The Portland Police Bureau continues to face critical staffing shortages. The Bureau has fewer officers today than it has in years. This is due to budget cuts, retirements and separations, and the back-log of needed training for new officers caused by the pandemic.

Currently, the bureau has 855 sworn members with 61 vacancies. Of those sworn members, 596 are officers. Taking away officers who are assigned to investigations/follow-up units (i.e. Family Services, Detectives, Behavioral Health), are training instructors, are in training, are assigned to process phone and online reports, or are injured or on some other kind of leave, that leaves 290 assigned to patrol. They cover the city’s three precincts, spread across three 10-hour shifts, seven days a week.

In an effort to reduce significant overtime costs and maintain current service levels, Chief Chuck Lovell is implementing a reorganization plan for the Portland Police Bureau which will add more officers to patrol. The main driver of this

PPB in 2020...
55 retirements
29 separations
855 sworn members
61 vacancies
596 officers

Chief’s Corner
by Chuck Lovell

Happy New Year!

As we begin 2021, the Portland Police Bureau faces some challenges. Last year, significant retirements and separations as well as budget cuts left us with a number of vacancies (see story).

We continue to look for ways to adapt and implement new strategies to respond and investigate crime. The Portland Police Bureau is committed to providing the community the service they expect, want, and deserve.

Our city is also seeing a drastic rise in gun violence. We are committed to doing what we can in part to stop the shooting, violence and loss of life. We work to prevent violence and hold people accountable who are shooting and killing our neighbors. Black men and women suffer disproportionately from shootings in this city.

We continue to add resources to help investigate gun violence. It’s important that we do our work in a way that is equitable and builds community trust. Finally, the pandemic and divisive time has taken its toll on people. We want to remind you that there is help available. If you or a loved one is feeling worried, upset, or overwhelmed, give Lines for Life a call at 1-800-923-HELP (4357). You do not need to be in crisis to call. The Multnomah County Mental Health Call Center at 503-988-4888 is also available 24/7.

Vaccines are rolling out, albeit slower than we want. Our communities will begin to heal. We look forward to the months ahead and continuing to build partnerships with our community.

New portal captures shooting data

The Portland Police Bureau has unveiling an improved interactive online dashboard offering data about shootings in the city. The new dashboard offers information at the neighborhood level so anyone interested may have access to the information most relevant for them. The dashboard has three years of shooting data, updated monthly: https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/81203

Users will see the home page with citywide and precinct-level statistics, charts, and graphs. Additional information is available by hovering your mouse pointer over the items. There is also a filter for shootings with injuries. If you click the tab on top titled “Neighborhood Incidents,” it will offer a breakdown of each of the city’s neighborhoods. You can hover over the map to get quick information, or click on it to see a graph showing trends over
Bureau’s overtime costs is maintaining minimum staffing for the precincts so there are enough officers to answer 911 calls. That overtime, combined with significant overtime costs from months of civil unrest, the Bureau currently faces more than $2 million deficit this fiscal year and must decrease its use of overtime to meet its budget. “We are doing everything we can to reduce overtime and be good stewards of the public’s dollars. That requires significant personnel and unit changes,” said Chief Chuck Lovell. “In 2020 and the first month of 2021, PPB experienced a large loss of personnel from retirements and separations, which has created vacancies and increased overtime. To meet our fiscal goals, we are shifting our resources to focus on responding to calls for service and conducting investigations. We have heard loud and clear from the public that these are priorities and we are taking that feedback into account. These changes are not a reflection of the quality of work performed by the impacted units, but rather a response to the realities we face with budget targets now and in the coming fiscal year.” To accomplish this, the Chief has moved officers from the Rapid Response Team, Narcotics and Organized Crime, Canine, Traffic, Public Information, Community Engagement, Behavioral Health and Training. With these resources, plus a handful of officers completing training, the Bureau anticipates having about 365 patrol officers. These additional officers will not mean more officers will be deployed to patrol at any given time. It just means that in most cases, overtime may be avoided to fill the minimum staffing requirements in the precincts. The coming months will continue to bring structural organizational changes and the readjustment of supervisors.

The data can also be saved in a PDF document that can be saved or printed. The Police Bureau continues to work with partners to reduce the number of shootings. Solving crimes related to shootings takes help from the community, including witnesses and bystanders to come forward and provide information to police. This can be very difficult for people to do, but is often necessary to start the process of holding shooters accountable, and interrupt the cycle of violence in our neighborhood streets.

Crime Stoppers of Oregon offers cash rewards of up to $2,500 cash for information, reported to Crime Stoppers, that leads to an arrest in any unsolved felony crime and tipsters can remain anonymous. Visit the App Store and download P3 Tips to submit secure and anonymous tips. Online at https://www.p3tips.com/823

Crime Stoppers of Oregon is funded 100% by community donations. To support Crime Stoppers with a donation, please visit http://www.crimestoppersoforegon.com/

HELP STOP HUMAN TRAFFICKING
January is National Human Trafficking Awareness Month

If you are involved in sex trafficking, or know of someone who is being trafficked, call the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888 or 9-1-1. There is help available for victims.