

Notes of the monthly Reserve Meeting held on September 21, 2009. These are not necessarily in chronological order.

We began with 'the pledge' at 7 pm, followed by roll call taken by Capt. Murphy.

Sgt. Monty stopped by. The new deputy chief had never experienced Northfield's Defeat of Jesse James Days before. He thought we handled it well and he liked having the reserves around, especially on Sunday. On behalf of the police department, Monty thanked everyone for their work at the event.

Monty asked if there were any comments on the parade route day, rodeo, and the races. It was noted the golf cart was nice. A second golf cart would be helpful, this year Tex and Sgt. Murphy went around as a second cart checking on folks and handing out water. It was noted that on parade day several cars were going around barricades, but it may not have been as bad as in years past.

We talked about Highway 3 and Jefferson with rodeo traffic. It may be better to have two lanes of traffic departing and not just one on the frontage road. This was done in the past. We might also consider not utilizing the lights but taking over direction of traffic ourselves. If two lanes are used and we have enough officers we could make them split at the intersection.

Parade Day notes for next year...it would be prudent to be out there at 11:00, or earlier, so there would be time to see that everyone has vests, tanks up on water, eats and so on. It's important that everyone reports to the station, and not just show up on the parade route. There are assigned spots to fill and the officers in charge need to know who will be there to make the assignments and to get critical info like cell phone numbers and radios assigned. We need to be sure everyone is on the same page.

Sgt. Murphy's comments follow. Saturday evening was a little bit thinner than he would like for coverage. There were a handful of fights on Saturday night. But for the most part everything went smoothly. People partnered up as they were supposed to and took initiative. Next year on Saturday we need to have a few more people to post the signs. We need to make a priority and have even more than the four we had this year.

The department really does rely on us to get through the Jesse James weekend. The Deputy Chief thought well of us and our conduct.

We may want to look at a set number of people we know we need and want to have and fill those spots for the Christmas Concert, even for next year's Defeat of Jesse James Days. (Side note, I presume this is something the leadership will look at and make a plan to accomplish this goal. I'm sure the plan will be shared well in advance of the Christmas Concert this December with all of us.)

Sgt. Murphy asked if anyone had anything else on DJJD to share. Junior wanted to know how Saturday day hours went. It seemed to go ok. Sunday morning was busy; theft call after theft call came in.

Administrative Memorandums

Chief and Deputy Chief have started to issue administrative memorandums, these are important, but fall short of a policy change.

The first one that concerns us was about the Emergency Operations Center, EOC. The only time we as reserves would be in the EOC is during sky warn time. Notes to leave it clean, don't use the computers, or take out the assigned furniture were in the memorandum.

Junior calculated that as a group we volunteered 363 hours for DJJD's. That's like 9 people working a 40 hour week.

We will be recruiting around five more reserves in the near future. Should be advertized in the newspaper soon.

We may begin to do some sort of an academy with this new group. Jay said that Montgomery does a 24 – 30 hour academy. Montgomery does 4 weeks for 2-3 hours. They cover three main areas; traffic, reports, and defensive tactics. Steve talked a little about the St. Paul Reserve Academy. It was 12 weeks long meeting a couple time each week with a eight hours of traffic control.

Upcoming Events

Friday, October 2nd, Its time for the homecoming football game. It would be nice to have four people. The game starts at 7 pm, but reserves should be there by 6 pm.

St. Olaf home coming we think is this coming weekend. Junior did not think they had requested any special help from us.

Friday night and Saturday night it's always good to get people out. A couple of us taking the trailblazer out would be good. Fall weekends we usually have something going on with high school or colleges.

We have had several car breaks in and vandalism. Keep an eye out.

Halloween falls on a Saturday this year. It would nice to have extra people out for that.

Remember there are four days open to work the Christmas concert at St. Olaf in December.

Report Writing

Keep the basics in mind. The **ABC's** of effective writing: Effective writing is **A**ccurate, **B**rief and **C**lear.

Accurate – specific, concrete, objective, detailed

Brief – make every word count

Clear – pay attention to your modifiers

Use short, simple words, sentences and paragraphs. Do not insert descriptions into key sentences. Eliminate expletives - -e.g., there is, there are, it is, it has been. Write with verbs, not nouns. Underline all words ending in -ent, ant, ion, ment, ence, ency. Use active verbs.

Structure the narrative in your report. What we saw, what we observed and what we did. Make every word count. Use short words (less than three syllables) and short sentences (10 – 15 words) when possible.

(Note: There is a laminated list of approved abbreviations in the report writing room, if it's not in the list, don't use it. I included a pdf copy of the one Sgt. Murphy handed out at the meeting.)

Use plain English. Use specific, concrete language. Use first person active voice. Take out unnecessary words.

Take time to proofread!!! Have someone else read it to see if it makes sense to them. Walk away for a minute and then re-read your report.

Stage the report

We used Case Number 99-0001 for this exercise. (I included it as a separate pdf document.)

I was dispatched to such and such a location on the report of x. Upon arrival I spoke with Y.

Next part is what they told you, then what did you do, then you end it. Should have four little paragraphs.

Start with the date: On today's date at XXXX (the time), I was dispatched to (Name and Address) to take a _____ report. (You would get full name, DOB, address, and phone number, both home and cell)

I spoke to _____ (Mary Ann Brown) _____ (DOB don't need to add the DOB or put it in parenthesis).

On 09-21-2009 at 6:42 pm, I was dispatched to Jones Standard Station to take a bike theft report.

So you set the report up with the Date & Time, What kind of report, and who I spoke to.

Next paragraph would be what happened...

Brown told me _____ (Give description of what she said happened)

Brown told me she was walking my bike across the street. A white male grabbed her bike and rode west on 7th street. She saw something fall out of his pocket. She did not know what it was.

Brown described the white male as 6 feet tall, 180 pounds, with light brown hair. He was wearing blue jeans and a red jacket. He was about 17 years old. (Notice past tense).

Next paragraph would be a description of the bike...

The bike was a red, womans Raleigh, serial number 81-4639-1853, license number G2646.

What did you do?

I searched the area and found a key case in the middle of Main Street. Brown did not know if that was what fell out of his pocket.

Now close it.

I put the key case into property. (Stand alone sentence) (Its either property or evidence)

End report with the status.

There are no further leads or suspects at this time.

Meeting closed at 9:05 pm

Handouts at the meeting included:

Administrative Memorandum

The ABCs of Effective Reports: Observe the Basics

Editing practice sheets with notes

Approved Abbreviations for the Northfield Police Department

Northfield Police Department Report Writing Guidelines (thick document)