



# 2023 Annual Report

UNION TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT

To the Board of Trustees,

I am pleased to present the Union Township Police Department's annual report for the year 2023.

This year brought many exciting changes for our police department, including a change in the Command Staff. My ascension to the CEO's position, along with a new Operations Lieutenant and a near complete makeover in the sergeant's rank, brought a shifting paradigm in leadership to the police department. As we said goodbye to our former chief as well as numerous sergeants to retirement, we ushered in a new era of leadership within several ranks. We continue to develop and look to new technology to assist us in solving and reducing crime and added a drone program to our department. The drones have already assisted in locating missing persons and suspects for our department and several local departments and have also assisted in processing crime scenes and serious auto accidents. We also upgraded our in-car computer systems this year, allowing officers to work more efficiently in the field while optimizing the information flow between officers and dispatchers.



We continue to be aware of and work towards positive public perception and complete accountability in the eyes of the community. Our body camera program has been invaluable in that regard, and our staff and supervisors continue to maintain best practices by continuously evaluating and monitoring our officers through monthly body camera quality control checks. We continue to monitor the monthly performance of our police officers by tracking their officer-initiated activity and placing equal emphasis on crime reduction activity such as vacation checks, door-to-door business checks, and resident-requested extra patrols rather than focusing solely on pro-enforcement activity. Training and professional development of our personnel also continue to be a high priority for the department. Officers attended over 2,660 hours of training either in-house or through outside organizations in 2023.

The police department has maintained almost all public outreach programs, including citizen police academy, women's self-defense, child gun safety, police night out, security assessments, robbery response talks, and citizen ride-along. These programs are offered at no cost to the public, are well attended, and are instructed and performed by our officers, who incorporate them into their regular duties. We are committed to including even more programs in our public outreach and will strive to meet the growing needs and expectations of the Union Township community.

The men and women of the Police Department will continue to foster a relationship of genuine mutual respect with the community and remain committed to serving the public and striving towards the department's goal of making the township a safe place to live, work, and raise a family.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Chief Anthony Rees, M.P.A. CLEE

## Administrative Staff



Chief Anthony Rees is a veteran police officer with over 25 years of experience, serving all with Union Township. He possesses a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice from the University of Cincinnati and a Master's Degree in Public Administration from Northern Kentucky University. Chief Rees is a graduate of the Southern Police Institute and a Certified Law Enforcement Executive (CLEE)



Lt. David Combs Commands the Operations Bureau. He is a veteran police officer with 25 years of experience, serving all with the Union Township Police Department. He has served as a police officer, investigator and Patrol Sergeant prior to being promoted to Lieutenant. Lt. Combs possesses a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice from Wilmington College. Lt. Combs is a Certified Polygraph Examiner, a graduate of the Southern Police Institute and a Certified Law Enforcement Executive (CLEE).

Lt. Scott Blankenship Commands the Investigative/Administrative Bureau. He is a veteran police officer with 29 years of experience and has 25 years with the Union Township Police Department. He has served as a police officer, investigator, patrol sergeant, and the investigative commander prior to being promoted to Lieutenant in February 2015. Lt. Blankenship is also a certified polygraph examiner and a graduate of the Southern Police Institute.





Lt. Josh Hines commands the Professional Standards Bureau. He is a veteran police officer with 15 years of experience, serving all with Union Township. Prior to his promotion to lieutenant in 2022, Lt. Hines served as a police officer, detective, and investigative sergeant. Lt. Hines possesses a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice from Northern Kentucky University and is a graduate of the Administrative Officer Course at the University of Louisville's Southern Police Institute. Aside from Lt. Hines' duties within the department, he proudly serves on the Benefits Committee for *The Shield*, which is an organization dedicated to serving the families of officers critically injured or killed in the line of duty within Ohio counties of Clermont, Hamilton, Butler, and Warren counties.

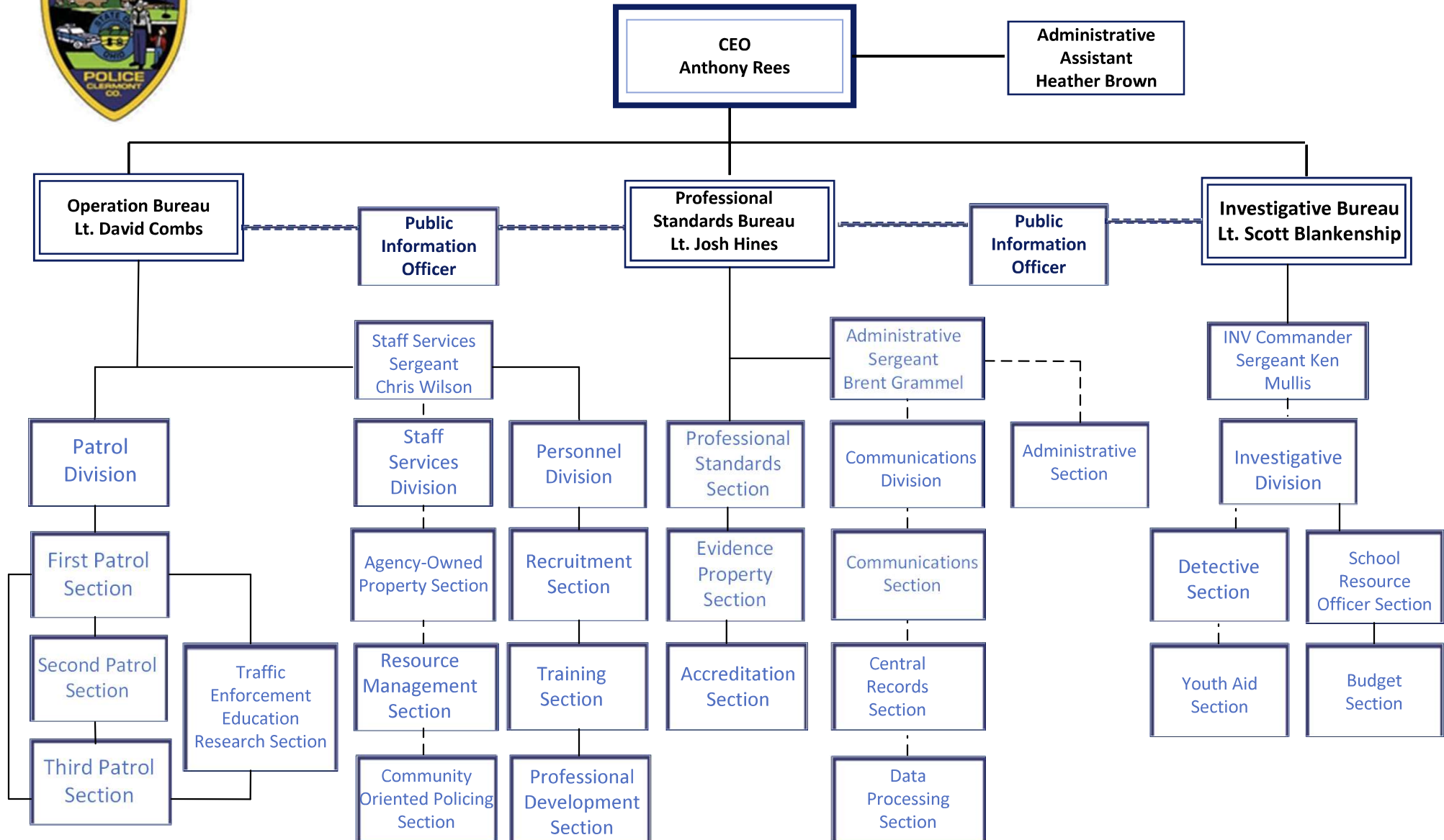
Heather Brown is the Administrative Assistant to the Chief of Police. She has held that position since her hire in 1997. She continues to be a vital part of the administrative staff. Her duties are many, to include human resource responsibilities.





# Union Township Police Department

January 2024



1/7/2024



Nationally Accredited Police Department  
and Communication Center.



## **Operations Bureau**

The Operations Bureau is commanded by Lt. David Combs and consists of the Patrol Division, Staff Services Division, and Personnel Division. Operations is the largest agency bureau with an authorized complement of 41 employees.

**The Patrol Division** is the largest division of the bureau. It is responsible for handling citizen calls for service, tactical response to apprehend criminals, community problem solving, enforcement of traffic laws, and investigation of traffic crashes. Total calls for service for 2023 were 58,132, a 26% increase from 2022. This can be attributed to more non-criminal self-initiated activity by officers. The total number of crime reports by officers increased, with 12,406 total reports generated, a 43% increase from the previous year. Part 1 UCR Crimes (the major felony type crimes) decreased from 1,300 to 1,250, a .04% decrease from 2022. Most of these were for reported assaults, which increased 41% from 2022. This can be attributed to the increased number of School Resource Officers added to the schools and the increase in activity.

The Road Patrol Section consists of three patrol shifts managed 24/7 by six patrol sergeants. Road patrol is assisted by two state-certified canine units and one officer assigned to plain clothes narcotics with the Clermont County Narcotics Unit. Two Patrol Division Officers are certified Traffic Crash Reconstructionist. They are equipped with the latest technology and are capable of investigating any traffic crash, from a simple two-car accident to a multiple fatality. Enforcement efforts are targeted to increase public awareness of traffic laws and reduce the number of crashes. Traffic Officers work closely with the Clermont County Engineer's Office in planning traffic flow as well as identifying traffic hazards. The total number of crashes investigated in 2023 was 1,367 compared to 1,363 in 2022. There was an increase of only four crashes from 2022 to 2023. Road construction projects scheduled along the SR 32 corridor for 2023 continued as planned, with major work being done at SR 32 and Elick Ln. The number of arrests for Operating a Motor Vehicle while under the Influence decreased in 2023 by .2%. In 2023, officers arrested 157 impaired drivers compared to 188 in 2022. The township has seen a decline in OVI arrests over the last several years.

Crime prevention and public relations are considered a department-wide effort headed by Lt. Combs. Members are responsible for reaching out to the Union Township community with programs designed to inform and educate on various topics. Assigned personnel participate in local, state, and national organizations to network and stay current on trends and available programs. Every contact with the public should be considered an opportunity to serve and educate the public. Union Township Police Department exhibits this belief through outreach programs such as Neighborhood Watch, Women's Unarmed Self-Defense classes, Citizen Police Academies and Reunions, a *Police Night Out* crime prevention festival, Child Gun Safety classes, School Safety talks, Safety Trailer displays at local events, and certified security assessments by trained officers.

The department continued to rebound in 2023 and began to see an increase in our public education programs as we were again able to offer our staple of programs. The department hosted its 16<sup>th</sup> annual Police Night Out at Veterans Park, which was again extremely well attended by our community. The department held its 18<sup>th</sup> annual Citizen Police Academy in



2023. Twelve members of the community graduated from the 12-week Citizens Police Academy. The department will continue to look for new ways in 2024 to advertise for the CPA Program to have more community members participate. In 2023, the Union Township Police Department partnered with the Mercy Health Plex at West Clermont High School and hosted four women's self-defense classes. Officers also put on Active Shooter training at several local businesses and financial institutions. Union Township Police Department has begun to phase out of the Neighborhood Watch program. With the increase in social media platforms law enforcement uses, the department has looked for new ways to get crime information out to the community. Facebook continues to be utilized in that regard, and new platforms such as "Next Door" and Lexus Nexis are being explored. The Citizen Police Academy Alumni group continues to grow and participate alongside officers in various public relations events hosted throughout the year. In April and September, the CPA Alumni assisted with Crime Stoppers Drug Take Back and Paper Shred and were able to take over 170 lbs. of prescription narcotics out of circulation.

Officers from the Crime Prevention section continue to educate the Township's financial institutions with Robbery Response update presentations in 2023, as well as professional Security Assessments. The department's three state-certified Security Assessment officers have given the police department an additional resource to be able to provide our residents and business owners looking to improve security around their businesses and homes. Facebook and the continued utilization of the department's Facebook page have increased the police department's visibility in the community. As a result, police department programs have also seen an increase in interest and attendance, and public tips accepted via the Facebook page have led to numerous arrests and case closures. In total, officers participated in or instructed 60 public relations events in 2023. In keeping with the Department's mission of fostering a relationship of genuine, mutual respect with the community, we continue to develop new ideas to increase positive interactions with the public. Crime Prevention officers will continue to meet new challenges head-on while remaining active within the Crime Prevention section and still handling their primary duties of answering calls for service.

**The Staff Services Division** provides support services for the agency, including supervision over purchasing, requisitions, maintenance of equipment and the fleet, and upkeep of the police department building. The Staff Services Division is managed by Sgt. Chris Wilson, who reports directly to the Operations Commander. Agency-Owned Property and Resource Management Sections of the Staff Services Division are responsible for all agency-owned equipment, vehicles, and facilities, including ordering approved purchases, inventory, inspection, and repairs. The smooth day-to-day operation heavily depends on the Staff Service's ability to satisfy needs. All agency-owned firearms are inspected on schedule, and trained armorers and certified agency personnel perform any repairs. All member-issued equipment is inspected by their respective supervisor annually, and they, in turn, report subordinates' needs to the Staff Services Commander. The Staff Services Division saw a significant upgrade in support and technology available to our officers through the introduction in 2021 of body camera systems to our department. All department officers are now equipped with body cameras. Department supervisors continuously review footage from the cameras to ensure quality control. Support was also increased by adding significant upgrades to our Armory, namely, the ArmorLink software set-up, which enables maintenance of our department-issued firearms to be tracked and kept up with.

**The Personnel Division** is dedicated to training its personnel under the direction of Lt. Combs. Our training in lethal and non-lethal force and response to critical incidents far exceeds those standards set by the State of Ohio. Training requests from members directly correspond to annual evaluations, endorsed by one's supervisor and approved by a training committee. The agency takes advantage of all local, state, and federal training offers and occasionally sponsors and hosts state-provided training for other departments at Union Township's Civic Center. In-service roll call training included immersive topics such as ethics, racial profiling, critical incident response, De-escalation Techniques, personal early warning systems, and many others.

The agency worked hand-in-hand with the Clermont County Prosecutor's Office to provide department members timely and essential legal updates. In addition, the full implementation of the *Power DMS* system allowed for fluid training and communication. Union Township Police Department members completed a total of 2,660 hours of training in 2023, including 8 hours of in-service training on Taser and Pepper Ball Systems recertification and de-escalation training and 8 hours of training in firearms. The agency participates in a county-wide Special Response Team by assigning seven tactical officers and one negotiator. In addition, three officers are assigned to the Regional Dive Team and receive regular training. Four Union Township officers are also designated as peer support officers trained to assist and counsel other officers dealing with or struggling with their experience from a critical incident. Union Township offers its members a generous college tuition reimbursement that allows the agency members to continue to expand their knowledge base and contribute to the growth of the Police Department. The police department continued its tradition by sending two first-line supervisors to the Southern Police Institute's 12-week Administrative Officers Course in Louisville, KY.

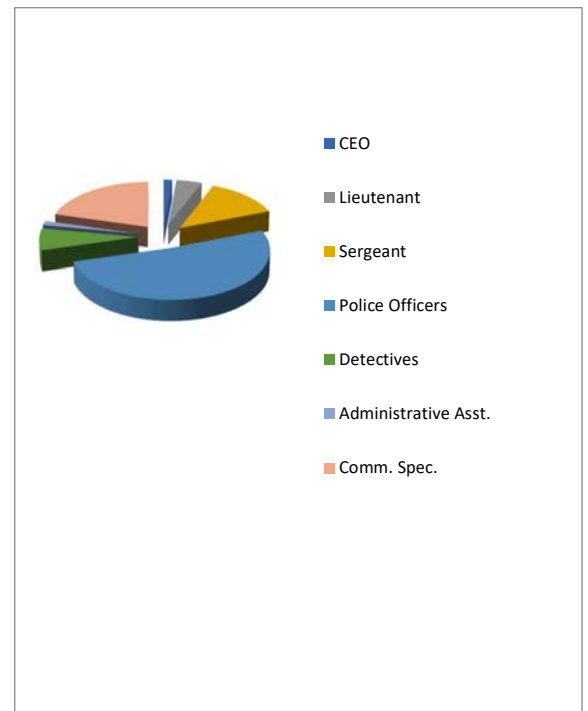
The Personnel Division is also responsible for recruiting potential sworn and non-sworn personnel. Various resources are used in recruitment, such as career days at the local grade schools and high schools and the department's ride-along program serving the University of Cincinnati Clermont College internship program and the UC Police Academy.



Sworn Positions	Current	Current	Current
	Male	Female	All
CEO	1	0	1
Lieutenant	3	0	3
Sergeant	8	1	9
Police Officers	33	2	35
Detectives	5	0	5
Sworn Total	50	3	53

Non-Sworn Positions	Current	Current	Current
	Male	Female	All
Administrative Asst.	0	1	1
Comm. Spec.	1	13	14
Non-Sworn Total	1	14	15

Totals	51	17	68
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3 photos from Police Night Out



1. Random photo of Patrol members
2. UTPD Honor Guard Presenting Colors at FC Cincinnati Game.
3. Crime Stoppers Paper Shred and Drug take back.





Ofc. Cooper, Sgt. Wilson, & Ofc. Haggerty hosting the women's self-defense class at Mercy Health Plex.



CPA Graduation



Officers welcoming back Ofc. Gosink from his military duty leave. Ofc. Kuhn posing with Santa Clause before his ride along.



## Investigative Bureau

The Investigative Bureau, commanded by Lt. Scott Blankenship, comprises three divisions: Investigative, SROs (School Resource Officers), and Budgeting. As a partnering agency with Clermont County Sheriff's Narcotics Unit, Lt. Blankenship is also responsible for supervising any department member assigned to the task force.

**The Investigation Division** includes five sworn officers who hold the rank of detective and are assigned all serious felony crimes, missing persons, and death investigations. Serious felony crimes include homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, major theft or fraud, auto theft, and arson.

Investigation Division members receive advanced training in evidence gathering and processing, suspect interviewing, case preparation and management, and specialized homicide and sex crime investigation techniques. The division encompasses a State of Ohio certified Evidence Technician, Polygraph Examiners, FAA Certified Drone Pilots, a Computer Forensic Investigator, and a Youth Aid Detective.

During 2023, Investigators worked over 455 felony cases, closing about 52 (11%) by arrest. Of the remaining, 309 (65%) were closed otherwise, inactivated, or unfounded. The remaining 114 cases (24%) are added to the 2024 caseload.

The Polygraph Unit performed 23 examinations, including 18 pre-employment exams. The Drone Unit was utilized for 22 incidents ranging from missing persons to auto accident and crime scene documentation.

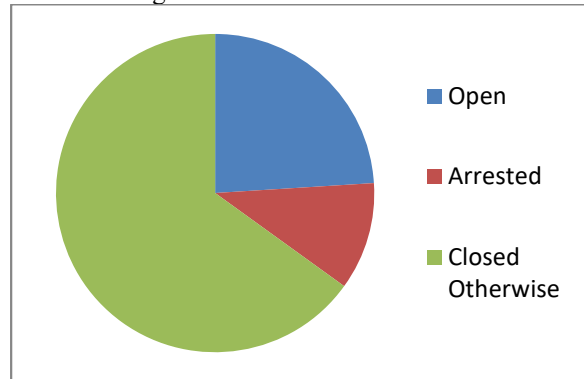


The 2023 investigative highlights included the arrest of an individual suspected of an organized retail theft ring involving local businesses.

The Investigation Division participated in the prosecution of several individuals involved in an organized crime group out of Houston, Texas. The group was involved in ATM robberies throughout the United States. Detectives identified the suspects and presented an organized crime case to the Clermont County Grand Jury, where three individuals were indicted. Detectives were also able to obtain evidence, which assisted with prosecutions in numerous other states. Due to the quick action of the investigative unit, stolen US Currency was located and returned to the financial institution.

All investigations were ended in a timely manner.

2023 Investigation Division Case Closure



### School Resource Officer Section

The agency's School Resource Officer Program is a unit within the Investigation Division due to the sensitive nature of the position. We currently have two SROs and one K-9 in the West Clermont High School, one "roaming" SRO for the West Clermont Elementary Schools, and an additional SRO was added to the Carter Center School for Excellence this year.

The SROs are involved in the investigative process of criminal offenses that occur on school campuses, disciplinary hearings, and educational events for their students. We continue to enjoy a terrific working relationship with both school districts.



## **Professional Standards Bureau**

The Professional Standards Bureau, currently commanded by Lt. Josh Hines, consists of the Administrative and Communications Divisions. These divisions provide support services for the agency, including supervision of all non-sworn personnel, communications, records, and accreditation. The Professional Standards Bureau is also responsible for the formal complaint and internal affairs processes and the oversight of the agency's Evidence Property Section.

### **Communications Division**

The Communications Division consists of 911 Emergency Dispatch (one of only two centers in Clermont County, Ohio) and Data Processing. Dispatchers share data entry duties and assist Central Records. These are essential support functions of the agency, utilizing 14 non-sworn employees. Communications also provides 24-hour emergency dispatching of police, fire, and EMS services for Union Township. The section handles thousands of monthly telephone calls, both emergency and non-emergency. Our 911 dispatchers are EMD & EFD certified through the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO). The Union Township Communications Center is accredited by CALEA (Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies).

Throughout 2023, the communications center fielded 21,287 emergency 9-1-1 calls. They also received an additional 39,929 administrative calls, from internal communication to public service orientation.



C.S. Tracy Daly

**The Central Records Section** processes all documents generated by police officers and manages a computerized records system, which includes all citizen calls for service, crime reports, traffic crash reports, warrants, and contacts with persons. Document archival is accomplished through electronic imaging. Public records inquiries, court filings, requests for officer's body-worn camera



videos, and expungements are also vital functions of the Records Section. The Records Section handles and disseminates tens of thousands of documents each year generated by 53 sworn officers, in addition to the numerous requests by the general public. Central Records processed over 7,200 records requests in 2023.



C.S. Jamie Robinson & C.S. Jen West (Central Records Section)

**The Accreditation Section** is responsible for the accreditation process. Sgt. Brent Grammel manages our accreditations and receives assistance from Communications Specialists Jen West and Jamie Robinson, currently assigned to our Central Records Section. Sgt. Grammel also serves as an Accreditation Assessor with the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). Union

Township is dedicated to the accreditation philosophy throughout its government services, including national recognition of Police, 911 Emergency Communications, Fire, and Public Works. The Union Township Police Department and its Emergency 911 Center were reaccredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies in 2020 and completed their Year 3 virtual review in 2023. Additionally, our department was also certified by the Ohio Collaborative this year.

In addition to Accreditation, this section works closely with the Professional Standards Bureau in creating and revising policies and General Orders. They are also responsible for keeping employees apprised of state and federal law changes.



Sgt. Brent Grammel (Administrative Sergeant)

## **Evidence Property Section**

Custodian Dean Murray manages our property room under the auspices of the Professional Standards Bureau. In 2023, Property Custodian Murray processed approximately 3,500 pieces of property/evidence through the agency's property room. His additional responsibilities include preparing court documents, transporting evidence to and from crime laboratories, conducting auctions, and maintaining inventories. Each year, a complete inventory is conducted in our property room to ensure the integrity of all evidence.



Property Room Custodian Dean Murray

## **Citizen Complaints**

The Union Township Police Department maintains careful records of all professional standard investigations and citizen complaints. An alleged violation of criminal law, civil law, or corrupt activity prompts a professional standard investigation. Citizen complaints, however, are usually non-criminal in nature and often pertain to an alleged violation of agency policy or standards of conduct. Our citizen complaint program requires written documentation and supervisory involvement in every complaint received. After a citizen complaint investigation is completed and a recommendation is provided, the Chief of Police reviews the investigation and determines the final disposition. The Chief then provides the complainant with the final disposition in writing. Our complaint process and statistics are also available to the public as required by CALEA standards and monitored for early warning purposes. In 2023, five citizen complaints were filed and investigated within the Professional Standards Bureau.

## **Employee Grievances**

The collective bargaining agreement is a contract between Union Township and our union employees establishing rights, protections, grievance procedures, wages, and various other departmental procedures. In 2022, negotiations were completed to renew the agreement through 2025.

**There were no grievances filed in 2023.**

### 2023 Citizen Complaints

Exonerated	0
Not sustained	0
Unfounded	4
Sustained	1
Withdrawn	0

TOTAL	5
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### 2023 Grievances

TOTAL	0
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2023 **Crimes Reported**, Traffic Enforcement, and Calls for Service

<b>Crimes Reported***</b>	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Apr</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>Jun</i>	<i>Jul</i>	<i>Aug</i>	<i>Sep</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>	<i>Totals</i>
<b>Part 1 UCR</b>													
Murder	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Rape	5	0	3	1	1	3	0	2	1	1	2	1	20
Robbery	1	1	0	1	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	7
Assault	5	8	19	10	21	10	6	8	25	11	9	8	140
Burglary/B&E	8	3	2	5	3	1	6	9	5	5	1	3	51
Theft/Larceny	83	74	71	60	76	67	79	68	64	69	74	59	844
Auto Theft/Unauthorized Use	1	0	5	2	4	7	8	5	5	5	2	9	53
Arson	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Domestic Violence	15	5	13	15	13	17	9	10	6	12	10	7	132
<b>Total</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>1250</b>

<b>Other Non-UCR/General*</b>	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Apr</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>Jun</i>	<i>Jul</i>	<i>Aug</i>	<i>Sep</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>	<i>Totals</i>
DUI	4	15	18	17	12	15	22	12	11	6	10	15	157
All Other Offenses	178	182	193	227	196	193	201	203	199	165	170	168	2275
All Other Non Offenses	357	416	545	750	860	815	890	845	862	844	788	752	8724
<b>Total</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>613</b>	<b>756</b>	<b>994</b>	<b>1068</b>	<b>1023</b>	<b>1113</b>	<b>1060</b>	<b>1072</b>	<b>1015</b>	<b>968</b>	<b>935</b>	<b>11156</b>
<b>Total Crimes Reports</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>613</b>	<b>756</b>	<b>994</b>	<b>1068</b>	<b>1023</b>	<b>1113</b>	<b>1060</b>	<b>1072</b>	<b>1015</b>	<b>968</b>	<b>935</b>	<b>12406</b>

<b>Traffic Enforcement**</b>	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Apr</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>Jun</i>	<i>Jul</i>	<i>Aug</i>	<i>Sep</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>	<i>Totals</i>
Citations	174	154	148	197	205	196	200	212	206	210	208	225	2335
Warnings	385	355	167	547	447	530	753	596	713	690	493	646	6322
Traffic Stops	518	465	206	680	576	662	896	720	853	822	635	754	7787
Traffic Crashes	94	78	81	85	88	100	95	106	96	110	101	131	1165
Traffic Crashes on Private	9	19	16	24	20	18	11	19	17	14	23	12	202
<b>Total Calls for Service</b>	<b>3558</b>	<b>3264</b>	<b>4069</b>	<b>4960</b>	<b>4936</b>	<b>4915</b>	<b>5355</b>	<b>5177</b>	<b>5415</b>	<b>5529</b>	<b>5131</b>	<b>5823</b>	<b>58132</b>

\*includes all non-UCR and other non-criminal information reports.