

MAHONING TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

Frederick C. Dyroff, III

On behalf of the members of the Mahoning Township Police Department, it is my pleasure to present to you the 2020 Mahoning Township Annual Police Report.

The report represents the highlights, challenges, and activities of the men and women of the Mahoning Township Police Department during the year 2020.

Engaging our citizens in all facets of the community remains the core of our policing philosophy. The Mahoning Township Police Department is committed to delivering the highest level of police services to our citizens and guests.

The men and women of the Mahoning Township Police Department will continue to embody the Department's Core Values of Integrity, Professionalism, Teamwork, Community, and Duty.



INSIDE THIS REPORT

- * 2020 Highlights
- * Agency Profile
- * 2020 Police Activities
- * Looking Ahead

MISSION STATEMENT

"The mission of the Mahoning Township Police is to facilitate our fundamental duty to serve the public by safeguarding lives and property, protecting the weak against oppression or intimidation, and the peaceful against violence or disorder. In carrying out this mission, we respect the constitutional rights of all."

VALUES STATEMENT

Integrity. A value that is paramount to the police profession. Integrity produces an atmosphere of credibility. Where integrity thrives, the diseased root of misconduct and corruption cannot take hold.

Professionalism. Our conduct and demeanor display the highest standard of personal and organization excellence. Professionalism is dictated by concepts like courtesy, civility and the ability to deliver high standards of police services.

Teamwork. We value collaboration and diversity of thought. We encourage growth and development – both on a personal and professional level, and understand that the team is always stronger than the individual.

Community. We adhere to the contemporary standards of community policing and embrace each of the nine Peelian Principles. We acknowledge a symbiotic relation with the community we serve; and through this partnership we work cohesively to promote positive solutions to community concerns.

Duty. Our duty is to protect and serve the public, prevent crime and apprehend criminals. We obey the law and enforce it unconditionally and do not swerve from our obligations.

2020 HIGHLIGHTS

NEW POLICE CHIEF

In August of 2019 **Sean McGinley** stepped down as Chief of Police from the Department to take a coveted position as Director - Security Operations for Geisinger. Chief McGinley turned the department around and made great strides in over two and one-half years (2½), hiring three officers (**Officers Pander, Bedisky, and Clossen**) to the force. He changed the culture within the department to one of professionalism and accountability to the citizens of Mahoning Township.

The Mahoning Township Board of Supervisors hired and appointed **Frederick C. Dyroff, III** as the Chief of Police for the department in August 2019. Chief Dyroff was formally the Chief of Police for the Mifflinburg Police Department for over two and one-half years (2½) and prior to that retired as a lieutenant with the Pennsylvania State Police. Chief Dyroff resides in Union County.

ADDITIONAL PATROL OFFICER ADDED TO FORCE

In August of 2019 the Mahoning Township Board of Supervisors approved the hiring of a full-time officer to be added to the force. **Officer Cody Clossen**, a part-time officer, was made a full-time officer. His addition to the force was a greatly needed boost in the arm to the department in fulfilling shifts and adding to the patrol rotation. In August of 2020 he completed his one-year probationary period with a great evaluation.

DETECTIVE POSITION

With the addition of Officer Clossen to the patrol roster, the vacant detective position, which was occupied prior to Chief McGinley's tenure and lost due to manpower and executive leadership changeover, was filled via a competitive process by **Officer Jason Bedisky**. This is a full-time position within the department and Detective Bedisky will handle the more complex and detailed oriented investigations. He has handled such investigations since his arrival at the department and is adept in handling such cases. He will fill vacancies within the patrol schedule as needed. Detective Bedisky began his new assignment on January 5, 2021.

TECHNOLOGY AND EQUIPMENT UPGRADES

During the fall of 2019 Chief Dyroff completed a review of the current **MTPD Policies and Procedures**, which were contained within a Word document. Those policies and procedures were outdated and the process of accessing, reviewing, modifying, as well as keeping them up to date with the latest Federal and State mandates, as well as current with applicable case laws was cumbersome and problematic at best. In late 2019 the Board of Supervisors approved the purchase of Lexipol, which is a 21st century criminal justice program that is web-based and provides 24/7/365 access to our updated policies and procedures (best practices) for our officers via smartphone, computers, tablets, etc. Lexipol tracks each officer's acknowledgement of new policies and procedures, eliminating the excuse the officer did not know a policy or procedure changed. This was no small undertaking, in that it took over 6 months to completely review/update our old policies and procedures to be on par with modern policing. Additionally, Lexipol provides Daily Training Bulletins for the officers to review and get quizzed on our policies and procedures, thus emphasizing these policies.



Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS), commonly referred to as a drone, was approved by the Board of Supervisors and purchased in August of 2020. One UAS was purchased for the Zoning Department and another for MTPD. The MTPD UAS has several attachments to include a loudspeaker, spotlight, beacon light, as well as two cameras. One camera is a traditional camera, while the other is a thermal imaging camera, meaning it can pick up heat signatures which will quickly locate persons on the ground from the air. Additionally, mapping software was purchased for the two UAS, which will greatly assist officers in recreating crime or crash scenes with relative ease, and are accurate down to 1 cm.



Two officers, Sgt. Matthew Gerst and Officer Ryan Pander, took a one-week course on the use and applications of the UAS. Both officers also took the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) test for operation of the UAS and passed effortlessly. MTPD Polices and Procedures have been updated to include UAS. As of this writing, MTPD UAS has been requested three times and launched twice to assist outside agencies with searching for wanted and missing persons. The latest deployment involved assisting in an investigation surrounding the abduction and homicide of a 26-year-old female from Bloomsburg.



Left - Sgt. Matthew Gerst operates a UAS near the Susquehanna River in December 2020.

Right – Officer Ryan Pander operates a UAS at the Mahoning Township building in December 2020.



Less lethal restraining device called the **BoloWrap** was purchased in December 2020. It is a non-pain compliance device, meaning no pain (Taser, pepper spray, baton, joint manipulation, etc.) is used on the subject. The device is becoming more and more popular (230 agencies in USA) due to the increasing spotlight on police and how to de-escalate with subjects that have mental health issues. The device is about the size of a cell phone and shoots an 8-foot Kevlar rope over 600 feet per second and wraps around the subject's legs or arms, preventing him/her from running away or using their hands against the officer. The officer then quickly takes control of the subject and takes them into custody. This device is much safer for the officer and subject, who many times is mentally disturbed. The MTPD continues to shine as one the regions most progressive police departments as it is the first agency in the area with such a device.



New patrol rifles were purchased in late 2019 and placed into service spring of 2020. The new rifles are Colt's LE6945CQB, Semi-automatic, SBR, 223 Rem/556NATO, 10.3" Barrel, Black Finish. The rifles have an adjustable stock which houses a 10-round magazine, external Aimpoint Red Dot sight, external light with grip activation, noise suppressor (silencer), and a single point sling. The old rifles were 20 years old and near end of service life.

CONTINUING IMPROVEMENTS TO THE DEPARTMENT VEHICLE FLEET

In July the department took possession of a 2020 Ford Police Interceptor Hybrid SUV. The SUV is an unmarked fully functional police vehicle with all the working components and equipment of a marked patrol vehicle. It has state-of-the-art emergency lights, siren, barrier separation between the officer and prisoner, secure rifle rack, on-board mobile data terminal (computer), speed timing device, as well as a secure cargo containment system that secures equipment and reports safely in the rear of the vehicle. This hybrid SUV gets over 21 mpg as compared to a comparable traditional engine of approximately 12 mpg, thus saving fuel expenses throughout the life of the vehicle. This SUV replaced a 2014 Dodge Charger that was beyond its police service life and was becoming problematic with repairs and breakdowns.



The department is expected to take possession of a 2021 Ford Police Interceptor SUV in mid to late January 2021. The vehicle will replace a 2015 Ford Police Interceptor SUV that has high mileage and was costing more and more to repair each month. Said SUV was traded in to Kovatch Ford prior to taking delivery of the 2021 SUV, due to receiving over \$9,000 for the trade at this time due to Kovatch having a buyer for the SUV. Had the department waited to trade in at the time of delivery of the new SUV, we would have received only \$5,000 for the trade-in.

ADDITION OF DRUG TAKE-BACK CONTAINER

In January of 2020 the department, in coordination with CVS Pharmacies, acquired at no cost to the township, a drug take-back container. The container was placed in the lobby of the township building and permits residents to safely dispose of unwanted prescription drugs and narcotics anonymously. To date the department has collected over 30 pounds of drugs. Due to the closure of the township building due to COVID-19 several additional pounds of drugs would have been collected.



ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

While updating the policies and procedures it was apparent there were no formal procedures on how to conduct annual employee evaluations for the officers. After reviewing outside agency examples the department, with a side letter of agreement prepared by the township labor attorney with the Officers Association, approved an **Annual Employee Evaluations** that set standards for the officers to meet each year.

In August of 2020 the Mahoning Township Board of Supervisors and the Cooper Township Board of Supervisors signed an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) that permitted the Mahoning Township Police Department to provide law enforcement services and assist in providing for safety, security, and order, in Cooper Township; namely providing police services in assisting the Zoning Enforcement Officer while he is working within Cooper Township for an hourly rate of \$40.00. This is the first time that Mahoning Township has approved contracted police services outside of Mahoning Township.

AGENCY PROFILE

Mahoning Township PD was established in October of 1954, with its primary purpose of providing safety for children at the Mahoning Township Consolidated School. Presently, there are eight sworn officers and a full-time civilian who serves in an administrative/clerical function.

The MTPD provides 24/7 primary police services to approximately 5,500 residents, within a 10 square mile jurisdiction. Contained within the jurisdiction is Geisinger Medical Center, Geisinger Surgery Center, Geisinger Hospital for Advanced Medicine, and Geisinger Children's Hospital. Collectively, the Geisinger System is boasted to be the largest rural hospital in the world.

The department is organized in a traditional police structure, with the Chief as the agency head who reports to a five-member Board of Supervisors. Under the chief is a Sergeant who supervises five police officers and one detective. Department members participate in the County Drug Task Force, Pennsylvania's Highway Safety Enforcement Network, and the Montour/Columbia County SWAT.

Within the ranks of MTPD are two NRA and Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) Certified Firearms Instructors, an NRA certified patrol rifle instructor, a school resource officer, an instructor for the police expandable baton, Taser, OC spray, and BolaWrap. Additionally, a certified instructor for civilian response to active shooters, child car seat technician, a police sniper, a certified forensic child abuse interviewer, a PSP trained crime scene technician and photographer, a cellular technology forensic technician, and an officer who is fluent in Mandarin Chinese and trained in advanced interrogation techniques.

FINGERPRINTING SERVICE

The MTPD serves as the host for the Montour County Central Booking Center and houses the county's only LiveScan machine/computer. Outside agencies routinely use the LiveScan to process those they have arrested.

In late 2019 new security policies were put in place to ensure the safety of officers and civilians working in the township building while prisoners are being processed, to include officers securing the prisoner to the floor with leg shackles, then securing their firearm/taser in a wall mounted gun safe.

In addition to being used for criminal justice purposes, the LiveScan machine housed within the department offers fingerprinting services for non-criminal justice purposes. The MTPD is the only police department in a two-hour drive radius that offers this Livescan based fingerprinting service.

In 2018, the Montour County Criminal Justice Advisory Board (CJAB) recognized that, while providing non-criminal justice fingerprinting is a valuable service to residents of the county, it was placing a considerable strain on the MTPD's limited resources. In response, the Montour County CJAB graciously authorized the MTPD to collect a \$40 fee from each consumer of the service. From 2019 through 2020 the department has conducted **206** fingerprinting services for a total of **\$8,240**, money that goes directly back into the township general account.

2020 POLICE ACTIVITIES

Below is a snapshot of statistics that reflect some of the activities the MTPD has engaged in during 2018. Detailed information on criminal statistics can be gleaned by visiting the Pennsylvania State Police Uniformed Crime Reporting website.

TOTAL INCIDENTS

3521

FOUNDED CRIMINAL OFFENSES

161

CRIMINAL ARRESTS

56

CRASH INVESTIGATIONS

73

TRAFFIC CITATIONS

223

PARKING TICKETS

963

MOTORISTS ASSISTED

93

ALARMS

73

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Prior to COVID-19, the department routinely performed station tours for local scouts and other civic groups when requested. The department participates in the annual Danville Halloween Parade and the National Night Out each year. However, in 2020 both events were cancelled due to the pandemic. The department did participate in a Trunk or Treat event held at Trinity United Methodist Church within the township. The department also participated in a graduation parade for Danville Area High School seniors as well as silent parades for front line workers and residents of senior living centers within the township.

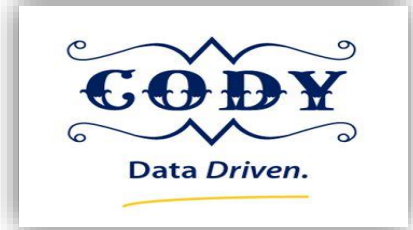
In 2020 the department began a Ride Along program where citizens may ride with a patrol officer for a shift to learn what an officers do on a typical day. A reporter from a local newspaper participated in this program and published an article that was very favorable to the officer and department.



Officer Ryan Pander (left) and Officer Clay Fahringer (right) conduct a station tour in November 2019.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021...

The Mahoning Board of Supervisors approved, via the 2021 budget, for the department to transition from our 20-year-old Records Management System (RMS), which is Visual Alert to one of the best RMS in the industry in CODY Systems. CODY Systems is a PA based company with over 41 years of experience and is family owned and operated. CODY Systems provides 24/7/365 live customer support, always talking to a live person. CODY Systems will integrate with our LiveScan fingerprint computer as well as handle parking tickets/data. Additionally, our current program the department utilizes for traffic citations and warnings (TRACS), will be merged with CODY Systems capturing driver and vehicle data; currently that data is not captured in Visual Alert. This transition will convert/migrate all records/data from Visual Alert to CODY Systems and will be readily available for officers to use, not losing any records/data using the new RMS. CODY Systems will also permit our officers to file criminal complaints and search warrants electronically with the local Magisterial District Court. This process will take approximately 6 – 10 months to complete, but it will bring our RMS into the 21st century.



The department will be transitioning to new duty pistols. Currently, the officers are issued Glock 17, Gen 4, 9mm pistols with fixed sights. The trend in law enforcement is to go the red dot sights on pistols. There are several reasons for this, namely much faster site acquisition resulting in more accurate shots, which is vital in life and death situations. The new pistols will be a Glock 45, Gen 5, 9 mm pistol with Holosun optics. Our current pistol does not permit the use of such optics with a machined modification to the pistol costing several hundred dollars. The new pistols and optics were already purchased from the 2020 budget and we are awaiting on all those items to arrive in early 2021 with transition training and qualification to occur in spring of 2021.

2020 brought protests and riots over the death of George Floyd in Minnesota in May that lasted through the spring, summer, and autumn months. Much of the protests shown a light on real and perceived injustices on the minority population by law enforcement. As a result, to show transparency, police departments across the country began to purchase Body Worn Cameras (BWC). Such cameras, when activated, capture police encounters with the public. MTPD currently has Mobile Video Recorders (MVR) in each marked police vehicle, however video is not captured when the officer is out of view of the vehicle, namely the front of the vehicle where the camera is pointed. In July 2020 the Mahoning Board of Supervisors approved the purchase of BWC for the department. The BWC will activate when the officer activates the emergency lights on the patrol vehicle and will synch with the current MVR. In December 2020 the BWC arrived, however due to the high demand on the manufacturer, installation of the BWC is scheduled the first week of May 2021.



The department will be utilizing a recently purchased Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) in one of the patrol vehicles; the ALPR is easily moved from car to car as needed. ALPR are regularly used by law enforcement to scan vehicle license plates to inquire their status (current/expired registration or stolen) within seconds. Several hundred vehicles can be scanned within a few minutes. It is anticipated that the number of police contacts will increase once the ALPR is placed into service. At this time, we are awaiting approval of submitted paperwork to the Pennsylvania State Police. The ALPR was already purchased from the 2020 budget.

Training of officers is paramount for the MTPD. However, due to the pandemic much of the scheduled training was cancelled. Officers of the MTPD received training in the following disciplines in 2020:

- Human Trafficking
- Minimal Facts Interviewing of Children
- Low Light Shooting
- Emergency Vehicle Operations Course (3 days each of training for 5 of 8 officers)
- Medical Evaluations for Child Abuse
- Red Dot Training (firearms)
- Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS – drone) training (5 days each, 2 officers)
- Hazards of electricity via PPL (all officers)
- Implicit Bias Training for Police Officers (all officers)
- Responding to Child Deaths for Patrol Officers
- BolaWrap Training (all officers)
- Gather Intelligence via Online Sources
- Tactical Firearms Training/Course of Fire (all officers)

The department will continue its march toward becoming an accredited law enforcement agency. This endeavor will take a few years to accomplish, but we hope to make significant leaps toward that end during the 2021 campaign.

As a department, we have set goals to reduce criminal activity occurring within our bailiwick through smarter policing by aggressively targeting problems as they emerge. That involves engaging our community to collaboratively work with us in identifying problems, reporting crimes, and sharing information that may aid us in solving those crimes. In the age of lightning fast information sharing on social media, we hope to continue expanding our presence on that platform.

Towards that end, the department will be implementing a **Security Camera Registration Program**. The program will be a voluntary program where residents and businesses with security cameras may register those cameras with the MTPD. This would be seen as a “neighborhood crime watch for the 21st century” and will potentially provide critical video/still photos to assist the MTPD with investigations. The program will not provide the MTPD the ability to freely access those registered cameras. Rather, it will be a contact list allowing MTPD investigators to review in the event a crime or incident occurred in view of those cameras. At that time the MTPD investigator would contact those registered residents/businesses to inquire if they have actually captured footage of the crime/incident and would be willing to share that with law enforcement.

In closing, the men and women of the MTPD are looking forward to improving our services where we can, while expanding on our strengths. We have enjoyed much success over the past year and that success is directly linked to the strong support the MTPD has received from our community and elected officials. Our goal, as always, is to provide excellent police services to the residents and guests of Mahoning Township, and we look forward to proudly serving you in 2021.



