

HUGO WALL SCHOOL *of* PUBLIC AFFAIRS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WICHITA POLICE DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT

Recent national events and local actions have heightened awareness of the critical relationship among law enforcement, residents and ultimately local government and public service professionals. Due to the volume of public interactions, number of employees, and critical functions that public safety represents, a police department is a fundamental representation of local government to its citizenry. Creating a high performing police department is critical to the officers, organization, and most importantly the City of Wichita. This organizational assessment for the City of Wichita is an attempt to identify critical issues and provide recommendations to assist the department in preparing for the hiring of a new chief of police. In addition to this assessment, much more scrutiny and deliberation must take place to address long-term systemic issues and community expectations.

Wichita State University Hugo Wall School of Public Affairs (HWS), including faculty from the Department of Criminal Justice, was requested to assist with the project. The purpose of this consultation was to conduct an organizational assessment to provide a blueprint for the Wichita Police Department (WPD) and the hiring of the next chief of police. The WSU team was tasked to:

1. Provide research of best practices on specific topics (Racial Profiling and Community Policing);
2. Engage internal and external stakeholders to identify assets, issues of concern and ideas on the future direction of the WPD;
3. Review critical information that includes current WPD demographics, planning documents, recent reports, and identified policies and procedures to ascertain strengths and opportunities for improvement; and
4. Provide recommendations for the selection process for the next chief of police and direction of the WPD.

HUGO WALL SCHOOL of PUBLIC AFFAIRS

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The purpose of collecting qualitative information from internal (195 employees, nearly 25% of the department) and external stakeholders (22 meetings) was:

1. To identify strengths and assets of the department,
2. To identify priority issues for the department; and
3. To identify issues where internal and external stakeholders view the department differently.

Both internal and external stakeholders were asked the same ten questions as the foundation for the conversation. Strengths for the department included: quality personnel, community policing philosophy, specialty units and relations with other law enforcement agencies. Areas for improvement included: training, communication, and implementation or deployment of community policing officers. The most important tangible improvements identified for the next two years were: training, technology, recruitment, and communication.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS ISSUES

Improving community relations was identified as an issue by WPD leadership and community organizations. While there were many comments about positive relations with the community, there are specific areas for improvement. Finding opportunities to build relations, create understanding between community members and WPD about police activities, and provide for more open communication are paramount for the future success of the department. Primary recommendations include:

1. Community Policing and Race

- Hire a forward thinking visionary chief of police who is deeply committed to the Community Policing Philosophy, not just verbally but also as a proven practitioner.

HUGO WALL SCHOOL *of* PUBLIC AFFAIRS

- Continue to engage officers and community members on expectations and the evolution of holistic community policing.
- Ensure the Community Policing Philosophy is embraced by the entire Department; not only a stand-alone unit. A separate unit cannot achieve the full purpose, more importantly, it fails to truly engage all officers completely in building relationships and trust.
- Develop a transition and implementation plan to expand the community policing strategy prior to the hiring of the next chief of police by creating a Transition Team comprised of WPD staff and community members. This team should begin discussions to change from the current Community Policing strategy of having a beat coordinator for every beat to a more comprehensive approach, while still maintaining the need for officers in target areas and a liaison for organizations throughout the community.
- Re-engage other city departments in the Community Policing philosophy. All City departments within the city structure should be educated, actively engaged and supportive of neighborhood activities.

2. Body Cameras

- Continue with implementation and communicate progress regularly to the community.

3. Citizens with Mental Health Issues

- Develop an implementation plan for all officers to attend a Mental Health First Aid course and expand training opportunities.
- Seek advice about current topics and trends from mental health organizations in the community to be proactive in addressing mental health issues.

4. Racial Profiling Training

- Make racial profiling, or fair and impartial police training, and cultural diversity/sensitivity training as hands-on as possible. Engage police officers in active role-playing and problem-solving learning exercises.

HUGO WALL SCHOOL *of* PUBLIC AFFAIRS

- Invite members from minority communities to the police training environment to participate in diversity/sensitivity training sessions.

5. Racial Profiling Policy

- Insert a specific link to racial and other biased based policing policies on the WPD website. This will document WPD's policy against racial and other biased based policing and will provide a transparent process for all citizens to easily review the stated policy.

6. The Pretext Stop

- Because citizens are largely unaware of the legalities of the pretext stop, it would be beneficial for WPD, as much as possible, to educate the community during forums on racial profiling.
- Implement proposed policy to increase documentation and improve communication to citizens and the department on pretext stops.

7. Demographic and Workforce Comparison

- Lack of departmental diversity is not unique to the WPD; law enforcement agencies across the country are challenged by this issue. Developing targeted recruitment and retention plans, mentoring and support systems will be critical for future success.

8. Wichita Police Department Community Advisory Board

- Establish a new Community Advisory Board for the purpose of working with the police department and to improve relations between WPD and the community. This new advisory board would provide community perspective on important policy, programs and priorities of the department.
- A standing committee of this advisory board would serve as the City Manager Review Board (CMRB). This committee would review cases on police conduct and administrative issues that are appealed by citizens. The District Attorney will continue to be responsible for all criminal investigations.

HUGO WALL SCHOOL of PUBLIC AFFAIRS

- The CMRB will review cases appealed by a citizen if the citizen disagrees with the findings of Professional Standards.
- In a significant change, the CMRB will also hear direct appeals from citizens for review of officer conduct or the CMRB may make a direct request. The first step will be for the CMRB to determine if the incident has already been reviewed by Professional Standards, and if so, determine the outcome. If the incident has NOT been reviewed by Professional Standards, the case will be sent to Professional Standards for investigation.
- For cases appealed to the CMRB, the board will review the report and findings from Professional Standards. Another significant change will be for the CMRB to have discussions with Professional standards and the chief of police to create understanding, improve process and address policy issues regarding the case. Additionally, the CMRB would also have the ability to request additional investigation or clarification, which is currently not an available option.
- If the CMRB supports the findings of Professional Standards, the case is complete. If the CMRB does NOT agree with the findings of Professional Standards, the CMRB may appeal to the City Manager.

9. External Communication

- Review website options to improve access to information.
- Standardize approach on significant issues to ensure transparency and consistency of process.
- Create a proactive educational campaign to inform the public on police practices and procedures.
- Evaluate the structure of the communication staff. Provide resources for an additional noncommissioned position to assist with public information and volunteer support.

HUGO WALL SCHOOL *of* PUBLIC AFFAIRS

10. Communication with Racial Minority Citizens

- Schedule regular community meetings with all minority communities to discuss racial profiling and other issues impacting minority communities.

11. Volunteers

- Use of volunteers is particularly crucial in an environment challenged with financial hardships. Thinking of creating ways that volunteers can be utilized and thinking beyond the way law enforcement has used them in the past would prove to be most beneficial.

12. Use of Force and Community Incidents

- Create a proactive information campaign on the use of force, and the related police policies and procedures.
- Develop standard procedures to follow after an incident occurs to inform the public, neighborhood and media.
- Continue to improve internal practices, policies and trainings regarding the use of force.

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

Numerous internal, or administrative issues, were identified during focus groups with police department employees. These issues reflect significant opportunities for the WPD to improve internal operations and thus the morale of the department.

1. Response Time

- Further investigate the significant changes in the types of calls.
- Inventory and prioritize special assignments.
- Ensure resources are available to the next chief of police to create a strategic work plan for the department.

HUGO WALL SCHOOL

of **PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

2. Committee Structure

- Identify and communicate standing committees, membership, purpose and annual work plan.
- Create task forces, as needed, for specific issues with clearly defined goals, deliverable timeframes, membership and responsible leaders.

3. Leadership Transition

- Communicate outcomes of the organizational assessment and transition plan to the department, law enforcement partners and community to ensure transparency of the process.
- Establish a leadership and management development program to support the current department leadership and prepare for the next generation.
- Hire a chief of police that values professional and personal development with a proven record of growing capacity within the department.

4. Organizational Structure

- Complete a staffing analysis with the primary purpose of ensuring that an appropriate allocation and deployment of officers is meeting current service demands.

5. Traffic Unit

- Evaluate the impact of reinstating the traffic unit or developing alternatives to address officer time on traffic accidents and decreasing accidents.

6. Relationship between Commissioned and Non-Commissioned Personnel

- Provide opportunities for commissioned and non-commissioned supervisors to interact on an informal level to build trust and communication across the department.

HUGO WALL SCHOOL *of* PUBLIC AFFAIRS

- Provide opportunities for field officers to tour non-commissioned service areas so they know what day-to-day operations entail and can therefore provide better service to citizens.

7. Workload

- Analyze data from the Officer Daily Activity Reports (ODAR) to determine what deployment changes can be made and drill deeper with officers on time consuming activities.
- Complete a workload assessment, or time study, to create more understanding on what changes can be made for the best use of officer time.

8. Discipline

- Provide clarification, training and set forth expectations on what types of infractions should be handled by frontline supervisors and what cases need to be sent to Professional Standards.
- Create understanding of different generational expectations in the workforce.
- Annually distribute information, both internally and externally, about the number of cases, length of investigations and findings.

9. Intelligence-Led Policing

- Determine the role of the analysts and if analysts should continue to support a primary patrol bureau or be assigned to work with key functions such as field, investigations, or administration.
- Analyze the value for all analysts to be located at City Hall to create a cohesive Crime Analysis Section. Purchase new analytic software with input not only from WPD, but also from the Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office and the Sedgwick County Association of Police Chiefs as a way to begin to look at crime analysis on a county-wide perspective.

HUGO WALL SCHOOL *of* PUBLIC AFFAIRS

10. Recruitment

- Conduct focus groups with recent applicants about the recruitment process and front-line supervisors to identify strengths and weaknesses of the current process and identify motivation for applying.
- Conduct a process review with a group of current and former WPD training staff, Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) representatives, and human resources staff to determine opportunities for improvement.
- Develop a marketing plan and material for internal employees and external recruits.

11. Promotional Process

- Review written tests and ensure alignment with skill set needed.
- Assess timeframe and process improvements.
- Continue to work proactively with the City's Human Resources and Budget Departments as well as the Position Review Committee to decrease the length of time a position is unfilled.

12. Training

- Identify external resources that can be used for training at minimal or reduced costs. Examples of resources include: The Institute for Intergovernmental Research, Federal Law Enforcement Training, local universities, and shared resources with other agencies.
- Develop continuous supervisor and leadership training and explore co-sponsorship with other regional law enforcement agencies.
- Evaluate the benefit of hiring a non-commissioned staff person with expertise in training and development to provide consistency for the department through leadership changes with emphasis on adult learning.

HUGO WALL SCHOOL of PUBLIC AFFAIRS

13. Internal Communications

- As previously recommended, hire a noncommissioned employee with a communication background to assist the commissioned leadership. The communication specialist can also provide media training and coaching to assist the department with routine activities and messaging for high-profile activities.
- Create a bi-monthly update to employees to include information from Command Staff meetings, highlights from special projects, policy changes, special recognitions and other important information.

14. Inter-Agency Relations

- Develop priorities, work plan and timeframe to investigate and report potential cooperative efforts between WPD and Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office prior to the hiring of the next chief of police. Initial cooperative ventures could include:
 - Co-locate Narcotics
 - Co-locate Property and Evidence
 - Co-locate Records Section
 - Share the cost of a polygrapher
 - Joint technology purchases
 - Regional training for leadership and management

15. Brady-Giglio Impact

- Through periodic meetings between the City and District Attorneys, continue to monitor the national understanding of court interpretations.
- Initiate a "fit for duty" screening for current officers who have been determined by the District Attorney to have negative credibility.
- Once complete, and in communication with the FOP, finalize the status of officers who have not passed the "fit for duty" screening.

HUGO WALL SCHOOL of PUBLIC AFFAIRS

HIRING THE NEXT CHIEF OF POLICE

Responses from all focus groups and one-on-one interviews about the qualities of the next chief of police were fairly consistent. Based on community feedback and information presented in “*Selecting a Police Chief: A Handbook for Local Government*” publication from the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), a selection process for the City of Wichita was prepared. Key recommendations include:

1. Engage a firm that specializes in hiring police chiefs.
2. Establish a Community Advisory Search Committee as a way to ensure an open and transparent process and ensure broad community participation.
3. Provide a forum for department employees and community members to meet the finalists and provide input to the City Manager.
4. Structure interviews to involve representatives from community groups, department heads, representatives from non-commissioned employees, FOP leadership and command staff.
5. Schedule a community forum to provide an opportunity for greater community input.

CONCLUSION

This organizational assessment for the Wichita Police Department provides a blue print for the next Chief of Police. With a department of this size and complexity, there are always challenges and areas for improvement. Most importantly for the WPD, there are incredible future opportunities due to the committed personnel of the department, support of the City Manager and City Council, and support of the Wichita community. Establishing the priorities and the transition plan will be the next step in this endeavor as the search and hiring of the new chief of police proceeds through 2015.