Policing
St. Petersburg

Strengthening the Transition To Community Policing

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Policing St Petersburg

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Executive Summary

For some years, the St. Petersburg Police Department has been nationally recognized as a forerunner in the implementation of community policing. It was perceived as an early convert to the principles of the police-community partnership and problem oriented policing, moving away from a reactive policing style that emphasized rapid response to calls for service as the highest priority of policing.

The transition to community policing in St. Petersburg was supported by a comprehensive planning process resulting in a strategic plan as detailed as any police agency had created during the period of the early 1990's. In that sense, St. Petersburg was truly a pioneer in the transition to community policing. It advanced the state of the art in a number of areas, detailing a massive number of organizational changes it was committed to implementing and moving to dramatically alter how policing was done in the city.

[f] It was thus a shock to much of the nation that following several years of community policing transition, a series of community disorders broke out in late 1996 which raised serious questions about the police and community relationship and the effectiveness of the transition to community policing. From the national perspective, St. Petersburg had it all: a bright, articulate and committed chief of police nationally recognized as a leader of progressive police thinking; a strategic community policing implementation plan that was detailed and comprehensive; substantial impact results from the community policing efforts undertaken until that time, including crime reduction in the city; and a host of other attributes often considered flowing from community policing implementation. What went wrong?

There are no simple answers to that question. Over the last seven years since the St. Petersburg Police Department began its transition to community policing, much has gone right. There are important

lessons to be learned from the St. Petersburg implementation experience; lessons that can only be learned in hindsight from understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the community policing transition.

The St. Petersburg Police Department is poised to move forward in solving important policy and strategic issues that impact the effectiveness of its community policing implementation. The department has been willing to open itself to a thorough examination of its policies and operations to experts from the four major police organizations. The recommendations set forth in this report represent the best of current police thinking in the United States today.

The department may not adopt all of the recommendations contained in this report. That is to be expected. The department, however, can make important strides toward excellence by recognizing the importance of several of the key concepts that flow throughout this report. They are:

- The importance of establishing police officer accountability on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis

- The importance of making geography the basis of the organizational structure and policing strategy

- The need to communicate thoroughly the rationale for policy matters to all police employees and the community

- The importance of holding each police supervisor accountable for the actions of the officers whom they supervise

The department is poised to move forward. The Chief of Police is committed to strengthening the internal policing-making process, and to involve both community and police officer in future policy decisions.

We are encouraged by the underlying spirit within the department. The full implementation of community policing, on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis, will serve the St. Petersburg community well. That community - all the residents and visitors to St. Petersburg - will then receive the high level of police service they deserve. It can be an exciting time for the city and its police department.

Community policing is not a panacea for all problems faced by American policing today. However, it can serve as the framework for a philosophy that brings police and community together to constructively

impact important issues of crime, violence, citizen fear and disorder. A community policing orientation for American police organizations is here to stay. The transition is a complex and difficult undertaking. The St. Petersburg Police Department has provided important experience and insight into how the transformation can best be done. As St. Petersburg moves to strengthen its own transformation, other police agencies can learn from St. Petersburg's efforts.

The Key Lessons for American Policing

Based on the analysis of the St. Petersburg community policing transition, there are important lessons that are applicable to other police agencies as well. These include not only organizational alteratipns peculiar to St. Petersburg, but also an overall approach to community policing itself. These key lessons are the following:

- The basic commitment to community policing must be well articulated by the city leadership to both the community and the employees of the police department.

- Community policing is not the panacea for all of a community's problems. While substantial improvements in quality of life issues and citizen satisfaction can achieved, it is a mistake for government to sell community policing as the ultimate answer to all the problems found in urban neighborhoods. If citizens come to perceive that community policing has that objective, they will eventually loose faith in the initiative.

- Measurable outcome objectives must be set forth early in the strategic planning phase of program development. Measurements of achievement must occur routinely and be widely publicized.

- Implementation plans for community policing can be detailed and complex, but they cannot be so compartmentalized that they lose sight of the key elements of the community policing philosophy: neighborhood responsiveness, problem solving and partnership.

- Partnership with the community means that members of the community have to be included in substantive discussions about how policing is carried out. Likewise, police officers who have the responsibility to carry out these strategies must also be deeply involved in the discussions.

- The solutions to crime and violence in a neighborhood cannot only be police solutions. These solutions also must involve community commitment and action if they are to be effective.

- Articulating the commitment to community policing requires that police management has a comprehensive understanding of both neighborhood priorities vis-à-vis crime, disorder and fear, and the perspectives of police employees about the police role in serving a community.

- A complex police organization should not expect to successfully implement community policing with a "split-force" patrol organization. Community policing requires that all police officers working in a neighborhood have a common focus on community problem-solving and partnership.

- The key accountability within the police department must relate to "turf" or geographic area. A majority of police officers must know clearly what their area of responsibility is in geographic terms, so they will know the community they serve and the community will know which officers are to respond to their needs. Even in non-patrol assignments, geographic responsibility must be reflected in work distribution and assignment.

- There must be a clear chain of command within the patrol function and clearly delineated accountabilities established within that chain of command focused on geographic areas. Every supervisor and every subordinate must know what their chain of command is and who is accountable for their work and performance.

- Policing congested neighborhoods of urban communities requires that every police officer act with a commitment to protect the dignity of every citizen, regardless of ethnicity, criminal involvement or appearance.

Policing St Petersburg

Strengthening the Transition to Community Policing

Introduction and Overview

For some years, the St. Petersburg Police Department has been nationally recognized as a forerunner in the implementation of community policing. It was perceived as an early convert to the principles of the police-community partnership and problem oriented policing, moving away from a reactive policing style that emphasized rapid response to calls for service as the highest priority of policing.

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It was thus a shock to much of the nation that following several years of community policing transition, a series of community disorders broke out in late 1996 which raised serious questions about the police and community relationship and the effectiveness of the transition to community policing. From the national perspective, St. Petersburg had it all: a bright, articulate and committed chief of police nationally recognized as a leader of progressive police thinking; a strategic community policing implementation plan that was detailed and comprehensive; substantial impact results from the community policing efforts undertaken until that time, including crime reduction in the city; and a host of other attributes often considered flowing from community policing implementation. What went wrong?

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to community policing, much has gone right. There are important lessons to be learned from the St. Petersburg implementation experience; lessons that can only be learned in hindsight from understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the community policing transition.

This report has a dual focus. It is, first a summary of the observations, findings and recommendations of the four professional organizations following their review of substantive aspects of the St. Petersburg Police Department. Second, it is a commentary on the lessons learned from the St. Petersburg experience which can be useful to other police agencies as they move forward with the important transformation to community policing.

Community policing is not a panacea for all problems faced by American policing today. However, it can serve as the framework for a philosophy that brings police and community together to constructively impact important issues of crime, violence, citizen fear and disorder. A community policing orientation for American police organizations is here to stay. The transition is a complex and difficult undertaking. The St. Petersburg Police Department has provided important experience and insight into how the transformation can best be done. As St. Petersburg moves to strengthen its own transformation, other police agencies can learn from St. Petersburg's efforts.

The Key Lessons Learned

Based on the analysis of the St. Petersburg community policing transition, there are important lessons that are applicable to other police agencies as well. These include not only organizational alterations peculiar to St. Petersburg, but an overall approach to community policing itself. These key lessons are the following:

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- Policing congested neighborhoods of urban communities requires that every police officer act with a commitment to protect the dignity of every citizen, regardless of ethnicity, criminal involvement or appearance.

Each of these lessons is reflected in the pages that follow, as they underlie the recommendations flowing from analysis of the St. Petersburg experience. The remaining sections of this report review each of the critical components of police organization and strategy, detailing how these lessons impact community policing implementation, as well as the specific recommendations for strengthening the St. Petersburg Police Department's effectiveness.

Acknowledgements

Policing Reform in St. Petersburg

Community policing came to St. Petersburg in 1989 with an experimental program in Jordan Park. It was one of the earliest community policing initiatives in the United States. In 1991, following a tour of ten cities experimenting with community policing implementation, four members of the St. Petersburg Police Department returned home and shared their observations with senior staff. A new mission statement for the department was prepared, setting forth an expanded role for the police working in partnership with the community to solve important community problems.

The St. Petersburg Police Department is committed to establishing and maintaining a meaningful and productive partnership with the community. The goal is to achieve excellence by facilitating a partnership between members and the citizens in order to mutually identify and resolve community problems. This partnership will ultimately enhance the safety and quality of life for the citizens.

Following completion of this mission statement and the articulation of a set of values for community policing, the Chief of Police held department-wide orientation sessions about the new philosophy. At the same time, the department also formed a Steering Committee for Policing Excellence, a 35-member group including both police department and public representatives. The group was charged with development of a community policing implementation strategy that focused initially on selecting and training a small group of police officers to serve as community police officers (CPOs) and, designation of community policing areas throughout the city; and assignment of the CPOs to those areas. The objective of these initial efforts was to "jump-start" the process quickly so its impact could be felt throughout the neighborhoods of the city. Since there was only limited national experience with community policing implementation, the plan was moving into untested waters. What was clear was that the department wanted to establish more productive and collaborative partnerships with its community.

Following that initial process, the implementation plan called for a series of supporting actions to be taken over the following year to strengthen organizational support for the community policing effort. Included were the development of a marketing plan, education of citizens, repeat call analysis, promotion of youth resource programs,

and training dispatchers to support the problem-solving process. All of these elements reflected national police thinking at the time.

In 1992, a far more detailed implementation plan was developed which was more comprehensive than the original and covered a wide-range of department activities. Five major goals were set: partnership; empowerment; service; problem-solving; and accountability. Each major goal was linked to strategies aimed at achieving objectives reflecting these goals. The plan was thorough and detailed, programming actions to be taken by the police department during the following years.

In 1995, a third planning document was prepared reflecting a shift in emphasis and conveying observations of then Chief Stephens about areas in which the community policing initiative needed to be strengthened. Recognizing the strong base for community policing that had been established in the department, this document suggested three important shifts in emphasis:

1. Establishing a geographical base of accountability for everyone in the department;

2. Increasing the emphasis on problem-solving; and

3. Enhancing and improving the department's communications capabilities, both within the department and between the department and the community.

Chief Stephens had evaluated the implementation of community policing up to that time and observed its strengths and weaknesses. He clearly understood the problems that had arisen which were preventing community policing from taking hold in a manner that would contribute to a more effective relationship between police and community. The department issued a second Strategic Plan in 1996, entitled St. Petersburg Police Department - Strategic Plan 1996 - 2000. detailing steps to take to impact crime, fear and disorder in the community. Building on the original community policing goals and objectives, this plan acknowledged that most basic support systems were in place to sustain community policing. The focus of activity shifted to problem-solving and problem-resolution in the neighborhoods of the city. This plan was updated in 1997 and re-titled Community Policing - The Transition to the New Millennium.

In late 1997, Chief Stephens was promoted to the position of chief administrative officer for the city and Assistant Chief Goliath Davis

became Chief of Police. Chief Davis stated clearly he was committed to St. Petersburg's community policing transformation and would seek to strengthen its implementation.

St Petersburg's commitment to community policing remained strong throughout, even though between 1991 and 1997 there were three chiefs of police, as well as a period during which an acting chief was in command for many months.

The Observations and Findings

The review of the strategic plans and supporting planning documents shows that the department produced a number of excellent technical plans, but that the cohesiveness and overall direction of the effort may have been somewhat obscured in the numerous statements of objectives, milestones, and implementation tasks. The breadth of material is, in the words of the IACP reviewer, "overwhelming." The department's planning effort was outstanding. At the same time, the product of that planning was so voluminous that it may have introduced difficulty maintaining a focus on the key elements of the community policing strategy. Given that difficulty, it is understandable that neither community nor police officers appear to have had a thorough understanding of the basic foundation of the approach to community policing in St. Petersburg.

Every poltee officer interviewed understood that the department was transitioning to community policing. Surveys found reasonably widespread understanding in the community that a transition was underway. There was, however, little understanding among the community or police employees as to systems of policing. Because the department decided to continue the basic structure of 911-call response, and designated community policing duties to a group of specialist officers, it appeared the general operational ethics of the department were able to continue in place.

The department has made significant alterations over time to its community policing plan. Chief Stephens, noting the importance of establishing some sense of geographic responsibility for an area, moved from a standard shift orientation to a system of geographic accountability. Sergeants have responsibility for one or two CPAs and lieutenants have responsibility for sectors having up to 6 CPAs. Each of these supervisors still has shift supervisory duties during some of the tours of duty when they are working. Their work schedules are flexible. They work three days as CPA supervisors and two days as general shift supervisors.

The result of many of these changes has been to strengthen aspects of the community policing initiative, sometimes creating a confusing array of overlapping responsibilities. The community policing implementation plan for St. Petersburg remains a well-detailed and somewhat visionary series of documents. But the complexity of organizational arrangements and the tendency to make adjustments without re-visiting some of the underlying organizational strategies has resulted in a complex, sometimes confusing set of police officer roles.

Recommendations

The basic commitment of the St. Petersburg Police Department to community policing is sound. But the department should now develop a revised organizational strategy for community policing that creates a singular focus on neighborhoods and integrates what are now, in some instances, disparate organizational roles into a more cohesive arrangement.

The Implementation of Community Policing

Community policing is an important police organizational orientation; an orientation that brings the community into sharing responsibility with the police for conditions of crime, disorder and violence in a community. While there is not a single approach to community policing, the basic elements of the community policing concept incorporate a number of consistent themes. These include decentralization of policing away from strong headquarters control toward neighborhood-focused policing activities; partnerships with neighborhood residents; a focus on longer-term problem-solving rather than simply responding to citizen calls for assistance; and, increased interaction between investigators, patrol officers and neighborhood residents toward strengthened crime solution activities.

A number of police agencies claim to have implemented a community policing strategy as a department-wide philosophy. Some of these agencies have adopted some element that could be considered bringing the community into some aspects of policing. In many police agencies, however, community policing has become an "add-on" to the core policing function, which remains responding to citizen calls for service. These agencies have failed to recognize that community policing involves a total change in a police agency's orientation, requiring new policy, procedure, assignment patterns and training. Indeed, in its best sense, community policing must be viewed as a way of thinking about the police function; as a philosophy of policing that permeates every aspect of police activity. It must involve a transformation of the police organization from a reactive posture to a police organization with a proactive posture aimed at solving neighborhood problems relating to crime, violence, citizen fear and disorder.

The most successful community policing implementation efforts are those that have captured the minds and souls of the police agency. The commitment to the "community" in community policing means that the agency takes a broader view of the police function than simply law enforcement. Problems of crime and disorder are solved by collaborative police and community action. To be successful with such

a strategy, it is imperative that police officers not only understand the elements of community policing but adopt a view of their work that is truly collaborative. That is not an easy transformation in an organization that is quasi-military, with a strong hierarchical structure and centralization of operational control over field service delivery through 911 centralized dispatch of all citizen calls for service.

In this sense, the commitment to community policing means a commitment to rethinking how policing is done in a community. It means not only that the police have to learn new ways of ordering their work, but also that the community must learn how to become full partners in providing for safe and secure neighborhoods. This is far easier said than done. The implementation strategy for community policing must transform the police organization from being reactively focused to being community centered. While an implementation plan might set forth in great detail the myriad of tasks to be undertaken and identify how each element of the police organization must adjust its activities, unless the plan provides a means of capturing the imagination and commitment of police employees, the plan will end up as little more than a programmatic blueprint whose essence is lost in translation during implementation.

Community policing implementation requires that at the earliest stages of the planning process, every unit of the police organization be brought into the process. While articulation of the mission, values, goals and objectives are a useful first step, bringing officers and the community into a process of defining the implementation steps to be undertaken will strengthen the initiative. If the commitment to community partnership is real, then bringing the community into the planning process is mandatory. If the commitment to assisting police officers adjust to a community-centered role is to be real, then officers, likewise, must be brought into the planning process at an early stage.

The commitment to community policing requires that the highest levels of the police organization have some type of geographical orientation; an orientation based on "turf." The power in the organization must rest with those who have geographic policing responsibility, not be divided equally between a variety of functional divisions, most of which are centrally focused. If patrol is considered the backbone of the police department, the commanders of patrol units - each geographically focused - should be, in the best sense, the highest level under the chief of police. Investigations, support services, and administrative functions must be aimed at servicing the needs of the geographical organization.

When these changes are made in a police organization, the commitment to community will be clear and the supervisors and managers of patrol officers can be held accountable for their patrol officer's activities. The degree to which these police officers can gain the trust of the community will determine the effectiveness of the community policing initiative. That is the vision of community policing. It is a real vision and possible in any community that fully understands the required commitments and is willing to act accordingly.

Nothing in this prescription of community policing prevents the implementation of highly effective crime reduction strategies (as adopted with stellar success by the New York City Police Department). What a commitment to community policing requires is that the strategies adopted to focus on crime in a community involve the community, and not be simply police responses. New York City learned from their experience that those anti-crime strategies targeted the elimination of quality of life threats to a community were always most effective when the community was involved in strategy development. That is the basis of community policing-collaborative decision-making.

Observations and Findings

In St. Petersburg, the original city-wide community policing model was centered on creation of a Community Policing Division, staffed with 43 selected officers, who were each assigned to a designated "Community Policing Area" (CPA). Shortly after implementation of this structure in 1991, the number of CPAs was increased to 48 to better equalize workload among the officers. This model for community policing - considered a "split-force model" with a small group of specialist officers assigned to develop neighborhood relationships and undertake problem-solving activities - stayed in place until April, 1993. At this time, the Community Policing Division was merged into the Uniform Services Bureau, in an attempt by then Chief Darrel Stephens to eliminate the "split force" orientation of the undertaking and better assimilate community policing officers and patrol officers into a single problem-solving group. The CPOs reported through designated sergeants to the Division Major and the patrol officers reported to the Major through a different chain of command. While these ^angedjfrrought the CPOs and the regular patrol officers into the same police department unit, one group of officers continued having responsibility for neighborhood problem-solving while the remainder of the patrol force focused primarily on response to calls for service. But the changes laid the groundwork for a series of following efforts aimed at correcting the initial divisiveness between the two groups of officers.

Responding to the concerns that there remained a division between patrol officers and CPOs, Chief Stephens implemented further refinements of the structure in February 1994, when a comprehensive "geo-deployment" structure was implemented. Under this new structure, both CPOs and patrol officers working a common geographic area reported to a single supervisor (sergeant), who had "group" responsibilities for three shifts a week, and overall "shift" responsibility two shifts a week. In this plan for "geo deployment," three to five police officers were assigned to each Community Policing Area, and each Sergeant had responsibility for one or two CPA's on a 24 hour a day basis. Each Lieutenant was assigned responsibility for 24 hour a day supervision of three sergeants, and five to six CPAs.

In August 1995, the department was awarded a COPS AHEAD grant from the U. S. Justice Department's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. The grant provided for 18 additional officers assigned to one of three strategic problem-solving teams. These teams, headed by a sergeant and reporting to the district major, focused on problems of drug dealing in target neighborhoods.

The continuing organizational changes and the resulting structure of the department created some confusion among a number of patrol officers about lines of authority and chain of command. The lines of accountability, and chain of command for officers assigned to community policing areas (CPAs) were not as clear as many officers desired, given the fact that they had spent years in a traditional police environment with a definitive chain of command that was the same for every shift. From our review, it appears that some of the issues related to officer's less than enthusiastic embracing of a community policing philosophy that created perceived disparities among officer work assignments for patrol officers and CPOs.

It is important to note that St. Petersburg was dealing with a difficult issue head on. Recognizing the importance of geographic stability of assignment for patrol officers, the department moved to make geography a key element of resource allocation. Thus, individual sergeants were given 24 hours a day responsibility for geographic area supervision. This meant these supervisors had to vary their work shifts, so they would have contact with officers on other shifts. When these supervisors were not present, other supervisors had to fill in for them, creating a situation in which officers could claim that their supervisors were changing day to day. In fact, that was not the case with the model that evolved any more than in a normal patrol structure when supervisors are sick or on vacation

It seems clear, however, that the addition of grant-funded officers reporting directly to the area major further confused the chain of Command issue. While acceptance of the grant funds were believed to require that officers be specially detailed to the new anti-narcotics activities, the department did not fully explore other options for program design that would have reinforced their current supervisory structure. And as a result, it appears that the department was left with a community policing model with a variety of different roles among officers and different supervisory chains of command. The fact that both groups of officers - CPOs and grant-funded officers - had specialist assignments in patrol, either as grant-funded strategic officers or community policing officers, they were viewed by the remainder of the patrol force with some envy and suspicion.

In early 1994 on an experimental basis, to resolve this perceived divisive structure and chain of reporting, Chief Stephens implemented on a test basis a new geo-deployment patrol structure, with all officers reporting to the same sergeant. Some of the community policing officers were less than happy with the new changes, because it increased their accountability and supervision. It is reported that a number of CPOs organized members of their community to protest the changes, claiming that the department was doing away with community policing. Our review of the history and rationale of the changes in structure indicate that nothing could be further from the truth. Not only was the senior command of the department fully committed to community policing, but they were moving to expand the type of activities successfully implemented by the CPOs among the rest of the patrol force, not limit those activities. But for that to occur, the two groups of officers had to begin to operate as a single team, all accountable to the same supervisor.

It is clear that St. Petersburg went through numerous changes in its community policing strategy design. Some of these changes appear to have generated some confusion among officers who have a need for clear lines of authority and supervision. But even given this confusion, substantial benefits and accomplishments have emanated from the community policing model as adopted. The review of community policing implementation by the International Association of Chiefs of Police found that substantial accomplishments have been achieved during the implementation period, with some-of the important measures of achievement over the five-year implementation period. For example:

- Serious crime declined over 17%
- Violent crime declined over 15%
- Police officer hours spent in community problem-solving increased 215%

- The number of citizen complaints declined over 36%
- Citizens view St. Petersburg as a safer place, with citizen fear of being out alone at night declining from 41% to 31%
- Citizen reports of victimization decreased from almost 21% to just over 13%

Even with these successes, citizen satisfaction with police performance has fluctuated in some areas, according to recent department surveys. Police officer dissatisfaction with their jobs has apparently increased to some degree, as evidenced by analyses conducted for this study, although it is questionable if the increase is significantly significant. To the casual observer, there is a real disparity between the department's solid accomplishments and the underlying tensions and level of dissatisfaction. They are not easily explained. But we suspect that community policing may have been oversold in its earliest stages, where a sense was created within the community that community policing would significantly improve the quality of life in the city's neighborhoods. What has occurred is that police performance has improved over the period. But the problems of unemployment, poverty, racism and education have remained significant issues in many neighborhoods, and residents were led to believe that community policing was the key factor what could resolve these problems have become disenchanted with progress being made.

The review of community policing implementation by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) concludes that the St. Petersburg Police Department has, "within the limits of the state of theory and practice, taken most every step possible to prime the community policing implementation process for success." Their conclusion is that the following factors have been important to the transition process:

- Zealous and informed leadership
- Thorough early and continuing research
- Philosophical linking of traditional and community policing
- Deliverable expectations
- Quality strategic planning
- Goals and objective setting
- Workforce preparation
- Retooled support systems
- Skilled resource management and augmentation
- Comprehensive marketing
- Intense partnership and problem-solving activity
- Structural experimentation and evolution
- Evaluation driven change
- Overall managerial and operational excellence

An important exception to this finding lies within the area of labor relations. It appears that the SPPD management failed to mobilize sufficient support from labor. It seems, also, that workforce preparation, both communicating the rationale for transition decisions, and intensity and range of training, could have been stronger.

The IACP review noted that both chiefs during the transition period, Ernest Curtsinger and Darrel Stephens, were vocally committed to the transformation. It seems clear that the formal implementation process was well designed and comprehensive, matched by vocal commitments from the senior executives of the department. This raises the issue of whether the original implementation concept was itself flawed.

The original approach to community policing in St. Petersburg was one in which a group of specialized police officers were assigned responsibility for developing community relationships in the various St. Petersburg neighborhoods. While this approach was common at the time the original community policing strategy was designed, it has been found to be less appropriate today. Experience throughout the country has clearly indicated that community policing does not reach its full effectiveness if only a small group of officers or supervisors are assigned to develop extraordinary relationships with a neighborhood's residents. Having a dual track of relationships creates not only conflict within the police agency (where officers assigned to neighborhood community policing activities, freed from response to 911 calls for service, are viewed as having "special" duty), but within the community where there is created a dual track of relationships; one for dialogue and problem-solving and the other for "real policing." This has been found to be destructive in ensuring that all officers develop a strong commitment to the neighborhood and solving its problems.

Chief Stephens recognized the importance of moving away from specialist community policing officers. But one of the important cjfssocS^bf the St. Petersburg experience is how difficult it is to change the course once a community policing structure has been put into place.

While the department came to recognize the importance of geographic accountability, it has not been able to design a model supervisory structure that clearly provides for the level of accountability needed for successful community policing. As new officers have been added, it has created new roles and overlapping responsibilities with current CPA teams. The current structure is confusing. This creates a sense

of instability among patrol officers, who are unclear as to who is the actual supervisor during some periods of the workweek.

TThe key to successful implementation of community policing in a city like St. Petersburg is providing neighborhood accountability for a (~ majority of the officers assigned to the patrol function. The department was correct to begin to move away from the original model of simply assigning a small group of police officers to act as community police officers, while the remainder of the patrol group maintained a traditional orientation and structure. All police officers assigned to patrol in St. Petersburg must develop the type of relationships the community police officers have established. This level of community interaction must become the fabric of all patrol operations and not just the specially assigned officers. But for that to occur, both the Police Foundation and the International Association of Chiefs of Police note that it is important to resolve theJssAiea^yjroj^ding.supervisory accountability and chain of command.

If the values of community policing are not viewed as primary to all officers working patrol, the disparity between what community police officers do and the activities of the remainder of the patrol force becomes more noticeable. It is apparent that this is the situation that evolved with the implementation of community policing in St. Petersburg.

Recommendations

The community policing officers and generalist patrol officers must be fully integrated into a geographically-based unit. The current assignment pattern, perceived by some officers as a continuation of the "split force" organizational model, should be eliminated and all officers considered as community policing officers. This will mean that all officers perform the two basic tasks of patrol in the geographic areas: response to citizen's problems, and community organization and outreach. Some officers may spend more time on community outreach than others, as determined by their supervisor. But the two roles must be a part of every officer's role.

This change may well be difficult to implement for two reasons. First, the community has come to accept community policing as being the good work being done by the officers assigned to that task. And second, officers have developed intense relationships with community members in the neighborhoods to which they are assigned. For the community, residents must recognize that merging the assignment patterns does not take away from their linkage to community policing but broadens it. The

St. Petersburg Police Department will not be lessening its commitment to community policing. It will be strengthening that commitment.

For the community police officers assigned to these CPAs, the merging of all police officers into their assignment roles will only strengthen the commitment of the department to the community policing philosophy. We have seen that many CPOs have used their assignments to avoid dealing with some tough assignments and responsibilities. They have organized community residents to support retention of the status quo not because it would improve police performance but because it will eliminate some of their specialist status.

The department must develop a resource allocation model that provides for such an integrated policing strategy. There are a number of ways to do this. For one, the department must work to ensure that there remains limited "out of sectoring" in each patrol area. It may be necessary to reduce the number of Community Policing Areas to ensure that each area has a police supervisor assigned to it on each shift. In the supervisor's absence, the senior patrol officer or other designated officer might act in the sergeant's absence to coordinate implementation of the supervisor's instructions.

The four principal objectives of the new patrol structure should be the following:

- Provide for clear lines of authority and accountability on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis

- Eliminate the current division between community policing responsibilities and general patrol officer duties

- Provide for shift supervision when a neighborhood-centered supervisor is not working

- Ensure that geographical accountability is the primary level of accountability for all patrol officers

Merging the community police officers with other members of the patrol force should not reduce the number of community contacts or problem-solving activities undertaken, but rather it should increase these activities. Current CPOs wilt not have to abandon most of their community policing activities, since they will still receive assignments from the supervisor to deal with situations about which they have particular expertise. But they will not have to perform those activities alone, for they will have many other members of the patrol force to

assist them. It is the supervisor who will determine what daily assignments are necessary in a given geographic area. This supervisor must be held accountable for the activities of the officers assigned to his supervision. Therefore, the sergeant must have the authority to direct these subordinates' work, without alternate chains of command. In this sense, the evolving model will require that the immediate supervisor of a team of police officers assigned to a geographic area provide policing priorities to officers on a daily basis. The resource allocation analysis to be undertaken by the department should determine the minimum number of community policing areas necessary to ensure adequate coverage while limiting "out of sectoring." Individual beat areas can be what are now considered "community policing areas," but they need to be a part of a larger supervisory area, which becomes the basic building block of community policing. This transition will mean that the unit of assignment and accountability is broadened beyond that upon which the original community policing strategy was based.

The Perspectives of the Community and the Police

Within any community, there are a wide variety of opinions and perceptions about policing and how it is carried out. The public often has only a limited understanding of the complex nature of the police and the basis of police strategies and practices. That lack of knowledge rarely means residents of a community do not have strong opinions on policing, and what they consider good and bad. In minority communities where there is frequently greater interaction between the public and the police, there are often stronger opinions. Indeed, in poorer sections of a city, where the police often are deeply involved in many aspects of neighborhood life, residents tend to view the police based on two factors; personal observation, which can be a daily occurrence; and rumors, which pass quickly throughout dense neighborhood areas.

Among the police force, there are important perceptions about neighborhoods, the support received from the public and the types of problems faced by the police in carrying out their work. These perceptions are often developed from personal experience, but also

reflect the orientation of individual officers, their backgrounds and training. Within police organizations, new recruits quickly come to understand the general sense their peers have about different city neighborhoods and their residents. While some of these perceptions are accurate expressions of police officer experiences, they are often simplistically stated, without an underlying understanding of the complexity of the situation. The absence of strong relationships and regular non-enforcement interaction between police and neighborhood residents, many police feel uncomfortable in the neighborhood, feeling their actions are watched by residents from their porches and windows.

These differing perceptions often result in tensions between police and community. These tensions reflect differences other than simply the perceptions among residents and police. They often reflect differences about what policing priorities in a neighborhood ought to be, what strategies the police should adopt, and the tactics used by the police in responding to crime. Unless addressed, these tensions grow over time; no public statement about new community-based policing strategies addresses the underlying nature of the situation. While community policing was conceived as a means to develop a working partnership between police and community to address crime, violence and disorder, impacting the police and community relationship requires more than a police plan, new buzz-words and a separate group of officers assigned to establish new working relationships.

For a police department to develop an effective partnership with its communities, it is important that these differing perceptions be addressed. This best occurs through on-going dialogue between police and neighborhood residents. When such dialogue occurs, police find out that most residents want and need police protection, that citizens have common goals with those of the police and that most citizens simply want a police force that treats everyone with respect, regardless of the circumstances.

Through such dialogue, police officers begin to be seen as individuals, beyond their uniforms. The basis of a sound cooperative relationship is recognition that both police and community have important parts to play in providing for a safe and secure neighborhood.

It is important for police management to set clear goals and objectives for police officers working under the community policing philosophy. Those goals and objectives cannot be academic or fuzzy. The department must clearly indicate what it is trying to achieve through its policing efforts and the role that police officers are expected to play in

those efforts. Police management must also clearly indicate how police officers will be judged, thus laying the framework for holding supervisors accountable for the actions of the officers whom they supervise. There is no secret involved in this effort. The goals and objectives of community policing should be as important to the community as they are to the police employee. By clearly stating what is expected, what employees will be held accountable for, there is less chance that officers will misunderstand what the priorities are or that officers will make the wrong choice about whether internal policing objectives have priority over collaboration with the community on neighborhood problems.

Effective implementation of community policing also requires a police agency to make some important choices. Immediate response to every call for service cannot be achieved if police officers are expected to remain in their assigned neighborhoods. The community must be educated to the fact that having the same officers assigned to the neighborhood day after day will require more use of alternate responses to cut down on the need for officers to leave their assigned area and answer citizen calls for service in adjacent neighborhoods.

The community, not just the police, must also assume the responsibility for crime and violence in a neighborhood. When the police commit to bringing neighborhood residents and business people into the strategy development process, the community is accepting a full share of responsibility for the results attained. It is their neighborhood and they set the tone for the level of fear, the absence of violence and the reduction in crime. That means in a true police and community partnership, residents on a block by block basis must take responsibility for their own children, for their own behavior and watch for those who disturb the peace of the area. In the past, it has been all to easy to point the finger at the police and to say, "It's your responsibility."

Observations and Findings

Between 1991 and 1996, the St. Petersburg Police Department administered three citizen surveys to measure citizen satisfaction with police service, fear of crime, victimization rates, and public perceptions about crime and quality of life in the neighborhoods. The sample size of these surveys ranged from 1,448 in 1991 to 2,508 in 1996. The original survey in 1991 established the baseline for assessment; that survey was repeated in 1994 and 1996.

Over the time period between 1991 and 1996, residents of the city felt that the city became a safer place. Indeed, the percentage of residents who were very concerned with crime declined from slightly over 65% in 1991 to just under 40% in 1996. While this is a substantial reduction, the survey still indicates that fear of crime remains a serious concern.

The surveys also note other changes in public perception. Along with the actual decline in crime rates reported by the department, the survey showed that victimization also declined, from over 20% in 1991 to 13% in 1996. But most interesting is that citizen satisfaction with police service delivery declined in many areas over the period of the surveys in a number of important areas. Some of these are the following:

Percentage of Respondents
Rating Behavior as Good

Area	1991	1994	1996
Language/behavior	83.1	66.1	61.0
Professionalism	69.5	66.4	62.2
Courtesy of Officers	73.5	65.6	62.2
Helpfulness of Officers	72.3	61.0	56.4
Sensitivity of Officers	54.5	54.2	**49.1**
Concern exhibited by off.	71.8	54.6	49.9

This data reflects the dichotomy of community policing implementation in St. Petersburg. Given the excellent implementation plans and the substantial progress made in increasing problem-solving presence in the community, the perception among community residents that police performance is good has declined. This presents important challenges for the department and cannot be ignored.

The National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE) conducted a community survey as a part of its review of the state of the community and police relationship. The survey, administered to 1500 residents of the city - with a greater proportion given out in the African American neighborhood - provides additional data about the state of the police and community relationship. In the NOBLE survey, fewer than 20% of the respondents rated the department as "excellent" or "very good." But 57% of the respondents rated the department as "poor" or "very poor." While this survey was administered after the 1996 disturbances, it indicated a substantial level of mistrust within the community about police performance.

In the last two years, two comprehensive surveys of police officer perceptions have also been undertaken, one by Florida State University (FSU) in 1995 and another by the police department's Geographic Deployment Committee (GDC) in 1996. The FSU survey, administered to 144 police officers (80 in patrol and 34 in community policing assignments) found that the satisfaction among CPOs with their jobs was high. The CPOs believed their role was beneficial to the community and that they were making a substantial contribution. Patrol officers were less positive about the CPO role or the effectiveness of the community policing effort.

The GDC survey, administered to 178 police officers (126 in patrol and 52 in community policing), found that while community policing officers were more positive about their roles than patrol officers, both groups were generally dissatisfied with the level of supervisory support they received under the new geographic assignment system.

NOBLE also conducted interviews with officers throughout the department to identify their concerns. These interviews supported the basic findings of the two previous surveys, but also found that a number of officers perceived that there was racism in the department and a lack of clear definition as to community policing policies. Common in many of the NOBLE interviews was a sense that the community policing initiative had limited direction and definition.

From all the surveys, it is apparent that there is a gulf of perceptive differences between police officers and some segments of the community. Within the police department, there are differing views about the police role and what policing priorities ought to be. Community Police Officers (CPOs) tend to have perceptions more closely linked to those of the communities to which they are assigned; which is not surprising since one of their assignments is to listen and communicate with neighborhood residents and business people.

Recommendations

The experience of the community police officers (CPOs) in St. Petersburg supports the contention that positive interaction between police officers and the residents of the neighborhood to which they are assigned is an important contributor to positive perceptions on both sides of the relationship. Since the CPOs have been assigned the task of getting to know the community, they have far different perceptions of community members than do officers who have not had such interaction.

The challenge for the St. Petersburg Police Department is to bring the same type of interaction common between CPOs and the community to the entire police force. It is interesting that interviewees in the NOBLE survey had some particular recommendations as to how this could be accomplished. These suggestions included the following:

- (Police officers) must treat all residents with dignity and respect
- Develop a true partnership between the community and the police
- The police should communicate better with the community

It is clear from the survey results that many police officers understand what is necessary to establish a meaningful, productive relationship between the police and the community, especially the African American community. The following steps were recommended:

Police officers must fully understand the implications of the citizen perception findings and commit to changing those perceptions. If every police officer understands that their job will be easier and their effectiveness greatly improved if they have the trust and confidence of the community, they will act in a manner that builds trust.

Strengthen the lines of accountability between police officer assignments and geographical areas of the city. The lines of accountability from police officer to neighborhood must be strengthened. One immediate step will be implementation of a revised supervisory structure. A second is to undertake a revised resource allocation analysis, developing a new patrol plan providing for most police officers to remain in their assigned neighborhood area. Police officers cannot be held accountable for their performance in a neighborhood area if they have to leave their assigned area regularly. These officers must report to a single sergeant, who must report to a lieutenant who has responsibility for a definable group of neighborhood areas.

As the focus of community collaboration, move from crime watch activities into serious discussions with the community about how particular problems in each neighborhood can be addressed; whether crime or quality of life. With all the commitments to problem-solving activities by the department, most citizens who get involved with the police in collaborative work do so within the crime watch program. That level of involvement is not sufficient to build strong police and community partnerships since crime watch focuses on telling the community that "you watch and then tell us (the police) what you see." It is imperative that the community be involved beyond just being eyes

and ears, particularly if they are to share responsibility with the police for the level of crime and disorder in their neighborhood.

Bring the community into active participation in updating the department's strategic plan for community policing. Make the focus of the plan joint commitments by community and police for collaborative action to deal with priority concerns. There is a sense within the community that the community policing strategic plans have been developed with minimal community input. While this is not completely accurate, that perception exists and must be overcome. Since the strategic plan for community policing will need to be revised to reflect the priorities and recommendations contained in this report, it is a good time to bring the community into the process, by sponsoring a city-wide workshop on strategic plan development.

Provide police officers with reliable data about what the community views as priorities in the neighborhoods. The disparity between police perceptions about what issues are important to neighborhood residents and those actually held by the residents is particularly notable. Besides police officers assigned as CPOs, who spend their time communicating with residents about neighborhood issues and problems, most police officers have little sense of how the community views crime, police strategies and tactics, and neighborhood life. It is important that these police officers gain this understanding, so they will not be responding to a set of priorities different from community expectations. In collecting this information, on a beat-by-beat basis, it would be useful to have officers assigned to each beat participate in the process of information gathering, since it is for their use and will impact how they interact with their assigned neighborhood.

Educate the community about community policing. The surveys indicate that there is a substantial portion of the community who do not understand what community policing is about. We believe it is wise to describe community policing not only as a philosophy but also as a commitment to policing standards (such as treatment of people, problem-solving, crime reduction, and community involvement in police priority setting). The community must be educated not only about community policing methodology but about what they can expect the police officers assigned to their neighborhood to do. The police officers, of course, must fully understand these commitments as well.

Reinvigorate training for the community in problem-solving. We have noted the department's commitment to the problem-solving process and recognize that former Chief Stephens was one of the originators of the concept before he came to St. Petersburg. While both police

officers and members of the community in past years have been trained in the process in conjunction with the Council of Neighborhood Associations, this training appears to have fallen off during recent years. It is particularly important that members of the community - who must be equal partners in the community policing and problem-solving process - have regular access to training. It is incumbent upon the department to offer neighborhood representatives who will participate in problem-solving discussions to continue to have the same training as police.

Send more community leaders through Firearm Justification Training. Since firearms decisions made by police are difficult and are often complex, many departments have found it useful to have community leadership participate in firearms simulation exercises, so they will understand the great difficulty a police officer faces in making split-second decisions in unclear circumstances. The St. Petersburg Police Department should expand the availability of such training to community leaders from all sections of the community.

Institutionalize and expand the citizen police academy to ensure it continues when grant funding runs out. The Citizen Police Academy has been a positive force for those who have attended, but there is some question whether sufficient outreach has occurred to bring into the academy sessions representatives of all points of view in the community. Ensuring diverse participation in the academy will strengthen the program. Arranging for the city to pick up the costs of the Academy once grant funding has ended will guarantee its continuation.

The police should reach out to all members of the minority community, regardless of whether they are considered outside the mainstream of thinking. As the NOBLE analysis stated, "Some police officers avoid contact with persons who have opposite political philosophies. ..or who otherwise seem 'out of step with mainstream thinking.[1] By isolating and marginalizing people, the police send the message that there are groups they will not work with. That is a mistake."

The department should increase its ability to organize communities in support of safe neighborhoods. Ultimately, it is the degree to which neighborhood residents can be mobilized in support of safe neighborhoods that will determine the success of the community policing effort. Crime control, prevention and order maintenance are not solely police responsibilities. But the organization of neighborhood residents will only occur if every police officer is committed to dealing with residents in a sensitive, compassionate and professional manner.

The department must ensure that it does not use tactics that are offensive to the community. There have been substantial questions raised about federally-funded programs and the enforcement tactics used. Some of this concern appears to relate to community sensitivity about aggressive enforcement tactics. It is not sufficient for the department to say that it will no longer participate in such activities; while that might sit well with the community, it does nothing to further a community commitment to eliminate the underlying problem of drugs and violence in the neighborhood. The challenge for the department has been to organize the community against illegal activities in the neighborhood that impact the quality of life and involve the neighborhood in strategy development to eliminate those activities. It has strongly moved in this direction.

The department, when engaging in enforcement activities, such as drug raids, should devote as many resources to explaining to the neighborhood what is happening as to the actual enforcement action itself. During enforcement actions in congested neighborhoods, many residents come out of their homes to observe what is going on. The police officers involved in the action are usually singularly focused on carrying out what is often a dangerous assignment. But citizen observers often want to know what is happening and their queries must be addressed. During such enforcement actions, police officers should be assigned to talk with citizen observers, explaining what the action is about and why it is being undertaken in the neighborhood.

There are four important internal issues that are of such importance to police effectiveness that they require special attention. These four issues are diversity and employment practices, labor relations, police training and methods of dealing with police misconduct.

Diversity and Employment Practices

It has long been an important axiom of democratic policing that a police force should generally represent the ethnic diversity of the community being served. Since public trust is such an important element in determining police effectiveness, it is considered critical that ethnic sub-groups in a community see that the police force has representation from each such group. This is particularly important when dense urban congested areas are populated largely by minorities who frequently do not have the economic resources to improve their lives. Such areas often require substantial police assistance in dealing with difficult problems of crime, disorder and drug use. Police effectiveness is directly diminished if minority residents perceive that the police force has no minority representation.

Diversity, therefore, becomes an important goal for a police administration. To achieve meaningful representation within a police force takes some time. Unless there are substantial outreach efforts as a part of the new police officer recruitment process and the recruitment and employment process is non-discriminatory in all aspects, it is difficult to achieve meaningful diversity within a police agency.

Observations and Findings

The review of diversity issues in the department conducted by NOBLE noted the recent promotion of a number of African-American members of the department to senior policy positions. This brought the number of minority group members at the rank of lieutenant or higher to 30%, substantially higher than the 24% minority population in the City of St. Petersburg[1]. But more important is the fact that the department has

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[1] The 24% includes all minorities, not just African-Americans

had a history of having minorities in rank positions for some years. It is not a new phenomena for the department.

The department does not have written policies for every area of diversity issues, but it appears that minority personnel have had access to a variety of assignments in the department. Within the Uniformed Services Bureau, a majority of African-American officers are assigned to Patrol District 1, which has the majority African-American population in the city. It appears that the department has the correct policies and practices in this area but would be wise to document more of them in writing.

During the interviews, some minority officers expressed concern with the handling of internal discrimination and harassment complaints by the Internal Affairs Unit. There is a General Order (II-25) which clearly outlines the policy of the department regarding discrimination, harassment, offensive behavior and sexual harassment and how complaints in these areas are to be investigated.

Recommendations

The NOBLE analysis recommends the establishment of a civilian position EEO Coordinator in the Office of the Chief of Police. This individual would be responsible for receiving complaints and "walking" these complaints through the investigative process. NOBLE also recommends the appointment of volunteer EEO counselors in each department facility to receive complaints, counsel victims, and monitor EEO compliance. But it is important to note that the City has a coordinator of human relations and with strengthened procedures and publicity, given the limited number of complaints, a strengthened centralized function may be able to meet the need.

Labor Relations

Police agencies find that their effectiveness is determined to a large degree by the extent that employees understand the vision and direction of department development, and buy into the philosophical approach to policing advanced by police management. With a transition to community policing, many former norms of the police organization invariably change, making it imperative that police employees - and their employee organizations - understand the reason for the change and accept the change process. In this sense,

labor relations in a police agency become a key determinant of the success of the community policing transition.

Unless the rationale for the changes are communicated clearly with employees and their organizations, misunderstandings will arise that create serious tensions between labor and management and labor and segments of the community itself. Because community policing involves important changes in policing priorities and tactics, unless police labor organizations are a part of the planning and implementation process, there may be serious misunderstanding about the rationale for aspects of the transition to community policing, and tensions will grow between labor and management.

Labor organizations have the welfare of employees as their primary priority, while police administrations, in their best sense, must merge two sometimes conflicting priorities: the needs of the community and the needs of employees. The semi-military orientation of many police organizations has made it more difficult to reconcile these often-divergent interests. Only through careful collaboration with labor can a police administration resolve these tensions in a manner that results in a joint commitment between administration and labor to provide excellent service to the community.

Labor organizations must recognize that they have a major stake in successful community policing implementation. The degree to which a community supports their police, and believes it is receiving good police service will be reflected in the community's willingness to fund police expenditures, including increased pay levels. Community policing provides police officers with an excellent opportunity to develop community support, and to position the community to share responsibility with the police for success in preventing crime, solving crimes and. dealing with community violence and disorder. A combative labor-management relationship takes the focus of policing away from where it must rest: community problem-solving. Sophisticated police labor organizations have taken leadership roles in working for successful community policing.

Observations and Findings

In St. Petersburg, a series of labor management disputes over the years have resulted in significant tension between the two groups. Long-term labor management stability has been made more difficult because of the number of changes in senior management which have occurred over the last several years.

A key ingredient in the tensions between labor and management has been a lack of understanding among police officers as to the rationale for changes in organization and policy; much of it a part of the community policing implementation process. Officers feel that management has failed to adequately communicate the reasons behind decisions which officers believe directly impact their work environment. And there is a strong perception among officers that it takes management far too long to make decisions about issues that impact officer job satisfaction and effectiveness.

Police management, on the other hand, perceives that the labor organization (Police Benevolent Association) reacts emotionally to many issues, often not taking the time to fully understand the complexity of issues faced by the department. This has made management less enthusiastic about explaining further management rationale for key decisions, because management often expects an emotional reaction from the PBA.

Minority members of the department generally seem to feel that many of the positions taken by the PBA do not reflect their concerns. This perception is somewhat driven by PBA reaction to policing issues that center on how the minority areas of St. Petersburg ought to be policed. PBA positions on these issues have sometimes been perceived to be lacking in sensitivity to the dynamic of minority neighborhoods and the serious problems they confront.

In a community where there is tension between the police and some segments of the community, divisiveness within the work force only enhances the level of tension between police and citizens. These labor tensions, therefore, have a major impact on the public's sense that the police department is less than optimally effective. It is imperative that the department and the PBA find a way to come together on important issues of police policy.

For management of the department, extraordinary efforts must be made to ensure that there is employee input into decision-making. This does not mean these employees, or their labor organization, make policing policy. That is clearly the responsibility of police and city management. But experience shows that employees often have an excellent sense of which strategies will work and which will not and their input only makes the decision-making process stronger.

For police employees, and their labor organization, the challenge is to fully understand that the city government and its political leadership is

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totally committed to the community policing concept. Neighborhoods will have intensive involvement in policing matters.

Among police officers, there is a common sense that they are not fully supported in the field. The Police Foundation analysis of labor issues indicates that this sense among officers may be somewhat rooted in the confusion about supervisory chain of command and accountability issues. Officers appear to be unsure of exactly what they are held accountable for, because they end up having multiple supervisors and work through what some see as a dual chain of command related to the way that geographic accountability has been established.

City Hall, the Police Foundation notes, plays a major part in the police employee relationship. While not always obvious, the city's political structure impacts the labor relationship by establishing the economics for police labor relations and setting the financial parameters of employee pay and benefits.

Recommendations

The department should limit the use of committees to resolve minor problems, unless such committees can rapidly act and bring resolution to the issue. The department's management has historically used committees to provide employee input into the decision-making process. There is a perception that using committee work as the basis for resolving every issue is time consuming, and creates an impression among many employees that the administration is slow to act in resolving problems. Not every issue needs to be the object of attention of a committee; the Chief of Police can resolve many problems quickly after an administrative review. Where the committee process would unduly delay reaching resolution of an issue, it is recommended the Chief of Police use alternate means to provide for reasonably quick action.

Management must ensure that the rationale for decisions is provided to officers. Directives or decisions should clearly explain the issues involved and why the decision has been made, particularly in instances where such decisions are not necessarily in line with officer's initial expectations or desires. Being a quasi-military organization, it is often assumed that officers will follow directives, and they generally do. But unless management provides an explanation as to why decisions are made, and the thinking behind policy, officers will never fully understand how the decision was reached and what broader issues they are dealing with when following the policy. It is apparent that some of the neighborhood resident discontent with police performance

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is based upon officer attitudes. When officers fail to understand the underpinnings of policy decisions, they will sometimes act in an uninformed manner. Successful community policing requires officers with both commitment and spirit, understanding intent as well as formal regulations.

Every policy and directive issued by the department should contain an introductory section explaining the issues underlying the policy and regulation and why the department has selected these policy requirements for implementation. This is a burdensome task for top management of a police agency, but it is necessary if officers are to fully understand management thinking on these critical issues. Officers deserve that information, as does the community when they inquire about these policies.

The PBA must take extraordinary efforts to ensure that its membership is immediately informed about issues discussed with management and the agreements reached. The PBA must assume major responsibility for the level of knowledge their members have about issues of discussion between the department and the union. Absent that information, officers will make assumptions that raise paranoia, impact effectiveness and reduce morale. Regardless of the positions taken by management, the PBA must see that officers are factually aware of the discussions and the positions taken by management. To do less eventually undermines confidence in the PBA and is a disservice to the department's employees.

The PBA should go out of its way to dispel the perception that they do not speak for minority members of the department, whether or not that perception is true. Perception is reality. A large number of minority officers perceive that the PBA is non-representative of their interests. That situation cannot be permitted to continue. Given the level of tension between the police and St. Petersburg's minority community, tension within the police department only becomes magnified in dealings with the public. It is in the PBA's interest to better understand the perceptions of minority officers and to determine how these perceptions can be addressed. The effectiveness of the St. Petersburg Police Department can be exponentially increased if the PBA speaks for all officers. This will require increased sensitivity within the PBA leadership to minority concerns, and willingness among minority officers to honestly engage PBA leadership in discussing their concerns.

The city should develop a long-range resource plan for the department that links city economics with policing strategies. The transition to

community policing is not an undertaking without new costs. It is important that the city recognize the underlying costs of an effective transformation and develop an economic package that will provide the needed support for the transition in the next stages. Recognizing the competition for resources the city faces, these are not easy decisions. It is, however, important that the city recognize that absent a community that feels safe and secure, and without resolution of the divisive racial climate in the city, there will be major impacts on economic development in the future. Investment in community policing is an important element to develop a climate supportive of new investment in the city.

<u>Police management must take seriously the issue of equity in assignments, promotions and discipline in the department, and make extraordinary efforts to establish mechanisms to ensure that there is equity among each personnel action taken</u>. As with many police agencies today, there is a perception among many officers that there is a lack of equity in decisions about assignments, promotions, discipline and rewards. It is probable that the perception of inequity is greater than the actual degree of inequity, but the issue will continue to be a concern until every action taken by police management and supervisors reflects effort to ensure that it is equitable with past actions and policy guidelines.

<u>The Employee Assistance Program, currently run within the department by a supervisor, should be moved out of the department to increase its confidentiality and credibility</u>. While most employees agree that the program is a good idea and necessary, there have been questions about confidentiality and whether a police supervisor is adequately trained to provide the needed assistance. The issues that come to the attention of the program are such that professional, highly qualified assistance is desirable. That can best be provided outside the department, either by employing a trained professional or contracting with a professional firm to provide the service.

Police Training

Effective policing requires that police officers have an extraordinary understanding of interpersonal and community dynamics, as well as technical skills in areas ranging from crisis intervention to criminal investigation. It is probably true that the police officer's job is as complex as any other in our society. With the movement into community policing, additional community-oriented skills have become necessary.

Providing adequate training opportunities involves more than simply assigning officers to attend training classes. For one, it is often difficult to find truly competent instructors or to develop effective training curricula which can develop an officer's capability to intervene in situations ranging from disorder to crime. Secondly, the pressure to ensure that police officers are available for duty - and meeting the daily staffing requirements for police service delivery - puts pressure on police managers to limit the amount of time officers are away from field duties.

Providing effective training that captures the imagination of police officers is no simple matter. The task is complicated when training must deal with the complexity of moving from a non-community-oriented approach to a true community policing orientation. Given the fact that police officers must often work in neighborhoods with which they have little familiarity, skills alone are insufficient to provide the officers with the capacities they need to be effective. A thorough understanding of the complex social dynamic of urban communities is important. And officers must become sensitive, fair and consistent in their approaches to solving problems. These requirements provide a real challenge for police training programs, but the degree to which a police agency can provide their employees with this understanding and skill, the more effective the policing effort.

In summary, policing a diverse community requires that police officers have a wide variety of skills and knowledge, and that they are engaged in a continuous process of skill development and knowledge including updating about modern policing practices and strategies. The new police recruit receives his or her introduction to policing through the police academy, but training does not end with that basic training. Throughout a police officer's career, refresher, specialist, and if promoted - supervisory and management training - must be provided officers to enhance their skills and become increasingly effective at dealing with the numerous complex situations they face daily.

Observations and Findings

The St. Petersburg Police Department noted the importance of training in its Strategic Plan: Community Policing 1996-2000. One of the overreaching goals of this plan was provision of training to officers at all levels of the organization. The stated objective was to "provide departmental members and the community with the knowledge and skills they need to enhance service, enrich the department's membership, and build partnerships."

The Police Executive Research Forum reviewed all aspects of the department's training efforts against that stated objective. NOBLE also reviewed the impact of the department's training programs on issues of diversity and relations with the community.

The department has a Training and Research Division, which has responsibility for all training programs and related initiatives. The research component is focused on keeping abreast of current police practice. The division also has responsibility for personnel recruitment, policy development, personnel development, accreditation, the promotional process and a variety of administrative matters.

The department's training plans are theoretically developed yearly, but since the disturbances, no plan has been developed, pending the release of this report. Prior plans have been based on a needs assessment which indicated most members of the department support additional training.

Not all training is developed and implemented by the Training and Research Division. Some individual units, such as the Investigations Unit and Communications Center, have developed specialized or topical training to benefit the special needs of their employees.

Recruit Training. The Florida Department of Law Enforcement requires that all newly hired police officers receive a minimum of 520 hours of training. St. Petersburg police recruits are trained at the Pinellas County Recruit Academy, and receive far above the minimum requirement, with 720 hours. The increased hours are not targeted in a single substantive area but rather spread throughout the curriculum. An exception is the addition of 45 hours to the interpersonal skill course. When the recruits graduate from the county training academy, they enter into the department's field training program.

New officers have either had prior Florida State certification as police officers (and have attended a state-certified training program), or have had no such certification. In the former instance, the new officers do not attend the county training program, but rather are given a 10-day orientation to the department prior to entering the field training program. Officers without prior certification attend an 84-hour pre-training orientation to the department prior to attending the county police academy, and a 148-hour post-academy training course, focused mainly on internal St. Petersburg procedures.

Candidates completing the county police academy must pass a state examination, which is not scored until three to four weeks following completion of the training. Absent that certification, new officers can not begin the field training program. This means that while the St. Petersburg Police Department fills the gap between county police academy graduation and receiving the test scores, students can find that they have failed the state examination after they have been through not only the county academy but also the department's post academy training and orientation.

As with many police academies throughout the country, the county police academy course does not have a community policing orientation. It is reported that individual instructors have been incorporating some material related to community policing into their training courses, but this material is not a formal part of the curriculum. Given the importance of community policing to St. Petersburg, it is important that the department push for revision of the basic recruit training curriculum in Florida to incorporate these topics as an integral part of all training subjects. Massachusetts has recently revised its total recruit training curriculum and can serve as a good example of how this integration can occur.

The department's field training program is centered in selected areas of the city, not citywide. The field training program lasts for 14 weeks. Field training officers (FTOs), who are selected from volunteers, attend a 40-hour training program. They must be on the job for at least three years prior to application as an FTO. FTOs are not provided any specific information about individual officer's strengths and weaknesses. The new officers rotate between FTOs every few weeks, working on different shifts in different policing sectors. They take bi-weekly tests of material covered in their field experiences. The PERF analysis indicates that the program is highly organized and comprehensive

In-Service Training. Florida requires that every police officer attend 40 hours of in-service training every four years. St. Petersburg provides in-service training to officers which greatly exceeds this requirement. Prior to the disturbances in 1996, employees of the department received a wide range of in-service and specialized training. Since the disturbances, much of the in-service training has focused on mobile field force training (or disorder control).

The department has also made a substantial commitment to advanced and specialized training over the years. While officers attend a variety of specialized courses, the PERF analysis indicated that decisions about what training is provided and who attends is mostly ad hoc. The result, however, has been provision of substantial training opportunities for members of the department. Of the training provided, in recent years a far greater percentage has been focused on community policing and problem-solving than in prior years, and less has been focused on special unit training.

Supervisory and Management Training. Newly promoted supervisors are required to attend state-certified training immediately following their promotion. The department follows this training with its own course, consisting of subjects of particular importance to St. Petersburg. For managers, there is no set training course structure, but managers do have the opportunity to attend a variety of management courses ranging from Florida Department of Law Enforcement courses to the PERF Senior Management Institute for Police.

Recommendations

Foster Vision at the Earliest Opportunities. To advance the department's stated community policing and problem-solving philosophy, the St. Petersburg Police Department needs to use its earliest opportunities to begin the acculturation of future St. Petersburg police officers. The current practice of allowing recruits to be introduced in the regional academy to community policing, community collaboration, and problem-solving only informally should be altered. Opportunities for conscious integration of community policing concepts include the pre-academy training period, the academy process, and the post academy training sessions. In addition, newly appointed supervisors should be taught how their new duties should be performed to help the department move to accomplish its community policing vision.

Plan Training Systematically. If the St. Petersburg Police Department is to fully achieve the training objectives it sets forth in the strategic

plan, it must plan its training systematically. A comprehensive training plan should include training needs and objectives to foster individual, unit, and departmental development. The department must first inventory the skills it needs both for on-going operations and for community-policing and problem-solving. Competencies needed for supervisors and for managers should be included in this inventory. Line employees, first-line supervisors, and managers should all be questioned about what they each perceive as training needs. In addition, the department should thoroughly evaluate the training its employees currently attend and feedback should be sought from the trainees about ways to improve this training.

Match Training to Needs. As the department plans its training more systematically it should try to convince the State of Florida consider abandoning its "one-size-fits-all" in-service training mandate. Instead, a system should be created that supports a combination of standardized and individualized training programs. Supervisors should assume some responsibility for choosing some of their subordinates training, and individuals should be free to select some training according to their career-development interests. Not only would the department's in-service offerings be included but also courses from other sources. Some courses would be designated specifically for managers or supervisors while others may be aimed primarily at specialized unit personnel. Part of this system should include regulations requiring trainees to share the knowledge they gain with others in the department. This would serve to multiply the impact of the time and money devoted to training.

Meet the Challenges of the Regional Training Model. Some of the problems inherent in regional recruit training might be ameliorated with more aggressive pre-academy and post academy courses as well as extensive contact and mentoring of recruits while in a regional class. While the department currently has an officer assigned to the regional recruit academy, the level of coordination and feedback could be improved. The St. Petersburg Police Department and members of its FTO program should systematically solicit and provide feedback about the curriculum, identifying areas that need revision, amplification, and/or instructor changes.

Revamp Pre- and Post-Academy Periods. Both pre-academy and post-academy training should be re-examined and re-developed. Specific goals and learning outcomes ought to be created for these periods of instruction with the purpose of using these periods to inculcate into the recruits the department's community policing philosophy and style of policing. Training in problem-solving, beat

profiling, community collaboration, the department's mission, values, and strategic plan, and ethics would be valuable.

Review Field Training. The department should consider expanding field training to cover the entire city.· They should formalize a means of communication between the training staff and Uniformed Services prior to new officers being assigned their field training officers. This will provide an opportunity to better match a field training officer based upon a probationary officer's strengths and weaknesses. The department should conduct all Field Training Officer classes in house. In addition, the department needs to identify incentives for the Field Training Officer program, making service as a field training officer mandatory before moving laterally or upwardly in the department or giving additional credit to those who have served.

Strengthen Firearms Training. The department should consider conducting all firearms training and qualification at the Allstate Center. These superior facilities should be utilized as much as possible because of their police specific design ad advanced technology.

Maintain Training Records. Although the department has made several past attempts, it needs to make the creation of an automated training record system a priority. The new and revised systems recommended here will be facilitated greatly with prompt and accurate record keeping. The current files maintained by the training division should be integrated and cross-checked with other sources including records at the FDLE (Florida Department of Law Enforcement). Such a system will be necessary for accurate career development tracking and planning.

Continue to strengthen cultural diversity training for all members of the department. The department has provided diversity training to its employees for some time. Over the last five years, officers have received a 24 hour course, 16 hours of follow-on training and 4-hours of post-disturbance training. The State also has an in-service requirement in this area. As these requirements are implemented, it is important to involve the community in as many aspects of that training as possible. Given the degree of tension between some members of the minority community and the police, the department should continue to provide regular diversity training for all officers given by a qualified and effective instructor. The training should aim at assisting officers to understand cultural differences and lifestyles, as well as provide officers with enough understanding of diversity issues that they will feel comfortable among cultures different from their own. But diversity training cannot be considered as the sole solution. Indeed, there is evidence that with repetitive sessions, officers tend to feel that they are being accused of inappropriateness regardless of

their individual actions. The department, therefore, needs to consider whether there is a limit on how much cultural diversity training is needed once it is clear that all officers have received the required instruction and assistance.

There is a point in time when officers must start to be accountable for their actions; for being aware and sensitive in their dealings with diverse ethnic cultures. We believe that point is here, now. Officers must now be held accountable for their actions. If they exhibit insensitive or inappropriate behavior, they must be severely disciplined. Policing St. Petersburg requires a high degree of cultural sensitivity and sophistication. Absent thatjevel of skill reflected in an officer's behavior, the officer should not be permitted to continue to police in the diverse St. Petersburg environment.

Provide training in conflict management intervention and resolution to every patrol officer and their supervisors. Much of police work involves intervention into potentially violent or difficult situations. It is imperative that police officers have the skills necessary to intervene into these situations without increasing the tension. Some police officers have that skill naturally, and rarely, if ever, make a situation worse. They exhibit fairness, sensitivity and compassion, even during difficult tension-filled encounters. All officers can learn these skills. This training should be a priority for the department over the coming year.

Strengthen the "verbal judo" course on verbal interaction and de-escalation of tensions for all police officers assigned to patrol. Many police agencies have developed effective courses for officers that teach them how to respond to aggressive, verbal banter during situations of actual or potential conflict. Police officers frequently find themselves confronting such situations and the ability to understand the nature of this type of verbal interchange and respond in a manner that de-escalates tension rather than increasing it is an important skill. It is not uncommon for observers of police action in congested neighborhoods to taunt officers taking routine police action. Having the skill to react positively to these taunts and de-escalate the potential for violence is important for ail members of the department to have.

Strengthen the field training officer program selection, training and evaluation. There is a sense both within the department and in the community that the field training officer program is more oriented toward screening out officers than assisting officers to become effective police officers. Data shows that some recruits have trouble with written reports, and this is used as the basis for recommending dismissal from the department. It is important that the department not

have a field training officer program that combines evaluation with training, since past studies have clearly shown that the two roles are best kept separate. During the training phase of field training, officers should be observed and when deficiencies are noted, sent for retraining in areas where they have exhibited performance deficiencies that are correctable through such additional training.

Consider bringing community residents - on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis - into the field training program to orient officers to their neighborhood. Since a priority for the department must be strengthening the partnership between police and the community, and since an allied objective is to have the community share responsibility for solving problems in their neighborhood, it is important to bring the community into the training and orientation process for new officers, as well. A community will feel more comfortable with its police officers, and have some sense of accountability for police performance, if they have been involved in the training of new officers. The department should seek out residents who are willing to take responsibility for orienting new officers to the neighborhood, maybe by hosting coffees for the new officers to introduce them to residents or taking the officers on visits and tours of the neighborhood. There is tremendous potential to be gained from such a program of community outreach in the training process and it will reinforce for new recruits the positive aspects of the community.

Broaden the police recruit and in-service training program to include instructors from the community and youth. Members of the community can make a real contribution to the training of police officers. It is useful for community residents and youth to have a role in the training of police officers, provided the classes are structured to provide a positive experience for both the community participants and the police officers attending. By bringing members of the community and youth into the classroom setting, not only can police officers gain from the experiences and knowledge of these residents, but the residents themselves will feel a part of policing operations and have a stake in the success of members of the department. This is the best kind of community and police collaboration.

For too long, police in many communities have believed they are the sole experts about policing communities. Effective policing requires substantial knowledge about neighborhoods; knowledge best obtained from those who experience life in the area daily. Youth perspectives on life and neighborhood life are also important. These residents can make real and substantive contributions to police officer knowledge and skill bases.

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Pealing with Police Misconduct

Few issues are as important to public confidence in the police as the process by which a police agency investigates citizen complaints about police performance and administers discipline. As with many organizations, the police often tend to keep internal disciplinary matters private, out of public view. But given the enormous public trust and authority placed in the police by the public, secretiveness can only undermine citizen confidence. The police administration in St. Petersburg is well aware of this issue.

The nature of police transactions with the public often makes it difficult to determine the exact nature of a police/citizen encounter that results in a citizen filing a complaint. For one, many complaints are filed following a police action, such as an arrest, in which there are no disinterested parties. Secondly, even when there are observers to a police/citizen interaction, the observing public often does not understand the nature of the interaction or the policing objective being sought. Police officers, for example, have a legitimate concern about hidden firearms on arrested persons and must search them carefully to ensure their safety and that of the public. But to observers, it may appear that the police officer is doing something improper as he or she searches the individual.

Police officers have often been insensitive to the need for observing members of the public to understand the nature of these transactions. Rarely do police officers engaged in a situation observed by the public take the time to explain the basis of their action. Absent this information, it is understandable that a suspicious public may well believe the worst, reinforcing suspicions in a community about the integrity or sensitivity of the police.

A number of criminal justice observers and judges have expressed a belief that most criminal defendants tend to lie about their offenses, and that many police officers also lie when confronted with the lies being told by the defendant. Professional policing requires a strong commitment to the truth, regardless of what a defendant says in court or during an investigation. For a police department, one of the greatest sins a police officer can commit is lying. That commitment to the truth must be clearly stated and ingrained in the culture of the department. It requires strong linkages to the imposition of discipline, so that an

officer who is found to be telling the truth is considered far more favorably than one who has lied.

These factors greatly complicate the police processing of citizen complaints. The nature of police encounters, as described above, and the intensity of many police/citizen contacts makes it difficult to determine what actually occurred. Given this complexity, the police complaint investigator must carefully document each witnesses statements and prepare a report on the complaint that clearly shows all the evidence in a logical manner. Too often reports of internal investigations fail to meet that standard.

When a citizen files a complaint, the timeliness of police handling that complaint is important toward building public confidence. For the police, action is often delayed until criminal charges have been disposed of, since there is a feeling among many police that arrested persons tend to complain as a means of mitigating the charges against them. To a public that has a general distrust of the police, the wait until a police investigation is completed may create an appearance that the police are hiding something.

All these pressures underscore the importance of police agencies having well-developed processes for investigating citizen complaints and administering discipline. It has been far easier for the police to administer discipline against officers who have been shown to engage in criminal activity, such as theft or off-duty assault. But in matters of police action involving police interactions with citizens, police have found it more difficult to articulate clear standards of behavior and ensure they are enforced. One problem, as mentioned, is that of proof when there is no corroborating disinterested witnesses. A second problem is the general sense among police that some police/citizen interactions are so conflict laden that police officers cannot be expected to perform their job with effectiveness if they are second-guessed every time they take an action. A third issue is the perception within police organizations that officers with higher rank get differential (and preferential) treatment from those of lower rank in matters of discipline.

The challenge for a police agency is to have clearly defined standards of performance and an investigative capacity that is timely, thorough and objective with little secretiveness. That process should be totally transparent to the public, so members of the community can see that the police are committed to maintaining the highest standards of integrity, behavior, performance and effectiveness.

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Observations and Findings

The St. Petersburg Police Department has adopted a comprehensive system
for handling and processing citizen complaints. Complaints received by the
department are classified into three general categories: "Information Only
Complaints," considered minor complaints that are handled informally by
supervisors or the Internal Affairs Unit; "Bureau Investigations," complaints that
are normally assigned to supervisors for investigation and resolution; and
"Internal Affairs Investigations", complaints of a more serious nature that are
investigated by the Internal Affairs Unit.

Information-only complaints are those in which there is considered to be a
minor misunderstanding. Supervisors have 10 days to report on their
investigation and how they have resolved the complaint. They receive
four hours of training in complaint investigation. In most cases, the
supervisor handles whatever discipline is necessary for these complaints.
There is a perception among officers that the investigation of complaints
and administration of discipline among supervisors varies among
supervisors depending upon a supervisor's status, length of service or
relationship with his or her officers.

Officers tend to perceive investigations conducted by the Internal Affairs
Unit as thorough and fair. The review of a large sample of these cases by
the Police Executive Research Forum staff indicated that they were,
indeed, well executed and reported.

There is a perception within some segments of the community that the
department does not adequately investigate complaints of harassment or
unnecessary force. The data on complaints investigated shows that in
1994,1995 and 1996 none of these complaints were sustained.

In perspective, there were 694 reported uses of force by police officers
during 1996. Thirty-two complaints were received from these cases,
representing 4.6%. Of the 200,000 service calls responded to by the
department in 1996, the 32 unnecessary force complaints represents less
than 1/5 of 1% of these citizen contacts. It is unfortunate, of course, that
the few cases in which it is alleged that unnecessary force is used can
create the impression within the community that such force is the norm,
when in fact it is not.

It is impossible to tel! how many complainants believing they observed or
were subjected to unnecessary force failed to file complaints. And it is not
possible to measure the extent to which citizen observers of police action
perceive that the police were acting with unnecessary force when the

officers were in fact confronted with an aggressive individual or a person resisting police action.

For those complaints in which discipline is recommended, there are a number of administrative arrangements for determining what is appropriate, but in each case, these processes are advisory to the Chief of Police. All complaints where discipline is recommended flow through the Assistant Chief of Police, and are reviewed by the Internal Affairs Unit (whether or not they conducted the investigation).

The Police Executive Research Forum extensively reviewed the internal investigation process. NOBLE also reviewed the basic process and focused on citizen perceptions of the process during their interviews.

The NOBLE review indicated that there are a substantial number of citizens, particularly within minority neighborhoods, who are reluctant to file a complaint with the department because of the basic mistrust of the police. These residents also do believe the police cannot be trusted to police themselves. A number of citizens desire to have a civilian review board created.

There is a growing sense among large numbers of police officers that since the disturbances of 1996, there is less objectivity in considering officer's statements against citizen's statements.

The city did create a Civilian Review Committee (CRC) in 1991 to receive complaints against the police, as well as review completed police investigations. Relatively few citizen complaints are received by the CRC, but those received are passed to the police department for an investigation and report. That report is then reviewed by the CRC. The CRC's meetings are broadcast on cable television, providing excellent access to the public of their proceedings. But even with that access, many members of the public appear not to know of the committee's existence.

Recommendations

While the citizen complaint process used in St. Petersburg is fairly reflective of common practice throughout the country, the nature of the police and community relationship makes it very important that the department refine the process so that the trust level among both the community and officers in the department will be raised. A number of specific recommendations can be made:

A standardized complaint form should be developed for reporting citizen complaints/commendations. The form should be a multi-copy (carbonless) form, original to IA, one copy to the assigned investigator/supervisor and one copy to the citizen. Upon receipt of a complaint, it should be routed through IA to be properly logged and assigned. This would not preclude an immediate investigation. The form should include a space for a description of the complaint either completed by the complainant or a summary of the complaint by the receiving officer. The complainant, if available should read and sign the complaint. This would eliminate the necessity of the complainant having to make more than one trip to headquarters to sign a transcribed statement. By initially forwarding a copy of this report to the Internal Affairs Unit, immediate issuance of a tracking number and a review to determine the appropriateness for bureau level investigation can be done.

The department should identify exactly which cases can be handled as bureau investigations and those that cannot. The terms "minor misconduct" or "serious misconduct" are open for various interpretations. Specifying offenses falling within each category would eliminate most questions among the public and ensure that complaints do not get inappropriately assigned.

The Department should institute refresher training for supervisors in the conduct of complaint and internal investigations. Training should include the department's philosophy on discipline and uniform procedures for completing investigations. The perception among many officers that supervisors are inconsistent in how they handle complaints needs to be rectified. An investigative protocol (checklist) should be developed and supervisors should be trained in its use. Each complaint investigation should follow the same investigative format (to the degree possible) as well as reporting format. By developing a standard protocol for investigations and report development, and training supervisors in its use, the department should gain consistency in this area. It would also be useful to indicate to supervisors what appropriate disciplinary ranges are for a variety of offenses, so they administer discipline in a consistent, equitable manner.

The Department should institute refresher training for all employees concerning bureau and internal affairs investigations. This training should also include the department's philosophy on discipline. Misunderstandings concerning the differences between criminal and internal investigations conducted by the department should also be addressed. Once again, a standardized categorization of discipline for various offenses can be useful in standardizing the outcomes, as well as

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advising officers and the community of what can be expected in cases of improper officer conduct.

Training should be developed to give officers a better understanding of the purpose, operations, limitations and value of the Citizen Review Committee. Officers admit they do not fully understand the positive role the committee plays in policing. Through better understanding, officers may be more willing to participate in the committee's hearings. Some police agencies have even invited citizens from such committees to sit in on department complaint boards, since knowledge of how citizens view various infractions can greatly assist a police agency to understand the impact these complaint actions might have on the community or how they will be perceived. Citizens often have perspectives that are very different from police officers. Often, they are far more lenient in judging an offense once they have the facts, but other times they will ask questions that police commanders normally would not think about when considering such cases. Such involvement can only strengthen the process of complaint resolution. Since these deliberations are only advisory to the chief of police, it is incumbent for the department to provide the chief with a full view of perspectives on the case at hand based upon the evidence gained through investigation.

The Internal Affairs Unit Standard Operating Procedures should be reviewed and procedures that are not adhered to should be evaluated for elimination or procedures put in place to ensure they are followed. This should include providing transcribed statements to employees prior to interview and the order of interview (who gets interviewed first, etc.) during investigation. These two procedures have created unnecessary conflict among departmental personnel and the Citizens Review Committee when not followed to the letter.

Procedures concerning the reporting of the use offeree should be followed. There appears to be discrepancy whether or not all incidents in which minor use of force (for example, pointing of weapons at citizens) are reported. The interviews indicated that officers are not sure of what exactly is expected for reporting minor uses of force. A revision and further specification of the reporting standard can be useful for department data as well as to protect officers if a complaint is later filed against their action.

Consideration should be given to relocating the Internal Affairs Unit away from police headquarters. Several comments were made by officers about the intimidation related to having to wait on the 3rd floor, in an open area, while waiting for an internal affairs appointment. An officer under

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investigation and others who may be witnesses or sources of information cannot avoid being the subject of rumors.

The department should involve the legal advisor early in the investigatory process when cases may involve termination or suspension longer than five days. The current process of involving the legal advisor at the conclusion of a case is often too late. The advisor should be an integral part of the team to help provide guidance in serious cases. This may help to avoid discipline being overturned by arbitration. Just as it is common for a prosecutor to be brought into criminal cases early in the investigative process, the same holds true for internal investigations. It is important that there not be mistakes during the investigative process that later negatively reflect on the case and prevent adequate discipline from being administered.

Complaints that result in any investigation should not be classified as an Information Only or Inquiry. Inquiry case classification should be limited to cases that only require an explanation of departmental policy or procedures. If the matter involves investigation it should be classified as a bureau investigation. To ensure greater consistency, supervisors should be given clear definition as to what is appropriate for this classification. Matters that are not clear can be easily resolved by a call to Internal Affairs. It is important to limit supervisors discretion to make investigative complaints "information only," since this only reinforced the perception among officers that some supervisors process cases in a manner that protects some officers. Again, this is an important issue of equity and consistency in how such cases are handled.

Information Only notations should not be made in an officer's file when the matter was strictly a misunderstanding on the behalf of the citizen. A citizen's ignorance about police operations should not result in a notation in an officer's internal affairs file. Field supervisors should also be better informed as to the requirement to forward appropriate information when a file notation is justified.

No notation should be made in an officer's file without notification to that officer. Any file entry to document an Information Only complaint, whether handled by the officer's immediate supervisor or an internal affairs investigator, should be immediately followed by notification to the officer of the entry.

Field supervisors should not inform accused officers of the Observations and Findings and disciplinary recommendations of a complaint until it has been approved by the chain of command. Current procedure calls for the supervisor to notify the officer of the outcome of a case before internal

affairs concurs that the investigation is complete and before discipline is approved by the chain of command. In the event a change is made, the officer must be informed. These notifications should be withheld until the chain of command has approved the action(s). For this recommendation to be effective, timely action by each member of the chain of command will be essential. As a practical matter, individual supervisors should be able to discuss an unusual case with their Bureau chain of command to ensure approval before finishing final reports.

Internal Affairs should receive all bureau investigations for review before they are submitted to the Assistant Chief of Police. By placing Internal Affairs in the routing of these cases, incomplete investigations can be returned or corrected in a more timely fashion. While conducting these reviews, internal affairs should check for department-wide consistency as to Observations and Findings and the application of discipline. Cases that deviate without obvious justification can be highlighted before they are directed to the Assistant Chief. Taken in conjunction with the recommendation to postpone officer notification until after this step, the department can eliminate many concerns about disparate treatment of officers.

In lieu of an executive summary, each Citizen Complaint Committee or Subcommittee member should be required to read the entire investigation about which they are to conduct a hearing. Though they serve a useful purpose, any summary may unintentionally reflect the views of the author. These investigations are often very complex and their outcome could hinge on any number of key points that could be lost in a summary. Certainly more time consuming, full reports of investigations should be the basis for making any committee recommendations.

Civil Disorder Prevention and Control Preparedness

Every police agency must be ready to effectively respond to developing disorder preparedness. Such responses involve regular training, properly equipped personnel, strategic disorder control plans, strong linkages to community leaders and adequate supporting policies related to issues such as use of force, arrest and detention, and utilization of outside police and military agencies.

In the 1960's, most police agencies developed coordinated disorder control plans and strategies. There was regular training and all officers were well equipped to handle these situations. Over the past 30 years, as the potential for disorder was lessened, the officers with the most knowledge about disorder prevention and control have retired. The knowledge and sophistication that was present during the prior time has been lost. Most police officers today were, at the most, very young men and women during the prior time when disorder prevention and control was a major urban issue. That knowledge has not been carried forward.

Disorder prevention and control is a major and important policing responsibility. The knowledge is still available and the strategies still appropriate. Police agencies, recognizing the loss of expertise occurring over the last years, need to re-establish the competency and bring their officers up to date with the latest in prevention and control.

Most serious disorders occur in neighborhoods with histories of crime, violence and disorder. Prior to outbreaks of disorder, there has usually been a long period of rising community tension or frustration that has built over time. Indeed, while disorders tend to break out following some precipitating incident, these incidents frequently serve as a rationale for some people in a community to either vent their anger over issues in the neighborhood, or to take advantage of the tension following the incident to act out, sometimes for personal gain, through violent activities. During periods of rising tension, if police officers do not have strong relationships with a community, they can be fearful of acting strongly as disorder begins or escalates, fearing that strong police action will make the situation worse.

In periods of relative calm, police often tend to become complacent about preparedness for disorder control. Officers who have been trained leave the department and new officers are often not provided regular disorder training. As a sense of normalcy sets in, officers can fail to recognize signs that the level of tension is high. When disorder does break out, the police agency can be caught by surprise.

Maintaining order during an outbreak of disorder is a complicated task, requiring that police officers be trained in disorder control tactics. But even more important is the capability of regular patrol officers and their supervisors to have the skill to intervene in rising tensions before they result in an outbreak of disorder. This requires police agencies to have a comprehensive tension assessment capacity, a protocol for early

intervention, and ultimately the capacity to move into a community and restore order without alienating the law-abiding citizens of the area.

Observations and Findings

In the last year, the department has moved to strengthen its disorder intervention preparedness, with the purchase of some new equipment and provision of regular training to officers in crowd control. While the actions of the department in increasing preparedness cannot be faulted, there has been concern among some residents about the high visibility given to the preparation. There are a number of people who view the public display of preparedness exercises as a means to remind the community that the department is ready for the next time.

Finding a way to conduct preparedness exercises and not aggravate the community is not an easy task, for much of the training must involve group exercises that, by their nature, are highly visible. But the department must seek ways to reduce the visibility of the preparation; maybe by holding these exercises away from populated areas of the community and with little announcement or visibility.

Equally important to civil disorder preparedness, of course, is strengthening the prevention capacities of the department. We have mentioned a number of these in prior sections of this report: special training in crisis intervention for patrol officers; special courses teaching officers how to respond to aggressive dialogue during police interaction in congested neighborhoods; cultural diversity training; and implementation of early warning and conflict assessment capabilities of the department. These initiatives can be very important mechanisms for ensuring that disorders do not break out in the first instance. But the department cannot assume that some situations may not occur which are generally spontaneous. The department must be prepared for these occurrences.

Most important to disorder prevention, of course, is the development of a constructive, supportive relationship between police officers in the field and residents of the community. While disorder can occur for a variety of reasons, and spontaneously erupt with little warning in neighborhoods in which the police have built strong ties to community stakeholders, the potential for such disorder should be greatly diminished. That is the challenge for every officer of the St. Petersburg Police Department. Every officer must recognize that they, personally, play an important role in establishing a sense of stability in urban neighborhoods. That is their challenge and why policing St. Petersburg is different from policing more rural areas of the state.

Recommendations

<u>The department should develop a sophisticated conflict assessment capability as a part of the community policing implementation strategy.</u> Having regular assessment of the level of conflict and tension in the community is an important means for a police department to have early warning signs of impending disorder It is also an important mechanism to evaluate the impact of community policing implementation efforts.

The department already has a long history of public surveying. Coupling the continuation of this surveying with field reporting from police officers and their supervisors will strengthen the early warning system. But the department should also consider developing a series of "tension indicators" to be measured on a regular basis, and might assign a senior officer the responsibility for monitoring tension levels in the community on a regular basis. If someone is watching over the issue, there is less chance the department will be taken by surprise.

Summary

The St. Petersburg Police Department is poised to move forward in solving important policy and strategic issues that impact the effectiveness of its community policing implementation. The department has been willing to open itself to a thorough examination of its policies and operations to experts from the four major police organizations. The recommendations set forth in this report represent the best of current police thinking in the United States today.

The department may not adopt all of the recommendations contained in this report. That is to be expected. The department, however, can make important strides toward excellence by recognizing the importance of several of the key concepts that flow throughout this report. They are:

- The importance of establishing police officer accountability on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis

- The importance of making geography the basis of the organizational structure and policing strategy

- The need to communicate thoroughly the rationale for policy matters to all police employees and the community

- The importance of holding each police supervisor accountable for the actions of the officers whom they supervise

The department is poised to move forward. The Chief of Police is committed to strengthening the internal policing-making process, and to involve both community and police officer in future policy decisions.

We are encouraged by the underlying spirit within the department. The full implementation of community policing, on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis, will serve the St. Petersburg community well. That community - all the residents and visitors to St. Petersburg - will then receive the high level of police service they deserve. It can be an exciting time for the city and its police department.