

To: Lavon Phillips, Business Administrator
From: Joseph Candido, Director of Public Safety
Date: September 1, 2025
Subject: August Monthly Report

Personnel

The department continues to experience several staffing challenges:

- **Long-Term Injuries:**
 - Sgt. Grochowski
 - PO Chesney
 - PO Notare
 - PO Reale
 - PO Lasko
- **On-the-Job Injury (OJI):**
 - PO Araneda is on extended OJI leave. His condition may ultimately result in retirement.
- **Military Leave:**
 - PO Twining remains on extended military leave.
- **Light Duty Assignments:**
 - Lt. Rodriguez – Anticipated return in the near future
 - PO Ravioli – May require further treatment, extending absence
 - PO Elbaum – Workman’s compensation delays continue to prevent return
- **Administrative Leave:**
 - Sgt. Gravina remains on administrative leave pending a Police Training Commission review. Preliminary findings indicate the matter will likely be resolved in his favor.

Retirements:

- PO Menafrà’s retirement is the last anticipated for this calendar year.

At the August 26, 2025 Township Council Meeting, four additional full-time officers were hired, completing the planned backfill and bringing our sworn strength to **113 officers**. Operational capacity, however, is considerably lower:

- 11 officers are unavailable due to sick leave, OJI, or military service.
- 8 recruits are currently in the Police Academy, with another scheduled to begin at the end of October.
- One sergeant will deploy for a year of military service beginning in October.

Factoring these conditions, the department’s **effective operational strength is 92 officers**, inclusive of command staff.

Budgetary Considerations

Overtime expenditures continue to rise sharply. As of mid-August, the department has incurred **\$666,873.38** in overtime costs. I have not yet received a comprehensive plan from the Chief to control or explain the rapid increase.

Comp time cash-ins are also trending upward. To date, **7,273 hours** have been cashed in at a cost of **\$506,523.29**. At the current pace, we project approximately **13,000 hours** by year-end—4,000 more than last year—at an estimated cost of **\$900,000**.

Daily Operations & Projects

1. **Vehicle Upgrades:** Four new quads were delivered; two were displayed at National Night Out. Training is underway, enhancing our ability to respond in wooded areas.
2. **National Night Out:** Held August 5 at Johnson Park, the event was a success with strong community turnout and broad participation from first responder agencies.
3. **Vehicle Procurement:** New patrol vehicles purchased with 2024 capital funds are now deployed. Their updated single-color design was shared on social media.
4. **Traffic Management:**
 - The Cedar Swamp Road closure increased traffic on Leesville and Frank Applegate Roads. Reopening is scheduled for September 4, easing school busing issues.
 - A new traffic light at Bennetts Mills and Frank Applegate has reduced crashes.
 - Sgt. Falzerano has organized back-to-school traffic details funded by annual grant allocations.
5. **State-Mandated Training:** Officers completed four hours each of active shooter and defensive tactics training, as required by state mandate.
6. **Class I Officers:** Backgrounds for two candidates are complete; deployment awaits budget approval. Two additional budgeted Class I positions remain vacant.
7. **Dispatch Vacancy:** A dispatch candidate withdrew following a promotion elsewhere. No new applicants are available. Lt. Rodriguez is expanding recruitment efforts.
8. **911 System:** The current system failed in August and will be unsupported after this year. An upgrade, funded through the 2024 Capital Budget, is in progress and expected to be completed by year-end.
9. **Class II Officers:** One conditional offer has been made; another candidate is in background review. Six budgeted vacancies remain, with additional applicants expected post-summer season.
10. **Recruit Training:**
 - Four recruits began the Monmouth County Police Academy on July 21.
 - Four recruits begin at the Ocean County Academy on September 2.

- Candidate Arianne Broughton, delayed by emergency surgery, will retest in October and attend in November.
 - 11. **Body Cameras:** Field testing is underway with an AXON-style system. Adoption would eliminate uniform alterations and reduce costs, with no additional expense to the township if we decide to transition.
 - 12. **Pistol Transition:** The transition to new firearms is nearly complete and should conclude in September. The change is expected to reduce ammunition costs.
 - 13. **Crossing Guards:** All crossing guards have been sworn in. Supervisor Angela Beagan has completed training and prepared for the school year.
 - 14. **Call Volume:** The department has handled **71,703 calls** to date, projecting **111,000 calls** by year-end, with further increases expected during the holiday season.
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Please let me know if additional details or clarifications are required.

Respectfully,
Joseph Candido
Public Safety Director

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