

## MEMORANDUM

June 7, 2021

TO: Steve Powers, City Manager  
FROM: Trevor Womack, Chief of Police  
SUBJECT: Police Department Six-Month Progress Report

As you know, my approach to the first year as chief comprises three phases: (1) introduction and familiarization through listening, learning, and observing, (2) in-depth organizational assessment, and (3) strategic plan development. As I approach the six-month mark, I'm reflecting upon all that the department has already accomplished as a team and gaining more clarity about where we are headed under our new policing philosophy, which rests upon the dual pillars of Principled Policing and Smarter Policing.

I spent the introductory phase meeting with hundreds of individuals and conducting many public presentations with question and answer sessions, which provided valuable insight into the community and our department. The subsequent internal assessment phase is ongoing but has already resulted in changes. The internal assessment, coupled with the findings of the recent independent assessment, will provide a strong foundation for broad organizational transformation. Our strategic plan development over the coming months will produce a solid framework for moving the organization steadily forward.

### First Half of 2021

Below is a summary of change work already accomplished or well underway.

- **Principled Policing** – Strengthening police legitimacy is a top priority and Procedural Justice (PJ), when practiced both internally and externally, is a proven means to that end. PJ comprises four tenets: voice, neutrality, dignity/respect, and trustworthiness. Two recent examples of introducing PJ into the organization include adding a community member to police officer applicant interview panels and incorporating PJ concepts into our upcoming promotional processes. Longer-term, we will infuse PJ into special assignment selections, performance evaluations, policies, etc. We are creating a new cadre of PJ trainers to develop and administer training tailored to our department. Top leadership, myself included, will be first in line for this training. We will model PJ training after the evidence-based approach outlined by [National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice](#).

We are working with the [California Partnership for Safe Communities](#) to design a police-community trust-building framework tailored to Salem. The initial design will be complete in July. We have continued to meet with many individuals and small groups to hear directly from our community about their experiences with Salem Police and their needs and desires going forward regarding public safety. Several I have met during this process will become members of a new advisory board to provide an ongoing means of direct communication and provide input into our policies, practices, training, and more.

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- **Smarter Policing** - We need to make focused, data-driven decisions about how we use our limited personnel resources. Intelligence-led policing is where we are headed. The Salem Police Department (SPD) has been doing some level of this for years, but it is time to refine this work and apply it throughout to all we do. As an example, work is underway to use data and human intel to (1) identify our most prolific criminal offenders, (2) develop individual risk reduction strategies for each, (3) leverage outside partners and internal resources across divisions, and (4) continually reassess. In short, we must focus our collective internal and external efforts upon the highest risk people to be most effective at reducing crime and improving safety. This logic can be applied to anything from reducing criminal behavior within the chronically homeless population to auto theft to homicide.
- **Accountability Measures** - We renamed the Office of Internal Affairs to Professional Standards Unit, sent three staff members to a leading professional standards training conference, and doubled our capacity to conduct administrative investigations by moving a second sergeant into the unit. We are also revamping the complaint intake and review process. Previously, many investigations were conducted by the involved employee's supervisor and manager. Most will now be conducted by Professional Standards, improving quality, timeliness, and objectivity. The change also frees workload from sergeants in all divisions, allowing more time for active supervision in the field and team building. We are implementing a new process for supervisors to respond and conduct reviews on force incidents and other high liability events. Longer-term, we will be updating and reorganizing our policy and procedure manual—with some level of community review/input—and posting them online for full transparency.
- **Addressing Staffing Challenges** - Over the past decade, increased workloads without commensurate staffing increases have diminished our ability to provide adequate emergency patrol response and investigate crime, our core functions. This has also limited our capacity for community engagement and trust-building, something we can no longer ignore. We are unable to hire more staff without increased revenue, so priority staffing adjustments are required. We developed a plan to reassign 10-13 positions to patrol from other areas. School resource officer reassignments resulted in six patrol positions. Additional transfers by the end of this year will result in four to seven others. We are also analyzing shift structures and schedules for possible changes and reviewing call types for alternative response options. Difficult priority moves like these are necessary for the short term while we strive for staffing increases in the coming budget years.
- **Protests** - Through our on-the-ground learned experiences over the past year and continual efforts to apply emerging best practices regarding crowd/protest management, we have made improvements to training, equipment, communication, and incident management. We will continue to adapt to the shifting dynamics of these events as it is so critical to both officer and community safety and our legitimacy as a police agency.

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- **Recruiting, Hiring, Retention** - We are refreshing our recruitment strategy with an emphasis on diversity. We are establishing a “career pipeline” with existing programs and exploring potential new partnerships, such as [Western Oregon University](#) and Salem-Keizer Public School’s [Career Technical Education Center](#). We will create an organizational culture wherein everyone is a recruiter and ask for the community’s help. We have implemented an exit interview process to gain a better understanding of the experiences and perspectives of all employees who separate from the department. As mentioned above, we added a community voice into the hiring process.
- **Training** - Training will remain a high priority but also take a new shape as we emerge from the pandemic, including increased usage of our new simulator. We set a goal to provide Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) to all officers and will be hosting a CIT course to help us reach that goal (about 30% of officers have already had that training). We will emphasize communication and interpersonal skills along with tactical training, and model de-escalation training around best practice such as the [Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactics](#) course developed by the Police Executive Research Forum. We are exploring ways to return to multi-day blocks of annual training instead of the current reliance upon short sessions before and after each shift. Procedural justice training was mentioned above.
- **Transparency** - We are increasing internal and external communication. Examples include regularly communicating our approach and priorities related to [protests](#) and providing more aggregate use of force data to the Community Police Review Board. We will do much more, including making policies available online, providing daily crime updates to the community, and developing a public-facing dashboard and/or data portal; and create more opportunities for two-way communications as well. Internally, we will continue to emphasize communications up and down the ranks and across all divisions. Examples include the virtual employee suggestion box and the creation of Special Directives—which are immediate, temporary policies allowing for quick formal policy changes as needed. We will continue to make ourselves available for all manner of community meetings and presentations to both share departmental information and glean community input.

### Second Half of 2021

To move the department steadily forward, much of the general work described above is being packaged into four categories, each led by a member of my executive team. These areas are summarized below. While all of this will be written into our strategic plan and further developed, we are not waiting; the work starts now.

- **Community Engagement** – Deputy Chief Miller will lead the effort to design a new patrol model that supports increased levels of community engagement. Our current organizational structure and staffing analysis project will inform the design. Redistricting, either by combining existing policing districts or creating completely new districts, will be a key first step; followed by a new deployment model that best

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supports continual community engagement within each district. We will leverage Neighborhood Associations for collaborative problem-solving efforts specific to each group's needs and interests—all coordinated under a proposed new police lieutenant position. To some extent, the effectiveness of our community engagement model will depend upon current and future staffing capacity.

- **Intelligence-led Policing** – Deputy Chief Burke will lead the creation of an intelligence-led policing model, which will require some amount of dedicated staff and centralization to drive overall departmental efforts. Existing personnel and technological resources will be centralized and managed within the Investigations Division as a foundation to build upon. Efforts will be focused on identified priorities using collaborative, multi-pronged approaches.
- **Training, Policy, Diversification** – Efforts to incorporate new forms of training, a full update and reorganization of our policies, and a focus upon increased diversity will be led by Deputy Chief Bellshaw.
- **Police Legitimacy and Trust-Building** – I will be working directly on designing an overarching police-community trust-building framework for the department. Lt. Debra Aguilar is temporarily assigned to assist me with this work.

Much is happening and we are evolving as an organization. Decisions are being made thoughtfully with consideration of the potential impacts and benefits to the community and department. Open, honest, transparent communication is a priority as we move forward. We are actively seeking input, sharing information, and listening to our community to inform our decisions. Internally, we are supporting our staff through the change process, while encouraging all to remain open-minded, supportive of the process, and provide input at every opportunity.



CHIEF TREVOR WOMACK

SALEM POLICE DEPARTMENT

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