and residential speed enforcement," Trumbo wrote.

In the report, Trumbo notes that, in order to reach its goal of having 69 sworn officers by 2019, the depart-

ment should hire six officers in 2015, one officer in 2016, three officers in 2017, five officers in 2018, and one officer in 2019.

"One of the things I specifically asked Lt. Trumbo to study was our attrition rate over the next few years so that we know exactly how many people are going to retire and how many people we're going to need to replace," Shelide said. "The plan is to add at least one officer each year through 2019 to get us back to 69 sworn officers."

While Shelide has previously expressed interest in increasing the diversity in the department's ranks, the report compiled by Lt. Trumbo takes it a step further by noting that the department currently has only two female officers and no officers representing particular racial or ethnic groups.

"The department should focus on targeted recruitment and begin moving to diversify its ranks," Trumbo wrote in the report.

The lieutenant also recommended that the department redevelop the performance appraisal system to measure both organizational and individual performance.

"(Approximately) 79 percent of residents were in favor of organizational performance measuring, which they ranked as their third largest priority," Trumbo wrote. "Surveys of both users and non-users of police services should measure fear of crime, satisfaction with the police department, perceptions of professionalism and department core values. A Citizen Advisory Committee is also recommended to closely align departmental goals with those of the community."

In the department's patrol division, the report recommends creating a newly promoted command officer training program, with structured performance objectives.

"A shift command standard operating procedure manual should be created, containing guides, resources, key responsibilities and protocols," the report states.

It also addresses the issue of police body cameras.

"While there are certainly benefits to using body cam-

eras, there are obstacles as well," the report states. "The department should conduct a feasibility assessment and plan financially and structurally for this possible outcome."

The report also recommends implementing a system that uses retired officers at the front desk, thereby replacing patrol officers currently tasked with this responsibility.

"(Approximately) 51 percent of employees are in support of this endeavor, with 38 percent opposed," the report states. "Employees surveyed reported that Monday-Saturday front desk service, working 10-hour shifts, were the median levels of need. This results in an annual 3,120 hour model. At \$20 per (hour), and a total cost of \$66,862, this results in a savings of \$56,066 to the department by placing sworn staff on the road."

The report also includes several recommendations for the department's detective bureau, including the addition of three detectives in order to "specialize and restore investigative resources" and the elimination of both school liaison officer positions.

"One officer's responsibilities should be reassigned to a standard detective position," the report states. "The second officer should be repurposed into a youth bureau officer position. This specialty assignment would primarily investigate youth crimes and respond to schools as needed as opposed to primarily working out of the high schools."

Also in the report, Trumbo indicates that 63 percent of employees support reducing DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) instruction, while 54 percent of the public supports pursuing community relations activities instead of DARE.

"Only 38 percent of citizen respondents feel that DARE achieves its primary objective of reducing teen drug use," the report states. "(Approximately) 73 percent of citizens, however, feel that police increase interaction and build relationships with our youth. This can be accomplished with reduced instructional time."

The report recommends that the department's DARE

officer should reduce instructional days for each of the 35 sixth-grade classes from 10 down to six, thereby reducing classroom hours from 413 to 240.

"This will allow the DARE officer to assume community resource activities that are practiced by the current traffic bureau sergeant, as well as add new responsibilities for neighborhood watch, crime prevention public service announcements, and homeowner's association/business group meetings," the report states.

According to Shelide, the report also includes several suggestions to improve the department's traffic bureau, including the elimination of the motor carrier position when the current motor carrier officer vacates the position.

"The existing motor carrier officer is outside of his contractual service time," the report states. "He has been unable to meet motor carrier demands due to accident investigation, new responsibilities for firearms and defensive tactics instruction, and necessities in filling road patrol shortages."

In addition, the report also recommends restoring the department's motorcycle patrol functionality.

"There are currently seven officers who are motor trained in the department, and two officers in the department are qualified instructors," the report states. "This reduces mileage wear and tear on department vehicles, provides community relations dividends, and allow bicycle path and park patrol capacity."

Shelide said he has mixed feelings about the recommendation.

"I'm very hesitant about it," he said. "Motorcycles are cool and the officers like them, but there are several studies out there that show they're dangerous."

Shelide said he has reviewed the recommendations in the report, and will present those he feels are worthwhile to the Board of Trustees for approval.

"Everything in this report has to get executive approval and board approval," he said. "We have a tremendous police department, and we're going to keep it that way."