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INDIVIDUAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REPORT

In Response to a Request for Technical Assistance

By the

South Iowa Area Crime Commission

FORT MADISON

September 19, 1973

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Prepared by:

Public Administration Service
1313 East 60th Street
Chicago, Illinois 60637

(Per Contract J-LEAA-015-72)

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I. PRELIMINARY INFORMATION

A. Consultant Assigned:

Dr. John A. Webster
University of Illinois at Chicago Circle
Chicago, Illinois

B. Date Assignment Received:

July 11, 1973

C. Date of Contact with LEAA Regional Coordinator:

July 15, 1973

D. Dates of On-Site Consultation:

August 20-24, 1973

E. Individuals Contacted:

Gordon M. Lane
Mayor, Fort Madison

Robert O'Malley, Chairman
Board of Supervisors
Lee County

Gordon E. Plepla
South Iowa Area Crime Commission

Don E. Arnold
Sheriff, Lee County

Mike Howard
Executive Secretary, Chamber of Commerce

C. Arthur Hansen, Superintendent
Fort Madison Community School District

Robert Lewis, Assistant Principal
Fort Madison High School

Robert Readshaw, Assistant Principal
Fort Madison Junior High School

D. E. Hauck, Production Manager
W. A. Sheaffer Pen Company
Chief of Auxiliary Police

James E. Carrell
Chief of Police

James L. Hartley
Assistant Chief of Police

Sergeant C. Morse

Sergeant P. Bartholomew

Patrolman R. Hayes

Patrolman D. Helling

Patrolman M. Pratt
Youth Officer

Patrolman A. Mitchell

Patrolman V. Peterschmidt

Patrolman R. Pohlpetter

Patrolman G. Frost
Criminal Investigator

Auxiliary Patrolman F. Britton

D. R. Clark
Iowa Highway Patrol

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A. Problem as per Request for Technical Assistance:

General recommendations as to possible improvements in: (1) Police management; (2) Manpower development and deployment; and (3) Intergovernmental relations.

B. Problem Actually Observed:

As stated.

III. FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM

See attached consultant's report.

IV. DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE COURSES OF ACTION

See attached consultant's report.

V. RECOMMENDED COURSES OF ACTION

See attached consultant's report.

CONSULTANT'S REPORT

The Fort Madison Police Department is an outstanding organization. It is well-managed and provides superior police services to the citizens of Fort Madison. Extensive and in-depth interviews, examination of records, and observation reveals the department to be effective in carrying out its responsibilities of protecting the citizen, his rights and property, as well as providing other police services. The citizens appear to be well satisfied with the quality of police performance. The following administrative and operational programs represent management methods used to achieve high quality performance.

1. *Deployment of Manpower.* This is a 25-man police force consisting of a chief, an assistant chief, 3 captains, 4 sergeants, and 16 patrolmen. There are 6 civilian employees who serve as dispatchers and clerk-typists plus an auxiliary police force of 14 personnel.

At least three one-man patrols are on the street or available for every shift. A foot patrol is on duty in the business district during peak shopping hours. The auxiliary force, which will be discussed later, is highly trained and well qualified and serves as a source of manpower in substitution for regular members of the force. The intention by management is to have the uniform police highly visible on the streets. This high visibility of police helps to insure safety and extensive police service while providing a deterrent effect to criminal activity.

Specialization is hazardous to a police department and particularly to a small force. This department has designated several personnel spaces for specialization, without sacrificing manpower efficiency. There are nine administrative and supervisory personnel, a youth officer, and an investigator for a total of 11 spaces compared to 14 patrolmen. Both the youth officer and the investigator are filling needed and important positions. Yet, there is no need for four layers of supervision—chief, assistant chief, captain, and sergeants—for a 25-man force. The chief, assistant chief, and sergeant spaces are necessary, but the function performed by captains can be performed by sergeants. Additional sergeant spaces should be studied and possibly created as captain positions are vacated through attrition.

The patrol is the "backbone of the force," and each time a specialist space is created--if for supervisory, administrative, or operational purposes--manpower is taken from the patrol division. The Fort Madison Police Department should consider reversing the procedure of providing specialist spaces from the patrol division by assigning additional spaces to patrol from unnecessary administrative and specialist areas. Police departments, particularly small city police departments, should have patrolmen versatile in all areas of police work. This can be created first by recruiting and selecting good policemen and providing good training. This policy will provide versatile policemen, while making the individual police officer's job more interesting, resulting in higher morale and motivation.

2. *Auxiliary Force.* This is a remarkable reserve police force. The recruiting, screening, supervision, and training of members of the force are almost the equivalent of a second qualified police force. The force is limited to 15 spaces. Members receive a \$1.00 a year salary to protect them under workmen's compensation and continue training so they will remain proficient in police skills. The members purchase uniforms and sidearms and work eight hours a month. The chief of auxiliary police estimates that the force contributes approximately 200 hours a month which is the equivalent of five full-time policemen. The auxiliary force is a tribute to the willingness of innovative department management to tap resources in the community and develop skilled manpower who serve the community with pride and interest.
3. *Police-Community Relations.* Police-community relations are excellent. Interviews and contacts with citizens revealed that high quality police performance has promoted good police-community relations. School officials were pleased with the minimum of vandalism, police cooperation, and particularly the services of the youth officer. The executive officers of the Chamber of Commerce were very supportive of the police because of their cooperation.
4. *Reporting System.* The reporting system is very good. It is thorough but simple. The records are used for both operational and management purposes. The records should be automated to facilitate and improve their use as a management tool.

5. *Crime and Accident Prevention.* An aggressive crime and accident prevention program is carried out primarily because of the high motivation of the members of the force. Management is constantly alert to potential dangers and initiates efforts to frustrate new crime and accident problems.
6. *Manpower Development.* Manpower development is a priority item of personnel administration in the Fort Madison Police Department which is aggressively pursuing police education and progress to improve the appearance and health of police officers.

The Fort Madison City Council was the first in Iowa to promote college training. Policemen can earn an extra dollar a month for each semester hour of successful college credit up to sixty hours or \$60.00 a month. Management's goal is for each police officer to acquire the minimum of an A.A. certificate.

There is strong emphasis on health, physical fitness, and appearance. The officers look fit compared to policemen of other departments partially because of the enthusiasm for and voluntary cooperation in the weight reduction program by members of the force. Police officers in uniform generally present an excellent appearance. Weapons and leather equipment appear to be in good condition. Officers working in civilian clothing are instructed by regulation number 9.109 of the Department's Rules and Regulations to keep firearms concealed when outside the confines of departmental facilities. This regulation refers to the need to avoid "an affront to accepted social procedure" in the use or display of firearms.

7. *Intergovernmental Relations.* Intergovernmental Relations between the Fort Madison Police Department and other agencies is quite satisfactory. Officials of other governmental bodies gave the Fort Madison Police Department superior grades for competency and cooperation. These reports are from the Mayor, the Chairman of the Lee County Board of Supervisors, the Lee County Sheriff, The Director of the South Iowa Area Crime Commission, the Chamber of Commerce, school officials, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Iowa Highway Patrol.

PROBLEMS AND DEFICIENCIES

1. *Police Station.* The most obvious and glaring deficiency is the inadequacy of the police station facility. There is no in-depth discussion in this survey of the shortcomings of this facility since reports have already been written and forwarded to appropriate agencies. However, a great deal of time was spent reviewing plans, interviewing personnel, and examining the facility in detail. The inadequacy of the building assumes critical proportions when measured against the risks to police department effectiveness. It is remarkable that the administration and operational divisions of the department have maintained such high levels of proficiency. Such high quality police service can be continued as long as the situation is improving and there is every likelihood that a new facility will be built. Present building plans are excellent and will meet the needs of the Department.
2. *City-County Consolidation.* There presently is no plan to consolidate or share the services of the proposed building with Lee County. An interview with the Sheriff and a limited examination of County facilities revealed an inadequate situation.

Apparently there is no planned consolidation because Lee County authorities withdrew from an original plan of consolidation. Fort Madison continued to develop its plan for a new police facility without Lee County's participation. Later, Lee County discovered that its plans for a sheriff facility could not be completed. By then insurmountable disagreement had arisen between the two branches of government preventing consolidation.

It is strongly recommended that the governing officials reconsider their positions and consolidate such services as communications, jails, locker rooms, etc. With government becoming increasingly expensive, it is unfair to the taxpayer not to take advantage of situations where savings can be made. *The consolidation would undoubtedly enhance police effectiveness for both Fort Madison and Lee County.*

3. *False Burglary Alarms.* There were 54 burglary alarms in Fort Madison from June 2 to August 19 and each was a false alarm. In fact, 90 percent or more of the burglary alarms in practically every city in the United States are false. This is an appalling situation when the possible dangers and high costs are calculated. Numerous

risks arise as police cars move through heavy traffic at high speed to respond to false alarms. Faulty equipment, driver error, children, pedestrians, and street repairs are a few of the factors that increase hazards. The life or injury of a policeman or citizen is not fair trade for a real burglary, let alone a false alarm.

The management at Fort Madison Police Department began to tabulate the false alarms two and a half months before the survey because they recognized a growing problem. They now have sufficient data to effectively deal with the problem and reduce it if not eliminate it altogether. The data shows there are 18 alarms installed in various locations. Seven of these locations have never had a false alarm. Two have had one false alarm. One had two false alarms. Three locations had between three and five false alarms each.

Research has shown that alarm equipment is usually well-manufactured. The false alarms are invariably subscriber errors. Good examples are the 13 false alarms at a local business, each set off accidentally by an employee.

This problem can frequently be solved by an appeal from the police force to the subscriber. Subscribers are usually not aware of the tremendous police effort and danger involved in an alarm. However, if false alarms continue from the same subscribers, police units should move to the scene at normal speed. (After police arrival at the scene the situation must be considered as a crime in progress.) Also, the City Council should consider establishing sanctions against false alarms. As a final consideration, since Fort Madison is small in area and the alarms are probably the "silent" model, normal driving speed would be adequate. The silent alarm is designed to surprise the offender and sirens and emergency lights deny the surprise element.

4. *Public Display of Firearms.* The shotguns in police cars visible to the public are offensive and should be discontinued. The trend in major cities has been to put the shotguns in the trunk of the car or store them in the arsenal. The police union in New York has asked for shotguns, but has not received them. As Fort Madison does not have the violence of New York or Chicago, the Fort Madison Police Department should resolve to conceal the shotgun. Personnel in civilian clothing should also conceal their weapons as required by police rules and regulations.

CONCLUSION

The Fort Madison Police Department is a very successful police agency. It is probably unique in its level of excellence. Chief James E. Carrell is an outstanding leader and administrator. Mayor Gordon M. Lane and the members of the Fort Madison City Council are recognized for their support of the Police Department and for their service to the community.

END

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