

Blair Police Department IACP Staffing Study Review



Why This Study Was Conducted

- Requested due to anticipating a leadership transition with the Chief of Police
- Independent review conducted by the International Association of Chiefs of Police
- Goal: ensure police services align with community needs and growth



Purpose and Scope of study

- The City of Blair engaged the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) to conduct an administrative and operational review of the Blair Police Department (BPD) anticipating a leadership transition and amid increasing service demands. The study evaluated patrol staffing levels, workload distribution, organizational structure, and operational effectiveness, with a focus on aligning resources to current and future community needs



Data used to support study

- IACP consultants reviewed the last 3-5 years of data:
 - Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) calls for service reports
 - Nebraska Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) data
 - Human Resources payroll and overtime reports
- IACP conducted interviews of PD sworn and civilian staff
- Review of department operations, workflow and written directives



Community Safety Context

- Blair remains a low-crime community
- Crime rates below state and national averages
- Very low violent and property crime rates
- Blair population stable, but long-term growth projected
- Calls for service increased 17% since 2022 and rising faster than population



What Is Driving the Issue

- Workload growth exceeds population growth
- More service demand without matching staff growth
- Officers operating in largely reactive mode
- Less time for proactive community engagement
- Increased reliance on overtime
- Increased burnout on existing personnel
- Retention issues are factual



Key Findings

- Patrol officers are operating in a largely reactive mode:
 - 54% of time responding to calls
 - 38% administrative duties
 - 2% of time available for proactive community engagement
- Supervisory/Command staffing is insufficient
 - One patrol shift operates without dedicated sergeant creating increased risk to officer safety, service quality and liability
 - This issue has been remedied with promotion of Sgt. Hatheway
- Need for additional command officer (Captain)
 - Span of control is too great for one captain and places excessive administrative and operational burden on current command.
 - Adding command capacity allows Chief to focus on community and organizational strategic leadership, operational effectiveness and long-term planning rather than daily operational triage



Key Findings Continued

- Staffing gaps are currently being filled by overtime
 - Equivalent to nearly two full-time officers
 - Officer burnout is apparent.
- Limited access to CAD records and workload data
 - Strained relationship between Douglas County 911 & Blair PD limited data-sharing agreements
 - Constrains effective planning, deployment of personnel and accountability
 - Limit's our ability to expand data-driven and evidence-based policing.
 - **This issue has been remedied through political influence**



Current Operations Reality

- Officers must balance emergency response, paperwork, administrative duties and community presence.
- Current staffing levels & two (2) officer minimum staffing, leaves very limited time for proactive policing
- Many calls for service require two officers for response
- Proactive time is essential for crime prevention and positive community engagement.



IACP Recommendations Critical/High Risk Priority

- Create 4th Sgt position – **COMPLETED**
- Improve access to accurate, timely CAD and workload data – **COMPLETED**
- Increase patrol staffing by three (3) officers
- Add one (1) additional command officer (Captain)
- Conduct workload analysis and compare against personnel allocations annually
- Adopt and implement IACP Principles of Leadership



IACP Recommendations

Medium Priority

- Establish geographic accountability (patrol sectors/beats) and stress beat integrity
- Capture and use data-driven and evidence-based policing methods
- Explore crime mapping systems and tools for internal use and external community engagement
- Adopt wellness program to improve officers' morale and health



Cost of Inaction

- Escalating overtime dependency
- Reduced service resiliency
- Officer fatigue, morale issues and retention risks
- Continued erosion of proactive crime prevention and community engagement
- Reduced supervisory and command oversight creating higher liability exposure
- Diminished ability to support future growth
- Deferred costs shifted to future budgets
- Higher recruitment and training costs



Benefits of Investment

- Consistent supervision and accountability
- Greater organizational stability
- Improved service reliability & response flexibility
- Better use of data and results metrics
- Reduced overtime reliance
- Improved proactive prevention and engagement
- Increased morale and less officer burnout
- Strengthened community trust
- Reduced risk of costly liability claims
- Improved recruitment competitiveness and retention



City Council Considerations

- Are current service levels sustainable?
- Define acceptable risk tolerance (officer safety, response reliability, liability exposure & continued OT costs)
- Recommendations are supported by IACP
- Balance short-term cost vs long-term stability
- Does action show fiscal foresight and strengthen community trust?
- Decide between proactive planning or reactive correction
- Inaction defers accountability and future council inherits more expensive problems





Hire vs. Overtime – Budget Comparison

Category	Overtime Reliance	Hiring Staff
Cost Predictability	Variable / Unpredictable	Fixed / Planned
Hourly Cost	Time-and-a-half	Straight time
Fatigue Risk	High	Lower
Supervision	Does not resolve gaps	Builds coverage
Morale & Retention	Negative pressure	Improves stability
Community Engagement	Limited	Restored proactive time
Long-Term Cost	Escalating	Stabilized