

# Groveport Police Department



City Council Report  
Mayor Lance Westcamp  
Groveport City Council

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## Training, Officer Activities and monthly report information: JULY 2022

MUTUAL AID CALLS			Number	REPORTED OFFENSES	Number
Franklin CO SO			1	Accidents	9
Madison TWP PD			7	Assaults	1
Madison Twp. Fire			3	Burglaries/Criminal Trespass	1
Obetz PD			1	Domestic Disputes	4
CPD/ CFD/Other Agencies			2	Domestic Violence	0
Public Assistance			14	OVI and alcohol issues	1
				Theft Related/ Robberies	10
House Watches			6	Weapon Related Calls	2
Mileage			17458	Missing Persons/Juveniles	0
				Narcotic Related Offenses	2
Sheriff's Dispatches/Self-Initiated Calls			197 / 329	School Related Dispatched Calls	0
Busiest Day(s)		Monday & Friday	30/29 Reports	Stolen/Unauthorized Use	4
Day Shift- 48 Reports			17%	Parking	16
Evening Shift- 61 Repots			37%	Threats	4
Nights Shift – 22 Reports			46%	Vandalism/Criminal Mischief	4
Total Reports taken			131	Suicide (attempts)/ DOA	2
Traffic Citations			31	Sex Related Crimes	0
Training Hours			224	Arrests made	7
Referrals (FCCS)			1	Juvenile Complaints	2
Groveport Madison School District Criminal Reports			N/A	Groveport Madison School District Non-Criminal Reports	N/A
Speed Trailer				Speed Trailer	
Location	Limit	Date Start	Date End	Total vehicles	Highest Speed
Delane Road	25 mph	July 11th	July 25th	N/A	N/A
Rec. Center	25 mph	July 25 <sup>th</sup>	July 30th	N/A	N/A



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## **4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration**

This year's 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration was uneventful when it came to the police department activity response to dispatched calls and self-initiated calls from the officers. The police department logged 290 hours of Holiday Pay/Overtime hours worked between July 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, with approximately 132 hours of patrol vehicle use during the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. The only call of significance during the day was a male subject and his girlfriend attempting to enter the Groveport Aquatic Center with a knife and no identification, but the Groveport Aquatic Staff alerted Director Seth Bower immediately of the situation, the two individuals were refused entrance into the facility and staff contacted the police department immediately. Groveport Police Officers detained the individuals on the Groveport Recreation Center Property, and both individuals were criminally trespassed off all City of Groveport property immediately. I credit the new protocols put in place over the past year at the Aquatic Center for this pro-active response by the Rec Center Staff to identify the problem, and contacting the police department to give our officers the chance to identify and handle the situation before allowing the individuals a chance to leave without being identified.

I would like to credit Lt. Josh Short with his planning of this event over the past six months to prepare the police department for the parade detail, but the rest of the day where officers were actively patrolling the event area in and around the Municipal Parking Lot and Groveport Elementary School event area. There were areas where we both identified could be improved to shutting down roadways a bit earlier to make sure the parade participants have better access to the Rec Center Staging Area, but also do not have to cause lengthy delays in the area of vehicle backups to non-parade participant traffic flow. We have also discussed the possibility of eliminating East bound traffic flow on Main Street from Front Street to give the Rec Center, Ace Hardware, and both Groveport Madison School parking lots time to empty out and travel East bound onto Groveport Road after the fireworks concludes. We found that vehicles on Front Street @ Main Street would block traffic flow in order to make a left turn to travel East on Main Street, and this would cause delays in the intersection for smooth traffic flow. We also looked at the area on Main Street in front of the Rarey's Port building as a good location to leave open for pedestrian traffic to cross Main Street after the fireworks conclude.

## **Active Shooter Homicide Investigation**

On July 11<sup>th</sup> around 5:30am, we all know that the City of Groveport became another city that faced the trend of increased violence in our society over the past couple of years. As you are aware, a male individual working at S&K Foods on Toy Road entered the locker room and executed his girlfriend with a handgun and fled the scene on foot where he was later found to end his own life after climbing up and electric pole and electrocuting himself. Sgt. Josh Guiler and Ptl. Adam Greter were the first two officers on scene from the Groveport Police Department, along with officers from the Obetz Police Department and Franklin County Sheriff's Department, and from what I have seen when it comes to our body camera video, all officers immediately entered the facility upon arrival to the scene to encounter the active shooter threat and to preserve further loss of life in the facility. These officers faced obstacles of vehicles blocking the entrance and access ways to enter facility due to the shift change time where there is a large amount of traffic flow, they had to work their way through a large amount of individuals fleeing the back of the facility



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as the active shooter threat was identified by the company's management team, this team had begun to enacting their active shooter protocols and evacuation plan, and the officers had to search a large interior perimeter with employees who spoke little to no English as officers were giving verbal instructions to employees fleeing the area.

I have to give a tremendous amount of credit and admiration to all of the Groveport Police Department Personnel who immediately responded as the situation was unfolding, and this also includes our personnel who responded as they learned of the situation and came into cover the streets and assist in the investigations. I would have to say this was one of the hardest situations I have had to deal with, and I was four states away with no control of not know what was going on as the active situation was occurring. Lt. Josh Short deserves a lot of the credit for handling the Patrol Operations of this situation and handling the media aspects during this critical incident. Lt. Bary Murphy and the Detective Bureau deserve credit in dealing with not only that day's part of the crime scene and investigative process, but the days following of coordination resources to identify the suspect & victim, along with the searching of further evidence in the area surrounding the Toy Road and Alum Creek Drive corridor.

The Groveport Police Department worked almost 60 hours of overtime on that day, and the Detective Bureau accumulated close to 100 hours of investigative time including overtime during that entire week.

Finally, I would like to thank the City of Groveport Administrative Staff Members who without question assisted wherever they thought could help me and the men and women of the Groveport Police Department during this time, but also you as the elected officials sent your support and understanding of our needs and allowing our officers to accomplishing the mission of thoroughly investigating this violent criminal act with no outside interfering factors.

### **After Action Response to Equipment Evaluations**

When it comes to the equipment that the Groveport Police Department utilized during this Critical Incident, during my conversations and observations of body camera video, our officers utilized patrol vehicles, external ballistic vests, ballistic helmets, duty rifles, the Polaris Ranger ATV, Language Line Interpreters, and the Franklin County Sheriff's Office SWAT Team and Dive Team, along with the Columbus Police Department Swat Team during the initial response. After the scene had been secured, and the days following, we had assistance from the Franklin County Sheriff's Department, State and Federal Homeland Security Agents, and the Springfield Police Department.

One item of concern that was brought to me about the response inside this warehouse, but has been a continued concern brought by our officers when going inside these warehouses in the South Business District is the radio communication difficulties. Over the past years where this radio communication concerns have been brought to my office when I was a Patrol Sergeant and now Chief of Police, I have brought radio techs from Ohio MARCS, Franklin County Sheriff's Department, Columbus Communication Center, B&C Communication, and VASU Communications to attempt to problem solve the issue of losing signal within the warehouse primarily South of Groveport Road and the Groveport Madison High School.



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All these agencies and radio communication companies have advised there is sufficient signal when they utilize our equipment in conjunction their equipment that analyzes radio signal strength. These radio tech do not typically go inside these warehouses to measure radio signal strength to conduct test, so the accuracy of their analysis is incomplete. After the Critical Incident, I again reached out to Ohio MARCS who now has control over the radio repeater towers and radio programming, along with the Franklin County Sheriff's Office Communication Director, and both point to Building and Zoning Code Regulations that can require mandated radio strength testing within the buildings. They also advised that this type of inspection is controlled by the Fire Department authorizing occupancy permits, and the reason for this control of inspections is making sure of proper radio communication for fire services during an incident.

I have reached out to Fire Marshall Scott Hite of the Madison Township Fire Department reference this issue, he advised that the fire department does require this radio strength test on all buildings constructed in the past five years when this building code was enacted by the State of Ohio, but buildings more than five years old would not have had this testing done when they were being constructed. Fire Marshall Hite did advise there is a provision in the code that would permit fire departments to require radio strength testing on buildings older than five years during their annual inspections conducted by the fire department, but this has never been enforced due to the cost of the testing (\$1500 approximately per business). If a business fails inspection, then the business would be required to install an amplifier system and antenna units that would work with our portable radios to help with radio strength within the building, but the cost could come at an expense of \$40k minimum and could reach the \$100k plus mark depending on square footage of the building and the number of antennas needed to be installed on the roof of the buildings.

Fire Marshall Hite advised that he would convey my concerns to his Fire Chief, and see if there is any change in how their fire department looks at the older warehouses in the City of Groveport. I HAVE SINCE SPOKEN TO Chief Robinson

### **Another Large Marijuana Confiscation**

In late July, the Groveport Police Department was called to the same business that alerted us in late May about a suspicious load within their shipping yard. As you may recall, the shipment that was confiscated in late May had over 700 lbs of Marijuana located within the product packaged as tool boxes, this time the same shipping yard discovered another large shipment within the pallet of merchandise, and over 300 lbs of Marijuana was confiscated and stored at a storage facility until a transfer of the Marijuana could be transferred to an agency who could handle the evidence and subsequent destruction of the illegal product.

It is my hope that these two incidents are random and not connected, but as we are looking at the future, we could be looking at an every 8 week confiscation of large amounts of product that for an agency our size is putting a stress on our resources to properly safely store and destroy this product. We also have concerns with the safety issues of the product being laced with other lethal substances like Fentanyl, and



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how that could affect not only our officers, but the community of Groveport when it comes to transportation and storage of the product. So far, we have been extremely fortunate that the outside agency who has taken this product off our hands has not requested storage fees or destruction fees of the product, but we are looking at what it could cost to handle this on our own or resource it out in the long term if this type of confiscation continues into the future.

### **Evidence Collection and Considerations**

As the Groveport Police Department is exposed to more types of criminal behavior that was typically associated with big cities, I have had to look at our facilities and how we would house the evidence and individuals associated with the criminal acts. One example of this would be during the Homicide at S&K Foods, we had a patrol officer by himself with two individuals under arrest at the Groveport Police Department, and one of the individuals could not be restrained with handcuffs due to being possibly pregnant. For me, it is hard to fathom leaving an officer by themselves to deal with and process two individuals who had been breaking into vehicles, and in possession of a firearm when they were arrested. The officer had no other choice but to deal with this situation on their own as the remainder of the shift was responding to an active shooter critical incident.

Another example during this critical incident was the proper preservation of evidence during the Homicide Investigation, the victim's clothing was so saturated with blood, we had no area within our current facilities to house and properly dry the articles without cross contamination, and this was the second case where DNA Evidence needed a secured drying self-contained unit to properly preserve the evidence. Finally, in regards to storage space for evidence, Det. Josh Gilbert just destroyed a lot of prior evidence authorized by the courts for destruction, but has sense filled the property room up with new evidence. The large amount of Marijuana that has been confiscated, we are having to depend on organizational help from outside department in order to properly secure and destroy this evidence in order to avoid individuals from being tempted to locate this evidence within the City of Groveport, and take this illegal contraband from an unsecured location and/or our limited space Property Room within the police department.

I have spoken to, and attempting to problem solve these evidence chain of custody issues with Administrator BJ King, Public Service Director Brian Strayer, Facilities Director Eric Reed, and IT Director Trevor Swackhamer. As we have discovered, some of the issues can be resolved with changing configurations of the current police department space to create the possibility of two temporary holding rooms to secure individuals under arrest as the officer(s) complete the arrest paperwork, and having the IT Director look at permanent ways store valuable video and digital evidence long-term on servers within the property room away from other city computer storage servers. Facilities workers have identified ways to construct us a storage rack system to properly seal and dry DNA evidence without purchasing a unit that could cost over \$10,000. Admin. King and I have discussed possibly in the next couple years looking at adding onto our current property a Storage Facility where vehicles and other large articles of evidence could be properly stored with security measures in place to monitor the evidence and property.



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Again, this is where all departments within the city can work together to help resolve issues that can be handled in house, and save on expensive financial expenditures to our overall budgets.

### **Updating of Police Department Equipment**

As I have mentioned over the past year after Councilman Shawn Cleary requested clarification on the Police Vehicle Supply Chain Issues, I believe we have found a way to purchase, and place in service patrol vehicles by the Summer of 2023. There seems to be no end in sight for this problem of locating, ordering and placing in service police vehicles for communities from across the United States. It seems communities will have to be more pro-active in discovering information of fleet management techniques on the ordering processes for manufactures, keeping their communities informed of changes to ordering processes when it comes to time frames to purchase vehicles and the equipment that is required to place these vehicles in service, but look at ways to try to re-purpose current equipment to place on new vehicles purchased in order to keep costs down.

Sgt. Josh Guiler along with the Range Officers have identified some equipment needs for the police department, they have begun to utilize their portion of the Operations Budget to purchase new shotguns that will replace older shotguns that have been needing replaced for many years, and I will be requesting from Admin. King permission to trade these older weapons in as we replace them with newer weapons. Also, as officers retire and purchase their duty weapons per the collective bargaining contracts, Sgt. Guiler has begun to evaluate and obtain input from the officers on duty handguns that they feel are practical to replacing weapons lost to the retirement program. Finally, Sgt. Guiler is utilizing funds to add two new AR-15 rifles to the inventory, along with purchasing new training ammo that officers will utilize at the open ranges and yearly firearms qualification.

Finally, I have submitted in the re-appropriations request budget for 2022, an increase for equipment that our officers believe would be able to utilize in the field by carry in the patrol vehicles to have the equipment easily at hand when needed. Sgt. Sam Yockey, Ptl. Danny Amabile, and Ptl. Kyle Smith are currently certified to carry and instruct the entire police department on the use of Less Lethal Munitions. Examples of these munitions would be Bean Bag Rounds, Pepper Balls and Training Rounds for Active Shooter Training, along with the designated shotguns for these munitions. When debriefing after the critical incident at S&K Foods, there was a belief that this could be an alternative to using lethal force to bring a suspect to compliance, or interacting with mental health individuals refusing to comply with directions from officers and pose a danger to themselves and society. If we are able to purchase this equipment in 2022, it is the hope to have the program and policy in place by the end of this year.

### **Updates on New and Old Programs**

In regards to new programs to the City of Groveport, Public Service Director Brian Strayer asked myself and Admin. BJ King to sit in on a proposal from the FAA reference Drone Detection Technology at Rickenbacker, and the utilization of city parks to conduct monthly testing for the detection technology.





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During the meeting, the program manager advised that the FAA wanted to use Cruiser Park and Degenhart Park once a month for about 8 hours to fly Drones in and around the immediate areas of the park to test the radar technology at Rickenbacker. They have also advised they will utilizing location located on Eddie Bauer @ 6600 Alum Creek Drive and another location in Madison Township off of Oregon Road.

During the Franklin County Chiefs Meeting in late July, it was discussed that Columbus Police Department will not be providing Special Duty Services in their jurisdiction, which was a surprise to the Franklin County Sheriff's Office who has been asked to pick up the slack for this paid special service in the City of Columbus. The Franklin County Sheriff's Office has now asked that police departments from outside Columbus consider being sworn in as Special Deputies for the Franklin County Sheriff's Office in order to cover what Columbus Police Department would cover normally during the Ohio State Football Games. Suburb City Departments were pretty outspoken about declining this request of assisting the FCSO and Ohio State University during this time due to the difficulty of coving our own Special Duty Assignments within our jurisdictions, and a lack of how the departments would be covered under the Mutual Aid Agreement when taking official action within Columbus.

This conversation brought out more concerns when it comes to how law enforcement agencies respond to other communities requests for Mutual Aid, and how the current Mutual Aid Agreement was last reviewed and agreed upon in 2013. As it was pointed out, most of the elected officials who signed this agreement are no longer in office, which includes the Sheriff and Franklin County Prosecutor who are responsible for evaluating and maintaining this agreement. I believe that there will be further discussions in regards to this matter, how and when we can respond to an agencies request for assistance, and after the 2020 City of Columbus protests, agencies may be reluctant to respond until this subject matter is clarified and/or updated to define what an outside agency is covered under if they face taking action outside their jurisdiction.

Finally when it comes to Mutual Aid and assisting agencies outside our city limits, I have spoken to the Chiefs from Madison Township and Obetz to inquire if they have started any type of planning for the 2023 Air Show at Rickenbacker June 16<sup>th</sup> thru 18<sup>th</sup>. Both chiefs advised they have reached out with no real response from the Port Columbus Airport Police who has yet to plan for the three day event. I have reached out to Port Columbus Police Department Airport Police, and after speaking with a supervisor from that agency, there seems to be no real sense of urgency for this event planning, and that there seem to be no real point person to communicate with reference our three agencies that will be affected by the increased traffic flow and people coming to our communities. There is also been somewhat of a concern that neither Franklin County Sheriff's Department or City of Columbus Police Department will be able to dedicate a heavy patrol presence during this event on the airport property (which both jurisdictions will be primary responders due to the airport being in the City of Columbus and inside Franklin County), this concern comes from the verbal comments over the past months and couple years of officer staffing levels within law enforcement.



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## **Training for July and Future Training Information**

Groveport Police Officers attended the second leg of mandated Continuing Professional Training standards put in place by the State of Ohio Legislature. The 4 hour training was on "Use of Deadly Force", and again our officers with little to several years of experience was impressed with the course matter presented at the Groveport Police Department by Robert Meader LLC. There was a lot of questions to how this instruction pertains to our Central Ohio Law Enforcement Community when it comes to State and Federal Court decisions. One item that was discussed was how the Columbus Police Injunction on Use of Pepper Spray also incorporates outside agencies entering the City of Columbus Corporation Limits.

Three of our officers also attended the 40 hour Crisis Intervention Team training at the Columbus Police Department. Ptl. Shellie Rimmer completed the 40 hour School Resource Officer Training Certification Course held in Mason, Ohio in late July to now give the City of Groveport two certified SRO Police Officers to work in the schools. Groveport Police Department completed a total of 224 hours of training for the month of July.

Finally when it comes to training needs in the future, I have inquired about mandated CPT standards in 2023, and there seems to be two differing opinions when it comes to this subject matter for preparation of 2023 budget. Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy has not heard of any mandates for 2023 by the State of Ohio Legislature, but representatives from the Ohio Association Chiefs of Police organization that has heard that the State of Ohio Legislature will be taking this matter up in the Fall Session, with an increase from 24 hours in 2022 to 40 hours in 2023. Either way, this places a stress on law enforcement agencies to figure out what if any funding will be out there to pay for this training, and what subject matters will be mandated for officers to complete in 2023. This will be important as we are looking to see changes within the Groveport Police Department for hiring needs to replace possible retirements, and changes in leadership roles for specialty assignments and promotion(s).

## **Establishing a Eligibility List for Hiring**

The Groveport Police Department has begun the process of establishing an eligibility list for hiring to replace officers eligible for retirement in 2023 and 2024. Personnel Director Joyce Myers has been a true asset in putting this hiring process together and working with me to update any and all documents to ensure the hiring process is fair and equal to all individuals who are looking for employment opportunities in the law enforcement community at the Groveport Police Department. We have two separate processes that will identify these individuals by looking for candidates with less than three years of full-time experience and will be required to take a test with National Testing Network, we will also be conducting a Lateral Transfer Program for individuals with at least three years of full-time experience in the State of Ohio and can submit an application to verify their qualifications to meet the minimum standards of a Lateral Transfer Candidate.



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It is my hope that we will be able to establish a list of these candidates to form a 2 year eligibility list, rather than the one year list as in years past where not enough candidates applied to sustain a list longer than one year. I am also hoping to have the top 10 candidates backgrounds completed according to the oral board final rankings, and ready for final interview as openings are presented to my office through retirements in the future.

## **Sgt. Josh Guiler- Midnight Shift Sergeant**

### Third Shift Patrol July Report 2022

Duty Hours = 714.25	Miles = 4210	Dispatches = 107
Calls to Service = 57	Pick-ups = 110	Traffic Stops = 39
Citations = 3	Accidents = 2	Incident Reports = 8
Mutual Aid(s) = 5	Building Alarms = 18	Open Buildings = 3
Suspicious Person(s) = 38	Suspicious Vehicles = 42	Business/House Checks = 87

July was a busy month for us on 3<sup>rd</sup> shift patrol. July 4<sup>th</sup> went very smooth and we do appreciate all the extra support we receive from the Mayor, City Council and our Administration. We continue to focus on neighborhoods and our businesses. A monthly report is still sent to Public works of any street light outages. Ptl. David Fairman does very good making sure this gets done monthly.

On the morning of July 11<sup>th</sup> we had two significant incidents that occurred. First, Ptl. Kyle Smith was on patrol in the subdivision of Hickory Grove when he observed two individuals in a vehicle then walking away from it down the sidewalk. Ptl. Smith realized their behavior was suspicious and stopped them. It was soon determined that they were stealing items from the unlocked vehicle. Both suspects were separated and the owner of the vehicle was contacted. He was very happy that Ptl. Smith was able to catch them in the act. One suspect was found to be carrying a firearm and having a previous felony conviction and warrants for their arrest. The other suspect was in possession of car keys that we used to locate the vehicle they arrived in. It was reported stolen through Columbus PD. Charges on both parties consisted of Theft, Receiving Stolen Property, Having Weapons under Disability and Felony Possession of Drugs. I thank Ptl. Smith for being vigilant and acting on his suspicions. Awesome arrest!

Second, as we were processing the two suspects we received a call that we often hear about in training but hope never comes out on our radios. ACTIVE SHOOTER! Ptl. Adam Greter and I responded to 3301 Toy Rd. S&K Foods not knowing what to expect. We were receiving multiple different scenarios on the radio from 911 calls. Ptl. Greter and I arrived on scene at the



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same time. Obetz PD and Franklin County SO had arrived shortly before us and were already inside searching for the shooter. Ptl. Greter exited his cruiser and ran from the front to the rear of the building where he was able to get inside, join up with the other officers and also began searching for the unknown. At this time it was reported that no shots were being heard but there were two possible shooters. I observed a large crowd at the front of the building and individuals running out of the main entrance. I took up command at this point and utilized a semi-truck to block access from vehicles leaving. We knew at this point we had one victim with multiple gunshot wounds and it was our goal to get the victim out. Ptl. Greter along with a FCSO Deputy carried the victim a very long way towards the exit where they were met by officers with a gurney. The victim was transported out of the building for medical attention. The scene was then secured and it was determined the suspect had left the facility prior to LE arrival. Ptl. Greter showed a lot of courage and unselfishness to not only run into a possible deadly situation but to also try and save a life. I commend Ptl. Greter for all his actions.

### **Sgt. Sam Yockey- Day Shift Sergeant**

July  
2022

#### **First Shift**

July has been a busy month for the whole department. In July we had Independence Day Celebrations and the S&K Foods incident. On first shift we also seen an increase in mental health related calls which includes individuals with suicidal ideations. All mental health calls ended positively with the individuals being transported to a mental health facility to receive the resources they needed.

Officer Pack, Ripson and Benner completed Crisis Intervention Team training which involved teaching officers different ways to interact with people who are experiencing a mental health crisis. This is a great class to have considering the increase in mental health calls.

First shift also had an increase in car thefts or attempts. At this time all three cars stolen have been recovered.

This month all Officers on the department attended a four hour refresher class on Use of Deadly Force. This class was a review of case law and constitutional law which dictates when officers can use deadly force on an individual.