



Staff Report

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Date: 7/13/2020

Item #: 6.d.

TO: Mayor and City Council

THROUGH: Steve Powers, City Manager

FROM: Courtney Knox Busch, Strategic Initiatives Manager

SUBJECT:

Salem Police Department Performance Audit

Ward(s): All Wards

Councilor(s): All Councilors

Neighborhood(s): All Neighborhoods

Result Area(s): Good Governance; Safe Community; Safe, Welcoming and Livable Community.

ISSUE:

Information requested by City Council for a performance audit of the Police Department.

RECOMMENDATION:

Information only, or City Council may choose to provide direction.

SUMMARY:

On June 22, 2020, City Council requested the types of policies, procedures and programs to be included in a performance audit of the Police Department. A performance audit can include a wide range of programs, policies and procedures. For the performance audit information requested by City Council, the recommended components are interactions with unsheltered individuals, interactions with individuals experiencing behavioral health crisis, community engagement, response to assemblies and crowds, department capacity, use of force, and officer accountability.

FACTS AND FINDINGS:

Desired Outcomes

- Thorough third-party review and assessment of policies, programs, training and practices for

selected areas,

- Recommendations for improvement, and
- Publish report on findings with recommendations for Salem, within context of the City's budget and available resources.

Components to Include in a Performance Audit

There are several issues of community concern for which the Salem Police Department is a principal responder, regardless of whether an activity is criminal. City Council and the community want to better understand how Salem police officers prepare for and interact with unsheltered individuals and individuals experiencing behavioral health crisis. Peaceful assemblies permitted protests and demonstrations, and impromptu crowds can require a Police Department presence or response. Are the Police Department's policies and tactics aligned with City Council and community values and expectations?

Police officers are challenged with balancing response to calls and unobligated patrol time. Unobligated patrol time is when officers can engage with residents in productive, non-adversarial ways. What is the Department's capacity for community policing? How effective are Salem police officers in engaging with all Salem residents? How effective is the Department's engagement with youth? Are the Department's policies, tactics, or training biased or discriminatory?

Police departments across the country are being asked to explain and justify use of force. Are the Salem Police Department's use-of-force policies, procedures, training, and reporting effective in protecting officers and the community? Are the Department's policies, tactics, or training biased or discriminatory?

Police officers must have confidence in the integrity and competence of their colleagues. Officer accountability is essential to maintaining public trust. Review and adjudication processes must be fair to police officers. Complainants must have confidence that their grievances have been considered by the Police Department and City without bias or predisposition. How effective are the Police Department and City's systems, policies, and procedures for officer accountability?

Proposed Scope of Work

- 1. Research and Assessment.** The following documents will be made available for review:
 - Department mission, vision and values,
 - Operations budget and organizational structure, functional groups and programs,
 - Department policies, hiring practices, training requirements, and reports,
 - Performance measures and outcomes,
 - Accreditation documentation (occurs every three years), and

- Community Police Review Board proceedings.

2. Review of Best Practice

- Review how comparable Oregon cities approach community policing and engagement.
- Review how comparable cities interact with unsheltered individuals and individuals experiencing behavioral health crisis.
- Locate examples of best practices from comparably-sized communities or state capitals in protection of permitted protests and crowd control.
- Conduct peer department interviews, as necessary, to better define specific programmatic elements.

3. Organization Interviews

- Conduct interviews with officers, department leadership, City management and councilors regarding Department policies, programs, training, and performance.
- Identify other areas within the organization and community in which partnerships support a response to needs in homelessness and behavioral health.
- Identify other areas within the organization and community in which partnerships support a response to needed resident and neighborhood engagement
- Consider organizational capacity to achieve recommendations and identify gaps in resources such as funding, staffing, or training.

4. Community Interviews

- Conduct interviews with community leaders and potential partners to explore impacts and outcomes of programs and practices.
- Consider community capacity to achieve recommendations and identify gaps in resources such as funding, staffing, or training.

5. Report Out

- Prepare final report for City Council, City Manager, and Police Chief.
- Take report to community and neighborhood associations.

City Council requested an estimated cost for a performance audit. An estimate is challenging to provide without a scope of work. If City Council chooses to proceed with a performance audit as outlined in this report, a request for information will be used to provide a realistic estimate for consideration.

BACKGROUND:

A performance audit usually refers to an independent examination of a program, function, operation

or the management systems and procedures of a governmental or non-profit entity to assess whether the entity is achieving economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the employment of available resources. Generally, performance auditing follows a standard practice and may be conducted under Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS).

Typically, steps in a performance audit include:

1. Confirm objectives, scope and methodology of the audit,
2. Document and assess existing programs, policies and practices in a functional area,
3. Document and analyze best practice within the functional area,
4. Assess existing key performance indicators to track performance against objectives, identify any gaps, and compare to other local governments of comparable size or demographics and to national benchmarks,
5. Report finding and recommendations,
6. Prepare plan to address the findings, informed by best practice, with attention to those areas that fall below comparable cities and national benchmarks,
7. Develop a plan to measure and report the performance on an ongoing basis, and
8. Report the progress of each action planned to improve the performance and revise as necessary.

The City is currently developing a performance measurement framework with performance metrics aligned with city-wide strategic and operational goals.

In law enforcement, performance audits address specific concerns arising in individual communities often following an incident or in response to a court-ordered settlement. These performance audits address concerns of patterns in officer-involved shootings, concerns about excessive force, or discriminatory policing. The goals of the performance audits are to strengthen police oversight and provide specific recommendations regarding changes to policy, procedure, and tactics.

Courtney Knox Busch
Strategic Initiatives Manager

Attachments: