

To: Brattleboro Selectboard
Via: Peter Elwell, Town Manager
From: Michael R. Fitzgerald, Chief of Police
Date: 1/4/18

SUBJ: DECEMBER 2017 MONTHLY REPORT

Summary of Major Activities/Work Projects:

Officers responded to 784 calls for service/incidents and made 33 arrests resulting in 59 criminal charges. Included in these calls for service were 9 overdoses with none resulting in a death. This does not mean there were only 9 overdoses and no OD-deaths in Brattleboro for this period. It merely means that these are the numbers that were responded to by police.

44 vehicle operation citations were issued along with 362 warnings. Officers spent approximately 193 hours on foot patrol in the downtown area as well as other neighborhoods and parks in Town.

Cases of Interest:

Officers received information about possible drug activity at a local Motel on Putney Road. Officers went to investigate and observed one of the suspects James F Davis, operating a motor vehicle and contacted him. Davis was found to have a Criminally Suspended Driver's License. During the investigation, it was revealed that Davis was staying at the Motel with his son James F Craft. Subsequent investigation led to a safe that Davis kept in his Motel room. A Search Warrant for the safe was applied for and granted by a Judge. Officers found the safe to contain 224 bags of Heroin and \$1530.00 in cash. Both Davis and Craft were arrested and charged with Possession of Heroin. They were issued Citations ordering them to appear in Windham County Superior Court to answer to the charge.

Brattleboro Police responded to a motel on Canal Street for a theft complaint. It was reported that a room at the motel was missing multiple items. Through video surveillance a male subject was observed placing items in a vehicle. The vehicle from the surveillance was located and was stopped by police. Derek J. Sicard was found to be operating the vehicle and the items from the motel were in the vehicle. Sicard was placed under arrest and was transported to the Brattleboro Police Department for processing. Sicard was released with a citation to appear in court to answer the charges.

Brattleboro Officers responded to a business on Canal Street for a report of Trespassing and Retail Theft. Upon arrival, Officers met with store employees who had detained Valli R Hecht age 53, of Brattleboro for Retail Theft. During the investigation Hecht was found to have previously been Trespassed from this location. She was arrested and Transported to the Brattleboro Police Department where she was fingerprinted and photographed. She was released on a Citation ordering her to appear in Windham County Superior Court to answer to the charges.

Brattleboro Officers responded to a residence on Canal Street on a report of a Citizen Dispute. Upon arrival, Officers spoke with the victim who stated that she had been assaulted by her boyfriend Jonathan Holway. The victim stated that Holway had been drinking and during a verbal dispute Holway became physical. The victim stated that Holway then took two of his children and her car without her permission and fled the scene. Officers later located the vehicle and contacted Holway. He was arrested for DUI, Aggravated Domestic Assault and Cruelty to Children Under 10. He was ordered held without bail by a Judge and is scheduled to appear in Windham County Superior Court.

Brattleboro Officers were conducting a routine patrol on Putney Road when they observed a vehicle with defective equipment. Officers initiated a traffic stop on the vehicle and contacted the operator Frank D Merrell. A records check revealed that Merrell is Criminally Suspended in the State of Vermont. During a search of his person incident to arrest, Merrell was found to be in possession of heroin. He was transported to the Brattleboro Police Department where he was finger printed and photographed. He was lodged and later ordered released on conditions by a Judge. He was issued a Citation ordering him to appear in Windham County Superior Court to answer to the Charges.

Brattleboro Officers responded to a Canal Street business on a report of Solicitation. Upon arrival Officers observed the male suspect and contacted him. He identified himself as Michael J Mays and stated that he was traveling to New Hampshire. Officers observed his vehicle to be missing license plates. Mays stated that his plates and all the paperwork for the vehicle had been stolen. A check of the vehicle's VIN revealed that the vehicle was stolen from Massachusetts. Due to a medical condition, Mays was transported to Brattleboro Memorial Hospital. He was released and issued a Citation ordering him to appear in Windham County Superior Court to answer to the charge.

Officers responded to Brattleboro Memorial Hospital for a report of an assault. Upon arrival, they contacted the victim who stated that he was attacked with a knife causing severe injury to his face. The victim could provide officers with enough information to track and locate the suspect Owin Thomas 45, of New York. Thomas was found at a residence on Green Street. During a search of the residence a large quantity of Cocaine was found. Thomas was placed under arrest and transported to the Brattleboro Police Department where he was finger printed and photographed. During a search incident to arrest, Thomas was found to have Heroin on his person. He was ordered held without bail. He is scheduled to appear in Windham County Superior Court to answer to the charges.

The Brattleboro Police Department responded to a report of an attempted robbery at a restaurant on Western Avenue. Upon arrival, it was determined that a male entered the restaurant and attempted to steal the cash register. The male was described as having dark skin, approximately 5'08" to 5'10" tall, weighing approximately 220 pounds and wearing a dark hooded sweatshirt covering his face. The male exited the restaurant and fled on foot eastbound on Western Avenue. This incident is still under investigation.

Officers of the Brattleboro Police Department were dispatched to a residence on Estey Circle for a 911 hang-up call. Subsequent investigation revealed that during an argument with other residents Marco Skorstad interfered with their ability to contact emergency services by unplugging phones and taking cell phones. Skorstad was charged with Interference with Access to Emergency Services, and will appear in Windham County Superior Court: Criminal Division to face the charge.

Brattleboro Police responded to Putney Road for a reported motor vehicle collision and both operators were behaving aggressively. Upon arrival, it was determined that there was no motor vehicle collision. After investigation, it was determined that Parry J. Smith-Phillips and James A. Dyer Jr engaged in a physical altercation on Putney Road. The fight was a result of an incident that had occurred on Putney Road when both males were operating their vehicles. It was discovered that Dyer's operator's license was criminally suspended in Vermont. Dyer was placed under arrest for Disorderly Conduct, Negligent Operation and Operation after revocation or suspension of license. Dyer was transported to the Brattleboro Police Department where he was fingerprinted, photographed and released with a citation to appear in court. Smith-Phillips was issued a citation to appear in court for the offense of Disorderly Conduct.

Brattleboro Police responded to Main Street for a male who had just taken a purse from a female. As police were responding they were advised a good Samaritan had the suspect pinned down on the ground and they were awaiting police. When police arrived, they identified the suspect as Frank Merrell. Merrell was arrested and transported to the Brattleboro Police Department where he was held on \$5000 cash bail until he could be seen in court.

Brattleboro Police initiated a traffic stop for defective equipment on the 91 North on ramp at exit 1. Police contacted the operator, Gail Jones. After conversation with Jones, investigation began into if Jones was operating the vehicle under the influence of alcohol. After the investigation concluded, Jones was placed under arrest for DUI. Jones was transported to the Brattleboro Police Department, where she was processed, and released on a citation.

Brattleboro Police responded to Black Mountain Road for a reported single vehicle crash in which the vehicle slid off the roadway. Investigation revealed that the operator, identified as James M. Smith was impaired. He was arrested for the offense of driving under the influence, and issued a citation ordering him to appear in Windham County Superior Court.

Brattleboro Police responded to a call of a violation of a stalking order. Upon investigation, it was determined that Kristina Fletcher violated a court order for stalking. Fletcher was arrested for the violation and issued a citation to appear at Windham Superior Court to face the charge.

Special Meetings/Communications/Events:

Officer's and staff continue to make numerous appearances to meet and discuss the concerns of the citizens at the senior center, elementary schools, with various organizations and community centers. The topics included personal safety, crime trends, homelessness and internet safety. The Brattleboro Police Department continues to make strides in educating and informing the citizens of our activity and to solicit their feedback on how we can improve our services.

Budget Concerns/Impacts:

We continue to monitor the FY 2018 budget. We have prepared and submitted a budget proposal for FY19 to the town manager and look forward to participating in the annual budget development process.

Staffing:

The Department is currently down five positions.

Three candidates were extended a “conditional offer of employment” for the February 2018 academy class providing they successfully complete the background investigation, physical fitness test and orientation. They have successfully completed the background investigation requirements and will attend training next year, provided they pass the final fitness test in January.

Interviews for the remaining open positions took place in December. Out of that process there were 6 candidates selected to move forward into the background phase. The successful candidates are being screened for the August 2018 academy class.