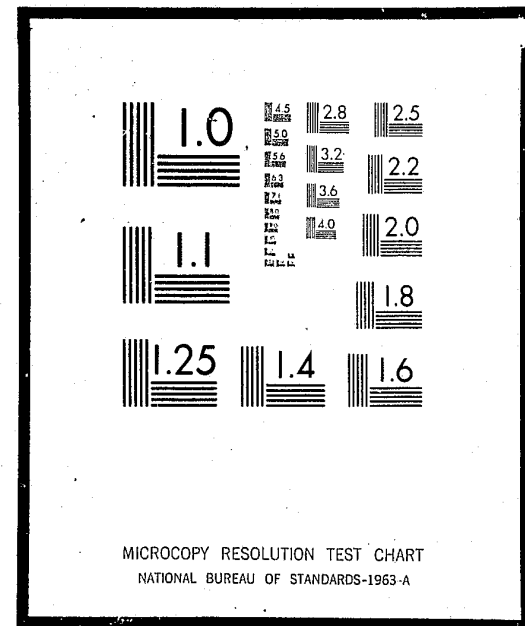


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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFERENCE SERVICE
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Date filmed

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Report
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SURVEY
(WI) -
City of Onalaska, Wisconsin
Police Department -

Population - 7,500

Sworn Police - 9

November 25, 1975

The Lower West Central Criminal Justice Planning Council forwarded a technical assistance request to the Wisconsin Council on Criminal Justice (S.P.A.) on behalf of the City of Onalaska Police Department. The request was forwarded to Region V, LEAA.

Survey made by Terrence T. Doherty, Police Specialist, Region V, LEAA, John Scepaniski, Wisconsin Council on Criminal Justice and Mr. Robert M. Johnson, Chief of the Records Section, State of Wisconsin. The requested areas of study were -

- 1) Department operations.
- 2) Modernization of report writing.
- 3) Manpower allocation.
- 4) Records and filing.
- 5) Personnel.
- 6) Alternatives for improvement.

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PERSONS INTERVIEWED

John C. Dlouhy, Chief of Police and Mr. Harry A. Yates, Lower West Central Criminal Justice Planning Council.

DATA ON CITY AND ON POLICE DEPARTMENT

Onalaska is growing in population, expanding from 3,161 in 1960 to 4,900 in 1970. The most recent population estimate from the City Clerk's Office is 7,500. This represents a 142% population growth. The Police Department has increased its patrolman strength 100% going from three patrolmen to the present six.

The present total strength of the Department is -

- 1 Chief
- 1 Lieutenant
- 1 Sergeant/Juvenile Officer
- 6 Patrolmen
- 1 Cadet

1.2 sworn personnel per 1,000 population.

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Motorized equipment consists of one ambulance - marked as a squad car, one regular marked squad car, and one unmarked car. Since there is no regular fire department, the ambulance is the only public vehicle available for emergency injury or sickness transportation. Thus, it must be operational at all times.

Onalaska, under the terms of a union contract, must schedule policemen's days off on a 5-2, 5-3 basis. This means that the policeman works five days, is off two days, works five more days and is off three days in a regular pattern. This enforced day off scheduling limits the flexibility of deployment.

SURVEY AND DISCUSSIONS

Chief Dlouhy stated that he has tried many different assignment and deployment methods in order to get the best and most effective use of his resources. His present deployment system is as follows:

- 1 officer assigned to the ambulance - 11pm to 7am
- 1 officer assigned to the ambulance - 7am to 3pm
- 1 officer assigned to the ambulance - 3pm to 11pm
- 1 Lieutenant or 1 patrolman (as available) assigned to squad car - 5pm to 1am

The Sergeant/Juvenile Officer has flexible hours which enable him to provide supervision and youth services during critical hours. The Chief states that this employee works long hours to cover these responsibilities.

Although the Chief conceives of the Lieutenant as a field officer, I disagree strongly with such a concept. A high command officer is needed for Department management during the evening hours. Furthermore, additional duties are contemplated for him as the coordinator of investigations. Such responsibilities preclude the idea of a management-level officer being relied on for routine field duty.

The Chief's deployment pattern is based on a daily availability of three patrolmen, with another patrolman being available a few days of the week. I checked this by applying the "three-fifths" formula. This formula is a police administrative device for calculating how many policemen will be available for duty in any 24-hour period, allowing for days off, vacations, training, some court appearances and a normal amount of absences due to sickness or injuries:

$$\frac{3}{5} \times 6 \text{ patrolmen} = 3.6 \text{ patrolmen available each 24 hours.}$$

Therefore, the Chief's estimate of his daily available strength is correct.

If Onalaska's hourly workload demand pattern is fairly normal, his present deployment hours are correct (one unit on each shift, plus an overlap during the high workload hours). The problem is that he cannot activate the overlap shift every day. Under the day off system he cannot even guarantee the overlap shift on Friday and Saturday nights when such field resources are a necessity.

Therefore, I draw the following conclusion: Given the conditions under which he must deploy and given his daily available strength, Chief Dlouhy is assigning his manpower to maximum effectiveness. No other system of deploying the available resources could be devised to do the job better.

This deployment is minimal to the point of danger. The Department has been fortunate not to have cases of officers being unavailable for long periods of time due to serious injury, serious sickness or litigated hiring constraints. Any of these situations would cause the City to be without any police service during certain shifts.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The survey has established the fact that the Department manpower is deployed as effectively as it can be. But this is a bare minimum of coverage which could not be maintained in the event of extended absences. The City should consider several alternatives to assure adequate police services.

The first alternative is based on the question of whether Onalaska should have its own police department. LEAA has been recommending consolidation of small departments and regionalization and sharing of services to provide adequate police coverage to all communities at all hours. The criteria for such sharing and regionalization has been averaging out a police department of less than ten sworn personnel. Onalaska is at that figure. Therefore, they should consider the possibility of disbanding the department and purchasing contract police services from either the LaCrosse County Sheriff's or from the nearby City of LaCrosse. It should be said here that there is one form of resource sharing already in effect. Onalaska receives dispatch services from the LaCrosse County Traffic Department.

However, such an alternative raises many questions. How strong is the City's desire to have their own police department? How would the cost of contract policing compare with present police costs? Is the LaCrosse County Sheriff's Department or the LaCrosse City Police Department willing or able to provide full police service for Onalaska?

The other alternative, if fiscally possible, would be to hire one or two additional police officers for the existing Department. Using the "three-fifths" formula, seven patrolmen would assure four patrolmen available each twenty-four hours; eight patrolmen would give a daily available figure of 4.8 officers.

It is recommended that the City of Onalaska investigate these two alternatives.

It should be mentioned that civilian or para-professional help would not do much to solve the problem. The Department has no sworn personnel assigned to "inside" or non-police duty. The cadet does all the clerical work for the Department.

While I was surveying those aspects of the Technical Assistance request dealing with operations, deployment and personnel, Mr. Robert M. Johnson was surveying the requested items of reports, records, and filing. He will submit his findings in a separate report to the Wisconsin Council in Criminal Justice.

END