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Lafayette Police Chief presents 2022 crime stats to council

By Elaine Borden Chandler

Chief of Police Ben Alldritt gave the Lafayette Police Department 2022 Annual Report to the City Council during its March 27 meeting. He started with a summary of the department and the year. Lafayette PD has 25 staff members who dealt with 12,674 calls for service, 1,293 police reports, 259 arrests, and 1,093 citations. Alldritt's report was based on the FBI'S Uniform Crime Report which includes eight types of Part 1 Category Crimes: homicide, rape, robbery, assault, burglary, larceny, 10851 (joyriding) and arson.

"In a 10-year comparison, for 2022 we had the lowest number of Part 1 crimes," said Alldritt. But he noted certain categories rose. Assault and larceny went down, while robbery, burglary, and joyriding went up from 2021. Both person crimes, such as homicide or robbery, and property crimes, such as theft or vandalism, were far below the national average.

Lafayette had no homicides in 2022. There was one reported case of assault with a deadly weapon and two cases of kidnapping. The assault was a case where a wife struck her husband and was arrested. The first kidnapping case involved a stranger attempting to abduct a teenager. There are currently no leads. The second kidnapping was a case where a family was restrained after a forced entry. The intruder is currently in custody.

The law acknowledges two kinds of robbery: armed, which involves a weapon, and strong-arm, which does not. There were two armed robberies and six strong-arm robberies, mostly shoplifting that became violent. Suspects were arrested in all cases.

There were two reported cases of rape, one of child molestation, six of felony domestic violence, and seven of misdemeanor domestic violence. Alldritt did not discuss details for the sake of sensitivity.

There was one assault on a police officer. Alldritt commented, "The gentleman had a little bird in his hand the entire time during the fight, and as he came to the ground the bird walked away."

Most crimes in Lafayette are property crimes. There were 17 residential burglaries, a jump from 2020 and 2021. Alldritt took responsibility but also asked residents to invest in home surveillance. Commercial burglary increased with 32 cases, 14 of which are solved. While there were 120 auto crimes, ranging from theft from car to stolen vehicles, auto burglaries have dropped significantly from 2019, which Alldritt credited to situational awareness cameras.

Traffic citations rose from 900 in 2021 to 1,039 in 2022. Alldritt stressed that traffic citations should correspond with traffic collisions and that traffic complaints have been very high in Lafayette. Traffic collisions were down from 2021 at 115 cases, and lower overall from the last 10 years. There were no fatal accidents. Alldritt is hopeful the Lafayette Go Slow campaign will reduce these collisions further.

Code enforcement had 268 calls, including their first house abatement. The majority were for overgrown vegetation. Code enforcement also includes property violations, building and zoning violations, fire hazards, and parking violations.

Recess with a Cop is returning this fall after a pause during COVID. The PD also does active threat training with schools, involving one hour of free training for staff for a situation like a mass shooter. As per a question from Vice Mayor Gina Dawson, Lafayette PD works specifically with teachers, and schools are responsible for drills.

The Emergency Preparedness Commission updated the "Lamorinda Residents Guide to Wildfire Preparedness and Evacuation" and sent it to every home. The CalOES Grant was used for purchasing radios in schools and school buses, solar panels and a backup generator. Alldritt gave a shout out to the Public Works crew for all their work, especially in the rains.

The written report also notes eight cases of felony vandalism, 35 of misdemeanor vandalism, 30 of identity theft, five of terrorist threats, and one of forgery, and expresses gratitude to the Crime Prevention Commission.

Alldritt ended saying March marked five years of his service in Lafayette. "I love being here, and I love the opportunity to work with this. We have a great community, a caring community, from school administrators to city staff to community members," he said. Council members Teresa Geringer, Wei-Tai Kwok, and Susan Candell praised Alldritt and thanked him for his work.

Chief Alldritt's report at the March 27 Lafayette City Council Meeting with can be found at www.youtube.com/watch?v=nxDEtp0hKGE&t=3024s. The "City of Lafayette Police 2022 Annual Report" can be found at www.lovelafayette.org/home/showpublisheddocument/7242/638155998995970000.

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