



Dewey Beach Police Department

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Message from the Chief:

When I was hired this time last year, I was given a mandate from Town Manager Bill Zolper and Mayor Bill Stevens to assess the immediate needs of the Police Department.

I used the Organizational Analysis that was commissioned by the Town in 2019 as a roadmap of what needed to be addressed and corrected. I made the determination as to what issues needed immediate attention.

Although many areas of the administrative and operational aspects of the agency were in dire need of reform, the staff of the agency is its greatest strength. After extensive interviews with my staff both sworn officers and civilians, I was delighted at the level of their professionalism, commitment, and enthusiasm at helping to improve our agency and the services we provide to our community and our visitors.

We have only begun to improve the Dewey Beach Police Department. But this first year under my command saw expenditures that will enhance professional services, update computer technology, and most importantly make our community and the officers that serve this community safer.

Employee Interviews and Facility/Vehicle/Equipment Inspections:

Before any actions were taken, I conducted extensive interviews, meeting with each Police Department employee to get direct input from each Officer or Civilian assigned to the Police Department. Compiling a list of what each perceived to be the greatest need for the agency.

- Each employee was interviewed, and during this interview was asked what they perceived as major operational/training/or equipment issues.
- A thorough inspection was conducted of the Police facility with a special focus on three specific areas: Arrestee Detention area, Evidence/Property storage area, and the Communications/Dispatch area.
- I also inspected the equipment issued to the officers and asked for inspection logs, monthly vehicle inspections, as well as the latest personnel evaluations of my personnel.
- I also inquired about the agencies organizational chart and began to review the agencies Policies & Procedures and General Orders.



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Observations and Findings:

- The Dewey Beach Police personnel are a group of committed professionals who had been working in positions that were not sufficiently supported by communications personnel and had not been provided necessary and basic tools to conduct Police work in a safe professional manner. Things like updated and better body armor, uniforms that were functional and provided uniformity**, medical trauma kits for self-care were not issued.
- Arrestee Detention area is not adequately secured**, no separation of both sight and sound for minors/adults and male/females. No countermeasure or device was in place to safely and humanely contain/control a combative, violent detainee.
- Evidence and Property storage**: The room was bursting at its limits. A cursory check found that much of the contents had not been properly disposed of after adjudication of the case. Illegal drugs from arrests from ten years prior had been maintained in evidence long after the case had been disposed of by the courts. Maybe most importantly the procedure for logging, depositing and maintaining the evidence was antiquated and severely outdated.
- Police Communications: The Communications room (Dispatch) had non-working or severely outdated computers that had been cobbled together with other pieces and monitors. Much of the equipment was not serviceable and took up space. The Cables, wires, power cords were intertwined with other cables that had been abandoned and left behind the dispatch consoles.
- Inspection logs for vehicles, weapons, and other major equipment were non-existent. Yearly employee evaluations of performance had not been done regularly in decades. Policies and Procedures and General Orders were in place, and some had been updated after the agency had signed up for Lexipol, however the Lexipol resource had been severely under-utilized.
- Communications (Dispatch) was severely under-staffed and given little to no formal training.
- Vehicles were not equipped with comprehensive tactical trauma kits for treatment of catastrophic bleeds or sucking chest wounds, as well as secondary combat action tourniquets.

Issues that have been addressed and corrected:

- Arrestee detention: New handcuffs and leg irons were purchased and issued. A detention chair was purchased, and all officers were provided training in its proper use. A Policy was written and issued to all Officers.
- Property Section: The property room was inventoried, and any evidence or found property that was still being retained will be properly disposed of according to rules of evidence and property guidelines.
- A new evidence computer with software and barcode scanner was purchased to accurately and efficiently log property/evidence into the system to maintain the chain of custody log.



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- Communications: Un-serviceable and computers that were not compatible with the report system were retired and new computers and monitors were purchased and put into service.
- The cables wires and power cords were organized and any extraneous or unused cables were removed.
- Old, outdated, unreliable portable radios used mainly by the Seasonal Police Officers were taken out of commission and I applied for a grant to replace them with the modern portable radios used by my full-time staff.
- Vehicles were equipped with comprehensive trauma kits to include hemostatic agents, chest seals, and tourniquets. Each kit is located in a standardized location so they can be accessed by any officer, in any police vehicle.

Grants:

The process of finding and applying for grants to off-set Overtime/Vehicles/Equipment was under-utilized. In the past 12 months I have sought to identify and apply for grants to attempt to update worn equipment, vehicles, radios, body armor, flashlights, weapons etc.

Grants acquired:

DCJC	\$14,990.00	Protective Vests/Body Armor
DCJC	\$5,952	Protective Helmets/Shields

Delaware Criminal Justice Council Grants Sub- Total: \$20,942

Homeland Sec. Office of the Sec.	\$28,340.20	Cameras
Homeland Sec. Office of the Sec.	\$4,866.89	Vehicle Equipment
Homeland Sec. Office of the Sec.	\$11,179.88	Ballistic Shields/OT
Homeland Sec. Office of the Sec.	\$4,011.00	Weapon Equip./Hi-Vis Patrols
Homeland Sec. Office of the Sec.	\$4,932.50	Vehicle Equipment
Homeland Sec. Office of the Sec.	\$6,500.00	High Vis. Patrols
Homeland Sec. Office of the Sec.	\$28,257.80	Cameras
Homeland Sec. Office of the Sec.	\$27,210.84	Cameras
Homeland Sec. Office of the Sec.	\$1,112.80	Weapon Equipment
Homeland Sec. Office of the Sec.	\$4,822.22	Weapons



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Homeland Sec. Office of the Sec.	\$3,943.02	Weapon Equipment
Homeland Security Grants Sub-Total	\$125,177.15	
SLEAF 23-007	\$34,845.90	Radios
SLEAF 23-011	\$1,974.95	K9 Hidden Suit/Sleeve
SLEAF Grants Sub-Total:	\$36,820.85	
DENREC- Sustainable Energy Utility Inc. \$130,974.00	(2) F-150 FORD Police E-Trucks	
DENREC Grants Sub-Total:	\$130,974.00	
Total Grant Funding for 2023:	\$313,914.00	

Training:

Listed as a priority in the **2019 Agency Analysis** was a severe lack of good quality training. I additionally assessed that the supervisors training pertaining to leadership and organizational skills was lacking.

Training opportunities were identified and Officers that had been promoted were immediately scheduled to attend supervisory training to give them the skills necessary to direct and supervise personnel.

The FBI-LEEDA trilogy training has been available to our agency but was not being utilized. I immediately began sending personnel to this training.

- Training in police work has multiple positive impacts on the officer and the agency. Training provides job enrichment and offers the officers new challenges. Training improves the officer's base of knowledge and increases the officer's confidence and level of service to the community.
- Training benefits the town by reducing liability, enhancing an officer's knowledge of issues that often propagate civil suits. When officers regularly receive legal/law updates, recent court decisions, and major changes in subjects like investigative detention, search and seizure, reasonable suspicion and probable cause, they make legally defensible decisions on the street in real time.
- In the last year Officers have attended these valuable legal/law updates as well as each officer was issued a Field Guide for Search and Seizure (Search & Seizure Survival Guide/A field guide for law enforcement, Anthony Bandiero, JD). Each officer was issued this guide, signed for it,



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with the expectation and directive that they were to read the entire contents, and have it with them as a resource material while working.

- The guide provides them hundreds of legal “what if’s” that will assist our officers in making decisions during investigations. The manual provides case examples, and then compares them to the legal standards. Each time an officer refers to this manual and uses it as a reference guide he/she is conducting non-structured training.
- The agency had access to the web-based training provider Police One, however classes had not been selected or used. I received input from my supervisors and officers, as well as selecting topics in which our staff had not received
- Not including the training hours of the Chief of Police attending the Delaware certification process, firearms training, or the Academy training of the two new Police Officer recruits. Our Officers accrued a total of **1,092.50 hours** of both web-based training and in-person training.

Training Classes Attended and Completed in 2023

- Advanced Traffic Stops- FBI-LEEDA
- Advanced Search and Seizure- Blue to Gold LE Training
- Internal Affairs Investigations- FBI-LEEDA
- Basic Life Support- American Heart Association
- De-escalation Strategies and Techniques- Police One
- De-escalation and Reasonable Use of Force- Police One
- De-escalation and Minimizing Use of Force- Police One
- Use of Force- Police One
- Use of Force Situations-Police One
- 2023 Annual Staff Development Seminar- DE Assoc. of Chiefs of Police
- COPT Minimum Standards Basic Certification- Dover City Police Academy
- TASER X2 Re-certification 2023 DBPD
- Media & Public Relations Course- FBI-LEEDA
- Active Shooter Incident Management- DHS
- Priority One Air Rescue SAR Mission Hoist Training-Delaware Fire School
- Command Leadership Institute- FBI-LEEDA
- DSP Information Systems Safety & Security- DSP
- 28th Annual Homicide Conference- DSP
- Effective Policing Skills and Tactics- Street Cop Training
- Intoxilyzer 9000- DSP
- Supervisor Leadership Institute- FBI-LEEDA
- NCIC NLETS Re-certification-DSP
- Tarheel Canine Training- Tarheel NC
- Drugbeat Police K-9 Search and Seizure-



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- NHTSA/DUI Refresher Training –DHS
- Delaware Behavioral Health and CJ Summit- DHSS
- NRA Law Enforcement Patrol Rifle Instructor School- NRA PA.
- NRA Law Enforcement Handgun/Shotgun Instructor Course- NRA PA.
- Firearms Instructor Certification Course- DSP
- NHTSA Standard Field Sobriety Testing-Refresher- DSP
- Eating Right for Health and Fitness- Police One
- Off-Duty, Safe and Ready- Police One
- 2023 Legal Updates-DSP
- Introduction to Car Seats- DSP
- Street Crimes-Pat McCarthy's Tactical Training
- Field Training Officers Course- DSP
- Highland Canine Training- Highland LLC-NC

Supervisory Training:

- Promoting a seasoned veteran officer to a supervisory rank is only the first step to providing leadership and on-street supervision. Each Officer promoted to Corporal and above was provided training which taught supervisory techniques, leadership principles, and provided those tools for dealing with difficult situations in daily police supervision.
- Every newly promoted Commander/Supervisor has successfully completed the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) Law Enforcement Executive Development Association (LEEDA) course for Leadership and Supervision.

Field Training Program/Training:

- The agencies Field Training Officer Program has been completely re-vamped. To ease and accelerate the Field Training Program of new rookie officers, every single patrol officer has attained certification as a Field Training Officer (FTO).
- The Field Training Program will now consist of each Rookie Officer receiving training from multiple Training Officers to observe different techniques and approaches.
- The Program will have each FTO complete Daily Observation Reports (DOR's) to accurately track the rookie's progress and document any deficiencies.
- Each Rookie Officer will have to complete each enumerated task (training objectives) under the supervision of their assigned FTO.

Employee Evaluation Program:

- According to long time employees of the Police Department, annual performance evaluations were either done sporadically, or not at all for years at a time. The DBPD now has a comprehensive performance evaluation that will be done by the employee's immediate



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supervisor, and forwarded through the chain of command, being endorsed by the supervisor and subsequently the department head. These Evaluations will be done annually and forwarded to the Town Manager every October.

Equipment:

- Equipment in Police work has become much more technology based. Which in turn increases its price, shortens its length of service, and usually means additional extra training to qualify on a piece of equipment. I.E. a less lethal force Taser cost approximately four times what a deadly force pistol costs. It, like the pistol has to have re-training every year, in which it must have at least two cartridges fired in a training setting to certify on it.
- The more equipment that is supplied to a police officer the higher the training budget is going to increase. However, an agency is expected to equip its officers with a well-equipped "tool box" to handle various situations.
- During the past year I have assessed what equipment was lacking to carry out the daily duties of the agency, as well as what were things that needed to be changed. Much of my direction was gleaned from my individual interviews with my sworn personnel as well as the Organizational Analysis of 2019.

Fleet:

- Prior to my arrival a 2022 Dodge Durango was purchased. The vehicle was subsequently upfitted, marked, and placed into service during my tenure
- A 2023 Chevrolet Tahoe was purchased and up-fitted with a K-9 cage and K-9 Hot Dog system, as well as exterior markings warning of a K-9. This Unit was issued to Cpl. Kurten and K-9 SMOKE.
- A 2023 Ford Explorer Police Pursuit was purchased and upfitted and marked Black/with white lettering. This vehicle is an electric Hybrid. This vehicle was issued to PFC. Jesse Swanson.
- A 2023 Ford F-150 Police Service pick up was purchased in black and marked with white reflective lettering. This vehicle has been issued to Lt. Dempsey
- A Polaris UTV was purchased and marked in black and white markings and upfitted with emergency equipment. This vehicle is used by all personnel year-round. During the summer it will be a vehicle used by Seasonal Officers to patrol the beach and bayside during peak hours of the evening/night.
- Four Mountain Bicycles were purchased for rotational use by Seasonal Police Officers. Each bike is equipped with lights, and saddle bags.
- E-Truck Grant- (2) F-150 Lightning Police Special Service package. These vehicles will be delivered in March. Once they are marked and upfitted they will be issued to Lt. Dempsey and Sergeant Schmidt. Their current vehicles will be re-issued.



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Uniforms:

- The daily duty uniform that the officers were wearing was a black polo shirt, desert tan BDU pants and sand colored combat boots. The officers wore external vest carriers with “fixed” pouches (meaning they were set up one way and were not convertible) with generic “POLICE” patches on the front and back.
- I spoke with other Chiefs as well as observing what other agencies were wearing. It was determined that the agency should move toward a more traditional uniform that is instantly recognized as that of a uniformed police officer. A police uniform manufacturer was selected to assure that these uniforms could be ordered for the long term. Dark Blue was selected for a couple of reasons: It is truly synonymous with Police Officers, it is used to convey intelligence, and is viewed as a serious color, and it provides a neat quasi-military appearance to exude authority. The fabric is light, breathable, and can be washed at home to cut down on maintenance costs. The pants have additional pockets to carry additional equipment and are fitted in a way that allows for climbing, running, wrestling, with unobstructed movement.
- New Body Armor was obtained under a grant. Unlike the old outer carrier, a new carrier was selected that allowed for the equipment to be attached at the preference of the officer. An easy to clean outer carrier in black was selected. The carrier has a badge patch as well as the officer’s name and IBM number on them. They also have white letters denoting: **DEWEY BEACH POLICE**. These carriers also have the ability to “up armor” the vest by adding rifle plates. This can be done on the fly, meaning they can drop them in enroute to a high- risk call i.e. Active Shooter, with very little time or effort involved. These additional plates substantially increase the protection value of the officer’s body armor.
- New Ballistic Helmets with non-ballistic face shields. These were obtained using grant funds. These helmets will serve dual roles. They may be worn during high- risk operations dealing with armed subjects. I.E. Active Shooter. Additionally, they can be donned and used during a large disturbance when bottles, rocks, etc. are being thrown. The Non-ballistic face shield will provide basic protection from thrown objects.

Police Facility:

It should be noted that many safety issues were highlighted in the 2019 Organizational Analysis. Just purely based on the limited space, architectural design, and building materials used most of the suggested structural and procedural improvements cannot be achieved in the current police station. The new facility will correct all of the current discrepancies.

As noted in the Analysis report the facility is not designed to deal with prisoners, property, interviews or any other police related activities. And, although we are getting a new Police Station, when I took over



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the facility smelled of mold, was in disrepair and was dirty, unorganized and had not been properly maintained for years.

The way a Police facility is maintained and organized speaks to the professionalism and pride of the agency. Subsequently I requested certain portions of the station to be painted after being cleaned for not only aesthetic reasons, but cleanliness and health.

We made the following changes to be more efficient, organized and professional:

- Quarter Master and Storage rooms were gone through and completely cleaned and organized. Old, damaged, outdated uniforms, equipment and computers were properly disposed of.
- Serviceable equipment was cleaned and retained.
- The cleaning and organizing of these areas made room to store the Mountain Bikes in a dry and climate controlled environment for the off-season.

Police Department Seasonal Police Officer Program:

- The seasonal police officers that had been hired in previous years had been exempt from attending the full seasonal academy by the previous administration. I changed that to require that the officers have to complete all phases of training each year they return. This acts as their annual "In-service training".
- Each Seasonal Officer hired by the DBPD for the 2023 summer was more thoroughly vetted before being hired. The interview process was improved, and the training was increased.
- The uniforms and issued equipment were in complete disrepair. Uniforms had been cobbled together from previous years, and the issued utility belts were old, very worn, and dirty.
- I drew funds from the 10-33 account to fund the purchase of all new uniforms and equipment for the Seasonal Police Program.
- Additionally, we received grant funding for new portable radios that were provided to the Seasonal Officers to improve their ability to communicate with dispatch. In past years they had older, less reliable radios issued to them.
- Early in the season a total of eight seasonal officers attended Mountain Bike School at both the Bethany Beach Police Department, and the Ocean View Police Department.
- Seasonal Officers were also issued and wore the AXON Body Worn Camera each day they worked. As per agency procedure they were required to activate the BWC anytime they made a citizen contact during any police investigation.

Body Worn Cameras:

- DBPD began issuing Body Worn Cameras to all sworn personnel both full/part/seasonal officers prior to the summer season of 2023.



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- Body Worn Cameras (BWC) is designed to increase transparency, ensure accountability, and enhance public trust by effectively using captured video.
- Additionally, the BWC footage can be used to highlight the realities of police work, used in administrative and criminal investigation, and improve training and policies.
- In addition, body worn cameras video clarity is limited when compared to the human eye but does provide a silent witness to maintain a policy of transparency to the citizens and visitors we serve.

Communications:

- One of the most glaring areas that had been neglected, and as such created a dangerous Officer Safety concern was that the Communications section (Dispatchers) were severely under-staffed, under-trained, and had no direct Communications Supervisor.**
- Additionally Communications personnel were not readily identifiable as employees of the Police Department** Subsequently all Dispatchers are now issued a “soft” uniform of a black polo shirt and a ¼ zip pullover with the Police patch with “Communications” underneath of the patch. On the opposite side is the dispatcher’s first initial and last name, positively identifying them as a police department employee.

Dangerous Working Conditions:

- Without full time dispatchers manning the communications/Front Desk area, when a lone officer would be on the street the police department would be vacant and locked. Most vehicle GPS units in an emergency highlight the nearest location of a Police Station or Fire Station. The Police Station is often times the location of the first point of contact with a victim, complainant, or a citizen suffering a medical emergency. It is reasonable for a citizen to expect to find a police station open and manned 24/7**
- By the DBPD not having a dispatcher staffing the communications center 24/7: Officers usually working the over- night shift were relegated to carry a cell phone with them, receive calls for service on the cell phone and “self -dispatch” themselves to call for service. By doing this the officer’s ability to make an emergency call for assistance was almost impossible. This procedure was extremely dangerous and placed the officer (most times working with no back-up) in a dangerous position.
- After getting input by the Officers, Dispatchers and Supervisors it was clear that either we had to choose one of two directions to correct these dangerous short-comings. Either shut down our dispatch center and have all dispatch operations go through SUSCOM or hire additional full time dispatchers to maintain a dispatcher in Communications 24/7.
- After looking at several possible approaches I choose to increase staffing of the Communications center and hire an experienced police communications Trainer/Supervisor.



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- The main reason this option was chosen was the DBPD would not be able to use the SUSCOM channel for our seasonal Police Officers. Therefore, we would still need to maintain our own channel with a dispatcher to communicate with them. Since we employ some seasonal officers up to 6 months out of the year, this seemed the most logical approach. Additionally, SUSCOM often-times become over- burdened during busy summer nights by all the units sharing the southern Sussex County channel.

Department Wide Technology Up-grades:

- Axon Body Worn Cameras acquired and worn by all sworn personnel both full time/part-time and seasonal officers**.
- New police radios purchased (grant) to upgrade portables used by the seasonal police officers.
- New computers and monitors throughout the communications/administrative assistants/Chiefs Office/Property Storage Room.
- New Property/Evidence software program.
- New Skills Manager training and equipment inventory web-based software with technical support. Allows for every hour of training to be captured and retained. This in turn builds a more a more detailed record of training for civil and criminal proceedings.
- AXON software (cloud-based) that retains all BWC recordings for the prescribed time for evidence based BWC. This also allows for video to be sent to prosecutors for use in court proceedings. The program also allows for me or my designee to view randomly selected interactions to conduct officer integrity checks.

Goals and Objectives for 2024:

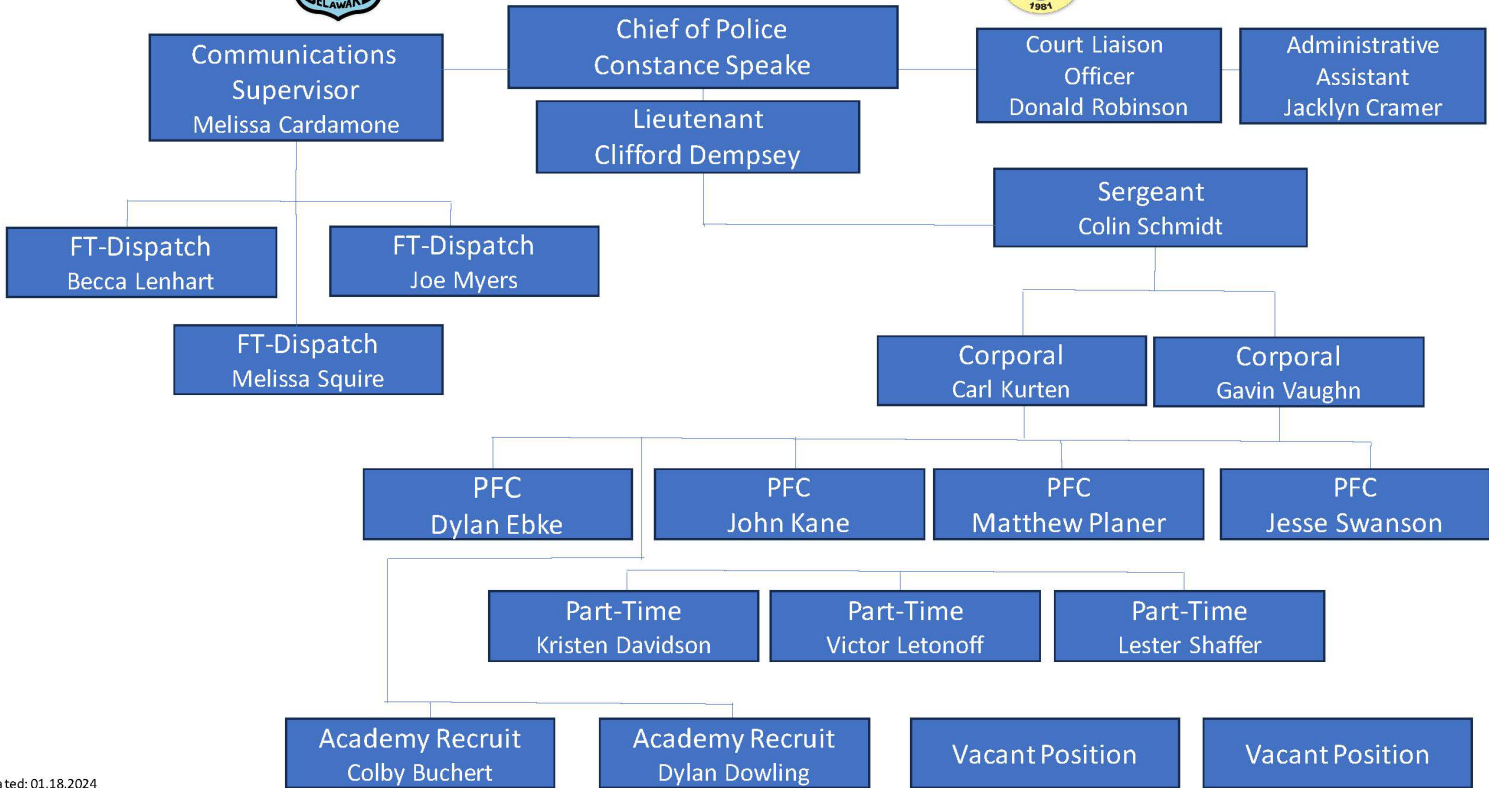
- Continue to enhance career development through training opportunities.
- Train and prepare designated Officer to conduct complex Criminal Investigations (designated Investigator)
- Fill the two police officer vacancies to bring our staffing to 100%
- Transition from GLOCK .45 caliber pistol to GLOCK 9mm pistol
- Host a Public Safety Fair in the Fall of 24'
- Create X (Twitter) and Instagram accounts for the Police Department
- Continue to update policies and procedures
- Purchase a Computer Aided Dispatch system
- Updating department website
- Continue to increase training and relationship building with other neighboring police departments.



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Dewey Beach Police Department Organizational Chart



Updated: 01.18.2024



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		Dewey Beach Police Department							
MAY - DECEMBER 2023 - FULL TIME OFFICERS									
Month:	Call for Service	Parking Tickets	Accidents	DUI Arrest	Ordinance Arrest	Criminal Arrest Adult	Criminal Arrest Juvenile	Warrant Arrest	
May	268	59	0	0	0	7	0	5	
June	319	55	11	2	2	9	0	13	
July	383	156	10	2	2	19	0	19	
August	330	104	20	3	0	0	0	0	
September	242	57	16	4	0	11	2	11	
October	109	21	2	1	1	11	0	9	
November	107	29	6	1	0	4	0	3	
December	167	12	2	3	2	6	0	4	
	1925	493	67	16	7	67	2	64	
Seasonal Police Officer May - November 2023									
	Parking	Civil	Criminal	Arrest					
Totals	702	233	100	129					
Calls for Service total: May - December: 3,823 - Full TIME & SEASONAL OFFICERS									
Year 2022 Calls for Service: 2150									
Year 2023 Calls for Service: 4116									