

**TOWN OF ARNAUDVILLE
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MAY 20, 2014**

POLICE DEPARTMENT REPORT

During my first month in office I have uncovered things that could have placed the Police Department and the Town of Arnaudville in an awkward position. The Police Departments SOP manual was seriously outdated. I have been fortunate to obtain the services of Mr. Jerry Quebedeaux, with the permission and support of Sheriff Ronnie Theriot, to review our SOP and update it accordingly. The evidence locker has not been opened and no one in the Department has any idea what might be behind the locked door. I assume that any log book must be inside the locker as well, since it cannot be found in the office. I have contacted the Louisiana State Police to come to our Department and perform an audit of the contents of the locker and then to advise us on how we should handle the logging in and preservation of any evidence in the future. While one of our Patrolman was in the process of recertifying it came to light that he was not in compliance with POST requirements. Once discovered, the Patrolman was placed on temporary leave without pay until he fulfilled the necessary procedures for compliance, which he satisfactorily completed.

To begin with, I wish to ask the Council to approve the hiring of Mr. Zachary Williams to the position of Patrolman Third Class at the starting salary of \$9.42 per hour. Patrolman Williams is POST firearm qualified, which allows him to work patrol; however, he will have to be enrolled in an academy before he reaches a year of employment. Patrolman Williams spent 10 months as a Correctional Officer in both Lafayette Parish and St. Martin Parish before moving to the Henderson Police Department as a Patrolman with duties that included a heavy emphasis on Traffic Enforcement. I received positive feedback from his previous employers on his character and work ethic and feel that Patrolman Williams will be an asset to our department.

Communication with both the St. Landry and St. Martin Parish Sheriff's Office is becoming more established. Both offices have been very helpful in their efforts to assist us, especially during the operation of the 2014 Etouffee Festival and in the required training that our officers need in order for them to retain their POST certification. Part of this process also requires our Department to keep a training log on our computer, which is then uploaded to the POST headquarters for updating. This procedure is currently being reviewed and I project that it should be up and functioning within the next month. With respect to the Festival, the St. Landry Sheriff's Office and the St. Martin Sheriff's Office supplied 7 deputies to patrol the grounds (3 deputies and 4 deputies respectively). A letter of appreciation and thanks were sent to both Sheriff's.

I recently received an estimate from Parking Lot Painting Co. to redo the striping for parking in front and on the side of the Police Department. The cost for this is \$345.00. I also asked for an estimate to repaint the stripes in the front and the Fuselier St. side of the town hall. The cost for this is also \$345.00. The total cost for the entire job would be \$690.00.

I am pleased to announce that a few policies have already been established and that others are currently in the works for future implementation.

I have implemented the department dress code for the patrolmen on duty and they are now wearing Class A uniforms during their tour of duty. This dress code has resulted in positive feedback from some of our citizens who report that our patrolmen look more professional. There is also a dress code for the dispatch clerks that will be put in place during the next month.

The Police Department is now making use of an FIC (Field Interview Cards) to log any stops that are Patrolmen initiated. This can be a traffic stop (where a violation ticket is not issued), a stop of a suspicious person or a vehicle, or anytime the Patrolman steps out on an activity that he deems worthy of investigating. Along with this, I am currently working on an MIC (Miscellaneous Interview Cards) that Patrolmen will fill out when he feels that a full-fledged

report is not necessary. This can be a 911 hang up or a complaint that can be settled on the scene. Note that these cards will be kept on file at the Police Department. An FIC for a traffic stop is a warning and should that individual be stopped again for the same violation, after being given sufficient time to correct the problem, they will be issued a traffic citation.

Our Department has also begun using Neighborhood Assessment Sheets. These will be filled out by the Patrolman when he observes things in town that should be brought to the attention of the Mayor for proper handling. These can vary from missing street signs, stop signs, speed signs, pot holes and burned out street lights; to name a few. Also, in terms of residential property, the Patrolman will provide information regarding an accumulation of trash, overgrown yards, or anything that should be brought to the attention of the land owner. Again, this information will be passed on the Mayor for her attention.

We have also begun an "Application for Senior Services" that will allow anyone who would like to be monitored the opportunity to have a regular phone call or a visit to see how they are doing. Due to his familiarity with the residents of our town, I have chosen Patrolman Joseph Carriere to initiate the first round of contacting our citizens (especially those that live alone) to see if they might be interested in this service. In conjunction with this, one day and one night dispatcher will have to be sent for training to be certified in elderly services in order for them to correctly monitor the individuals in the program. Our Department's job is to protect and serve and this program is one of the ways that we feel we can accomplish both.

In order to treat our businesses fairly and equally, I have started the policy of buying fuel for our police vehicles on a monthly rotating basis. The businesses involved in this process will be, Guidry's Food Store, The Mini Mart Store and Butch's Store. Should any business decide that they do not wish to participate in this program they should write to me expressing their wish to be removed from the program.

One of the key components of relationship building is communication. Effective communication promotes team work and team work enables progress. Currently, Arnaudville has no effective mechanism by which to communicate directly with our citizens, other than through their attendance at Town Council meetings. Therefore, any information, action or activity often gets communicated through word of mouth, which can result in misinformation or incomplete information. While I acknowledge that not everyone has a computer or a smart phone, I have found that through our Arnaudville website and Facebook page I am able to reach hundreds of people and provide vital information that is then relayed to those people without access to a computer. Please take note that many, if not most, of these people do not attend council meetings. I encourage everyone to visit our Arnaudville Police Department official website. It is very informative and up-to-date. It is also tied into the St. Landry and St. Martin Sheriff's websites. Currently two items of note are being highlighted, the Louisiana State Police "Click it or Ticket" program and Boat Safety week. I will also be posting my reports to the council on our website. I feel that the town of Arnaudville should consider getting a website. As with the APD website, the town website (if one is built) should be monitored daily.

I posted a survey on our website that asked citizens what they felt were priority issues in Arnaudville. You council members have a simple pie chart that breaks down the survey data. Keep in mind that this is not a scientific survey, but it does provide the APD a level of input from our citizens. The statistics for the survey breaks down to: 53% of the respondents felt that Drugs were the main priority, followed by 27% in favor of upgrading our Police Department, then 12% wanted us to crack down on Speeding, while 8% felt the monitoring of our elderly was also important.

Further statistics from our Department were, for the month of April, 14 Citations issued, 2 arrests, and 29 calls for service.

I would like to make a few recommendations for the Mayor and Council members to review:

First, I would like the council to review the possibility of employee health insurance. I know that the town currently pays 50 percent of the cost for employee health insurance; however, I feel that our Department loses many qualified candidates; as well as some who don't even come to put in an application, because we do not offer this perk. Please make note of the fact that should this benefit be added to the employment package it would mean that the employee would be getting a substantial raise. I think that should it be too costly to add this benefit, consideration should be given to offer a health stipends to the employees to help them pay for medical insurance. These are just suggestions for the council to consider.

Second, I would like to recommend the hiring of two (2) additional Patrolmen for the coming summer months. These officers would work the evening/night shift so that two (2) Patrolmen would be on duty during the time when more traffic is on the streets. It is dangerous enough for any Patrolman on duty during darkness and having an extra backup officer would go a long way to promoting officer safety. I am not sure that any Patrolman can be found to fill these spots on a temporary basis but I will look at possible alternatives should the Council approve this request.

Third, the pastor of the old Baptist Church on the corner of E. Bagstill St. and St. Joseph St. installed a basketball court behind the church. It has attracted many kids, since it is the only one that is not located on a homeowner's property. During the Easter week break from school two (2) fights occurred on those grounds. Although the property surrounding the church is private property there is no one there six (6) days a week to monitor who is on the property. I feel that the children of our community need a place to play and I would like to recommend that the tennis court, located next to the fire station, be considered for use as a basketball court. Two (2) and, possibly, four (4) Portable Goals could be placed at each end the tennis courts. The court is surrounded by a fence with two (2) access gates that can be locked and secured when the court is not in use. For safety, I would recommend that two (2) security cameras be set up to observe activity on the courts. These cameras could be hooked into the Police Department surveillance system and would be monitored by the dispatch clerks.

Further, the Police Department would take on the responsibility of unlocking the gates at 9:00 AM and locking the gates at 8:00 PM.

In conclusion, I wish to address another program that will start tonight. This is an "Employee of the Month" program. Along with the certificate to be presented I have begun talking to some of our restaurants to see if they may want to participate in honoring the employee. So far I have received positive feedback from a couple of the establishments that I have had the time to speak to. This first time awardee was chosen by me. I had eight (8) people to choose from and, to be honest, it was not easy. I looked at each person during my first month on the job and decided that one (1) employee stood out. This employee has been with our Department for a number of years and has been dedicated to both the Department and the town of Arnaudville. Through changes and upheavals this employee has stayed the course and did the jobs assigned. Before naming the employee of the month, I would like to ask the Mayor and Council Members to feel free to drop me a note about whether a particular employee has done a good job during the month. I also encourage our citizens to do the same. The first recipient of the Arnaudville Police Department "Employee of the Month", who will receive a certificate as well as a \$30.00 gift card towards a meal at The Little BIG Cup, is Patrolman Joseph G. Carriere.

This concludes the Arnaudville Police Report.

Respectfully Submitted,

Eddy J. LeCompte
Chief of Police
Arnaudville Police Department