



2024 Yearly Report
February 10th, 2025
Chief D. Dennis Brown

Chief's Corner

WELCOME

To the Hamlet Community:

Service as your chief continues to be an honor and privilege. Over the last four years, we have developed an excellent team within the police department of women and men who serve our fantastic community every day with pride and professionalism. Your police department staff continues to make a heartfelt impact by improving the quality of life in Hamlet and our community's overall feeling of safety. As this report will indicate, our team has made an impactful difference in the quality of life for all who call Hamlet home. Our city is experiencing the beginning of a revitalization, and your police department is playing a vital role in this process by reducing crime using environmental design, focusing on community policing, technology, and training

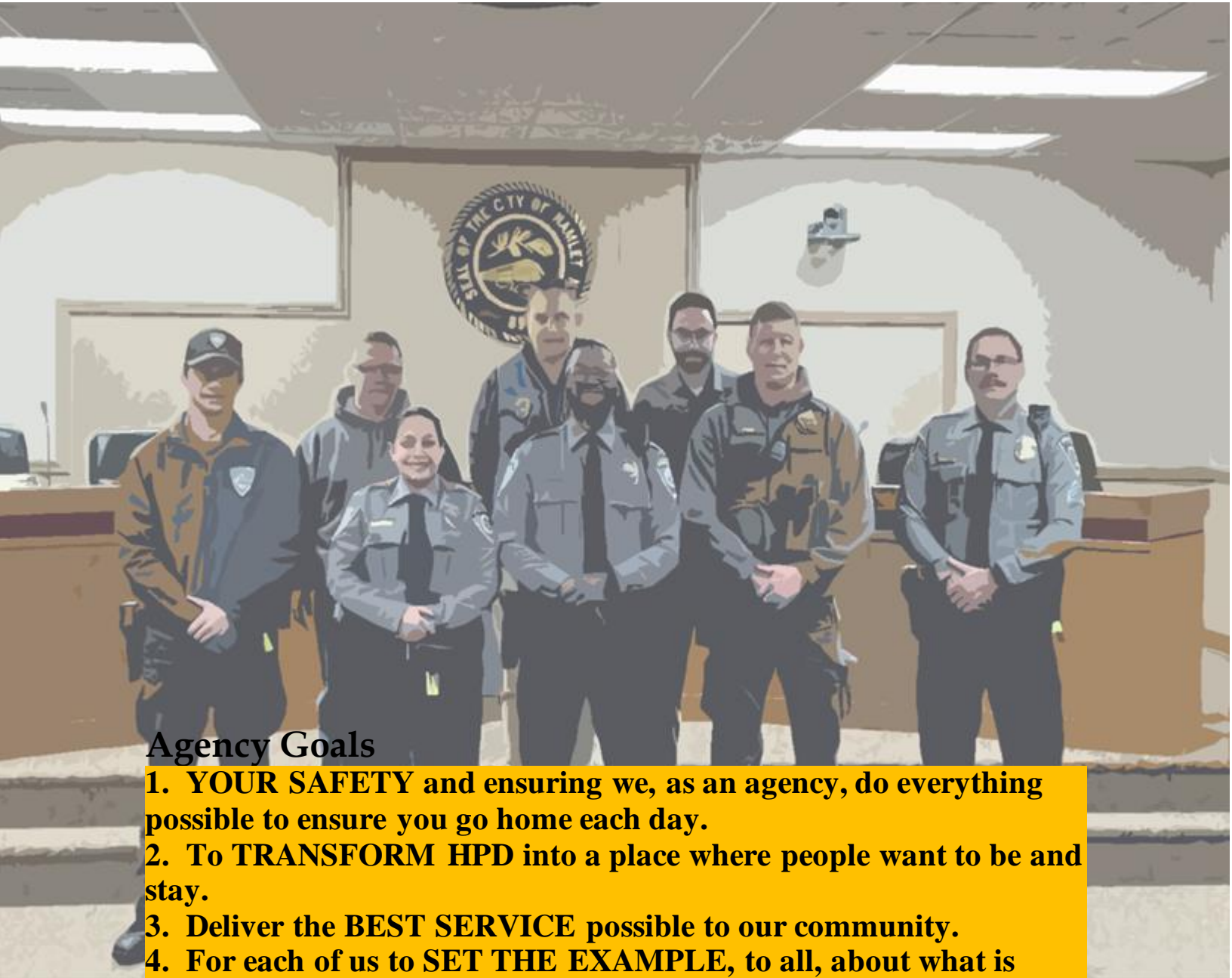
As I enter my 29th year of public service, I am excited about what 2025 brings for our Hamlet community. I hope you enjoy learning more about your police department and what we accomplished last year.



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Agency Goals

1. **YOUR SAFETY** and ensuring we, as an agency, do everything possible to ensure you go home each day.
2. To **TRANSFORM HPD** into a place where people want to be and stay.
3. Deliver the **BEST SERVICE** possible to our community.
4. For each of us to **SET THE EXAMPLE**, to all, about what is right with law enforcement.
5. Leave HPD **BETTER** than we entered for the first time.

Core Values: Pride, Performance, Perception, Professionalism

Your Department

The Hamlet Police Department employs 26 dedicated and passionate staff members who serve our community with pride and professionalism. On a daily occurrence, your staff goes the extra mile to ensure our city is safe and well-protected. Through our efforts, we who call Hamlet home feel safer in our residences, parks, and businesses. While we still have occasional violent crime, overall, our city remains one of the safest in the area.

Our department consists of 3 divisions (Patrol, Investigative, and Administration) which provide 24-hour service to the Hamlet Community. In addition to traditional law enforcement activities, our agency provides animal control, code enforcement, and a school resource officer for Richmond Community College.

This past year, we undertook the function of code enforcement within the city limits which has yielded great success. Additionally, we have specialized patrol officers who work on traffic complaints and crime reduction. These specialized officers helped to seize 84 illegal weapons from our streets, 30 driving while impaired arrests, and 179 drug investigations

Excitement is building around Hamlet with new housing and business investment. We, in the police department, believe some of this growth is due to the safe and tranquil environment we have built together by working with our community stakeholders. Now, it is common for kids to walk and ride around the city and we have groups of outdoor enthusiasts who explore our neighborhoods and downtown daily.

Our police department routinely interacts with residents, schools, and community organizations. We have expanded our outreach efforts to incorporate our community into long and short-term strategic plans.

Officer of the Year for 2024 is Captain Matthew Norris, a 28-year law enforcement veteran and Chief's Choice Award winner for 2024 is Code Officer Dalton Millen a two-year veteran of the department.

Our future is bright as we build on the success of our past.



PROJECTS

Grants

In 2024, the Hamlet Police Department applied for multiple private grants from Burlington Northern, Firehouse Subs, CSX, Walmart, Allstate, and others. This is primarily due to the federal grant system decommissioning and using this year to re-construct itself, causing federal grant disruption.

Improvements to Equipment

Rifles

New 45 caliber carbine rifles were approved, purchased, and assigned to patrol officers. The new rifles are of high quality and consistency, and officers currently are qualified with them. The rifles use pistol rounds which is more advantageous than rifle rounds in a city environment.

Cameras

New pole cameras were purchased, installed, and are in operation across the city. This has led to a significant number of leads for criminal investigations and has acted as a major deterrent against crime citywide. Flock cameras (license plate readers) have been installed in key locations in the city, and these systems paired together have consistently led to solving crimes. Our cameras allow us to connect to other agencies in the area, state, and nation to locate and identify offenders.

Shields

Ballistic hand shields have been assigned to patrol officers. These shields improve their safety in potentially deadly force encounters.

Technology

A digital forensics software (Gladiator), commonly used by the FBI was purchased and implemented for the use of cellular tower phone data analysis.

Less Lethal Shotguns

Less-lethal shotguns have been implemented, and officers have been trained on their use to provide them with a less-lethal option. This allows our staff the ability to respond with a lower force level in some deadly force encounters

Training Classrooms

The Richmond County School System provided two mobile classrooms for department use. These facilities will provide a much-needed training area and gym for staff.

Range Improvements

The berm was rebuilt at the range and the area has been cleaned and repaired. The range was renamed the Chief John B. Fallaw Training Facility.

Improvements to Procedure

Reporting Methods

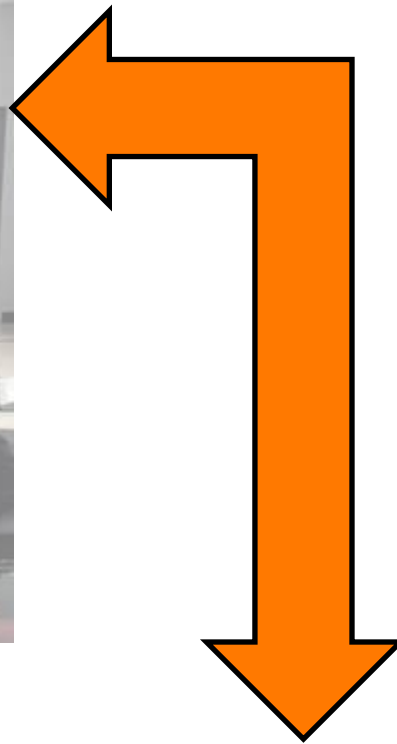
Officers now use automation to report law enforcement contact with juveniles who attend Richmond County Schools. A system was built by Major Chitwood and implemented for the school district to receive and process these referrals and share them with the correct school's personnel.

County-wide overdose reporting to the emergency communications center (ECOMM) was built and implemented by Major Chitwood, so that statistics can be drawn from all over Richmond County for overdoses. This system shows the location, race and gender, of the patient, and survivability which can be mapped.



Provided in part by Major Chitwood

Training



The Hamlet Police Department is committed to producing the best trained and prepared officers to serve our fantastic city. As a result, each officer received over 100 hours of training yearly in 2024.

In-Service

Chief Brown has continued the Solo Active Shooter training for all personnel, utilizing the Hamlet Hospital as a realistic environment for simunition training, building searches, and communication training.

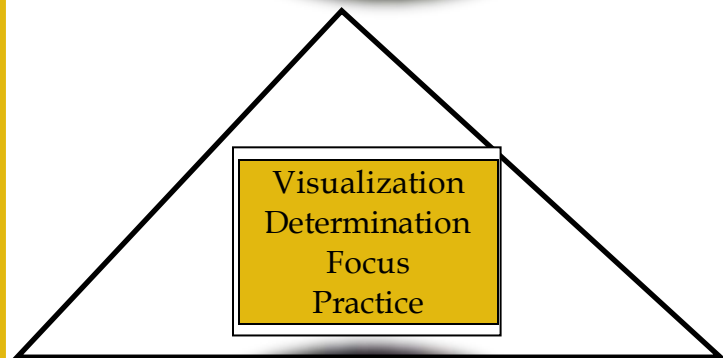
Chief Brown and Captain Norris created an in-service simunition training for bank alarms and responses where a more sensitive, hostage-rich environment may take place. This has dramatically improved officers' responses to banks and other sensitive assets on unknown problems.

Major Chitwood has utilized working his on-call second shifts for shift training events to teach tactical movement, responding to an area to locate suspects, time distance speed training, and building teamwork to the successful solving of a crime. All shifts are required to conduct weekly shift training from an approved list of topics.

Each officer completed 28-hours of in-service training in addition to CPR, First Responder, AED, less than lethal, Taser, Use of Force, and handcuffing. We have trained staff for over 3000 hours this year. Currently 6 staff members teach Basic Law Enforcement curriculum at Richmond County Community College.

Outside Training Achievements

Officers attended the Police Law Institute, the FBI's Carolina Command College, General Instructor, vehicle extractions, officer safety, the FBI's LEEDA leadership courses, and training courses such as Field Training Officer certification, TASER instructorship, RADAR/LiDAR training, and Standardized Field Sobriety Testing. Officers have attended higher-level investigations trainings and have since adopted technology solutions to complex criminal investigations, used by the federal investigative bodies. The North Carolina Criminal Justice Academy's Certification for Crime Scene Processing.



Community Engagement

The Hamlet Police Department is dedicated to developing partnerships with our community to ensure we deliver a surgical approach to enforcement and engagement. Our service model is built on our 4 core principles:

Pride-In-service to the Hamlet Police and pride in the community we serve.

Performance-Delivering the highest quality of ethical, honest, and dedicated service to our community.

Perception-Presenting to everyone, at all times, the best example of law enforcement and city service.

Professionalism- Going above and beyond to represent our community with grace and compassion.

Our Motto: "Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better."

Maya Angelo

Programs



YouTube

The Hamlet Police Department has created a YouTube channel to assist with marketing the agency and finding applicants for employment. Videos of their training have been made public, to show interest in our department's dedication to training and service.

Facebook

Facebook posts have been successful throughout the year in notifying the public of fresh crimes and have assisted in several solved crimes with tips. This is in partnership with P3/NC Crime Stoppers, which has provided tips throughout 2024 as well.

Crime Stoppers

Crime Stoppers meetings have been attended thoroughly, and Chief Brown and Major Chitwood attended the annual NC Crime Stoppers conference and training this year, representing the Hamlet Police Department throughout the week. Hamlet Police is the most consistent agency in attendance at these meetings. Major Chitwood was elected to the board this year.

School District

Routine walk-throughs of Hamlet schools paired this year with generating a signed mutual aid agreement between the Hamlet Police and the Richmond County School Police. Hamlet officers now work off duty at not only Hamlet schools but also at 9th Grade Academy to ensure a safer overall community. During the 1st week of school, officers were stationed in the schools for safety and rode buses during their routes which allowed for a smoother transition at the start of the school year.

The Chief and the Major have worked alongside Richmond County Schools in not only several criminal cases, but have attended pertinent school safety meetings, saving the school system time, money, and research in crime prevention and equipment recommendations. Major Chitwood presented training for all Principals and Assistant Principals on how to report crime on campus.

Basic Law Enforcement Training Instructorship

Hamlet Police has significantly increased its presence in the local Basic Law Enforcement Training program at Richmond Community College, teaching multiple classes to recruits hired anywhere from Aberdeen to Anson County and in between. These contacts with our instructors and recruits have abided as a mentorship relationship, proffering more open lines of communication across law enforcement agencies.

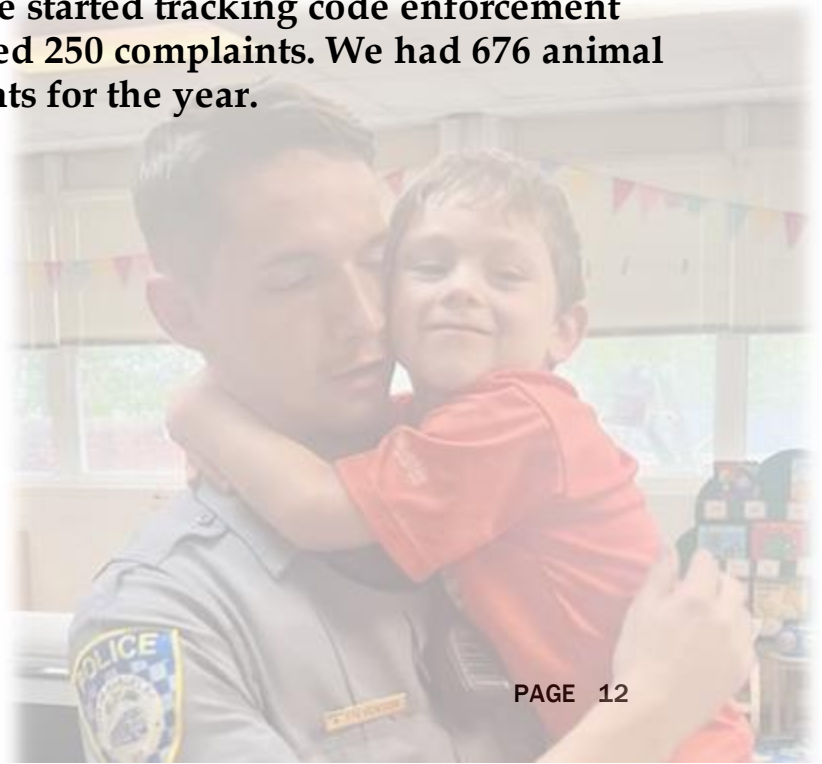
Public Events

Hamlet Police department members have attended multiple events at the Hamlet Senior Center, assisted in the Seaboard Festival, Boo Bash, Halloween on Hylan, 4th of July Fireworks, Christmas Tree Lighting, and the Christmas Parade.

This year, Major Chitwood spoke at the Senior Center on fraud awareness, taught seniors how criminals trick victims out of money, and ways to defend against fraud, and answered their questions. Major Chitwood spoke to School District Administrators on assisting law enforcement investigations at a county level.

Code and Animal Control

Animal Control Officer Tucker has maintained a low population of loose animals in Hamlet and has given multiple warning letters to landowners and citizens who violate the Hamlet City Code. Officer Millen has drastically improved the crime rate by coordinating and working in partnership with landlords across the city. Our code enforcement efforts have received an overwhelmingly positive response from our citizens and compliance is routine. We started tracking code enforcement activities in the fall and registered 250 complaints. We had 676 animal complaints for the year.



By the Numbers

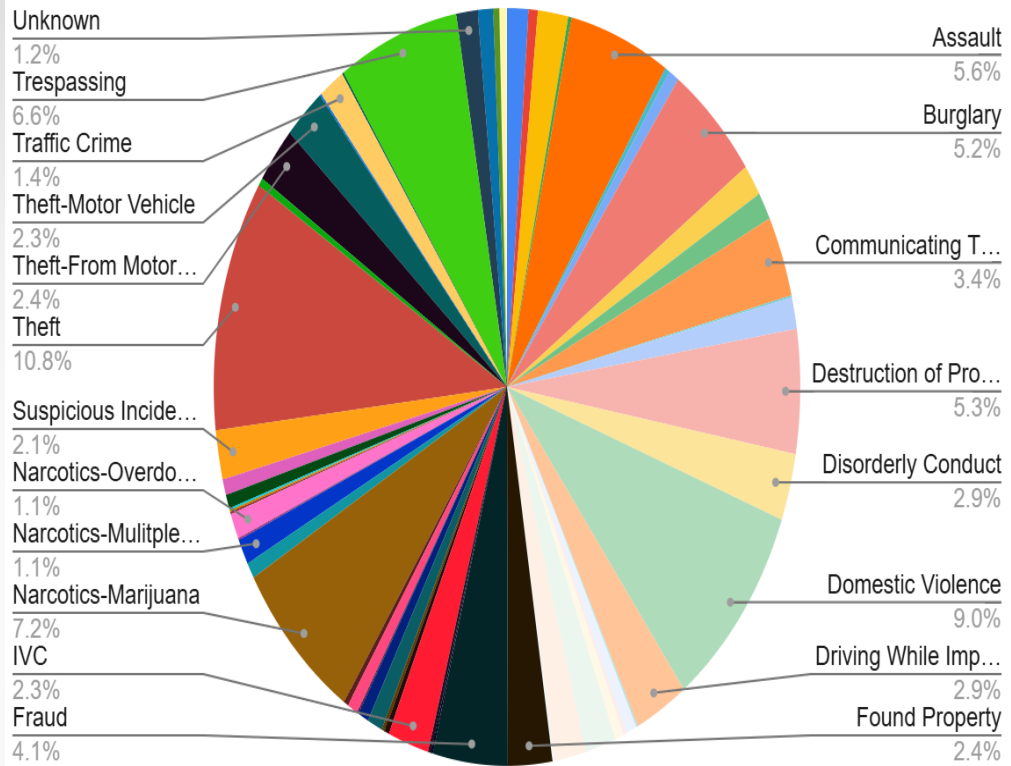
Calls for Police
Response: **12800**

Investigations:
1562

Crime	2023	2024
Murder	0	0
Rape	6	3
Agg Assault	28	26
Assault	123	126
Arson	1	3
Theft	203	197
Vehicle Theft	24	21
Fraud	40	60
Drugs Investigations	198	179
DWI	30	33
Trespass	35	53

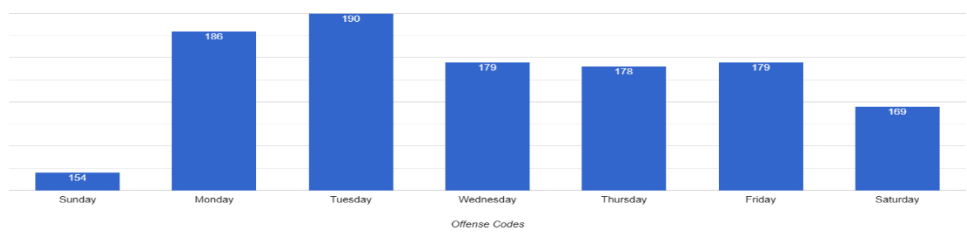


Breakdown by Crime:

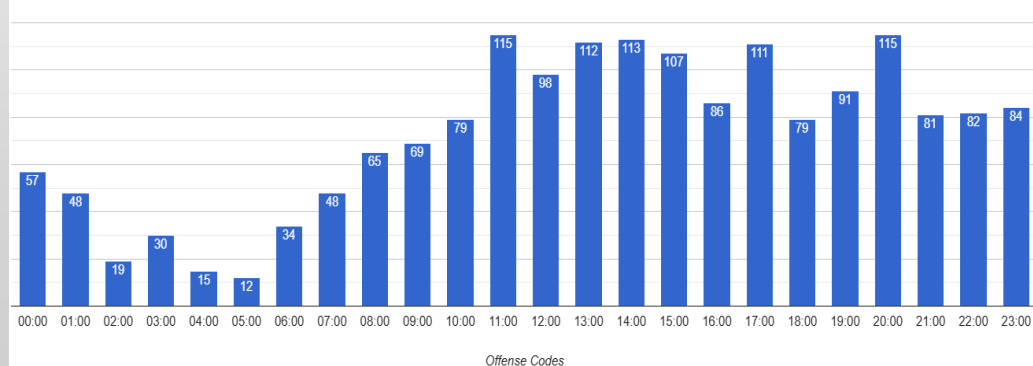


Crimes by the Day of the Week and Hour of the Day

All Offenses: 01/01/2024 - 12/31/2024



All Offenses: 01/01/2024 - 12/31/2024



The North Carolina General Assembly passed State Bill 300 which requires the tracking of certain law enforcement activities. While it is not required to publicly post these statistics, at HPD we believe in full transparency with our community.

EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

Response to Resistance/Use of Force

In 2024, there were (11) incidents out of 12800 calls for service that required reportable use of force against a subject(s). .085% of calls resulted in a Use of Force.

In (8) of these cases, the resistance was stopped by the officer showing force to the subject(s) without any further use of force.

- Officers responded to a Domestic Violence-related auto theft in progress. The suspect was presented with force after being found behind the wheel of the female's car due to noncompliance. The suspect was prone out and arrested without incident, a less lethal taser cover was used, without deployment.
- An ex-boyfriend broke into ex-girlfriend's residence and assaulted her. When he left, the female left the residence and called the police to have him arrested. Upon entering the residence, the suspect was presented with force. After he resisted arrest, he was taken into custody without injuries.
- A suspect in a shooting was ordered out of a vehicle while officers displayed force. The suspect had concealed a firearm upon contact and was frisked before being taken into custody. No other use of force.
- A suspect broke into a warehouse on Lackey St and stole building materials. Upon arrival, the suspect was concealed and lying in wait for officers. Officers showed force for compliance and arrested the suspect. No other use of force, no injury.
- Shooting & suicide. A 3rd party involved was discovered hiding in the water of City Lake just after the officer's response. An officer demonstrated force to the individual and ordered her out of the water for compliance due to low light visibility. The subject later kicked an officer in the chest and face before being placed in a patrol car.
- A female attempted suicide with pills, and upon arrival was screaming to let her die inside her residence. Officers forced entry under exigency for mental commitment, and the officers demonstrated force until she was taken into protective custody for medical evaluation.
- Officers responded to a stabbing that just occurred. Upon arrival, the victim was bleeding profusely from his neck. Witnesses informed officers of the location of the suspect, which was still near the victim. The officers demonstrated force and pruned out the suspect. The suspect was taken into custody without injury or incident immediately afterward.
- A driver failed to stop and led officers on a minor pursuit. The officer demonstrated force while ordering the suspect out of the vehicle due to apparent drug use and noncompliance (known risk stop).



The (3) remaining use-of-force incidents are as follows:

- The driver at a traffic stop walked away and refused to comply with commands to identify. The driver was loud, cursed at officers, resisted, delayed, and obstructed them. The suspect was pulled out of the car by force due to noncompliance, and a knee strike was used to effect the arrest.
- A suspect stole a vehicle and fled upon officer contact, crashing the vehicle before fleeing on foot. Upon contact with the officer, the suspect refused to comply with commands and concealed his hands in his pockets. The suspect was tackled by the officer and arrested.
- A suspect with large sacks and backpacks was reported to be looking into vehicles at night in the parking lot of a long-term medical care center. Upon arrival, officers contacted the suspect and the owners of the property, who confirmed he did not have authorization to be on the property. The suspect refused to comply with commands to stop, was verbally loud and argumentative, and resisted, delayed, and obstructed officers. When officers went to handcuff the suspect, he kicked officers in the leg, head, and hand, causing a TASER deployment which was ineffective.

Regarding injuries/medical requests:

Only 1 of the 11 Uses of Force required an EMS response. This was to remove a Taser probe per policy.

Patrol Vehicle Crashes

In 2023, there were (5) vehicle crashes involving officers on duty in City vehicles.

Of these, (2) were not deemed to be the fault of the officer (sinkhole, deer).

The (3) crashes determined to be at fault by the officer, were against stationary objects (tree, trash can, parked/stationary vehicle). (2) of the crashes were at slow speeds. (1) of these at-fault crashes (versus tree) totaled the cruiser.

Inquiries/Internal Affairs/Complaints

In 2024, there were (10) Inquiries, Internal Affairs, or Complaints.

Citizen Complaints

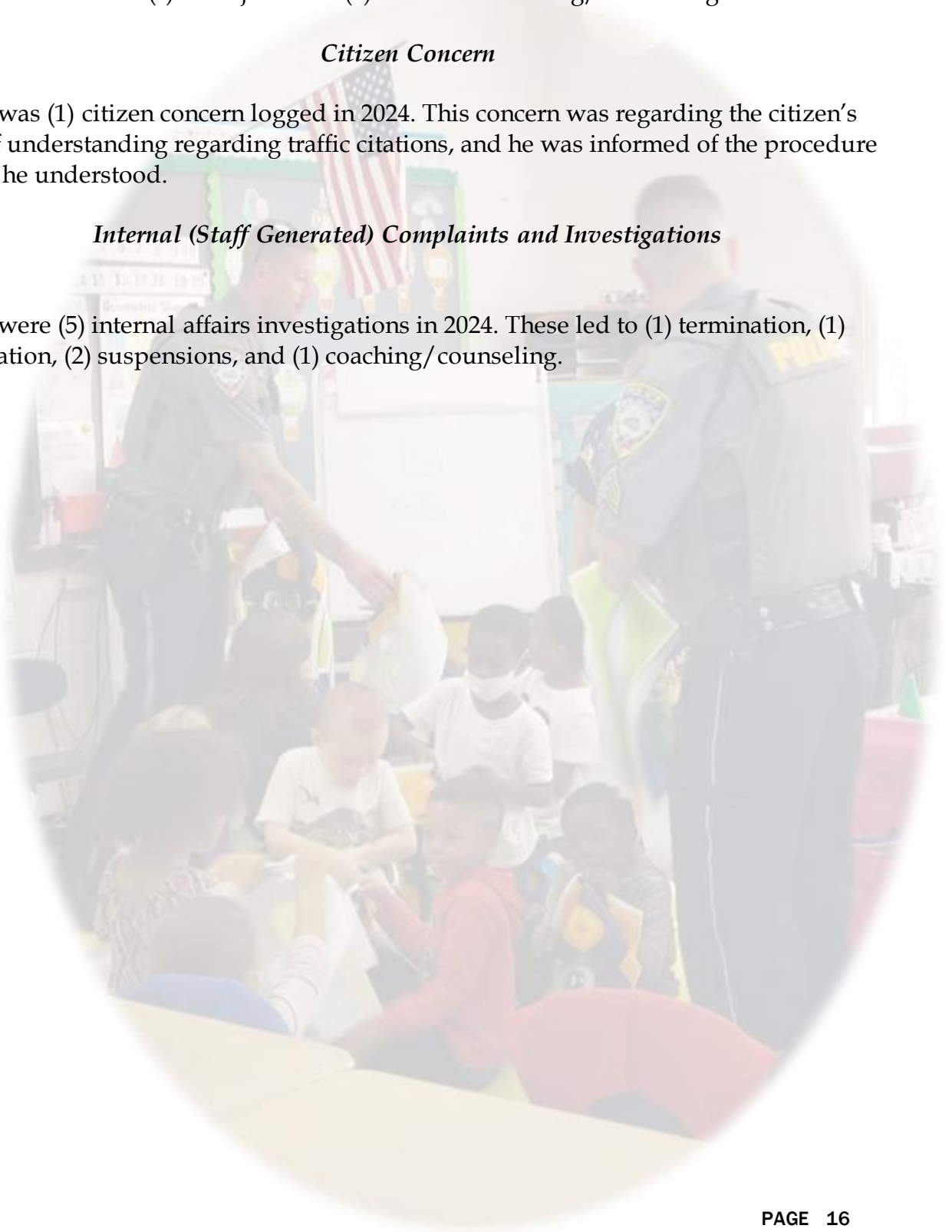
There were (4) citizen complaints about officers. Of these, (2) were found to show the actions of the officer(s) were justified. (2) led to the coaching/counseling of an officer.

Citizen Concern

There was (1) citizen concern logged in 2024. This concern was regarding the citizen's lack of understanding regarding traffic citations, and he was informed of the procedure which he understood.

Internal (Staff Generated) Complaints and Investigations

There were (5) internal affairs investigations in 2024. These led to (1) termination, (1) resignation, (2) suspensions, and (1) coaching/counseling.



Our Future

Space

The police department is in critical need of operational space. Our current facility is dated, inadequate and does not accommodate current operational demands. Our goal is to start a conversation and plan for future space needs of the police department.

Accreditation

We will aggressively start our process of accreditation this year. Over half of our operational policies have been updated to a national standard for best practices. Our staff are required to review and have 24-hour electronic access to all policies.

Training

We will invite other agencies to our monthly training sessions to coordinate teamwork with our area partners.

Develop a structured training and development plan for each officer. This plan will focus on the future career goals of staff and their overall well-being.

Staffing

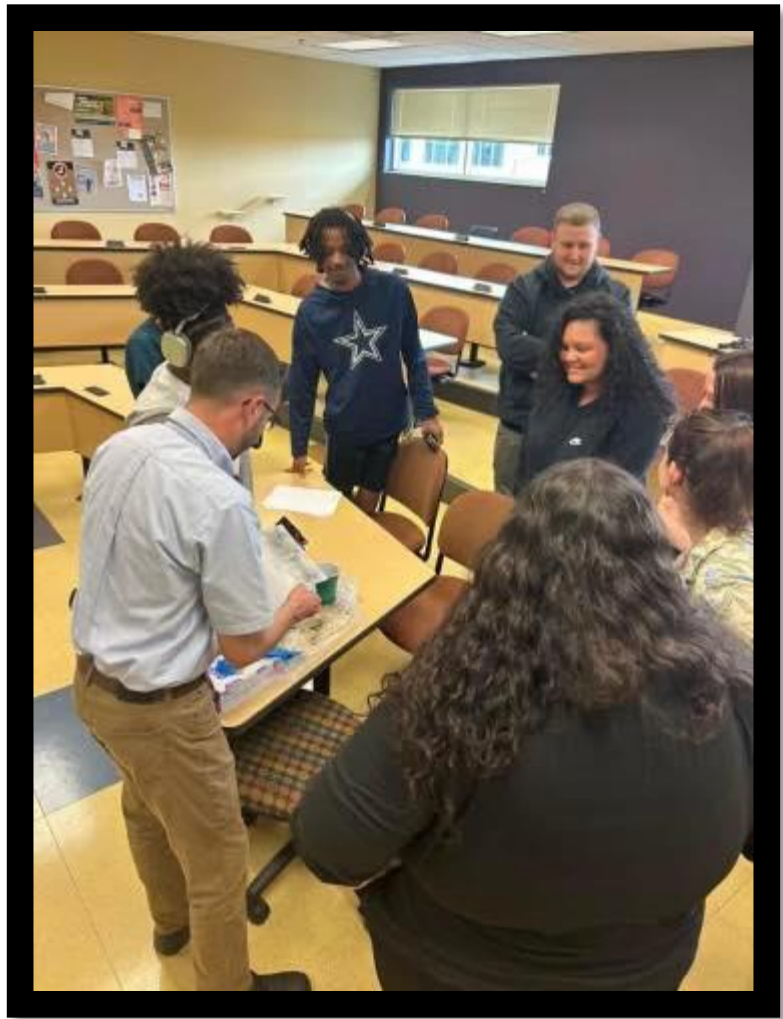
Seek to hire an additional staff member to meet the growing code enforcement and investigative demands placed on the department.

Community Engagement

Build on our current programs and develop a structured outreach to our citizens and businesses at the neighborhood level.

To provide crime reduction inspections to our local businesses to reduce thefts and alcohol offenses.

To Expand our social media imprint to reach more residents.



On behalf of the Hamlet Police Department, we thank you for your continued support and compassion. As we continue to grow as an agency and improve our service to Hamlet, we will continue to serve our community with professionalism and care.

Prepared by Chief D. Dennis Brown with assistance from Major S. Hudson Chitwood