



## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

# Annual Report 2023



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## **A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR**



As the Director of Public Safety for the City of Portage, every day I have the honor to serve alongside some of the finest police officers, firefighters, civilians, and volunteers in the country. These are dedicated and wonderful men and women who are responsible for delivering nationally recognized public safety services to a city of 49,000 residents, covering 32.3 square miles, with a daily influx of roughly 5,500 additional people who work in or visit our city. Each and every day, they are committed to providing professional and caring community service to the citizens of Portage.

Our mission is to deliver superior public safety services that make people's lives better. We work in partnership with our diverse community to safeguard the lives, rights and property of the people we serve.

With unwavering dedication, our first responders provide innovative professional public safety services to all of the members of this community. We strive to accomplish this by maintaining our honor, courage, commitment, leadership and teamwork while always conducting ourselves with the highest ethical standards.

The Police Division is a full-service law enforcement agency that provides a variety of law enforcement services, such as 24-hour-a-day patrol, school resource and community policing officers, and various other service teams.

The Fire Division is second-to-none in its commitment to service excellence in fire suppression, emergency medical services, fire prevention, rescue, training, emergency management and support systems for the citizens of Portage. We strive daily to make Portage a safer place to live, work and visit. These first responders also focus a large amount of time each year providing the public with child safety seat instruction, fire safety and prevention education, and station house tours, to name a few.

It is through the public's trust and support that the Public Safety Department can provide a safe and healthy environment for our community to thrive. I am proud of the men and women of this agency and feel fortunate to serve the community alongside them as we work in partnership with our community members to keep the City of Portage safe.

In closing, I feel blessed to have been chosen to be a part of such a fine organization. With the many challenges that face public safety today, I am extremely proud of our ability to adapt and remain steadfast in our commitment to providing the best possible police, fire, and EMS services to our city.

*Nicholas J. Arnold*

Nicholas J. Arnold  
Director of Public Safety

# **CITY COUNCIL**

The City of Portage operates under a Council-Manager form of government. The Mayor and City Council members are the elected officials who preside over the city. The City Manager is appointed by the City Council to handle administrative duties in the city on a day-to-day basis. The City Manager makes recommendations to the City Council as a group and the Council acts on business at regularly scheduled meetings.

## **APPOINTED OFFICIALS**



## **ELECTED OFFICIALS**



**Mayor**  
Patricia Randall



**Mayor Pro Tem**  
Jim Pearson



**Council Member**  
Vic Ledbetter



**Council Member**  
Terry Urban



**Council Member**  
Chris Burns



**Council Member**  
Nicole Miller



**Council Member**  
Jihan Ain Young

# COMMUNITY PROFILE

The City of Portage is located in Kalamazoo County, approximately half way between Chicago and Detroit. Regional accessibility to the community is provided by several interchanges along US-131 and I-94 expressways.

Portage was incorporated December 31, 1963. With a 2022 population of 48,844 (99% urban, 1% rural), it is the 25th largest city in Michigan and the 817th largest city in the United States. Portage has grown steadily over the past two decades in a region that has remained stable in spite of the Covid-19 pandemic. The population change since 2000 saw an increase of 8.8%

Spanning over 35 miles, Portage has a population density of 1,517 people per square mile (48.8% male, 51.2% female).

The median age in Portage is 37 years, with a median household income of \$69,188 and a poverty rate of 7.4%. The median rental costs in 2021 was \$956 per month, and the median house value was \$245,003.

Portage has over 2,000 acres of park and recreational space featuring 17 parks, three of which are dedicated to natural preservation, and 57 miles of bikeways and multi-use trails. Portage offers bountiful natural resources and seven lakes that account for 1,732 acres or 7.9% of the geographic area of the city.

*\*www.City-Data.com (based on 2022 available census information).*

## PORTAGE DEMOGRAPHICS\*

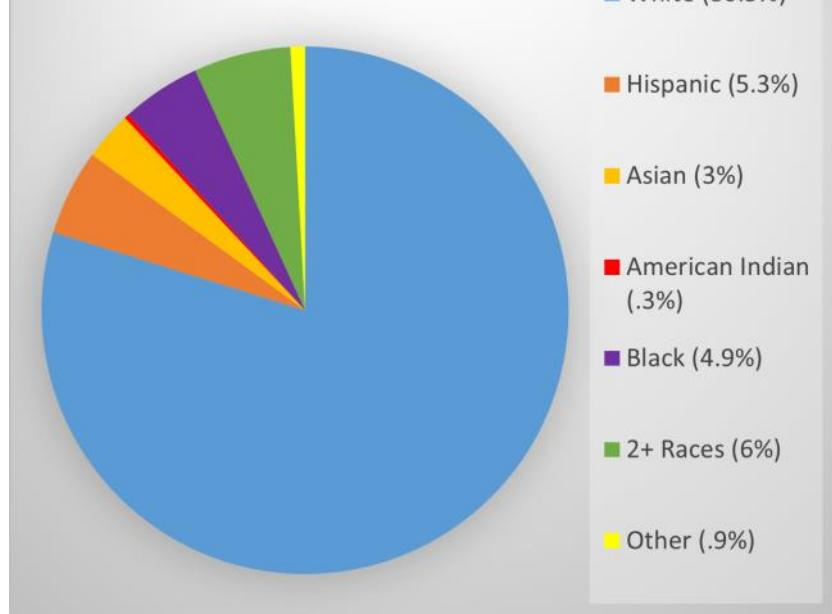
Median Income (per capita)

**\$36,400**

Median Income (household)

**\$69,188**

### Races in Portage (2022)



### Top Employers



**Summit Polymers**

# **THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY**



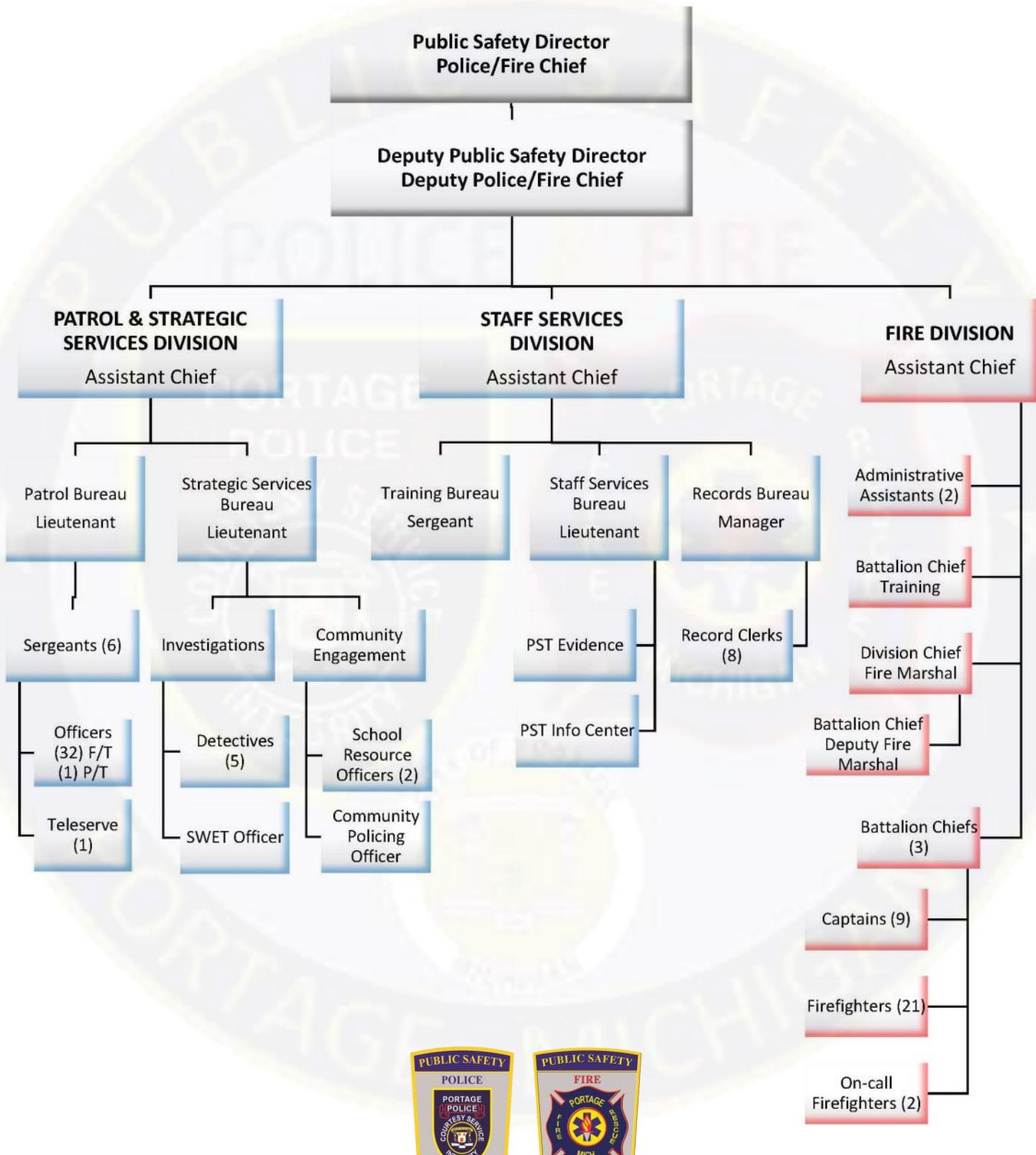
The Portage Department of Public Safety is responsible for the delivery of public safety services to a city encompassing over 35 square miles, and housing a night time population of 49,000 people. Due to the large number of service-oriented businesses located in the city and the number of commercial operations, the daytime population is much greater.

Employees of the City of Portage are committed to delivering superior customer service. Members of the Department of Public Safety are no exception as they strive to ensure the needs of our citizens, business owners, and visitors are met in a consistent manner unsurpassed in professionalism, politeness, and promptness.

On July 1, 2011, the administration of the Portage Police Department was merged with the Portage Fire Department to form the Portage Department of Public Safety. Operationally, each department, Police and Fire, still maintain their separate identities. Police officers do not perform duties previously done by firefighters and vice versa. However, both departments are led by a single Public Safety Director who serves as both the Police Chief and the Fire Chief.

Public Safety Administration is located in two adjacent buildings—the Public Safety Headquarters at 7810 Shaver Road and Fire Station No. 1 at 7830 Shaver Road. Police operations are solely operated from the Shaver Road headquarters facility. Fire operations are run from three stations: Fire Station No. 1 at 7830 Shaver Road, Fire Station No. 2 at 6101 Oakland Drive, and Fire Station No. 3 at 8503 Sprinkle Road.

# ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE





# **LEADERSHIP TEAM**

## **Police Division**



Director of Public Safety  
Police/Fire Chief  
**Nicholas J. Armold**



Deputy Director  
Deputy Police/Fire Chief  
**Jeff VanderWiere**



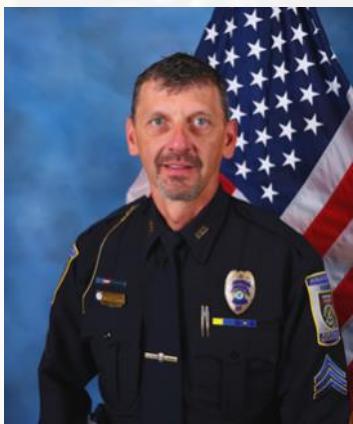
Assistant Chief  
Staff Services Division  
**Matt Wolfe**



Assistant Chief  
Patrol & Strategic Services  
Division  
**Bryan Mayhew**



Lieutenant  
Patrol  
**Kevin Glesing**



Lieutenant  
Strategic Services  
**Ron Clark**



Lieutenant  
Staff Services  
**Steve Clark**



Administrative Assistant  
Office of the Director  
**Barbara Garlow**



# **LEADERSHIP TEAM**

## ***Fire Division***



Assistant Chief  
Fire Division  
**Jed Wild**



Division Chief  
Fire Marshal  
**Stacey French**



Administrative Battalion Chief  
CRR / Deputy Fire Marshal  
**William Graham**



Administrative Battalion Chief  
Training Officer  
**Rob Leatherman**



Battalion Chief  
A-Shift  
**Lou Playford**



Battalion Chief  
B-Shift  
**Rick Nason**



Battalion Chief  
C-Shift  
**Chip Everett**



Administrative Assistant  
Fire Division  
**Ashley Bogard**

# OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR



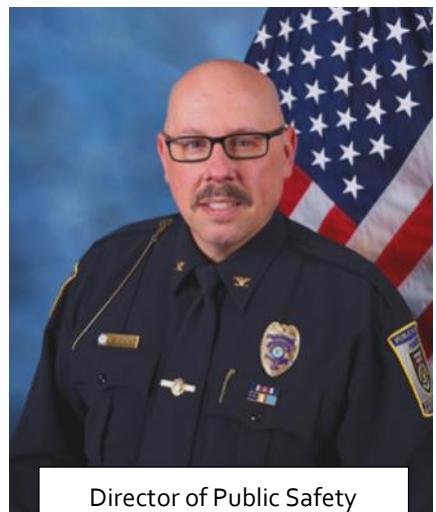
*The Office of the Director is responsible for directing, organizing, budgeting, planning and fiscal management of the municipal Police and Fire Divisions, as well as internal investigations. The Office of the Director is comprised of the Public Safety director, deputy director, one administrative assistant, and one records clerk.*

## PUBLIC SAFETY DIRECTOR—POLICE/FIRE CHIEF

Nicholas J. Armold joined the Portage Department of Public Safety in April 2014, as the Senior Deputy Police Chief over Operations, and was appointed to Director of Public Safety in March 2017. Armold brought with him 26 years of experience as a Public Safety Officer holding certifications as both a police officer and firefighter. He honorably served the City of Huntington Woods where he retired at the rank of Deputy Chief.

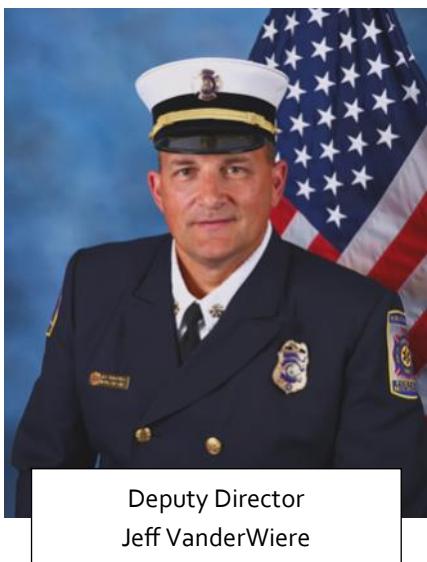
Director Armold has more than 36 years in Public Safety. He earned a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Lake Superior State University and is a graduate of the Northwestern University Center for Public Safety School of Police Staff and Command. He is also a graduate of the U.S. Department of Justice - Federal Bureau of Investigations National Academy, Session #268.

Director Armold currently serves as the President of the West Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police (WMACP) which represents 12 counties and over 110 agencies, and he is a commissioner on the Michigan Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission. Director Armold also sits on the Advisory Board for the Kalamazoo Valley Community College (KVCC) Law Enforcement and Police Academy programs.



Director of Public Safety  
Nicholas J. Armold

## PUBLIC SAFETY DEPUTY DIRECTOR—DEPUTY POLICE/FIRE CHIEF



Deputy Director  
Jeff VanderWiere

Jeff VanderWiere joined the Portage Department of Public Safety in September 2020, as a Division Chief—Fire Marshal. In May 2021, he was promoted to Deputy Fire Chief and in November 2022, he was again promoted to his current role of Deputy Director of Public Safety. In this role he is responsible for the oversight of both the Police and Fire Divisions under the direction of the Director of Public Safety.

Prior to his service with the City of Portage, Deputy Director VanderWiere served 24 years, retiring as an Assistant Chief, from the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety, the nations largest fully cross-trained (police/fire/EMS) department in the United States.

Deputy Director VanderWiere brings over 27 years of Public Safety experience and has served in a multitude of capacities and assignments to include: Police and Fire Operations, K-9 Handler, Criminal Investigations, Training, Strategic Planning, Emergency

Management and Professional Standards. As the Deputy Director of Public Safety for the City of Portage, he is tasked with oversight of the Police and Fire Divisions and is directly responsible for budgeting and capital improvement projects for the department.

Deputy Director VanderWiere has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Kalamazoo College and a Masters of Science degree in Public Administration from Central Michigan University. He is a graduate of the Executive Fire Officer program at the National Fire Academy, the Senior Management Institute of Policing (SMIP) provided by the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), and the Police Executives & New Chiefs School provided by the Michigan Association of Chief's of Police (MACP).

### ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Barbara Garlow is the Administrative Assistant for the Office of the Director. Her primary responsibilities include providing administrative support to the director and deputy director on a daily basis, and proactively anticipating the needs of the entire department.

Barbara joined the City of Portage in 2011 and has been with the Department of Public Safety since 2018. She is a graduate of Kalamazoo Valley Community College where she earned an Associate's degree in Office Administration and certifications as Legal Office Assistant and Microsoft Office Specialist.



Barbara Garlow

### ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS CLERK (P/T)

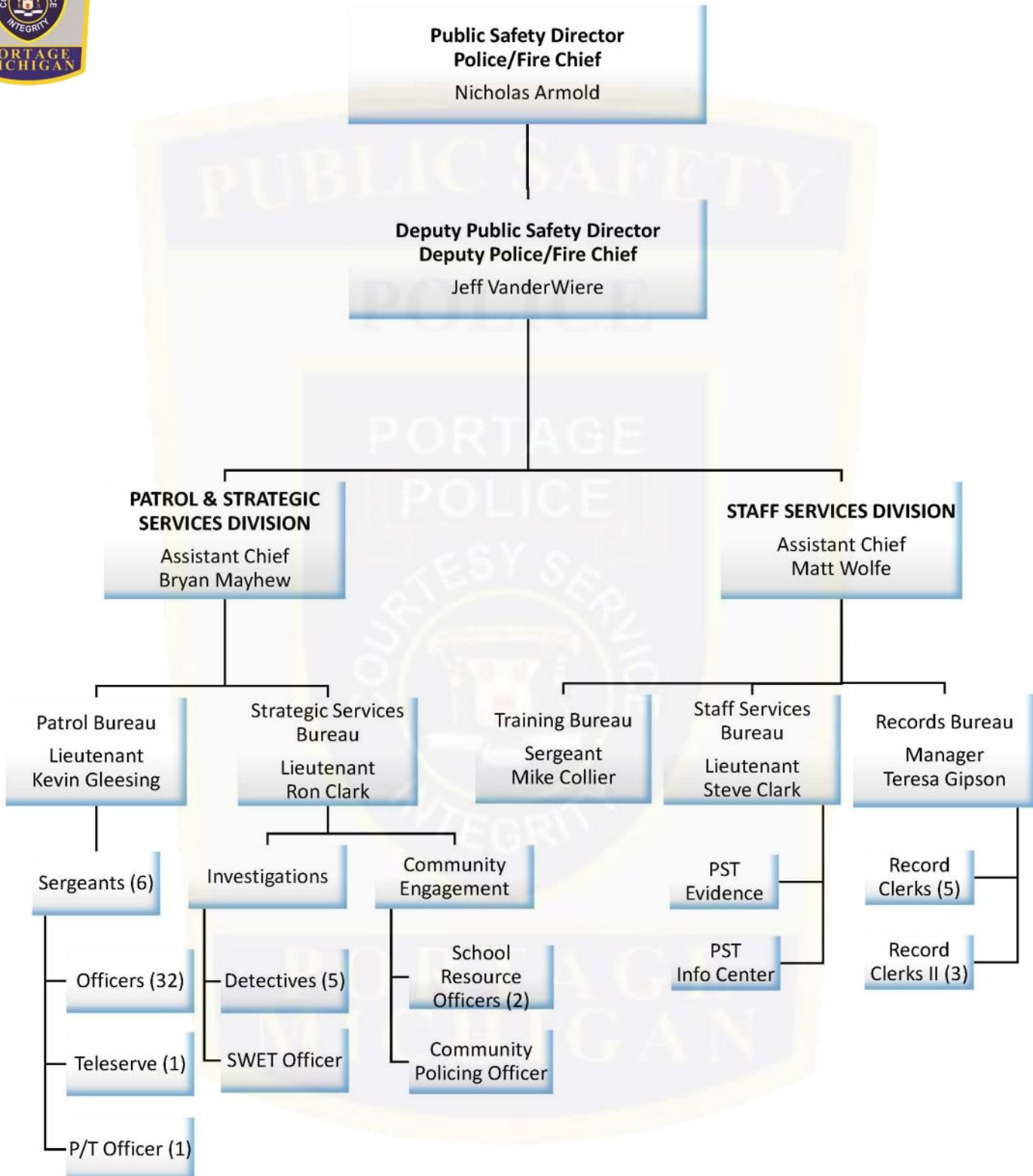
Tammy Scott-Farnsworth is the part-time Records Clerk for the Office of the Director and reports to the Administrative Assistant. Her primary responsibilities include general office work, Investigations Bureau transcription, interoffice mail distribution, bicycle registrations, interaction surveys, and assisting the Records Section as time allows.

Tammy joined the Police Division in 2013 after retiring from the U.S. Postal Service. She attended Kalamazoo Valley Community College where she earned an Associate's Degree.



Tammy Scott-  
Farnsworth

# POLICE DIVISION ORGANIZATION CHART



# POLICE DIVISION



## STAFF PROFILE

In 2023, the Police Division was authorized a total of 84 positions (80 full-time and 4 part-time). Of those 84 positions, the division is allocated 70 sworn (69 full-time and 1 part-time), and 14 civilian positions (11 full-time and 3 part-time). At the close of 2023, the division was successfully at full staff, filling 100% of sworn police officer positions. This was accomplished through innovative recruiting efforts, including sponsoring candidates through academy and a robust lateral hiring process, as well as sign-on bonuses and a new annual attendance bonus.

## MISSION

The Portage Department of Public Safety—Police Division exists to serve as guardians of the peace through courtesy, service, and integrity.

## GOALS

In order to fulfill our mission, we have adopted and will pursue the following goals:

- *The protection of life and property.*
- *The prevention and suppression of crime.*
- *The detection, identification and apprehension of criminals.*
- *The safe and accident-free flow of pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular traffic.*

## VALUES

- *Excellence*
- *Professionalism*
- *Community Partnerships*
- *Compassion*
- *Respect*

# **POLICE DIVISION HISTORY**



**December 31, 1963** City of Portage Chartered

**August 1964** Richard Wilde Hired as First Police Chief

**1966** Reserve Police Unit Established

**August 1967** David Sharp Promoted to Police Chief

**January 1970** Youth Section Established

**September 1970** Department Assumes School Crossing Guard Responsibilities

**January 21, 1971** Department Moved to Present Police/Court Building

**March 31, 1975** George E. VonBehren Hired as Police Chief

**1977** City Emergency Preparedness Plan Developed by Police Department

**September 1979** Police/Fire Central Dispatch Established

**1985** Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police Traffic Safety Award

**1985** Department Computerizes Records

**September 1988** Police/School Liaison Program Instituted

**November 1988** Volunteer Parking Enforcement Program Implemented

**October 1989** D.A.R.E. Program Instituted

**March 1990** Old City Hall Remodeled and Field Operations Relocated

**1995** Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police Traffic Safety Award

**November 6, 1995** Richard J. White Hired as Police Chief

**September 1996** Crime Prevention Program Instituted

**1998** Police Computers Upgraded to a PC Network

**1998** Police Citizens Academy Implemented

**September 1999** Formal Application Made to Become Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (C.A.L.E.A.) Accredited

**1999** Kalamazoo County District Courts Consolidated

**January 2001** D.A.R.E. Program Transferred to Sheriff's Department

**October 2001** State of Michigan Law Enforcement Information Network (LEIN) Certificate of Excellence

## ***POLICE DIVISION HISTORY CONT.***

**July 2003** C.A.L.E.A. Accreditation Awarded

**April 2004-2005** Remodel of the Annex and Headquarters Building

**March 2006** Received C.A.L.E.A. Reaccreditation

**October 2007** Electronic Citations Implemented

**August 2008** Digital Mobile Video Recording Implemented

**October 2008** Bicycle Patrol Implemented

**November 2008** Electronic Accidents Implemented

**March 2009** C.A.L.E.A. Reaccreditation

**January 1, 2011** Prisoner Holding Facility Closed

**February 2011** Records Department Upgraded to a Digital Dictation System

**July 7, 2011** Police and Fire Departments Consolidated into Public Safety

**March 2012** C.A.L.E.A. Reaccreditation

**March 2015** C.A.L.E.A. Reaccreditation

**July 2015** Motorcycle Patrols Implemented

**December 2015** Canine Program Implemented

**March 2016** Fire Department Accredited by Commission on Fire Accreditation International

**August 2016** Application Made to Michigan Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission

**March 2, 2017** Nicholas J. Arnold Promoted to Public Safety Director – Police/Fire Chief

**February 2018** Michigan Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission (M.L.E.A.C.) Received

**July 2018** C.A.L.E.A. Reaccreditation

**July 2018** C.A.L.E.A. Communications Accreditation Award

**October 2018** Dispatch Center Decommissioned

**November 7, 2019** K9 Zorro End of Watch

**February 2021** M.L.E.A.C. Re-accreditation

**March 2022** C.A.L.E.A. Reaccreditation

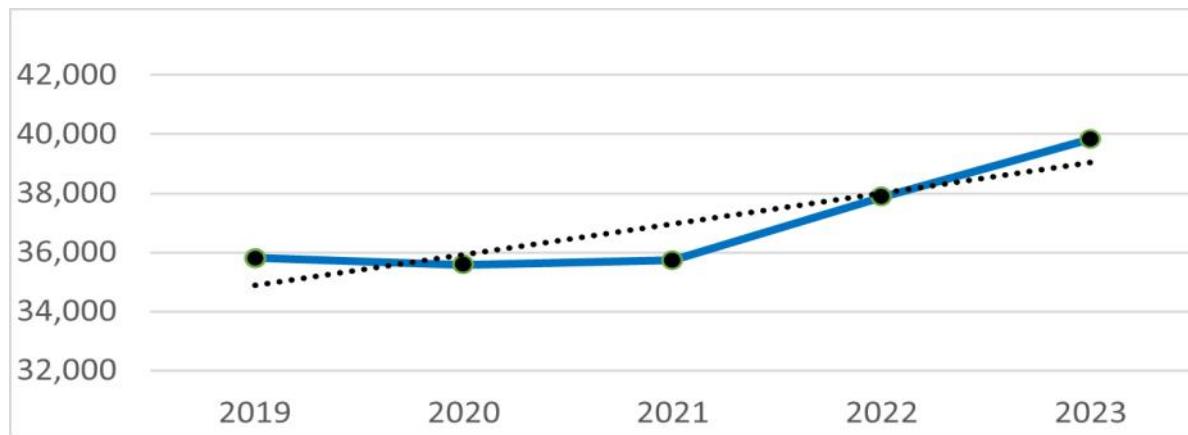
**November 2023** M.L.E.A.C. Re-accreditation



## CALLS FOR SERVICE

In 2023, overall police response was up by roughly 5% compared to response in 2022.

POLICE DIVISION CALLS FOR SERVICE ANALYSIS					
2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	AVERAGE
35,805	35,582	35,720	37,877	39,838	36,964



## CRIME SUMMARY

In 2023, the Police Division responded to 39,838 calls for service, including 1,798 Part 1 crimes and 2,623 Part 2 crimes. Overall, Part 1 crimes were up 0.5%, and Part 2 crimes were down 7%, compared to 2022.

**Part I** offenses are violent crimes that occur on a regular basis and are likely to be reported to law enforcement. Part I offenses fall into two categories: violent crimes and property crimes.

**Part 2** offenses are generally less severe in terms of the impact for society and public safety. Victims of Part II offenses may not notify police and most Part 2 offenses are considered victimless. As such, only arrests are reported for Part II crimes.

In 2023, officers arrested 2,221 adults on 2,470 charges, and 215 juveniles on 233 charges. The most frequently occurring crimes were retail fraud, larceny, non-aggravated assault, and fraud.

# PORTAGE CRIME REPORTING DATA

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	% Change 2022-2023	% Change 2019-2023
<b>PART 1 OFFENSES</b>							
Murder/Non-negligent Homicide	0	2	2	4	1	-75%	0%
Criminal Sexual Conduct	31	17	32	36	22	-39%	-29%
Robbery	14	10	20	10	13	30%	-7%
Aggravated/Felonious Assault	91	81	72	100	88	-12%	-3%
Arson	7	8	6	1	7	600%	0%
Burglary	163	140	140	116	118	2%	-28%
Larceny	673	689	930	832	711	-15%	6%
Motor Vehicle Theft	68	90	175	110	106	-4%	56%
Retail Fraud	633	435	445	580	732	26%	16%
<b>TOTAL PART 1</b>	<b>1680</b>	<b>1472</b>	<b>1882</b>	<b>1789</b>	<b>1798</b>	<b>0.5%</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>PART 2 OFFENSES</b>							
Negligent Homicide	0	0	0	0	0	0%	0%
Kidnapping	2	2	2	6	4	-33%	100%
Stalking	43	29	26	41	26	-37%	-40%
Extortion	0	2	0	2	2	0%	0%
Forgery/Counterfeiting	87	61	56	47	22	-53%	-75%
Fraud	364	323	355	338	360	6.5%	-1%
Embezzlement	48	30	19	33	24	-27%	-50%
Recovered Stolen Property	19	13	14	14	13	-7%	-32%
Malicious Damage to Property	189	175	201	226	207	-8%	9%
Drug Offenses	118	88	95	108	100	-7%	-15%
Obscene Material	2	2	2	6	1	-83%	-50%
Weapons Offenses	20	35	56	41	50	22%	150%
Retail Fraud (misc. categories)	36	1	14	14	15	7%	-58%
Non-aggravated Assault	430	376	410	511	475	-7%	10%
Illegal Entry	34	29	30	24	28	17%	-18%
Bad Checks	36	35	24	29	32	10%	-11%
Sex Offenses	21	21	17	49	54	10%	157%
Family Offenses	37	37	42	53	48	-9%	30%
Liquor Violations	19	14	9	8	5	-37.5%	-74%
Hindering and Obstructing	102	106	111	146	176	20.5%	72.5%
Obstructing Justice	280	169	188	179	185	3%	-34%
Disorderly/Public Peace	279	289	230	314	237	-24.5%	-15%
Hit & Run Accidents	56	51	31	51	26	-49%	-54%
Driving While Intoxicated	124	94	106	114	106	-7%	-14.5%
Trespassing	133	173	186	267	277	4%	108%
Runaway	21	18	35	56	36	-36%	71%
Other Part 2	150	147	163	144	114	-21%	24%
<b>TOTAL PART 2</b>	<b>2650</b>	<b>2332</b>	<b>2422</b>	<b>2822</b>	<b>2623</b>	<b>-7%</b>	<b>-1%</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL OFFENSES</b>	<b>4330</b>	<b>3804</b>	<b>4244</b>	<b>4611</b>	<b>4421</b>	<b>-4%</b>	<b>2%</b>

# **PATROL & STRATEGIC SERVICES DIVISION**



*The Patrol & Strategic Services Division is commanded by an Assistant Chief who reports to the Deputy Director and is responsible for the coordination and oversight of daily field operations, field training and overall supervision of police officers, crime scene and accident investigation services, special operations, investigations and community engagement.*

## **ASSISTANT CHIEF—PATROL DIVISION**



Assistant Chief  
Bryan Mayhew

On May 9, 2023, Assistant Chief John Blue retired, having served the department for 35 years. On June 11, 2023, Bryan Mayhew was promoted from Patrol Lieutenant to the rank of Assistant Police Chief.

Assistant Chief Bryan Mayhew coordinates the activities of the Police Division through the planning and oversight of daily law enforcement activities including patrol, criminal investigations, school liaison, crime prevention and special team assignments (county/region).

Mayhew is responsible for ensuring that all Police Division personnel and equipment are in a state of readiness for emergency management operations. During area emergencies, he commands the police force either directly or in conjunction with the ECC, coordinating with other agencies (fire, law enforcement, etc.) as required.

Mayhew began his career with the City of Portage in 2000 and was appointed Assistant Police Chief in 2023. Throughout his career, Assistant Chief Mayhew has worked in many facets of police work, including patrol officer, field training officer, school resource officer, patrol sergeant, K9 supervisor, and lieutenant.

Assistant Chief Mayhew received a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science with a minor in business from Calvin College in 2000. Immediately following college, Mayhew graduated from the Michigan Police Corps Academy at Ferris State University where he earned his law enforcement certification. In 2021, Mayhew graduated from the Eastern Michigan University School of Police Staff and Command Executive Leadership Program. Assistant Chief Mayhew sits on several committees including the Kalamazoo County Opioid Task Force and the Kalamazoo Protect and Connect countywide emergency services and behavioral health partnership.

## PATROL BUREAU



Patrol is commanded by Lieutenant Kevin Gleesing who reports to the Assistant Chief. His responsibilities include daily coordination of patrol officer activities, ensuring coverage to the community and efficient response to calls for police services.

Regarded as the most fundamental function of police service, patrol officers make up the largest portion of the agency. When the Portage Police Department was formed in 1964, all officers were assigned to patrol. As the demands and agency grew, detective positions and specialized assignments started being added in 1966. Today, the Patrol Division is comprised of two primary shifts. Each shift works in a 12-hour complimentary cycle, allowing for 24-hour coverage; a "powershift" comprised of several officers provides additional overlap

coverage. Within each of the two primary shifts, officers and sergeants are further divided into teams with two teams per shift, allowing for more individual team unity and supervision as each team is supervised by a sergeant. During each shift, patrol officers are either assigned to specific districts or city-wide support, based on staffing numbers. A patrol officer's duties involve both crime prevention and suppression activities. In addition to responding to calls, emphasis is placed on self-initiated activities, such as citizen and business contacts, high visibility patrols, and directed patrols in high activity areas.

### TELESERVE

The Teleserve function allows patrol officers to focus their efforts on resolving neighborhood quality of life issues and other crime prevention activities. Officers assigned to Teleserve support the district patrol officers by investigating reports by phone, in-person at the police department, and by other electronic means. Teleserve officers conduct follow-up investigations, obtain medical reports and other case documents, obtain photographs and other evidence, process detainees, obtain warrants, assist non-sworn personnel with station duties, and various other duties as assigned by team leaders.

The Teleserve Officer is a three-year assignment and selected from the patrol ranks. The Teleserve position is currently performed by Officer Greg Burke who began his assignment in September 2022. In 2023, Officer Burke handled approximately 7% of the initial daily caseload and calls for service between the hours of 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.



In 2022, the Portage Department of Public Safety implemented the LexisNexis Desk Officer Reporting System (DORS). DORS is designed to make it easier and quicker for the citizens of Portage to report non-priority calls in a safe, customer-friendly way—24 hours per day, 7 days a week, thus reducing the number of calls for service an officer must respond to in person. The DORS system affords the department to reallocate valuable officer resources and provide the ability to conduct more self-directed patrols. The calendar year 2023 was the first full year the DORS program was implemented, advertised, and placed on the City of Portage website for use.

All incidents submitted through the Desk Officer Reporting System are directed to the Teleserve Officer or designee, with their primary backup being the on-duty sergeant.

The department can estimate that a patrol officer responding to a call for service in person takes approximately 90 minutes to complete from start to finish, and can calculate the cost for that service to be roughly \$40.00 per report. In 2023, the Police Division took 207 complaints on the DORS program, equating to 310.50 man hours, and saved the department roughly \$8,280 in resources.

## CRIME SCENE UNIT

The Crime Scene Unit is a specialized team of officers trained in processing crime scenes and investigating major accidents. The team is currently comprised of seven Crime Scene Technicians and three Accident Reconstructionist's. Crime Scene Technicians identify, collect, and document evidence at a crime scene. Accident Reconstructionist's are called to the scene of major traffic crash investigations to document and reconstruct elements of the crash, working jointly with Crime Scene Technicians.



Crime Scene technicians are routinely called to process crime scenes, death investigations, and serious or fatal traffic crashes. In 2023, CSU technicians processed a total of 94 scenes, down from previous years (143 scenes in 2022 and 182 in 2021). Throughout 2023, CSU technicians successfully made 30 positive identifications with 23 suspect matches.

A wide variety of sophisticated equipment is utilized to document, process and collect evidence, such as latent print fuming chamber, print dusting stations, alternate light source, digital cameras, a specialized crime scene processing vehicle, and the FARO® 3D Laser Scanner.

### FARO LASER SCANNERS



CSU technicians have utilized FARO 3D laser scanners since 2016. These high-speed devices have extra-long range and provide functional capability to scan objects up to 1,082 feet (330m) away, even in varying lighting conditions, delivering realistic, detailed, and lifelike color scan results.

Utilizing FARO technology reduces the effort involved in measuring and post-processing of scenes. The 3D scan data can easily be imported into all commonly used software solutions for crime, crash, and fire scene reconstruction. Distance dimensions, area and volume calculations, analysis and inspection tasks, and documentation can be carried out quickly, precisely, and reliably. This forensic tool will make it possible for forensic investigators to perform extensive analysis and create compelling courtroom exhibits.

## **AUTOMATIC LICENSE PLATE READERS (FLOCK)**

To assist in the reduction of non-violent crimes, the Department of Public Safety received authorization to purchase and install 20 automatic license plate readers from Flock Safety in June 2022. In 2023, the department added an additional 10 cameras. These infrastructure-free license plate reader cameras utilize Vehicle Fingerprint® technology to capture vehicular attributes. The stationary cameras are aimed at the rear of passing vehicles to capture evidence such as license plates, make, model and color. This data is stored for 30 days before it's permanently deleted, unless it is flagged as important. No demographic information about drivers or passengers is collected.

In 2023, 40,225,257 total plates were read in the Portage area, resulting in 1,073 alerts. These alerts assisted in the investigation of: 47 stolen vehicles, 10 stolen plates, 6 warrants, 5 retail frauds, 3 homicides, 1 missing person, 1 kidnapping, 1 sex offense, and 4 thefts.

The Portage Police Department, Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Office, and Western Michigan University Public Safety are all currently users of the Flock ALPR System. Through the implementation of this citywide system, the Portage Department of Public Safety and its law enforcement partners are able to better collaborate and share data in our efforts to make Kalamazoo County a safer place.

## **SMALL UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS (DRONE) PROGRAM**



The Small Unmanned Aircraft System, also known as a "drone," is utilized as a resource by the Portage Department of Public Safety to protect lives, safeguard property, document incident scenes and detect danger that could not otherwise be seen. The operation of the sUAS is authorized for:

- Documentation of Crime and Vehicle Collision Scenes
- Hazardous Material (HAZMAT) Incidents
- Search and Rescue Operations
- Barricaded Subjects/Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team Call-outs
- Disaster Responses
- Searches for Fleeing Suspects
- Training

Drones are heavily regulated under Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14CFR) Part 107. The city holds a special Certificate of Authorization, which provides special flying rights that would otherwise be restricted under Part 107.

Pilots in Command (PIC) are required to obtain and maintain the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Remote Pilot Certification every two years, attend regular team training meetings and conduct regular training flights. In 2023, the department had six authorized drone pilots who were fully certified and licensed to operate any of the four Public Safety drones.

## CANINE UNIT

PDPS established a canine program in 2016, with the introduction of K9 Officer Zorro. Zorro faithfully served the department until he passed away of a sudden illness on November 7, 2019. K9 Riggs replaced Zorro in 2020, and K9 Rhett was added in 2022.

In 2023 PDPS was awarded a grant to facilitate the purchase of a third K9. With that, the process of selecting the next K9 handler was begun and the department will select its third K9 to begin training in the spring of 2024. In June 2023, K9 Handler Jordan Wentworth was promoted to the rank of sergeant, and appointed to K9 Unit Supervisor in December 2023.

### K9 RIGGS & OFFICER WENTWORTH

In February 2020, Officer Jordan Wentworth traveled to Shallow Creek Kennels in Pennsylvania, where he selected and began his training with his new K9 partner "Riggs."

Riggs is a 6-year-old male German Shepherd/Belgian Malinois mix. Riggs came to us from Hungary and responds to German commands. He is a dual purpose K9 trained in narcotics, tracking, article searches, area searches, and criminal apprehension. Officer Wentworth is certified through the National Association of Professional Canine Handlers (NAPCH).

In 2023, K9 Riggs conducted 32 deployments associated with demonstrations, building searches, article searches, tracking, and narcotic searches. K9 Riggs also completed approximately 237 hours of various training segments throughout the year.



### K9 RHETT & OFFICER BOGARD

In August 2022, Officer Scott Bogard traveled to Shallow Creek Kennels in Pennsylvania, where he selected and began his training with his new K9 partner "Rhett."

Rhett is a 3-year-old male German Shepherd. Rhett came to us from Hungary and responds to German commands. Rhett is a dual purpose K9 trained in narcotics, tracking, article searches, area searches, and criminal apprehension. In 2022, Officer Bogard became certified through the National Association of Professional Canine Handlers (NAPCH).

In 2023, K9 Rhett conducted 42 deployments for demonstrations building searches, article searches, tracking and narcotic searches. K9 Rhett also completed approximately 227 hours of training.



## KALAMAZOO METRO SWAT

Kalamazoo Metro Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) is a multi-jurisdictional team currently made up of SWAT officers from the Portage Department of Public Safety, Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety, Western Michigan University Police, Kalamazoo Township Police and the Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Department. The Kalamazoo Metro SWAT team responds to high-risk and critical incidents within Kalamazoo County and at the mutual aid request of jurisdictions within the Southwest Michigan 5th District.

The Kalamazoo Metro SWAT team annual training schedule includes training in firearms, entry, hostage rescue tactics, barricaded gunman tactics, bus and vehicle assaults, active shooter response, and less lethal and chemical munitions. Officers assigned to the Kalamazoo Metro SWAT team train on a monthly basis. The team also shares its expertise with PDPS by providing firearms training, including handgun and patrol rifle use and qualification, less lethal training and qualification, and scenario-based training.

The Portage Department of Public Safety currently has four members on the metro SWAT team. They carry the roles of sniper, operator, and operator team leader.

In 2023, Portage Department of Public Safety SWAT officers, acting as part of the Kalamazoo Metro SWAT team, were utilized at 42 incidents. These incidents included high-risk arrest warrants, barricaded subjects and high-risk search warrants, among other types of operations.



# STRATEGIC SERVICES BUREAU



The Strategic Services Bureau is commanded by Lieutenant Ron Clark who reports to the Assistant Chief. This position is responsible for overseeing the daily coordination of the investigative arm of the Police Division, as well as community engagement.

The Strategic Services Bureau also cooperates with other city, state, and federal agencies in investigating incidents, utilizing task forces or other cooperative means.

## INVESTIGATIONS

Investigations is comprised of five plainclothes detectives and one narcotics officer who is assigned to a multi-jurisdictional task force (PUNT/SWET). Detectives are tasked with conducting a broad range of investigative assignments and maintain an active caseload of 20 to 25 investigations per detective.

In 2023, 355 cases were assigned to detective for investigation. Assignments and duties include activities such as:

- Major Case Investigations (Part 1 crimes) including: Homicide, Robbery, Home Invasion, Identity Theft, Financial Crimes, Auto Theft, Felonious and Aggravated Assault, Sexual Assault, Child Abuse, Elder Abuse, Vice Crimes, Narcotics, and Computer Crimes
- Fatal Accident Investigations
- Silent Observer Tips
- Surveillance and Special Operations
- Solicitor Permit Investigations
- Crime Analysis (ie: conducting data analysis to establish crime patterns and trends so resources can be focused at target areas)
- Coordination with Area Agencies on Joint Operations and Task Force Investigations
- Background Investigations for City of Portage Employment Candidates
- Extradition Notifications
- Processing and Distributing Intelligence Reports

## DRUG LAW ENFORCEMENT (PUNT/SWET)

The Portage Uniformed Narcotics Team (PUNT) was formed to specifically investigate complaints involving controlled substances. Officers assigned to the team focus on conducting more intensive drug investigations by utilizing intelligence gathering, surveillance, and uniformed and plainclothes operations. The unit is comprised of patrol officers, detectives, and a sergeant. The unit is commanded by the Strategic Services Lieutenant.

In November 2021, Portage moved the designated officer assigned to the Kalamazoo Valley Enforcement Team (KVET) to the Southwest Enforcement Team (SWET). SWET works throughout Southwest Michigan in drug crime cases, serving Barry, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph, and Van Buren Counties. This change expanded the Portage officer's capabilities to a state-wide, multi-jurisdictional team. In addition to the added available resources, the assigned officer will enhance capabilities in narcotics investigations in the Portage jurisdiction.

## SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS

The Portage Department of Public Safety has provided a police officer to the Portage Public School system since 1988. The School Resource Officer (SRO) program currently provides two sworn officers which are assigned respectively to the two main high schools, with additional area of responsibility at the community high school, three middle schools, and eight elementary schools.

A School Resource Officer is a three-year assignment, selected from the patrol ranks and reports to the Strategic Services Lieutenant. The officers not only provide a visible presence, but are also members of school administration. They are present at school functions, teach prevention classes, and mentor students.

PDPS is a member of the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) and officers have also become certified as national practitioners. The National SRO Practitioner program was established as a way for NASRO, police agencies, and school districts to recognize officers who have excelled in the area of school-based policing. The program seeks to distinguish those officers who are committed to serving our nation's youth, along with the communities and schools they serve.

In October 2023, PDPS began utilizing a new software program specifically designed for School Resource Officers called "SRO APP," which can be used from a smart device (cellphone), laptop, or desktop computer. It replaced the archaic program "School Cop." With their areas of responsibility and frequent travel from building to building, the SRO APP can be easily accessed using their assigned school cell phone to log their activities throughout the day. Entries can also be documented after the fact on a desktop computer once they return to their primary school's SRO office. Once information is documented in the SRO APP, each SRO can then set their desired filters to complete a monthly report of their activities individually or as a group.



**SRO Kite**



**SRO Burleson**

**SRO Henry Kite** covers the Central District, assigned to Portage Central High School. He also covers Central Middle School, West Middle School, Central Elementary, Lake Center Elementary, Moorsbridge Elementary, and Woodland Elementary. SRO Kite began his 3-year assignment at the start of the 2020/21 school year. His assignment was extended one year due to shutdowns revolving around Covid. His assignment will end at the conclusion of the 2023/24 school year.

**SRO Kevin Burleson** covers the Northern District, assigned to Portage Northern High School. He also covers the Portage Community High School, North Middle School, Amberly Elementary, Haverhill Elementary, 12th Street Elementary, and Angling Road Elementary. SRO Burleson began his 3-year assignment at the start of the 2022/23 school year, his assignment will end at the conclusion of the 2024/25 school year.

## COMMUNITY POLICING



The Community Policing Unit is responsible for promoting, assisting, organizing and providing crime prevention programs to groups in residential and business areas, and serves as the liaison between the groups and the department. Group presentations are organized for civic, service, business, education, religious (regardless of denomination), and other organizations in areas such as residential security, office security, personal safety, loss prevention, senior citizen programs, community relations, social media outreach, and youth programs to name a few.

The Community Policing Officer (CPO) is a three-year assignment selected from the patrol ranks and reports to the Patrol Lieutenant. The CPO has many diverse responsibilities and functions, including Neighborhood Watch coordination, working with apartment complex managers, developing and participating in programs for seniors, crime analysis, conducting safety presentations, and coordinating larceny and retail fraud intervention programs. The CPO is also a board member on several community groups including the Safe Kids Coalition and Project Lifesaver, and assists with coordination of city website content, social media content, and writing safety articles for media publication.

During calendar year 2023, the CPO position was performed by Police Officer Sydnie Cooper who began her assignment in November 2022. Officer Cooper resigned on July 14, 2023 and the CPO position remains vacant with light duty personnel assisting when available.



## COPS GRANT

On November 2, 2023, PDPS received notification from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office), that a COPS Hiring Program (CHP) Grant of \$1 million was awarded to the Police Division. This program provides funding directly to law enforcement agencies to hire or rehire career law enforcement officers for the advancement of public safety through an increase in community policing capacity and crime prevention efforts. This grant will enable PDPS to hire eight new police officers.

*“These additional positions allow us to deliver superior public safety services and work in partnership with the Portage community to safeguard the lives, rights, and property of the people we serve,”*

- Nicholas Arnold, PDPS Director – Police/Fire Chief

The addition of eight new positions will afford the opportunity for:

- Redeployment of personnel to target the busiest service hours as identified in a 2022 staffing study.
- Implement organization command staff changes to enable line-level patrol supervisors to be redeployed from office to the road.
- Reallocate personnel from the lab team to manage and support the day-to-day requirements of evidence processing.
- Devote patrol personnel to the Data Analysis Response Team (DART)
- Implement a Community Engagement and Response Team (CERT)



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
OFFICE OF COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING SERVICES  
145 N Street, NE, Washington, D.C. 20530

**COPS**

ADVANCING PUBLIC SAFETY THROUGH COMMUNITY POLICING

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION TEAM (CERT)

With the COPS grant, the Community Engagement and Resolution Team will be launched in April 2024. The Community Policing Officer Program (CPO) and the Data Driven Response Team (DART) will be absorbed into the newly created Community Engagement and Resolution Team.

CERT members will be responsible for facilitating partnerships and initiatives to advance the mission of the Police Division, and to offer its services to Portage residents, businesses, and guests. CERT will emphasize community involvement in crime prevention efforts through three core components: community partnerships, organizational transformation, and problem solving.

This specialty team will consist of one sergeant and four officers. The CERT special assignment will be for a term of three years, with the option for one 12-month extension. CERT will be supervised by the Lieutenant of Strategic Services—Detective Bureau.

# STAFF SERVICES DIVISION



*The Staff Services Division is commanded by an Assistant Chief who reports to the Deputy Director. This position is responsible for Professional Standards, Accreditation, Internal Affairs Investigations, and provides oversight of the Training Bureau, Staff Services Bureau, and the Records Bureau.*

## ASSISTANT CHIEF—STAFF SERVICES DIVISION



Assistant Chief Wolfe hired into Portage in 1996 after having graduated from Grand Valley State University and the GVSU Police Academy. In his 27 years at the department, Assistant Chief Wolfe has served as an investigator for the Kalamazoo Valley Enforcement Team, a field training officer, detective, sergeant, patrol lieutenant, professional standards lieutenant, and acting deputy chief.

Assistant Chief Wolfe has been an adjunct faculty member at the KVCC Police Academy for 20 years. He currently serves as an assessor for the Michigan Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission and an at-large member of the Michigan Association of Chief's of Police Legislative Committee.

Assistant Chief Wolfe is a 2018 graduate of the Eastern Michigan University's School of Staff and Command, and more recently he is the graduate of the Federal Bureau of Investigations - National Academy - Class #285.

## PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Professional Standards is commanded by the Assistant Chief who oversees all internal affairs investigations, policy reviews, accreditation, training, inspections, volunteers, and onboarding of new officers.

## ACCREDITATION

In the agency's pursuit of excellence, the Portage Police Division continues to maintain accreditation status at both the state and national levels. The accrediting bodies, the Michigan Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission (MLEAC) and the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA), provide guidance and set rigorous standards that departments must adhere to in order to maintain its accreditation. PDPS is one of only four departments in the State of Michigan to maintain dual accreditation status.

The Portage Police Division has maintained national accreditation since July 2003 (CALEA) and state accreditation since February 2018 (MLEAC). In March 2022, PDPS received its seventh award of accreditation from CALEA, and in February 2024, received its third award of accreditation from MLEAC.



## INTERNAL AFFAIRS

The Portage Department of Public Safety accepts and investigates all complaints, internal or external, made against any agency employee or policy. Minor complaints are often referred back to the supervisor of the employee involved. The supervisor investigates the complaint, documents findings, and then refers the investigation back to the Office of the Director for review. More serious complaints are assigned to the Professional Standards Unit for investigation. All instances in which an officer uses force are forwarded to Professional Standards where they are reviewed for policy compliance.

Portage Police Policy and Procedural Order 300-4 governs the internal affairs function and the processing of complaints made against employees. This policy requires that all complaints be accepted and investigated, including those that are made anonymously. The annual statistical summary is as follows:

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Internal Complaints	2	3	0	9	7
External Complaints	19	14	14	9	2
Supervisory Reviews	7	0	0	0	0
Internal Affairs (IA) Investigations	3	17	14	9	9
IA's Sustained	3	4	11	10	2
IA's Exonerated/Unfounded	17	13	3	8	5
IA's Policy Failure	0	0	0	0	2
	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
<i>Rude/Unprofessional</i>	6	0	5	2	1
<i>Insubordination</i>	1	0	0	2	0
<i>Dispatch/Policy Violation</i>	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Policy Violation</i>	4	2	3	9	6
<i>Improper Investigation</i>	3	1	0	2	0
<i>Use of Force</i>	2	2	2	4	2
<i>Other</i>	5	5	3	1	0

## USE OF FORCE ANALYSIS

In 2023, the department logged 2,436 arrests, representing an approximate 12% increase from 2022. The data shows that use of force was used on approximately 6% of all arrests made, which is consistent with that of 2022. Furthermore, males made up 76% of the use of force incidents, while females accounted for 24%. Although there were three complaints of excessive force in 2023, none of them were sustained after being investigated.

The 2023 analysis shows a 38% increase in use of force, as compared to 2022. The increase can be partly attributed to the fact that the pointing of a firearm or taser during a high-risk stop was added to the use of force reporting requirements. However, physical controls increased by 38% and the pointing of a Taser to gain compliance increased by 340% as compared to 2022, this may largely be due to the increased reporting of the pointing of a Taser to gain compliance as compared to previous years.

During 2023, 15 suspects and 10 officers reported injuries as a result of use of force incidents. Suspect injuries were minor and were related to complaints of pain. Officer injuries were minor and did not require medical attention.

Officers continue to receive integrated use of force, decision making scenario training, and annual use of force policy training. During 2022, Portage Department of Public Safety purchased APEX Officer which is a virtual reality scenario training simulator. Several officers were trained as instructors for the new system and officers have received virtual reality training on de-escalation techniques and use of force decision making.

In conclusion, internal investigations and citizen complaints were also reviewed for race, age or gender trends or patterns of the subjects involved. None were identified. The analysis did not identify any trends or patterns resulting in injury to any person including employees, and any impact of findings on policies, practices, equipment and training.

Additional training should be provided to address de-escalation techniques to reduce the number of total use of force incidents. During 2024, the department is also adding the Police Executive Research Forum's (PERF) "Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactics" (ICAT) program that will aid in the de-escalation and use of force response as it relates to mentally disturbed and unarmed subjects.

Initial Contact/ Type of Incident	2023	Location	2023
Traffic Stop	16	Residence	26
Warrant Arrest	11	Business/Store	27
Domestic Violence	16	Outdoors/Roadway	30
Retail Fraud	7	Gender	
Armed Robbery	7	Male	87
Disturbance	3	Female	27
Suspicious Person/Activity	6	Age	
Burglary	3	Under 13	2
Larceny	3	13-17	4
Resisting/Obstructing	1	18-24	24
Stolen Vehicle	9	25-35	44
Assault	5	Over 35	38
PPO/Conditional Bond Violation	1	Mental Capacity	
Other (including suicidal, mental health)	21	Under influence alcohol/drugs	36
		Suspected mental illness	14
		Unknown/none identified	53
		Multiple Factors	4

## **VOLUNTEERS**

All volunteers and volunteer activities, such as minor clerical and recordkeeping functions of the Police Division, are managed by the Assistant Chief of Strategic and Staff Services. Due to COVID-19 health and safety precautions, volunteer services have been suspended since 2019, with the exception of the Public Safety Chaplain Program.

## **EDUCATION FOR EMPLOYMENT AND INTERNSHIPS**

The Portage Department of Public Safety continues its partnership with the Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency (KRESA) and universities across the state in the Education for Employment and Internship programs as time and resources permit. This program is designed to educate college, university and high school students about law enforcement and the criminal justice system, and encourage them to develop the skills and desire necessary to serve in a public safety capacity. Candidates for an intern/EFE student position must be enrolled in an accredited college, university or high school, and be in their junior or senior year of high school.

The department did not host any students in calendar year 2023.

## **PUBLIC SAFETY CHAPLAIN PROGRAM**

Portage Public Safety Chaplains promote a positive relationship between officers, firefighters, City Hall, public officials and the community. They serve as spiritual counselors, and are also trained in Critical Incident Stress Management and Psychological and Spiritual First Aid. The primary goal of the Public Safety Chaplain Program is to attend to the spiritual, emotional and practical needs of the first responders and their families.

Portage Public Safety is served by two volunteer chaplains. Members of the department can call upon the chaplains to assist when personnel are required to make death notifications, investigate domestic family problems, help in disaster situations, or in other high stress matters. While serving the agency in our community, their service also extends to the community members affected by a critical incident. Chaplains play an integral role for the City of Portage through five main services: Police Ride Along's, Fire Ride Along's, Assist City Hall with families in need of resources, assist victims in their hour of need, and coordination of donations.

Every year, Public Safety Chaplains donate hundreds of hours of their time working with staff, in addition to offering spiritual assistance to crime and accident victims in our community.



**Ken Hovenkamp**



**Clayton Smith**

# TRAINING BUREAU



The Training Bureau is led by Sergeant Michael Collier who reports to the Assistant Chief. This position is responsible for the coordination and scheduling of all training opportunities for the Police Division, as well as new employee onboarding and the Field Training Program.

Training administration must continually develop and utilize local resources to reduce costs by eliminating travel and lodging expenses whenever possible. To further this goal, the Training administration liaisons with other departments' to develop mutual and combined local training opportunities.

## TRAINING PLAN

Annual in-service training is provided in the areas of Firearms, Defensive Tactics, and Use of Force. In addition, varying topics are chosen and distributed to staff electronically each month, with a deadline to complete. Additional training topics typically include: *Legal Updates, Sexual Harassment, Domestic Violence, De-escalation, Ethics, All Hazard Plan, Hazardous Materials, Biased Based Policing, Criminal Intelligence, Crimes Against Children, Criminal Investigations, and Michigan Mental Health Code, Accreditation, and Supervisor Development.*

Training administration continues to identify individual training needs and provide opportunities for employee specialization, promotion, and job effectiveness. The department is a member of the West Michigan Criminal Justice Training Consortium. The consortium is funded by area agencies pooling annual Public Act 302 training dollar distributions, thus allowing agencies to take advantage of a wide variety of training opportunities and a valuable return on the dollars invested.

In 2023, PDPS began training with Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards (MCOLES) instructors on Mobile Active Violence as a result of Public Act 552 of 2018. PA 552 requires that all officers in the State of Michigan receive mobile active violence training. The training was conducted in conjunction with community partners to not only train the officers of PDPS, but to develop relationships between the department, officers, and the citizenry that we serve.

In 2023, PDPS became an official referral representative for APEX Officer and is featured on the company's website. This virtual reality-based scenario training system allows officers to engage in decision making scenarios to develop their communication, de-escalation, and tactics in a safe, controlled environment.



## FIELD TRAINING PROGRAM

The goal of field training and evaluation is to provide probationary officers with the skills and abilities required to perform the duties of a police officer on the street. The five-step Field Training Program takes approximately 18 weeks to complete to ensure newly hired officers are prepared to work in the field. In 2023, six newly hired officers completed the rigorous Field Training Program.

The Police Division currently has 10 Field Training Officers (FTO). An FTO is an experienced or senior member of the organization who is responsible for the training and evaluation of junior or probationary level members of our department. Each FTO has a solid working knowledge of agency policies, procedures, rules, regulations, and basic supervisory skills.

# STAFF SERVICES BUREAU



The Staff Services Bureau is led by Lieutenant Steve Clark who reports to the Assistant Chief. The position is responsible for fleet maintenance, physical plant, equipment, quartermaster, contract compliance, planning and research, grant management, and the property and evidence area.

## PROPERTY AND EVIDENCE

All evidence and property found by, turned in to, or collected by police personnel is secured in the Property and Evidence Lockup. Certified Evidence Specialist Diane Malz is responsible for ensuring and maintaining the safe, secure storage of all evidence and property.

Barcode coding began in 2007 and aids in managing and auditing property in the property room. All property and evidence items submitted are also entered into a computer database. Case research is then done so final disposition of items can be determined. The Evidence Tech works with several other agencies, such as the state and area agency crime labs, where evidence items are sometimes transferred for further testing or analysis.

All property is maintained and released according to International Association for Property and Evidence (IAPE) and accreditation standards. A complete evidence and property audit is conducted at least once a year. The property room is under 24/7 surveillance and has additional security for entry. In 2021, the annual inspection of the Portage Department of Public Safety Property and Evidence had zero discrepancies noted.

In 2023, Evidence Specialist Diane Malz logged 2,368 items into property and 2,149 items in evidence were properly disposed of. Property dispositions were achieved by returning items to their owners, sending items to auction, or destroying items of no value.

## INFORMATION CENTER

The Information Center (IC) is responsible for handling all citizen contact within the Public Safety headquarters lobby and fielding all non-emergency incoming phone calls. IC is staffed by two Police Service Technicians (PST) and a Records Clerk.

PST's are responsible for scheduling fleet maintenance, providing non-criminal fingerprinting, registering handguns, issuing permits to purchase handguns, background checks on ride-along applicants and contractors, and management of the key FOB control system. They also serve as back-up for sex offender registrations in the absence of the Teleserve Officer, and cover crossing guard posts when needed.

In 2023, PST's registered 1,275 handguns, issued 113 permits to purchase handguns, and processed 379 electronic vehicle repair orders.



PST Jenny Evans



Evidence Specialist/  
PST Diane Malz

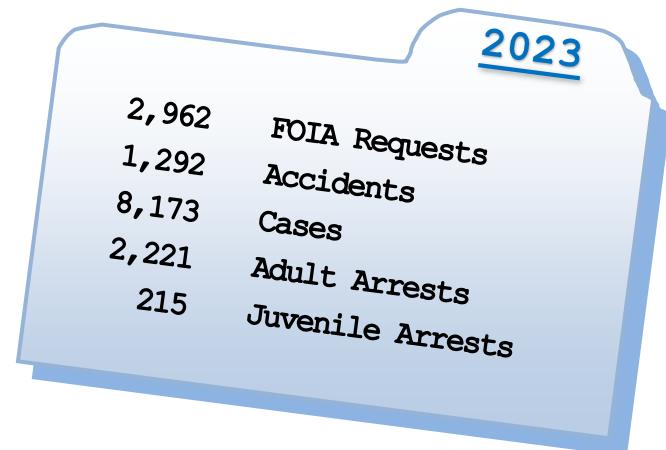
# RECORDS BUREAU



The Records Bureau is led by Public Safety Services Manager Teresa Gipson who reports to the Assistant Chief. This position provides direct supervision to seven full-time and one part-time records clerks.

The Records Bureau is responsible for data entry and storage of all Police Division records, processing Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, and state reporting of crimes, arrests, and accidents for the City of Portage.

A robust records management system (RMS) aids the department in precise recordkeeping and allows for retrieval of information for release and compiling complex, in-depth statistical data. Records personnel are able to scan ancillary documents into a case file, and as a result, an entire case can be viewed and/or printed from any computer in the Police Division, greatly decreasing the need for photocopying by Records staff.



## DEPARTMENT TECHNOLOGY

An extensive computerized records management system (RMS) is maintained on a Windows platform with numerous interfaced modules, including:

- ID Networks Live Scan
- Computerized Lineups
- LEIN/NCIC Interface with RMS
- Gun Registrations & Permits
- Property Room Bar Coding
- Bicycle Registrations

Additional network applications include Pictometry and Talon (LEIN/NCIC access), as well as interfaces to statewide sex offender files and statewide mug shots.

Mobile computers are installed in all marked patrol vehicles. The technology provides the ability to see the status of all in-service units, inquiry capability into the RMS database, display information for active and pending calls for service, and LEIN/NCIC capability. Coverage extends well beyond the city limits. Wireless card access provides full network capability, providing accessibility similar to that of a desktop user.

## **STAFF PROFILE**

In 2023, the Fire Division was authorized a total of 43 employees (38 full-time and 5 part-time). Of the 43 positions, the division is allocated 41 firefighters (38 full-time and 3 paid on-call). The paid on-call firefighter program was discontinued through attrition.

At the close of 2023, the division had successfully filled 36 of the 38 full-time firefighter positions, with 2 on-call firefighters still remaining. The part-time civilian administrative assistant was moved to full-time status, and the part-time civilian administrative assistant position was then vacant.

## **MISSION**

The Portage Department of Public Safety—Fire Division exists to foster a high quality of life and enhance safety in our community through compassionate care, professionalism, technical competency, and servant's heart.

## **VISION**

*The Portage Fire Division will continually work towards providing the highest quality customer service through training, education, risk reduction and the empowerment of our team members.*

## **VALUES**

- *Accountability*
- *Honor & Respect*
- *Communication & Teamwork*
- *Integrity*
- *Professionalism*
- *Compassion*

# ***FIRE DIVISION HISTORY***



**October 1940** *Portage Fire Department Established*

**October 1940** *First Fire Station Constructed at 7721 South Westnedge Avenue*

**May 1, 1941** *Ernest Hall Appointed First Fire Chief*

**May 1, 1942** *Emergency Response Services Began*

**May 5, 1942** *First Alarm Response*

**1942** *Jacob Mein Appointed Fire Chief*

**December 31, 1963** *City of Portage Chartered*

**1975** *Fire Department Master Plan developed (Rolf Jensen & Associates, Inc.)*

**1975** *Fire Station No. 2 Constructed on Oakland Drive*

**1977** *Minimum Staffing of Seven Established by City Administration*

**1977** *Richard Knopf Appointed Fire Chief*

**1983** *Jay Reardon Appointed Fire Chief*

**1984** *Fire Station No. 1 Moved to Current Location on Shaver Road*

**1988** *Wayne Kitchen Appointed Fire Chief*

**1994** *Fire Station No. 3 Constructed on Sprinkle Road*

**1996** *JW Tackett Appointed Fire Chief*

**1999** *George Sheets Appointed Fire Chief*

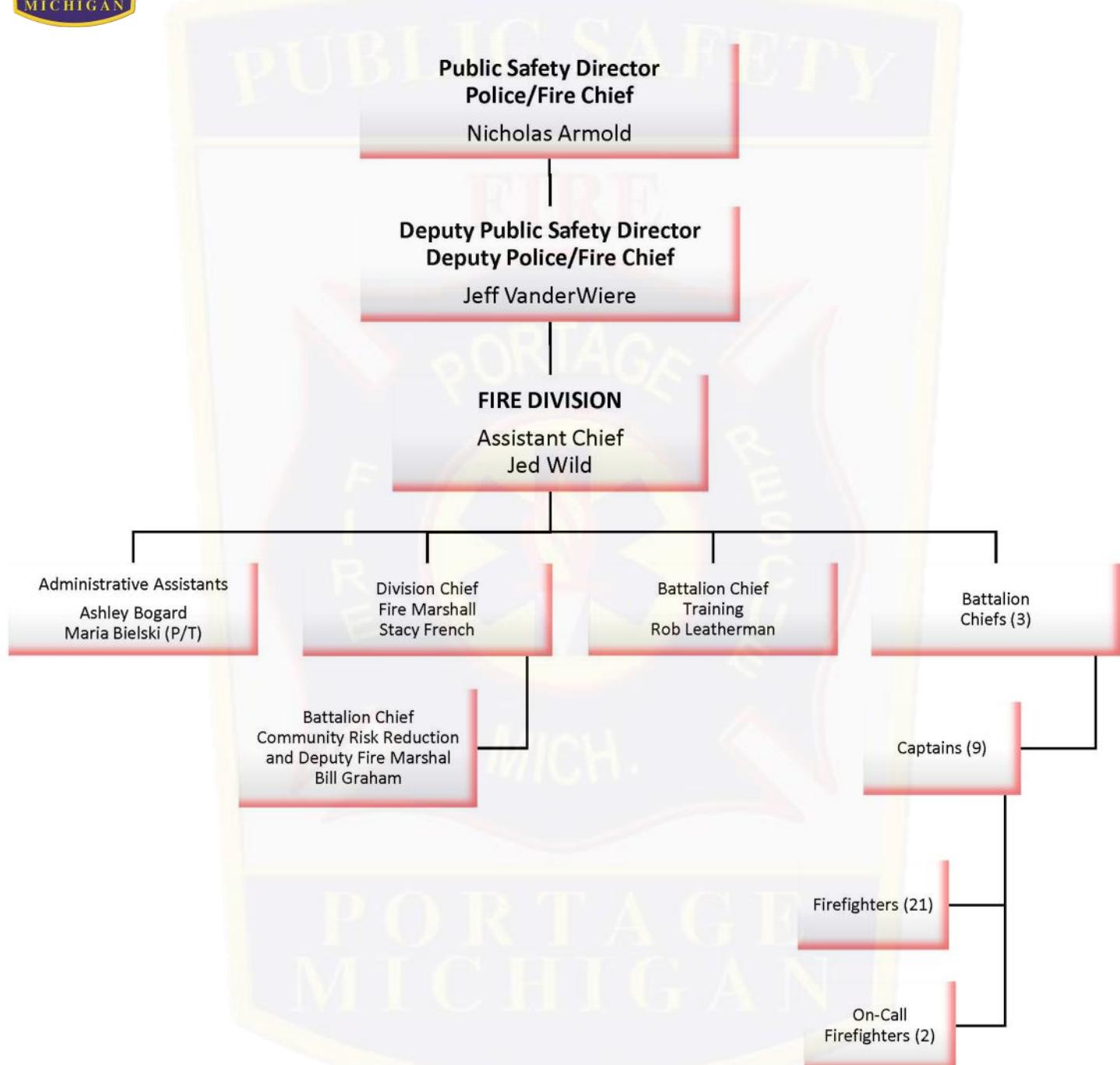
**2001** *Randy Lawton Appointed Fire Chief*

**2011** *Richard White Appointed Director of Public Safety—Police/Fire Chief*

**2017** *Nicholas Arnold Appointed Director of Public Safety—Police/Fire Chief*

**October 20, 2020** *New Fire Station No. 2 Constructed on Oakland Drive*

# ***FIRE DIVISION ORGANIZATION CHART***



# **FIRE DIVISION OPERATIONS**

*The Fire Division is commanded by an Assistant Chief who reports to the Deputy Director and is responsible for the coordination and oversight of daily fire operations, training, and overall supervision. This position is also responsible for managing the annual general budget and capital improvement projects for the Fire Division.*

## **ASSISTANT CHIEF—FIRE DIVISION**



Assistant Chief  
Jed Wild

Jed Wild joined PDPS in 2021. He has held the ranks of captain, accreditation manager and division chief (Community Risk Reduction), and now Assistant Chief. Wild began his public safety career in 2001 as a corrections officer at the Calhoun County Jail. In 2007, he joined Oshtemo Township Fire Department as a paid on-call firefighter and also work for Life EMS Ambulance filling multiple positions. He was hired by Covert Township Fire Department in July 2014, where he served as a captain, training officer, firefighter, and paramedic.

Wild is currently the Team Leader for the Special Response Team (SRT) of medics for the Kalamazoo Metro Swat Team through Life Ambulance Company. Wild has managed the Van Buren County Fire Academy since 2017, and led this program to have highly successful pass rates.

In 2020, Wild was the Kalamazoo County Fire Chiefs Fire Academy Director. He had the opportunity to be a founding member of the development and training team for the Rescue Task Force (RTF) of SW Michigan. He has been the lead instructor for multiple classes and trains new instructors on how to teach RTF. He also developed an RTF bag that is now on every ambulance and many fire trucks in Region 5.

Wild earned an associate degree from Kellogg Community College and is a graduate of the Kalamazoo Valley Community College MFFTC Fire Academy and Emergency Medical Technician Program. He holds a paramedic license through the Life EMS Paramedic Academy and earned a bachelor's degree in public administration from Siena Heights University. He is also a state instructor for both Fire and EMS.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT**

Ashley Bogard joined the Fire Division in November 2022. This position is responsible for providing daily administrative support to the Assistant Fire Chief and Division Chiefs, while also supporting the firefighters with the processing of payroll, training requests, and purchase requests.

Ashley assists citizens and businesses of Portage by answering questions about inspections and services provided by the Fire Division. She is also responsible for coordinating and scheduling public events for the Fire Division and station tours attended by members of the community.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT (P/T)**

The part-time Administrative Assistant position is Maria Bielski. This position is primarily responsible for answering phones, assisting people at the counter, making car seat installation appointments, entering vehicle maintenance records, receiving on invoices, filing, and other general office work as needed. This position is also responsible for backing up the full-time administrative assistant as needed.



**Ashley Bogard**



**Maria Bielski**



## CALLS FOR SERVICE

The City of Portage has approximately 21,000 residential units, over 2,400 commercial properties, and a population of over 49,000. Crews respond on average to over 4,885 calls for service annually and complete over 3,000 company inspections. Rescues, including that of household medical calls, continue to result in the greatest call volume, consisting of approximately 68% of all calls for service.

In addition to responding to calls for service, the Fire Division provides over 100 public education fire prevention events for the citizens of Portage every year. These fire prevention programs reach over 9,000 adults and 12,000 children annually.

In 2023, the Fire Division responded to 5,229 calls for service. The most frequently occurring call types were Rescue/Medical, Good Intent, and False Alarms. Overall, alarm responses were up approximately 1.44% compared to 2022, and have increased approximately 11% over the last five years.

### Fire Division Alarm Summary

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	% Change 2022-2023	% Change 2019-2023
Fires	93	126	128	128	116	-9%	25%
Overpressure rupture/	14	5	11	18	4	-78%	-78%
Rescue & EMS	2808	2751	2996	3498	3472	-1%	-1%
Hazardous Condition (no fire)	176	159	208	248	316	27%	27%
Service Call	267	190	223	172	166	-3%	-3%
Good Intent Call	908	505	603	185	646	249%	249%
False Alarm & False Call	426	378	428	432	500	16%	16%
All Other	8	13	12	9	9	0%	0%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>4,700</b>	<b>4,127</b>	<b>4,609</b>	<b>5,155</b>	<b>5,229</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>11%</b>

# **PORTAGE FIRE STATIONS**



**STATION NO. 12-1**

7810 Shaver Road

2023 District Response: 2,138



**STATION NO. 12-2**

6101 Oakland Drive

2023 District Response: 2,051



**STATION NO. 12-3**

8503 South Sprinkle Road

2023 District Response: 879

## **NEW PORTAGE FIRE STATION NO. 2**



On October 20, 2020, the all-new Fire Station No. 2 went into service with a design that takes into account the health and wellness of the firefighters who will use it and offers some unique training opportunities.

The new facility located at 6101 Oakland Drive replaces the oldest of three fire stations in the city. Fire Station No. 2 is now the largest of the three stations at 18,364 square feet. The old station had a mere 8,000 square feet of space. Portage Fire responds to nearly 6,000 calls a year with Stations No. 1 and No. 2 responding to most of those calls. Fire Station No. 2 is also the closest to I-94 and often deploys the first response team.

The \$6.1 million-dollar project was funded through the city's Capital Improvement Program funds. A 2015 evaluation found that it would be more cost-effective to build a new building rather than renovating the old station, which was built in 1974. The old station, which was adjacent to the new station, was torn down in October 2020 and became the driveway for fire response vehicles.

The building is divided into two halves — an administration side with mostly offices, and an operations side that includes living quarters for firefighters during their shifts.



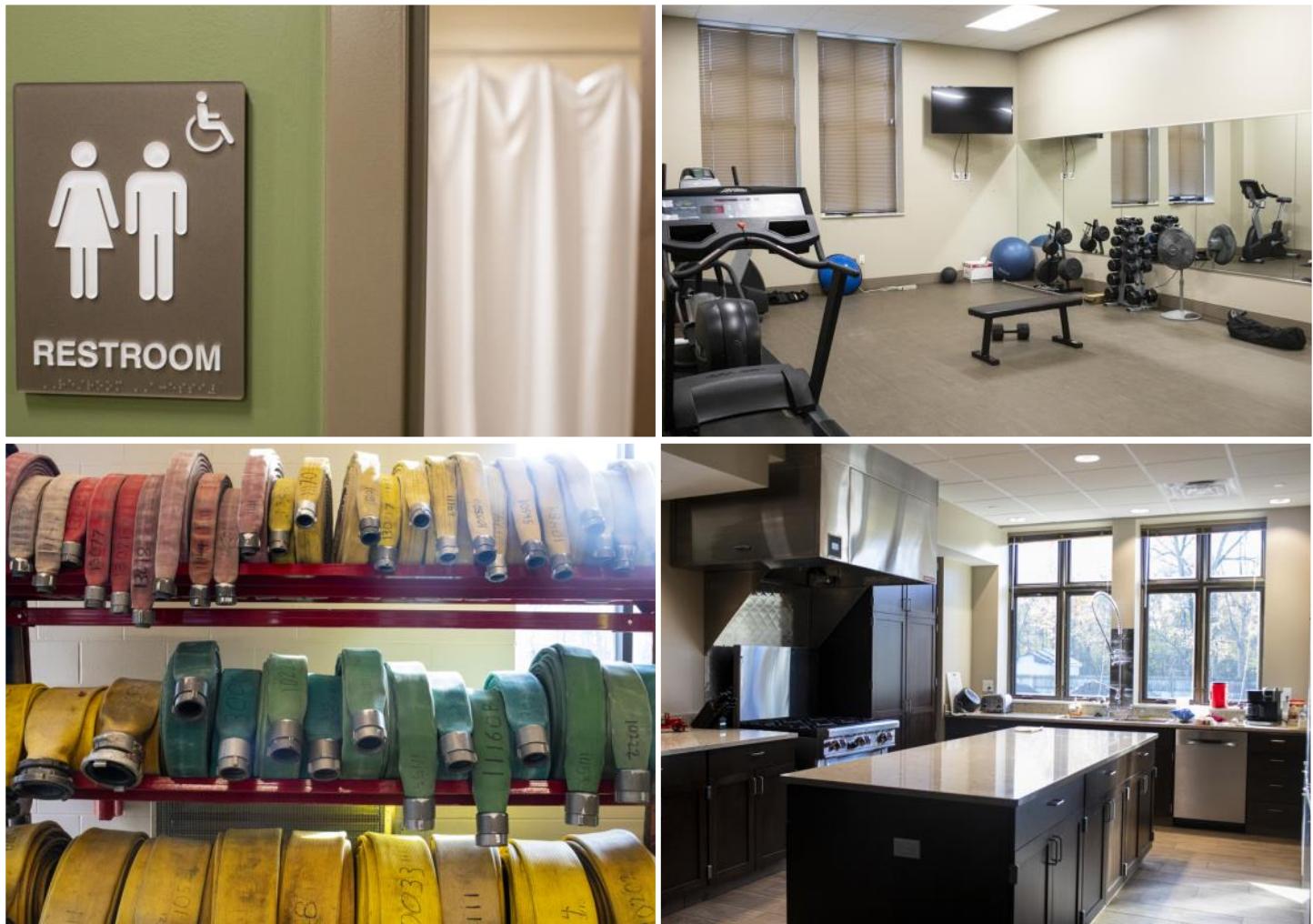
The new layout includes gender-neutral locker room and shower facilities, as well as individual sleeping quarters to accommodate up to eight firefighters. “Clean rooms” help prevent cross-contamination and were a top priority of the department as it allows the firefighters to remove used equipment for cleaning as soon as they get off the truck. Clean rooms are designed to prevent cross-contamination and the spread of carcinogens.

The station is equipped with a new alerting system, providing rapid information that will come across multiple displays in the station, providing incident location and type. The system will also progressively ramp up the lighting and volume within the bunk rooms to not startle the firefighters when they are being woken.

Another unique feature of the new station is the installation of training equipment that can be used at any time. Off of the main apparatus bay where fire trucks and other large equipment are parked, is a training tower equipped with a confined space area that consists of three manholes of different sizes. The vertical shafts drop some 13 feet below the station floor, allowing firefighters to simulate real-world rescue scenarios. The apparatus bay area is also equipped with hoses to run exhaust outdoors.

Another training component is the station’s fire hose tower, used for drying out long hoses. It also has a stairwell with a standpipe system, and multiple anchor point systems. The tower will be used for multiple purposes — from firefighter cardio to hose running training, as well as both indoor and outdoor rappelling. These training areas allow Portage firefighters to train 365 days a year without worrying about the weather.

The facilities extra space will allow the new station to also house rescue equipment for county and regional teams if needed.



# **EMERGENCY SERVICES**

## **FIRE SUPPRESSION**

The city is serviced by three fully operational fire stations, which are staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Approximately 90% of the city is equipped with fire hydrants to provide an adequate water supply. For those few areas of the city unprotected by fire hydrants, automatic tender aid from neighboring departments is in place to supply water to a fire scene. Additionally, mutual aid agreements are in place with other Kalamazoo County fire departments to provide additional support as needed or requested depending upon the type and location of an incident.

## **EMERGENCY MEDICAL**

The Fire Division is a medical first response agency. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) calls are prioritized by dispatchers trained in local protocols. Firefighters respond to all serious medical calls and provide initial care, generally in advance of an advanced life support ambulance. The city contract with Pride Care Ambulance was terminated in March 2023, and ALS ambulance services are currently provided by Life EMS.

## **HAZARDOUS MATERIALS RESPONSE**

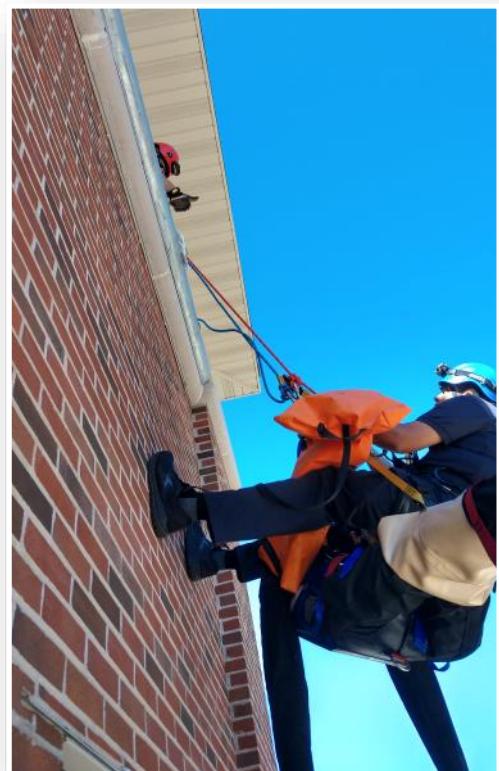
The Fire Division is part of the Kalamazoo County Hazardous Materials Response Team. Currently, two members of the Portage Fire Division are certified Hazmat Technicians and members of the Kalamazoo County Hazmat Team. This team assists local fire departments located in Kalamazoo County with accidental or intentional hazardous materials incidents. The team uses specialized equipment and is comprised of specially trained personnel qualified to evaluate the situation and take the appropriate remedial action. Cleanup then becomes a job for the party responsible for the incident, using a qualified private cleanup company. The HazMat response vehicle and trailer, HAZMAT 1, are kept at Fire Station No. 2 located on Oakland Drive. This location was chosen due to its quick access to I-94, allowing it to respond at a moments notice anywhere within Kalamazoo County.

## **TECHNICAL RESCUE**

“Technical Rescue” is a term given to particular emergencies that are unique in nature and require a particular level of specialized training. These incidents usually require highly focused expertise and unique equipment in order to manage and mitigate the situation. TRT members receive specialized training in concentrations such as: Rope and Tower Rescue, Confined Space Rescue, Structural Collapse Rescue, Trench Rescue, Grain Bin Rescue, and Ice/Water Rescue.

The Portage Fire Division continues to represent the City of Portage on the 5th District Technical Rescue Team. This team is comprised of members from the 9 counties of SW Michigan. The 5th District Team meets quarterly for specified training.

The Portage Fire Division is also a founding member of the Kalamazoo Technical Rescue Team that is comprised of Portage Public Safety, Kalamazoo Public Safety, Oshtemo Twp FD and Comstock Twp. FD. This team meets monthly for training and compliments each other with specialties and equipment for the Kalamazoo area.



# **RESOURCES**

## **FIRE APPARATUS**

The fleet currently includes four engines, two trucks, three basic life support rescue units, one command unit, one multi-purpose vehicle, and a cargo trailer carrying technical rescue equipment. Five additional four-wheel drive vehicles are maintained in order to meet the support staff and administrative functions of the Fire Division.

Emergency Vehicle Products provides certified Emergency Vehicle Technicians (EVT) to perform scheduled and unscheduled maintenance of apparatus, and assists with the annual mandatory testing of our ladders and fire pumps. This, in conjunction with the daily apparatus checks by fire personnel, ensures emergency vehicles are always in a state of readiness for emergency and support responses.

## **PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT**

Members of the Fire Division are protected by state-of-the-art Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). In addition to the protection PPE provides at fires, it also protects firefighters from chemicals, weather, blood-borne pathogens, and hazards at accidents and during technical rescues. PPE is maintained by following guidelines established by the National Fire Protective Agency and receives an annual “advanced” professional inspection and cleaning from a qualified outside agency.

## **FIRE HOSE**

21,200 feet of fire hose was tested in 2023, with a 5.42% failure rate. This hose testing was performed by a third party, National Host Testing Services, and performed over two days at Fire Station 2. This is normally a two-to-three-week project for our crews; however, by having a third party do the testing it kept our crews in service, reduced down time for apparatus, provided professional documentation, and reduced the risk of injury to our staff.



# FIRE TRAINING



Fire Division Training is led by a Training Officer who reports to the Assistant Fire Chief. This position is responsible for the coordination of all fire training, safety programs, field training, and succession planning.

Fire Division Training was led by Division Chief Mike Phelps from 2021, until his ultimate retirement in August 2023, after serving nearly 30 years in public safety. Following Phelps retirement, training was coordinated by Assistant Chief Jed Wild, with the assistance of several internal instructors.

*\*On January 5, 2024, Firefighter Rob Leatherman was promoted to the rank of Administrative Battalion Chief—Training Officer.*

## TRAINING PLAN

The Fire Division's comprehensive training plan covers the areas of Fire, EMS, Officer Development and Driver/Operator training. The plan also allows for our members to meet the continuing education requirements put into effect in 2021 by the Bureau of Firefighter Training, requiring firefighters to have 36 continuing education credits in three years, and officers and instructors to have 12 credits in three years.

The annual training program covers fire suppression, emergency medical services, technical rescue, hazardous materials, and occupational safety and health. Training is provided on a weekly basis to all three shifts on the various discipline topics.

In 2023, Fire Division members attended a total of 68 outside trainings totaling 2,201 hours. This is in addition to 3,803 hours of in-house training.

## SUCCESSION PLANNING

A Succession Plan was developed to identify the courses deemed important for firefighters who seek promotion to the ranks of captain and battalion chief. As a part of this plan, there is now a road map for completing courses prior to the promotional process.



# **FIRE PREVENTION**



Fire Prevention is commanded by Division Chief / Fire Marshal Stacy French who reports to the Assistant Fire Chief. His primary responsibilities include fire code enforcement, inspections, fire protection plan review, and fire investigations. The Fire Marshal is also the City of Portage Risk Management Administrator.

Division Chief French began his career with Portage in 1998. He holds a Masters from Siena Heights University, a Ph.D. in Evaluation from Western Michigan University, and certified as a Professional Emergency Manager from the State of Michigan Emergency Management and Homeland Security. He is a graduate of the National Fire Academy-Executive Officer Program and credentialed through the Center for Public Safety Excellence as a Chief Fire Officer.

*\*On February 2, 2024, Division Chief French retired, having served the department for over 25 years.*

## **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

In 2023, the Fire Marshal was also tasked with overseeing the City of Portage Emergency Management. This position ensures that all City leaders have the proper training and equipment to support City operations in the event of a large-scale disaster or emergency. Division Chief French successfully conducted a preparedness exercise with all department heads in a simulated ice storm that also brought in Michigan State Police, Kalamazoo County Office of Emergency Management, Kalamazoo City Office of Emergency Management, Bronson Hospital, Region 5 Disaster Preparedness, Kalamazoo County Health Department, and other community partners that would assist in a real-world emergency.

## **INSEPCIONS AND PLAN REVIEWS**

### 2023 Inspections:

- 84 Camp Fire Renewals or Permit
- 2 Fire Code Consultation
- 60 Final Occupancy Inspection
- 90 FOIA
- 15 Fire Marshal Violation Follow-up
- 30 Knox Box Inspection
- 79 Fire Protection Inspection
- 18 Spot Inspection
- 4 Tent/Membrane Structure Inspection

### 2023 Plan Reviews:

- 72 Site Plans
- 80 Building Plans
- 17 Solar Plans
- 17 Marijuana Provisioning Centers/Grow Centers
- 91 Fire Protection Plans
- 5 Liquor Licenses
- 7 Special Events

### Engine Company Inspections:

Fire inspections are not the most glamorous task that fire departments must undertake, but they are crucial to community safety. Inspections allow the department to come to the businesses on a good day, not on their worst day. Our job is to protect lives and property, and some of the simplest violations can have the biggest impact. The most obvious benefit of a fire inspection is that it provides an opportunity to educate our community on fire safety. We understand the average citizen doesn't live in our world and they may not understand or think about the importance of clearance from a sprinkler head, egress paths, or not storing items under a stairwell. It is our job to teach them, not to punish them.

In 2023, engine companies completed a total of 3,070 fire safety inspection visits to commercial and multi-family residential occupancies across Portage, a 19% increase from 2022.

# COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION



Community Risk Reduction is led by Division Chief Jed Wild who reports to the Assistant Fire Chief. The position is responsible for identifying and developing best practices to reduce risk in the City of Portage by using data analysis to prioritize and drive the Strategic Plan and other programs.

Division Chief Wild holds a Bachelor's Degree in Public Administration from Siena Heights University, and an Associate's Degree from Kellogg Community College. Division Chief Wild has over 20 years of public safety experience and is a licensed Paramedic and EMS Instructor Coordinator in the State of Michigan.

*\*In April 2023, Division Chief Wild was promoted to Assistant Chief and continued to manage the CRR function throughout the remainder of 2023.*

## CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

The Portage Fire Division is committed to continuous evaluation and improvement of the processes we use to provide quality emergency care. CRR is responsible for reviewing fire and EMS reports for quality, and developing ways in which the Fire Division can improve their delivery of service. He has the overall responsibility for quality assurance and quality control to ensure the goal of continuous quality improvement is achieved.

Wild represents the Fire Division at local, regional and state medical control authorities and disaster preparedness committees, and assists the Training Officer with preparation and delivery of training for the department. Wild also leads a monthly meeting with neighboring agencies and our ALS partner agencies to review calls and develop improvements.

## STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2025

The Fire Division Strategic Plan is built on the foundation of the departments mission, vision and values, as well as feedback from external stakeholders such as members of the community and community interest groups, internal stakeholders such as public safety personnel, and other City of Portage Departments.

Based on this feedback, the Fire Division developed five "RUNG" groups. Symbolic of rungs of a ladder in which we climb to greater heights, these rung groups focus on five core areas: Operations, Training, Support Services, Community Risk Reduction, and Employee Wellness. Each rung has a committee that has developed a desired outcome as well as strategies, goals and tasks to improve services within the Fire Division and to the community.

In all, the Strategic Plan has developed approximately 5 desired outcomes, 15 strategies, 45 goals and over 175 tasks that are to be accomplished over a three year period.



## CAR SEAT SAFETY PROGRAM

The Portage Fire Division partners with Bronson Safe Kids Kalamazoo to provide car seat safety inspections, and car seat installations. These inspections follow national standards on the safe installation and use of child seats in motor vehicles. The Portage Fire Division is the most active agency in Kalamazoo County for the installation and inspection of child safety seats.

The Fire Division has seven certified car seat technicians on staff that can provide this service to parents, guardians and those that transport children.

In 2023, PFD car seat technicians provided:

- 48 car seat installations
- 10 car seat inspections

In addition to the car seats that were installed by Portage Fire Division technicians, Bronson Safe Kids technicians utilized Portage Fire Stations to install 38 car seats in 2023. Using the Fire Station offers a safe climate-controlled environment that Bronson does not have. This is another way this partnership continues to serve the safety of our community.

Portage Fire Stations have been used as the location for several car seat safety check events in which multiple car seat technicians are on hand to check car seats. There were 32 car seats inspected at these events. In all, 118 car seats were inspected or installed at the Portage Fire Division in 2023.



## SMOKE ALARM PROGRAM

The Portage Fire Division has partnered with the State of Michigan Bureau of Fire Services MI-Prevention Division, which through a grant has secured a large number of 10-year sealed lithium-ion battery smoke alarms. Portage residents can call and make an appointment for the Fire Division to come and install these smoke alarms in their homes. In 2023, 18 Portage homes had smoke alarms installed by Fire Division staff. This program continues to gain momentum as word spreads. Portage is the only agency in Kalamazoo County that has partnered with MI-Prevention on this program.

## PUBLIC EDUCATION & EVENTS

In 2023, the Fire Division continued to look for new ways to interact and educate the Portage community. Throughout the year, crews were able to interact with the community in numerous settings, including:

- 18 Station Tours: *49 adults, 143 children*
- 23 School Education: *1,869 students (young 5—2nd grade)*
- Fire Prevention Open House: *343 attendees*
- 59 Outside Public Education / Community Events

## **Monster Mash**

The Monster Mash was held in October at Ramona Park, hosted by Portage Parks & Recreation staff. Fire Division personnel provided stickers and fire safety educational handouts from the back of Engine 1213 ...trunk-or-treat style! Police Division personnel were also on hand to interact with attendees and hand out candy from the back of a patrol cruiser. Every year the event was well attended with over 3,000 participants, half of them being children.

## **Annual Fire Prevention Week Open House**

A Fire Prevention Open House is held annually on the first Saturday in October. In 2023, we welcomed 343 visitors to Fire Station No. 1 with many of our fire trucks on display, as well as specialty vehicles. Firefighters were present to speak to attendees about fire safety, demonstrate equipment, and talk about what it's like to be a firefighter. Fire safety material was also distributed to attendees.

## **Fire Prevention Public Education**

In 2023, the Fire Division was back in Portage Public Schools delivering fire and safety education in a variety of methods. Firefighters read books to classes about fire safety, as well as the popular puppet show presentation. Captain Graham led this ever-popular program with the assistance of other Fire Division personnel.

## **Portage Public Safety Showcase**

In July 2023, PDPS offered a new program in partnership with the Portage Zhang Community Senior Center. This event was a two-day course designed to educate older Portage residents on everything Portage Public Safety does and has to offer the community. Presentations included topics from the Detective Bureau, EMS operations, SWAT, fire operations, fire extinguisher training, drone operations, patrol operations, K-9 and Life EMS ambulance services. Life EMS provided lunch to attendees of the program. The initial program had limited seating and filled up quickly. The department received an overwhelming outpouring of support from those that attended and numerous requests to run this program several times a year.







**Special Olympics  
Soccer Game**



**Monster Mash**



**Fire Safety Training**



**Farmers Market**



**Fire Safety Training  
at Portage Public Schools**



**Stuff a Truck  
Food Drive**

# ANNUAL AWARDS

On May 2, 2023, awards were presented to department employees based on recommendations from their peers for recognizing personal performance, achievement and/or actions which enhance the image of the department, the public safety profession and the community for the year prior.

## EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR

*Firefighter of the Year* - Firefighter Brad Welniak  
*Sworn Officer of the Year* - Sergeant Craig Begeman  
*Non-Sworn of the Year* - Records Clerk II Sandra Gray

## LIFESAVING AWARD

Firefighter Andy Campbell  
Firefighter Aaron Chase  
Battalion Chief Chip Everett  
Firefighter Tyler Farr  
Firefighter Kyle Gabrelse  
Captain William Graham  
Captain Jared Hambright  
Firefighter Nick Haverkamp  
Firefighter Austin Herndon  
Captain Clay Hollister  
Firefighter Heather Jozwik  
Captain Brian Klok  
Firefighter Jacob Mahoney  
Firefighter Harrison Manders  
Officer Brandon McMillan  
Firefighter Matt Miles  
Battalion Chief Rick Nason  
Firefighter Tom O'Reilly  
Battalion Chief Lou Playford  
Firefighter Debora Riley  
Captain Steve Tanner  
Firefighter Andy Toepfer  
Firefighter Josh VanOverbeek  
Captain Jeremy Vermeer  
Firefighter Jake Wnuk  
Firefighter Chris Weidemann

## MERITORIOUS SERVICE

Firefighter Rob Leatherman  
Firefighter Jacob Mahoney

## UNIT CITATION

Officer Levi Allen  
Officer Zach Bennett  
Officer Jessica Cutshaw  
Officer Lacey Fisher  
Officer Brent Hunstad  
Sergeant Nick Mattson  
Officer Eric Vesey  
Officer Jordan Wentworth  
Officer John Zesiger

## COMMENDATION

Officer Scott Bogard  
Officer Ben Gerth  
Detective Dereck Hess  
Officer Ben Kimble  
Detective James Lord  
Detective Brannon Pierman  
Officer Alex Riesgraf  
Officer Michael Schumacher  
Detective Nate Slavin  
Detective Brett Stapert

## OUTSTANDING INNOVATION

Sergeant Jermaine Bryant  
Lieutenant Steve Clark  
Sergeant Nick Mattson



**Sworn of the Year—Fire Division  
Firefighter Brad Welniak**



**Sworn of the Year—Police Division  
Sergeant Craig Begeman**



**Non-Sworn of the Year  
Records Clerk II Sandra Gray**

# 2023 PERSONNEL UPDATES

## NEW HIRES

Police Officer Evan Dexter  
Records Clerk McKenzie Stommen  
Police Officer Jason Fonger  
Police Officer Josh Spicer  
Records Clerk Vanessa VanAuken  
Police Officer Robb Nemecek  
Police Officer Mallory Southward  
Firefighter Randall Rice  
Firefighter Ciaran Byrne-Thayer  
Police Officer Jennifer Gonzalez  
Firefighter Mitch Barnum

## PROMOTIONS

Assistant Chief Matt Wolfe  
Assistant Chief Jed Wild  
Lieutenant Kevin Gleesing  
Assistant Chief Bryan Mayhew  
Sergeant Jordan Wentworth  
Lieutenant Ron Clark  
Sergeant Brandon Wall

## RETIREMENTS



**Firefighter Andy Campbell**  
Aug 20, 1990–Jan 10, 2023



**Police Officer John Zesiger**  
Jan 2, 2001–Apr 6, 2023



**Deputy Chief John Blue**  
May 9, 1988–May 9, 2023



**Lieutenant Joe McDonnell**  
Sep 29, 1989–Oct 27, 2023

# 2023 STAFF ROSTER

## FIRE DIVISION (CAREER)

ABDULLAH, Arik  
BARNUM, Mitch  
BYRNE-THAYER, Ciaran  
\*CAMPBELL, Andy  
CHASE, Aaron  
DUNN, Derek  
EVERETT, Chip  
FACE, George  
FARR, Tyler  
\*FRENCH, Stacy  
\*GABRIELSE, Kyle  
GRAHAM, Bill  
HAMBRIGHT, Jared  
HAVERKAMP, Nick  
HELMER, Travis  
HERNDON, Austin  
\*HILL, Greg  
HOLLISTER, Clay  
JOZWIK, Heather  
KLOK, Brian  
LEATHERMAN, Robert  
MAHONEY, Jacob  
MANDERS, Harrison  
MCCOY, Mark  
MILLER, Mike  
NASON, Rick  
O'REILLY, Tom  
\*PHELPS, Mike  
PLAYFORD, Lou  
RICE, Randall  
TANNER, Steve  
TOEPFER, Andy  
VANOVERBEEK, Josh  
VERMEER, Jeremy  
WALL, Greg  
\*WEIDEMANN, Chris  
\*WELLMAN, Chip  
\*WELNIAK, Brad  
WILD, Jed  
\*WNUK, Jake

## FIRE DIVISION (PAID ON-CALL)

\*MILES, Matt  
QUEZADA, Paul  
RILEY, Debora

## POLICE DIVISION (SWORN)

ALLEN, Levi  
ARMOLD, Nicholas  
BARKER, David  
BEGEMAN, Craig  
BENNETT, Zach  
\*BLUE, John  
BOGARD, Scott  
BRYANT, Jermaine  
BURKE, Gregory  
BURLESON, Kevin  
BUSH, Ryan  
CLARK, Ronald  
CLARK, Steven  
COLLIER, Michael  
\*COOPER (Rohn), Sydnie  
CUTSHAW, Jessica  
DELEEUW, Dale  
DEXTER, Evan  
DMOCH, Adam  
DOSTER, Kyle  
FISHER, Lacey  
FONGER, Jason  
GABRIELLI, Carlin  
GARRISON, Austin  
GERTH, Benjamin  
GIBSON, Robert  
GLEESING, Kevin  
GONZALEZ, Jennifer  
HAMBRIGHT, Brandon  
HESS, Dereck  
Houser, Daniel  
HUNSTAD, Brent  
KIMBLE, Benjamin  
KITE, Henry  
\*KLINE, Michael  
KUHARIK, Aaron  
LORD, James  
MARTIN, Matthew  
MATTSON, Nicholas  
MAYHEW, Bryan  
\*MCDONNELL, Joseph  
MCMILLAN, Brandon  
MORAN, Kyle  
MORGAN, Lynley  
NEMECEK, Robb  
PIERMAN, Brannon  
REYNHOUT, Brent

REISGRAF, Alex  
SCHUMACHER, Michael  
SLAVIN, Nathan  
SOUTHWARD, Mallory  
SPICER, Abe (Josh)  
STAPERT, Brett  
SWAFFORD, Jason  
SWIER, Chris  
TOMSIC, Matthew  
TURANZAS, Evan  
VANDERWIERE, Jeffery  
VANDYKEN, Justin  
VANPORTFLIET, Derek  
VESEY, Eric  
WALL, Brandon  
WENTWORTH, Jordan  
WOLF, Sarah  
WOLFE, Matthew  
\*ZESIGER, John

## CIVILIAN STAFF

ARENA, Traci  
BOGARD, Ashley  
EVANS, Jenny  
\*FOLEY, Danielle  
GALICIA, Paolo "Vito"  
GARLOW, Barbara  
GIPSON, Teresa  
GRAY, Sandra  
LACKEY, Brenda  
MALZ, Diane  
NEARCHOU, Aki  
SCOTT-FARNSWORTH, Tammy  
\*STEELE, Dana  
\*SWAFFORD, Jamie  
STOMMEN, McKenzie  
TRUMAN, Jacqueline  
VANAUKEN, Vanessa  
VPLIER, Megan

## VOLUNTEER CHAPLAINS

HOVENKAMP, Ken  
SMITH, Clayton

\*Retirement or Separation

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# ***FREQUENTLY CALLED NUMBERS***

CITY CLERK.....	329-4511
CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE .....	329-4400
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (CODE ENFORCEMENT).....	329-4477
DISTRICT COURT.....	384-8171
DISTRICT LIBRARY .....	329-4544
FINANCE (TAX AND BILLING INFORMATION).....	329-4455

## **FIRE DIVISION**

ADMINISTRATION .....	329-4487
COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION / DEPUTY FIRE MARSHAL .....	329-4482
FIRE PREVENTION / FIRE MARSHAL .....	548-4058
FIRE TRAINING OFFICER.....	329-4539
PARKS AND RECREATION .....	329-4522
<b>POLICE, FIRE OR MEDICAL EMERGENCY .....</b>	<b>9-1-1</b>
<b>DISPATCH (non-emergency).....</b>	<b>488-8911</b>

## **POLICE DIVISION**

ADMINISTRATION .....	329-4560
COMMUNITY POLICING.....	324-9255
DETECTIVE BUREAU.....	324-9264
INFORMATION CENTER .....	329-4567
PATROL SERGEANTS OFFICE .....	329-4566
POLICE TRAINING OFFICER.....	329-4530
STAFF SERVICES / PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS .....	329-4574
RECORDS BUREAU .....	329-4568
PUBLIC WORKS .....	329-4444
SENIOR CITIZEN SERVICES .....	329-4555
TRANSPORTATION & UTILITIES.....	329-4422

