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Good morning,
Below is our April 2023 monthly From Blue to You newsletter. Enjoy!
Steph

From Blue to You

Madison Police Department Monthly Newsletter | April 2023



Summary/Highlights

- Obtaining Police Reports
- Meet Dr. Hunt
- Stolen Autos Trend Downward
- Community Outreach

"Can I Get a Copy of My Report?"

Lieutenant Lori Chalecki does not hesitate when asked what question she most frequently fielded, as the Lieutenant of Patrol for Midtown District in 2022. "People wanted to know how to get a copy of a report" Chalecki says. In that spirit, we are taking a deep dive into how many requests Madison Police receives each year for records, the laws that govern records releases, and how you can access this service.

THE STATS

Last year, the Madison Police Department processed 32,006 records requests, or an average of 87 every day of the calendar year. The vast majority of records requests are for police reports, according to MPD Records Custodian Julie Laundry. "We are in a time of

police reform” says Chief Shon Barnes. “We know transparency and information sharing are needed to provide a high quality of service.”

Wisconsin’s Public Records Law, and at the federal level, the Freedom of Information Act, provide structure for how records are released. Law enforcement records have limits to their release, which will be explored in depth below.

THE REVIEW PROCESS

In fulfilling records requests, it is important to know that released information may be redacted. *Redaction* of a record means specific words or phrases are removed from the document, before it is released to the requestor. The Wisconsin Public Records law says records are available unless there is statute or case law that limits the release, or the balancing test is applied and the benefit of inspection is outweighed by the harm it would cause. When applying the balancing test, a custodian cannot deny or redact records because the release may cause embarrassment or reputational harm. The harm must be a harm that would impact the public in general and not one person in particular. A good example of a public harm redaction from a police report would be a redaction/removal of a statement about someone else’s mental health or alcohol use made by an individual that is not a health professional. Because of the known stigma of mental health and alcoholism, it is likely in the best interest of the public that unqualified claims about alcohol use or mental health be redacted for public release.

When a record is released, there may still be redacted segments. Information redacted from police reports may include home addresses, birth dates and personal phone numbers. Other redacted information can include details in sensitive crimes, unsubstantiated allegations, juvenile identities and statements, and medical information.

HISTORY OF RECORDS LAW AND MPD NOW

Public records laws were enacted in 1982. These laws have been untouched by legislature since they were enacted, except by case law. The same laws that govern MPD records apply to public records for school districts, boards, municipal divisions, town, village, city, county and state entities.

How long are records kept, and why? Madison Police has its own records retention and disposition authorization schedule, found here: <https://www.cityofmadison.com/mayor/apm/it/APM3-6AppendixB.pdf> These documents set the amount of time records are retained by MPD. The Wisconsin Public Records Board approved the MPD retention and disposition authorization schedule. For more on that, see <https://publicrecordsboard.wi.gov/Pages/home.aspx>

TOWN OF MADISON ANNEXATION

In late 2022, the City of Madison annexed portions of the Town of Madison. This process brought into MPD some Town of Madison Police Department’s records, dating back to 1980. In addition to paper records, MPD took on the Town of Madison’s audio and video from body cams and squad, and evidence the Town of Madison had retained.

HOW TO REQUEST

You can request information through our records unit in a variety of ways:

- By phone: 608-266-4075
- By email: pdrecords@cityofmadison.com
- By mail: 211 S Carroll St, Madison WI 53705
- In person: stop by the City-County Building at the address above
- By fax: 608-267-1117

Our records department has a request guide you can find online [at this link](#). You can find this document in Spanish [here](#).

Meet Dr. Hunt

As MPD works toward continuous process improvement and transparency, a Police Director of Data, Reform and Innovation was envisioned. This new position was filled by Dr. Eleazer “Lee” Hunt, and is the civilian equivalent of an assistant chief. Dr. Hunt has oversight of MPD Records, IT, and Crime Analysis.

The position will help the department focus on evidence-based policing, community engagement and transparencies. Dr. Hunt will analyze data and help identify solutions to problems officers see in the community. “We want to implement and apply crime reduction strategies that work, that will reduce crime without having to increase arrests,” Hunt said about his new position.

Dr. Hunt has worked in law enforcement and the public sector for more than 25 years. He began his career as an archaeologist and found many similarities between policing and archaeology. The recording of a crime scene or archaeological site requires keen observation, note taking, photographs and evidence collecting to recreate and preserve the event. He enjoys hiking and gardening.

While a Buffalo, New York native, Dr. Hunt and his wife are excited to be living in Madison.



6th Annual Battle of the Badges

Madison Police and Madison Fire clashed in the 6th annual “Battle of the Badges” hockey game, a charitable endeavor that goes far beyond bragging rights for the winning team. \$20,000 was raised for recipient Safe Communities and specifically, their recovery coaching program. Recovery coaches are individuals or affected family members in long term recovery from substance misuse and/or mental health experiences. These remarkable people use their own lived experiences to walk alongside individuals they are serving.

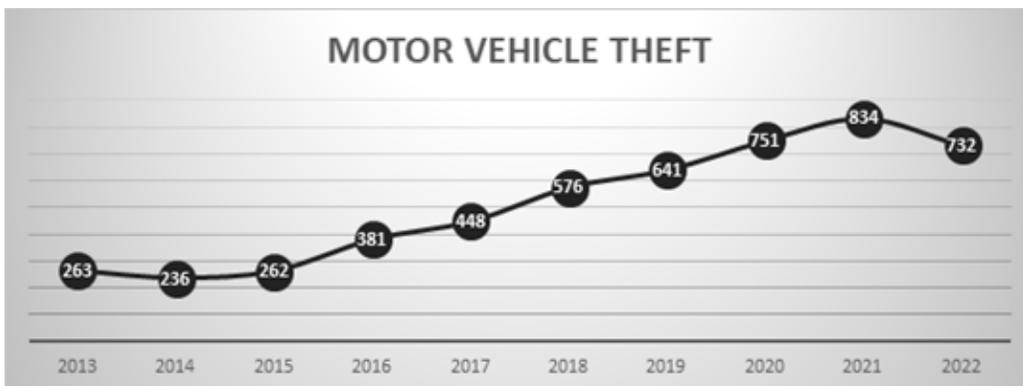
Safe Communities’ Executive Director Cheryl Wittke and many of Safe Communities’ recovery coaches worked the hockey game or appeared in support of this collaboration. First responders can play a key role in connecting individuals in active addiction with area recovery resources like Safe Communities. “Addiction has no boundaries,” said Travis Hilliard of the Police Team. “Anything we can do to support those families and people [impacted]” is why he takes part in this annual fundraiser.



Crime Report – Stolen Autos Trend Down

For the first time in ten years, the Madison Police Department saw a drop in the number of motor vehicle thefts. That did not happen by chance, but through data informed policing and tenacious, innovative work. “Stolen autos” were identified as a top priority in MPD’s 2022 Summer Strategic Plan. The stolen auto group consisted of detectives from both the Burglary Crime Unit (BCU) and each MPD District, which formed a comprehensive team to tackle these crimes.

The drop in motor vehicle thefts also occurred in a year in which a historic number of Kia and Hyundai models were targeted for auto theft, due to a widely known defect in their security system.



Outreach Event

SPRING POP-UP!



WHERE? CARGO COFFEE EAST
750 E. WASHINGTON AVE

WHEN? APRIL 30TH, 2023
10:00 am TO 1:00 pm

WHAT?* GATHER FOR A GREAT
CAUSE WITH COFFEE,
FUN, AND PHOTOS!



* ALL DONATIONS WILL BE SENT
TO A LGBTQIA+ GROUP WITHIN
MMSD! ALL FUNDS GO
THROUGH MCPF TO THE
RECIPIENT.



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