

Press Release: Chief Fitzgerald

News agencies and various blogs are reporting on past and projected resignations and vacancies within the Waterloo Police Department. It is true the Department is currently hiring and has seven vacant positions. It is equally important to place those facts into the appropriate perspective. Law enforcement vacancies are not unique to the City of Waterloo. A quick internet search of 'shortages and morale in policing' yields a plethora of interesting results; some of which may have been useful research to provide members of our community who may now mistakenly believe the problems only exist in this city (<https://www.npr.org/2021/06/24/1009578809/cops-say-low-morale-and-department-scrutiny-are-driving-them-away-from-the-job>, NPR, 2021).

It is easily verifiable that a vast majority of agencies struggle to recruit and retain officers, but many lack the support of leadership, or a history of supportive government that allows their agencies to better equip, to actively hire, and to recruit new police officers. Some jurisdictions have even reduced the the number of officers serving in their communities, but that has not been the case in Waterloo.

In an effort to sensationalize or politicize a story, viewers or readers are sometimes left to believe otherwise. This is fear-based clickbait masking as journalism (or serving 'the public's right to know') that harms communities they purport to serve, or in this case, some purport as having served. My experience as a police chief has taught me that there are persons who served in law enforcement in the past who unfairly lob criticisms when they lack the introspective capacity to unpack many of the problems that we experience in this industry that were created by those who lacked the vision, effectiveness, or courage to challenge the status quo. Sensationalizing or politicizing these issues is not problem-solving, it is divisive, purposeful and irresponsible.

The sky is absolutely not falling in the Waterloo Police Department. This community can rest-assured that each employee of the WPD (tenured and new) will continue to be held to the high standards established over the past year, and we will continue to provide the high performance, innovative and community inclusive law enforcement service all that 'all persons' deserve and expect.

I extend deep thanks to each officer who has demonstrated the commitment to the community and their fellow officers and resolve to continue serving the City of Waterloo and its stakeholders. I equally thank those who faithfully served, persons who either elected to exercise their right to enjoy a well-earned retirement, or who plan to do so. Your chief and the community truly appreciate your dedication to the profession, and your years of service. Rest assured, we will continue to evolve, and as organic growth and the end of career life cycles present opportunities for others to assume leadership roles, I will ensure those who continue to serve strengthen the effectiveness of our team.

The Waterloo Police Department is currently taking applications until September 24th, 2021.

<https://cms6.revize.com/revize/waterlooia/Employment/POLICE%20RECRUIT%20DESCRIPTION%2021-2%20FOR%20WEBSITE.pdf>

https://weblink.cityofwaterlooia.com/Forms/HR-Onboarding-Police?applied_position=Police%20Recruit%202021_Fall