

POLICY PAPER ON POLICE

Commissioner Charles Jordan
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Introduction

My tenure as Police Commissioner began with a crash course on the Bureau's activities, including countless sessions with the Police Chief and his staff, meetings with unit commanders, and rides with officers on patrol. I met with the General Assembly of the Police Union, its president, and its Executive Board. I dropped in for unannounced visits at precincts and talked with individual officers willing to express their concerns to me.

I went outside the Bureau for information, too. I heard from citizen groups, appeared on audience call-in programs on TV and radio, attended service club meetings, and called people who had previously complained to my office about police service and who had had their complaints investigated by the Bureau's Internal Affairs Division. I also consulted with individuals who have a wide range in experience with the criminal justice system as a whole.

As a result, I was able to assimilate a number of different perspectives on Police work. I gained some understanding of what it's like to be an officer, how citizens feel about the police and about crime, and what techniques and knowledge are available to police officers to enhance their effectiveness.

My assessment of the Bureau as a whole is extremely positive. Portland's police are efficient, honest and generally progressive in attitude. The officers perform their jobs well, and are proud of their clean image. Few would bring back the old days when police ruled with an iron hand, with one code for citizens and another for the police themselves.

But the Bureau, like any other city agency, is not immune to criticism. In particular, it needs better communication with the community. The public does not always know what the police can and cannot do. We must work harder to get

citizens involved in determining the general direction of many of the Bureau's programs, and to get police to see themselves as an important part of a larger city effort to serve the community.

The specific policies concerning the Bureau which I describe below are a result of my insights into police operations, and the concerns I have just raised. They are also derived from the philosophy about government and the individual which I use to guide my decisions. Thus a brief overview of my outlook and its application to police policy would be appropriate before I discuss my specific policies.

Government's role is to guarantee basic services to help individuals attain a minimum level of health, access to employment and security. If those services are provided, people will generally act in a socially beneficial manner. The Police Bureau is one of many agencies established to provide these services, and should not be regarded either by the police or by the community as a uniquely privileged, special or separate agency. As in other municipal agencies, the Police Bureau must work with others to meet city-wide goals. Although the Police Bureau rightly directs its efforts towards assuring the security of Portland citizens, it cannot meet its objectives without cooperation and sharing with other agencies.

Second, my philosophy puts a strong emphasis on problem prevention. The Police Bureau has traditionally concentrated on crimes after they have occurred. While this role will continue, my policies will put much greater weight on police involvement in crime prevention activities. Crime prevention is a relatively new field, but one of great potential.

Third, I believe citizens should have access to the agencies which affect their lives. My policies call for using citizens in developing crime prevention

programs in conjunction with the police. I will also make sure citizens can influence the Bureau's direction through precinct councils and budget advisory committees.

Finally, I intend to involve police personnel at all levels in decision making. Police clerks, patrol officers, and workers throughout the organization have valuable experience to share which should be used in formulating new programs. I will try very hard to establish ways by which this experience can be communicated and used.

The Police have a new role to play in society, because society has changed in its expectations and goals. Citizens are more aware of their rights, and more concerned that these be safeguarded. The police must preserve and protect these rights, both in their work against crime, and in their everyday professional behavior. Citizens also want to be more involved with the agencies which serve them, and demand more accountability from those agencies.

At the same time, citizens have little understanding of what a patrol officer's job is really like. More understanding here would contribute to better relations between the police and the community.

Adjustment is needed on both sides. A police Commissioner's role today can best be described as mediator, communicator, administrator. This is the role I have set for myself.

The rest of this paper outlines my policies on crime prevention, internal affairs, minorities and women police officers, the role of non-sworn personnel within the forces, and employee evaluation.

I. Crime Prevention

During the last ten years the United States, and Portland in particular, has seen a great increase in crime. In Portland, reported crimes against property

have increased by 193%, while crime against persons have increased by 434%. As a result, many of Portland's residents and businessmen now feel that Portland is not a safe city. Recently, the League of Oregon Women Voters found that the most serious concern of Portlanders interviewed was the rising crime rate. These perceptions, as well as the underlying problem of crime, must be addressed. Fear and misperception of crime can be every bit as socially debilitating as crime itself.

The reasons behind the rise in crime are complex and little understood. Generalizations about causes and solutions are difficult because of the lack of reliable information. Social and environmental conditions and solution priorities vary so widely, and the professional analysis of crime is so relatively new, that there is often not enough data to support any conclusions about the causes of crime.

One area of consensus, however, is that the old technique of fighting crime by adding more police officers as the crime rate rose is not working. A study of the 26 largest cities in the country showed that those cities which hired the most new officers during the 1960's had no more significant differences in their crime rates than those cities which hired the fewest. The conclusion of the study was that there is "no relationship between departmental expansion and crime control".

Thus, new approaches to crime control must be sought and tested. In 1972, Portland, with a substantial amount of federal funds, started a long-range strategy to lower crime. Funds were earmarked for juvenile and adult corrections programs, a new communications system, a "crime specific" strike force program in the Police Bureau, and a Crime Prevention Bureau.

The goal of the Crime Prevention Bureau was to "secure for the community an atmosphere of safety and freedom from injury and loss of property by decreasing opportunities for successful commission of target crimes". The bureau held

block meetings, in which citizens throughout the city were informed about security hardware, and given hints about changing personal and household habits, in order to reduce the probability that they would become victims.

Early evaluations, including a study of victimization rates in Portland, show this strategy was successful. Citizens who used the crime prevention methods were less likely to be crime victims than those who didn't. The conclusion is strong that an informed community equipped with positive programs and specific crime prevention techniques can reduce crime.

With the close involvement of street officers, I have developed and implemented a crime prevention program which builds upon these successful techniques. However, the difference between this crime prevention program and others is that there will be no fixed programs which will be handed down to the police and citizens. Rather, citizens and police will work together to draft a plan. Each precinct will use the precinct councils, neighborhood associations, and the officers and crime prevention specialist within their precinct to identify crime problems and solutions. Both the citizen groups and the precinct captain will review and approve the plan. Each precinct will be responsible for meeting the objectives and work activities of that plan.

The theme of the program is citizen involvement. The Police Bureau and citizens will cooperate in developing a community-wide citizen involvement program to educate the community in crime prevention techniques, and to increase citizen participation in crime prevention strategies aimed at reducing the vulnerability of their homes and persons.

By utilizing successful crime prevention methods, this plan can have an impact on reducing crime. By utilizing neighborhood groups and citizens to develop neighborhood crime prevention plans, it may have the additional benefit of raising citizens' confidence in their abilities to prevent crime.

In the past there has been reluctance by officers to participate in crime prevention programs, probably because they had no say in formulating them, and were asked to perform activities which they saw as unrealistic and unworkable. Citizens, on the other hand, had no clear responsibility given to them for crime prevention, and almost uniformly blamed the police for the crime problem. Both these attitudes should change, and this plan will be a step in that direction.

II. Internal Affairs

Policing a community is a sensitive task, but one that pales compared to policing the police themselves. No one holds as much potential for abusing the rights of another, under the guise of representing the interests of the community, as does a police officer. An officer can suspend, through his actions, almost all of our rights, such as the right to eat, sleep, work and play where and when we want. The community must know that the police will not abuse their power.

In Portland, citizen complaints about the conduct of individual police officers are investigated by the Bureau itself. The investigation is handled by the Internal Affairs Division, commanded by a lieutenant who reports the findings of the division's investigation directly to the Chief.

Based on my analysis, I am convinced that Internal Affairs is doing a good job of being fair and impartial in its investigations, and in protecting the rights of both the citizen and the officer.

However, I believe the investigation of the complaint, and the judging and resolution of the complaint, should be separate activities. Further, procedures for investigating complaints, and disciplining officers when necessary, need to be clearly articulated, so that complaints can be handled in a fair, impartial, and consistent manner, and in a way which furthers police and community goals. Both citizens and police must know what their rights and responsibilities are.

Although procedures should ensure privacy to an officer, they should also instill confidence in citizens that police complaint and disciplinary practices are effective. An officer is a visible representative of government, and relinquishes some of the anonymity of action of those in the private sector.

We must take, in particular, the following steps:

1. Procedures for complaint processing and discipline must be rewritten to be so clear and precise that there is no element of procedural surprise for officers or citizens.
2. Training should be developed so that officers can explain the procedures accurately to any citizen. This is to insure that citizen expectation, and actual complaint handling, coincide.
3. An internal code of investigative conduct should be devised. This is necessary to avoid procedural surprise. Such a code will also underline the serious professional responsibility which arises when allegations of police professional misconduct are made.
4. Discipline policy should be as definite as possible so that officers can be assured that any discipline taken against them is consistent for that kind of misconduct, and is not a result of a personality conflict or political pressure.

I will maintain my own monitoring of how well this system is working through contacting the Police Union, commanding officers, patrol officers, and citizen complainants. I will periodically contact complainants after an investigation is completed to see whether they perceive the investigation as fair.

The process I propose may not make everyone happy, but it will be fair and impartial, and protective of the rights of all citizens.

III. Minority and Women Police Officers

Shortly after becoming the Police Commissioner I approved a program for recruiting minority and women police officers on a national basis. My reasons for recruiting outside of the Portland metropolitan area are threefold: 1) my commitment to Affirmative Action; 2) the image of police work; and 3) the benefits to the Police Bureau and the City.

First, I have consistently supported programs designed to correct the under-representation of minorities and women in the work force. The Police Bureau does not now have an adequate proportion of women and minority officers, hence an affirmative action program is called for. Recruiting nationally is one of the quickest ways to obtain an appropriate number of women and minorities for the force.

The second reason for a national recruitment process is that the image of police work for minorities is such that we will usually attract a much lower percentage of local highly qualified minorities than we can of highly qualified white males.

Blacks and other minorities have traditionally shied away from law enforcement careers. Police work formerly did not have the professional aura that it has now, and a member of a minority who sought ways to climb the social and economic scale did not view police work as a field which could repay high aspirations and educational preparation. Much of this is changing, with many police forces throughout the country seeking college graduates, and with pay and benefits increased to rival traditional white collar jobs.

But other barriers, particularly to minority recruitment, remain. One of these has to do with attitude. In the past, minorities often regarded police officers as agents of "white law enforcement", enforcing prejudicial laws.

Hence, police officers, though needed in our minority communities, were unwelcome there. A minority who joined the force risked ostracism from his community and would often find himself in difficult dilemmas while enforcing the law in his own community.

The situation was aggravated by the policies of shortsighted police chiefs, who assigned Black officers exclusively to Black communities on the basis of skin color alone.

This kind of policy is losing favor now, as it must if we are to recruit more minorities into law enforcement. Today, the few minorities who enter police work do so for the same reasons other people do, namely security, the opportunity for a career, and the desire to make a constructive contribution to society. If we are to attract and keep highly qualified minority candidates, then we must ensure true equality of treatment.

In particular, it will be hard to keep qualified minorities and women if they believe they were hired and/or placed into a particular job solely because of the police department's need to comply with federal legislation, or if they are consistently placed in assignments based on race and sex. Candidates will scrutinize the motives and actions of the department, as well as the pay and the benefits.

To avoid these problems, we must adopt a clear policy concerning the composition of the police force. It is my belief that the police force should be representative of the entire community which employs its services. Further, I believe that work assignments, opportunities for advancement and training opportunities within the force, must be allocated to members in a fair manner.

Finally, active recruitment of minority and women police officers will be of benefit both to the force and to the community. Their presence in the department and in the street can do much to foster understanding and curb prejudice.

No formal program can possibly work as well as daily contact between peers in the police force and with citizens in the community in eliminating the existing barriers and hostilities.

IV. Non-Sworn Personnel in the Police Force

There is now a national trend toward using non-sworn personnel in police departments. There are good reasons behind it. For one thing, positions with relatively limited responsibilities can be filled with less cost by non-sworn personnel who need not have the special experience of officers.

Second, police management, and police work generally, now require expertise in specialized fields such as statistical analysis, computer programming, budgeting, accounting and law. It is easier to bring non-sworn personnel with such expertise into the force than it is to find it within the ranks. It is much cheaper, for example, to take an attorney and give that person training and experience in police work than it is to train a police officer to be an attorney for the bureau.

Finally, placing non-sworn personnel in key positions allows decision-makers more flexibility in getting the right combination of background, attitude and philosophy.

Sworn officers themselves have generally voiced opposition to this trend. They feel that the lives of patrol officers are jeopardized when decisions are made by people who have no first-hand knowledge or "feel" for what is really happening on the street. Also, they argue that if officers with limited disabilities were trained for these specialized positions we would provide financial relief for the Pension and Disability Fund.

I largely agree with the sworn officers on this issue. We should be extremely careful in placing civilians in positions previously held by police officers, and

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instead should be more selective in our hirings, promotions and transfers to assure that we are moving people through the ranks who are capable of handling complex assignments. We presently have seven hundred sworn personnel in the Portland Police Bureau. I find it difficult to believe that we can't find individuals with the right expertise and the right attitude to fill most positions. Massive hiring of non-sworn personnel is just an easy way for decision-makers to avoid their responsibility of making tough and informed decisions on hirings, promotions and transfers concerning sworn personnel.

However, I do recognize that there will always be a need for non-sworn personnel within the force. Further, there is some specialized knowledge needed within the Bureau that can only be gained through years of experience, or intensive special education, or both, and which is not easily found among sworn personnel.

Of course, to be effective, sworn and non-sworn officers must work together in meeting common objectives. We are now seeing much closer cooperation between sworn officers and city planners, neighborhood association representatives, and street engineers. The old days of the separate and closed police operation are gradually ending, giving way to pressures from within and without. Today's government is more open, with an emphasis on citizen involvement and a multitude of individuals involved in most major decisions.

So even though I will not bring scores of non-sworn personnel into the Bureau in the immediate future, I expect sworn officers to be sensitive to these trends, and to work with full cooperation with other agencies, with citizens, and with non-sworn personnel within the Bureau. To achieve this cooperation, it is essential that sworn personnel treat the work of their non-sworn co-workers as equal in importance to their own. I will watch closely, and I expect the command

staff to watch closely, to make sure non-sworn personnel are not treated as second-class citizens.

V. Employee Evaluation

All of the Police Bureau's employees, from the Chief to the records clerks, should be evaluated periodically to assure that established performance standards are met.

For patrol officers, the Bureau is currently at work devising performance standards and evaluation procedures, and will soon make recommendations to me on this topic. The result will be a set of standards which allows officers to know exactly what is expected of them in their work, and which enables supervisors to monitor and evaluate daily performance, and provide assistance to officers who are deficient in some way.

Also, the Bureau's commanding officers must develop goals, objectives and performance indicators for their divisions, so that the commanders themselves can be evaluated for their performance. The Police Chief and his command staff are developing these now, and the goals, objectives and indicators should be ready for my review within a year.

A program which appears to encourage the setting of objectives, performance standards, and evaluation criteria is the beat profile program being tested in North Precinct. Under this program each officer is provided with a statistical analysis of crimes which tend to occur in that officer's district, and is then encouraged to set goals for dealing with categories of crime upon which the officer can have a direct effect. Using the goals as performance indicators, the officers can be evaluated periodically.

Thus, the beat profile program makes police officers more accountable for their daily activities, a desirable change, yet does so in a way which does

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not compromise the Bureau's law enforcement mission. In fact, the beat profile program should strengthen the basic focus of the Police Bureau, for it clearly calls for a primary emphasis on the street officer with the Bureau's ancillary services such as crime analysis, planning and research, detectives, and traffic serving as support.

There are potential drawbacks to the program, however, which must be overcome. It may be that patrol officers spend so much time meeting their designated performance objectives that they neglect service calls. Also, the program may make it more difficult to transfer patrol officers from one beat to another, because transfers would probably require the development of new performance objectives for the new officer.

The beat profile program, and its implications, costs and benefits, is something that I will be looking at closely over the next year.

The evaluation of performance must also play a more important role in promotion than it previously has. Promotion must be based on merit, and we must make an effort to promote our top officers. Although the civil service system plays a useful role in evaluating candidates for positions, particularly through test scores and interviews, the civil service process is not equipped to make the final choice regarding promotion. That choice is made by the command staff within the Police Bureau. I strongly support a policy which ensures that a candidate's total profile and performance, including past evaluations by supervisors, will be used as a basis for the final promotion decision.

Further, while promotion is the traditional means of recognizing outstanding performance, the Bureau needs other mechanisms as well. We should devise a system which recognizes excellence in performance among patrol officers, for example, but which does not require that such officers be promoted into positions which they do not desire, or for which they are ill-suited. This is a proposal which

will be developed in more detail in the coming year.

Two other topics concerning evaluation which need our attention are psychological testing, and standards for physical conditioning.

At present, only police officer candidates are given psychological testing. Although I have yet reached no conclusions as to the need for psychological testing for sworn officers, I am currently investigating the need for this. It may be, for example, that periodic testing, testing as a condition for promotion, or testing of applicants for sensitive positions, on the vice squad for example, will improve the performance of the Police Bureau.

Finally, I strongly believe in the need for establishing standards for physical conditioning. I believe that officers in top physical condition will be less likely to injure themselves, and that consequently less burden will be placed on the Retirement and Disability Fund. Moreover, physical conditioning improves the morale of the force, and increases productivity. This is another program I have asked the Bureau to study, and their recommendations will be reported back to me within a year.

CONCLUSION

In a sense, the Commissioner of Police must perform a continual balancing act. He must balance the claims of those who want rapid change against those who want no change at all. He must recognize that those who promote change would not want to negate the Bureau's role of protecting innocent citizens. Also, he must realize that all but the most rigid conservatives would concede that some changes are necessary. Amidst all this, he must sift and weigh alternatives based on his own agenda for change.

My assessment of the Police Bureau is very positive, and I am pleased about the direction in which the Bureau is moving. As Police Commissioner, I will be working closely with the Bureau to keep it flexible and accountable to citizens and public officials. I will also be moving the Bureau through a period of gradual change towards a stronger management and evaluation system and a greater involvement in crime prevention. At the same time, I will work to preserve and strengthen one of the Bureau's essential roles, solving crimes and enforcing the law. Although this job of balancing is not an easy one, it is always a challenge, and with the excellent cooperation I have received from police personnel and citizens, it is a challenge which can be met.

Finally, although the job I do as Police Commissioner requires the help and cooperation of many others, I recognize that as an elected representative of the people, I am ultimately and directly accountable to the people for quality police service. I accept this responsibility.

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