



Wrightsville Beach Police Department

Office of the Chief of Police

In 2019 the WBPD sent out a citizen survey as part of our CALEA accreditation process. As we prepare to distribute our next survey (coming in December of 2020) we wanted to share with the Town some analysis of the 2019 results. The survey generated more than 400 responses which represented both full and part time residents. We hope to exceed that number and include more renter participation in the future.

Respondents reported a high sense of satisfaction with officers for responsiveness, and professionalism. Fear of crime was generally low with respondents reporting a good sense of security in homes and neighborhoods. We intend to continue to improve these results in the future.

Narrative feedback showed a need to expand options to access the police in non-emergency situations. These phone numbers have now been published on the TOWB website and Facebook page.

There was a request for increased noise enforcement. In September the BOA endorsed a change in the town's ordinance which gives the police department more effective ways to respond to those complaints. With the support of local property management companies, the department continues to issue warning tickets and citations to help combat the problem.

Crime and nuisance behavior associated with alcohol consumption was a real concern for respondents. Working together with the owners and staff of alcohol establishments, we will continue to reduce risks to public safety. New officers are being on boarded to meet the onset of increased business.

For many respondents, recruitment and retention of our officers was an ongoing concern. Recruiting, vetting, training, and outfitting officers is very expensive. Failing to retain good officers impedes the department's ability to accomplish certain community policing goals. We are committed to focus on recruiting experienced officers and work to lower the rate of voluntary separation.

Many showed interest in getting to know the officers by name. The pandemic and our rate of turnover for officers both adversely impact opportunities to develop and advance those informal bonds of familiarity we hope to foster. There is good evidence this should remain a priority as greater familiarity with the police increases a sense of security while increasing familiarity with the citizens we protect increases a sense of guardianship. We are trying to develop ways to increase engagement and would welcome ideas from the community.

Many of you cited a need to increase enforcement and efforts to achieve compliance with littering, animal violations, speeding, and bicycle violations. As you can imagine, we receive a surprising number of calls to enforce while we also receive a surprising number of complaints about enforcement. We remain committed to enforcement as a tactic while continuing to develop ways to focus on increasing compliance.

In December you will see a new survey come out. Please encourage each other to respond. If anyone would like to discuss any issues of importance, please contact me by email at dsquires@towb.org.