

Byram Township Police Department



2020 End of Year Report

Chief Kenneth Burke

POLICE DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

The Byram Township Police Department has existed since the 1930's as a part-time law enforcement agency. On April 7, 1971 it was established as a full-time Department with four sworn personnel. Today, the Department has fourteen sworn officers and two part-time records clerks. This is down from a high of fifteen sworn officers and a full-time records clerk in 2006. The Police Department strives to be a contributing factor in creating a better quality of life for our residents, business owners and visitors. Through proactive policing with an emphasis on community relations the Department places its highest values on the preservation of human life, the protection of property, and professional service to all.

The Police Department is divided into three operational units:

- Administration/Records
- Patrol Division
- Detective Bureau

The Administrative/Records Unit is comprised of the Chief of Police, the Lieutenant, and two records clerks. This unit performs the administrative duties of the Department as well as record-keeping and overseeing day to day operations.

The Patrol Division makes up the backbone of the Department. This unit is comprised of three Sergeants and eight Police Officers. The Patrol Division provides uniformed law enforcement services to the approximate 8,000 residents that live throughout Byram's 26 square mile area. These services are provided 24 hours a day, 365 days per year. These Officers provide traffic enforcement, emergency response and answer a variety of calls for service. Each of these Officers are trained First Responders and are certified in the use of automated external defibrillators (AED's). Each on-duty patrol vehicle is equipped with a first aid kit, oxygen bottle and defibrillator; as well as other emergency response equipment. Each first aid kit also contains Narcan with every Officer being trained in the administration of this product as part of our commitment to treat opioid overdoses and minimize overdose deaths.

The Detective Bureau is supervised by the Lieutenant and is staffed by the Detective. The Detective conducts criminal investigations that are assigned to him by the Patrol Sergeants after the initial report is taken by the Patrol Division. The Detective is also responsible for maintaining the Department's evidence storage facility, ensuring the integrity of evidence related to crimes is properly maintained as items are secured, stored, and transported to the New Jersey State Police forensics lab for testing.

CHALLENGING YEAR

We can all agree that 2020 was a unique year that presented numerous challenges for everyone throughout our society. The Coronavirus pandemic has created extreme hardships for many of our fellow citizens and we all witnessed the unprecedented levels of civil unrest that swept our nation over the summer. This civil unrest also led to historical levels of violence against the law enforcement community.

Thousands of law enforcement officers across the nation have contracted COVID-19 while performing their duties and at least 246 have died as a result. Determined to continue meeting our obligations to the community the members of this Department stepped up and remained flexible to continue providing valuable law enforcement services. Officers dealt with daily changes in policies and procedures from the national, state, county, and local levels. Due to shortages in manpower they adapted to a modified patrol schedule where they worked seven 12-hour shifts in a row over the course of nearly three months. Working with other government agencies the Department was able to acquire enough personal protective equipment to allow officers to continue their interactions with the public and to continue answering emergency calls for service.

Civil unrest throughout the year also led to an increase in violence towards law enforcement officers. Across the nation, police departments had over 97 police vehicles burned, more than 2,037 officers injured, and another 59 officers killed in the line of duty by gunfire and various means of assault. Although fortunate to avoid any major incidents within our community the members of this Department elevated their situational awareness and placed additional emphasis on officer safety, training, and education.

In Memoriam

The Byram Township Police Department has recently lost two retired members of the Department.

Retired Patrolman Henry M. Shubert Sr. passed away at the age of 84 on November 20th, 2020. Patrolman Shubert retired from the Department in 1994 after 25 years of service and was also a veteran of the United States Air Force.

Retired Detective Joseph T. "Todd" Duffy passed away at the age of 69 on February 1st, 2021. Detective Duffy retired from the Department in 2012 after 25 years of service and was also a veteran of the United States Coast Guard. During the last 20 years of his career, Todd was the D.A.R.E. officer and ran the program since its inception. He was and still is affectionally referred to by his students as "Officer Duffy".

POLICE DEPARTMENT OPERATIONAL BREAKDOWN

CALLS FOR SERVICE			
	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Homicide	0	1	+1
Sex Offenses	8	6	-2
Burglary	10	8	-2
Theft	58	38	-20
Motor Vehicle Theft	6	3	-3
Aggravated Assault	5	2	-3
Simple Assault	14	10	-4
Arson	0	0	-
Fraud	32	37	+5
Criminal Mischief	46	33	-13
Weapons	5	1	-4
Fireworks	7	16	+9
Narcotics	22	26	+4
Alarms	189	188	-1
Disorderly Conduct	50	30	-20
Suspicious Activity/Vehicle/Persons	221	198	-23
Motor Vehicle Accidents	224	173	-51
Motor Vehicle Stops	2,111	1,329	-782
Medical Assists	389	321	-68
Traffic Enforcement / Radar Details	-	887	-
Property / Business Checks	-	6,062	-
School Security Checks	-	335	-
All Other Calls	9,591	1,802	-
Total Incidents Handled	12,988	11,457	-1,531
	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Adults Arrested	112	61	-51
Juveniles Arrested	55	1	-54
	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Property Value Reported Stolen	\$266,582.00	\$71,851.00	-\$194,731.00
Property Value Recovered	\$178,453.00	\$53,983.00	-\$124,470.00

2020 OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Byram Township Police Officer's:

- conducted **335** School Security checks and walk-throughs at the Byram Lakes and Byram Intermediate Schools. These details typically last for 45-60 minutes and are conducted to reassure students, parents, and school staff that their Police Department is committed to the safety of our schools. It also provides a great opportunity for members of the department to promote a positive image of the law enforcement profession while fostering relationships with those we are here to protect.
- conducted **887** Traffic Enforcement details along municipal, county, and state roads located in the Township. The Department receives numerous complaints from concerned residents regarding the unsafe and careless operation of vehicles along their roads. We are committed to establishing a presence throughout the Township to slow down motor vehicle operators and to ensure the safety of everyone who uses our roadways.
- completed **6,062** Property Checks on local businesses, residential properties, and Township properties. Whether it is to stop in and strike up a conversation with a local business owner or locating an unsecured door at 3:00am, the Police Department is committed to the safety and security of your property. These checks serve as a vital deterrent to criminal activity and provides Officers with the opportunity to document suspicious and out of the ordinary activity.
- responded to **150** Animal Complaints. These complaints come in for a variety of reasons such as animals struck by motor vehicles, animals exhibiting an illness or erratic behavior, or a bear in search of food. We are fortunate to live in an area with an abundance of wildlife but sometimes the behavior of such wildlife can cause public concern. The Department has officers who are specially trained and equipped to respond to a variety of wildlife-related complaints.
- assisted **69** stranded and disabled motorists. Taking care of those who travel our roads is a priority for the Department. Outside of emergency response to motor vehicle accidents and accident investigations it is not uncommon for Officers to be out changing tires, retrieving a gas can, or contacting a tow company for those who end up broken down on our roadways.
- averaged **5** days of in-service training to maintain qualifications and continue our pursuit to provide the highest quality of law enforcement services to the community. We conduct semi-annual training in firearms proficiency, use of force, motor vehicle pursuit, and response to domestic violence related incidents. In addition, we maintain certifications for driving while intoxicated (DWI) enforcement and first aid/CPR.

- traveled approximately **100,000** miles during their patrol activities. One of the best ways to deter criminal activity and promote a sense of safety and security in the community is being seen.
- continued their assistance and volunteered time to help collect food donations for “*Cram the Cruiser*” and “*Stuff the Bus*” food drive events that benefit the Sussex County food pantry.

ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- In 2020, the Department processed **662** applications for Firearms Purchaser Identification Cards and Handgun Purchase Permits. This represented a **259%** increase from 2019 where there were just 184 applications processed.

AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Each year the Department and Township Officials host an event to recognize and commend members of the Police Department and private citizens for acts of valor, meritorious service, exemplary performance of duties, and honorable and faithful service. Even though the 2020 event was canceled due to the Coronavirus pandemic there were numerous achievements that took place throughout the year.

- In January 2020, Chief Peter Zabita retired from the Department after twenty-four years of honorable and faithful service to the residents of the Township.
- In February 2020, the Department promoted three officers to new positions. Kenneth Burke was sworn in as the Department’s fifth Chief of Police while Lieutenant Brian Moreland and Sergeant Thomas Dellicker were also promoted to their current positions.
- In June 2020, Patrolman John D’Onofrio retired from the Department after twenty-six years of honorable and faithful service to the residents of the Township.
- In July 2020, the Department hired two new officers. Patrolman’s Christopher Spaldo and Derek Kuncken completed their Basic Police Training at the Morris County Public Safety Academy in December.

PROJECT MEDICINE DROP

In August 2016 the Department began participating in “*Project Medicine Drop*” and obtained an unwanted prescription and over-the-counter medication collection box. The collection box is located in the lobby of Police Headquarters. The box was partially funded by donations from the Sussex County Center for Prevention and Counseling and the Byram Township Police Officer’s Association.

- In 2020 the Department continued its participation in the county-wide drug disposal day collections in the spring and fall at the Byram Shop-Rite and CVS stores.
- In 2020 the Department collected and disposed of **128** pounds of unwanted medications.



LAW ENFORCEMENT AGAINST DRUGS (L.E.A.D.)

The Department started its 30th year instructing an anti-drug program in the fifth-grade classes at the Byram Intermediate School. The Department's instructor, Officer Marcus Lisa, utilizes the L.E.A.D. program. Law Enforcement Against Drugs (L.E.A.D.) is a non-profit (501C3) organization, supported by dedicated police officers, committed to protecting our youth and communities from the proliferation of drugs, drug related crimes, peer to peer/cyber bullying and violence.

- Unfortunately, the 2020 L.E.A.D. program was limited by the current Coronavirus pandemic. Students were only able to complete about half of their scheduled curriculum and the typical graduation and picnic could not be held.

COMMUNITY LAW ENFORCEMENT ADDICTION RECOVERY (C.L.E.A.R.)

The Byram Township Police Department is a member of the Sussex County Community Law Enforcement Addiction Recovery (C.L.E.A.R.) Program. C.L.E.A.R. is a collaborative effort from the Sussex County Prosecutor, Sussex County Police Chiefs' Association, Newton Police Department, Center for Prevention and Counseling, Atlantic Health System and other social service agencies and is supported by the Sussex County Freeholders and municipal governing bodies across the county. Check out <http://clearprogram.org/about/> to see a clear overview of the program.

Our county, like the rest of our state and country, is in the midst of an opioid use epidemic. In 2016, the Sussex County area had 32 overdose deaths due to heroin, prescription medications and other drugs, up 28% since the previous year. Additionally, there were 52 overdoses where Narcan was administered by EMS or Law Enforcement, an 18% increase since 2015. In 2019, the Sussex County area had 41 overdose deaths due to heroin, prescription medications and other drugs, along with 121 overdoses where Narcan was administered by EMS or Law Enforcement. Overdose rates have been steadily increasing due largely to fentanyl, a powerful synthetic opioid.

The mission of the C.L.E.A.R. Program is to form a collaborative network of professionals in our county who will facilitate medical intervention, improve access to treatment and recovery support for those struggling with drug addiction who seek assistance without fear of arrest or prosecution in order to make a positive difference in the quality of life for individuals, families and our entire community.

The Sussex County C.L.E.A.R. Program seeks to offer access to treatment and services for adults not currently in the criminal justice system and afford them the same opportunities for recovery by utilizing evidence-based practices and strategies. Those county residents seeking assistance can call or text 844-SC-CLEAR (844-722-5327).

SAFE EXCHANGE

The Police Department maintains a safe exchange location under 24-hour video surveillance in front of Police Headquarters where residents and guests to the Township can have a more secure environment to complete their online sales.



The Police Department appreciates the public’s help in solving crimes. You can provide any information you have regarding any crime or suspicious activity by calling the department at 973-347-4008 or by emailing crimetips@byrampd.org. This email address is not to be used for reporting crimes. There is also a reporting link on our webpage at <https://www.byrampd.org/>. If you wish to remain anonymous you are not required to give your name or any other identifying information if you do not want to. To report a crime please call the Byram Township Police Department’s dispatcher at (973) 347-4008.