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**The Bill Blackwood
Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas**

Implementing a Citizen's Police Academy

**A Policy Research Project
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Professional Designation
Graduate, Management Institute**

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Mt. Pleasant, Texas
January, 2000**

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ABSTRACT

Modern law enforcement in the United States was born from Sir Robert Peel's brand of law enforcement from England. However, the main difference between the English Bobbie and the American Police Officer is the public's perception (Kirkham/Wollen, 1980). For many years, English public opinion has been supportive of the Bobbie. In contrast, American public opinion has viewed law enforcement with contempt. This perception problem has increased complaints against law enforcement and civil liability due to lack of understanding and communication.

There is a move in U.S. law enforcement to better relations between the law enforcement agencies and the public they serve through education and communication. One big program that has swept American law enforcement agencies is community policing. One of these programs is a Citizens Police Academy (CPA). The purpose of this research is to determine whether a CPA is a viable option for increasing relations between the Mt. Pleasant Police Department (M.P.P.D.) and the citizens of Mt. Pleasant.

The CPA programs are relatively new in the U.S. The first was in 1985 in Orlando, Florida. The research demonstrates that CPAs have proven to be a cost-effective way to educate the citizenry and gain support from the community. This, in turn, could help improve public relations, reduce citizen complains, and reduce liability. It is concluded that the M.P.P.D. would benefit greatly from a CPA program.

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Introduction

Since the very tragic and publicized beating of motorist Rodney King law enforcement officers in the United States have been publicly scrutinized and the term "bad cop" has become well known to the public. The public has developed a misconception of what their law enforcement officers do daily in their chosen profession. For every one "corrupt cop" in the system there are thousands of good officers in this country. These good officers go out every day and risk their lives for strangers. These officers have taken an oath to protect strangers they call citizens. Whether it is by walking a beat, riding a bike, or patrolling in a car, these officers work days and nights, in all weather conditions to do a job that they enjoy. Law enforcement officers go where no others will go: dark alleys chasing a knife wielding man who just cut someone, or dark buildings to try to catch a burglar, where the unknown awaits him.

If the public knew what their law enforcement officers do, they would have a new respect for them and the profession that they have chosen. There is a program that has been around in the United States since 1985, that helps to educate the public and creates better communication and understanding between the police and those they have sworn to protect. This program is called a Citizen's Police Academy (CPA).

This project will provide information on implementation of a CPA to the Mt. Pleasant Police Department (M.P.P.D.) to enable them to make a policy decision. The officers and the citizens of Mt. Pleasant will benefit by implementing such a program.

This project will utilize information from periodicals, books, policies, and bulletins. There will also be surveys administered to law enforcement agencies and interviews with citizens of Mt. Pleasant.

This project will be presented to the administration of the M.P.P.D., city council and the city manager. It will show that a CPA is a cost efficient way to better the relationship between the community and the police.

The intended outcome of this project is to implement a CPA in Mt. Pleasant, Texas. It will help the officers of M.P.P.D. to interact with the people that they serve. It will reduce the number of complaints by citizens because of perceptions that we have of each other.

Historical Context

The first full time paid, uniformed police department in the United States was established by New York City in 1856. It was modeled closely after Sir Robert Peel's idea of policing (Kirkham/Wollen, 1980). In the late 19th century, many of the United States' major cities were the most crime-ridden in the world. As a result, many police and citizens came in contact with each other under less than pleasing circumstances (Kirkham/Wollen, 1980). The police in England and in the United States were dealing with two totally different types of citizenry. The brutality and corruption of police in America is unheard of in the English Bobbie. English have been surveyed for decades and those surveys show English place a higher level of trust in their Bobbie than any other occupational group. In the contrast, Americans have regarded our police with contempt (Klockars, 1985).

In the early 20th century, police were involved with the community in many ways. Officers were on foot patrol and knew the public on a personal basis. Local alderman picked neighborhood people that knew the neighborhood and the citizens with in it to be the officers in that beat (Kirkham/Wollen, 1980). This was a personal type of policing.

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The officers working that beat knew the people living there personally. The officers were of the same ethnic, social, and economic background of the people in their beat and they were able to relate with the citizenry they patrolled.

With the invention of the automobile, and in order to be more efficient, officers were taken off foot patrol and placed in patrol cars (Kirkham/Wollen, 1980). This took the personal relationship away from the police and the public. The time of a neighborhood friend being a policeman changed to a policeman in a car with lights and siren blaring (Kirkham/Wollen, 1980). With the connivance of new technology and the mobility of the citizens in the United States, many police officers that were hired were not from the area that they patrolled.

Policing became an institution that the public knew little about. In the late 20th century, law enforcement's image took a blow with technology showing the public police misconduct as it happens.

In order to better the relationship between the public and the police, a community policing effort to educate the public was needed. One way to do this is a Citizen's Police Academy (CPA). CPA's began in England in 1977 by Devon and Cornwall Constabulary in Middlemoore, Exeter. (Cohen, 1996)

The first CPA started in the United States by Orlando, Florida in 1985 as a way to better relationships between the police and the public. The first CPA started in Texas by Missouri City Police Department in 1986. (Cohen, 1996)

Review of Literature or Practice

In order for the public to better understand what police do everyday and involve the public in the policing world, CPA's evolved. CPA's are an overview of the curriculum of actual police academies. They were created to educate the public on what their law enforcement officers do and why they do their job a certain way. The CPA's are open to people in the community depending on the department's policy. A majority of the departments allow members of the community without criminal records and of good moral character. Most departments only allow members of CPA's to play a role as an observer of the department and its operations. However, some departments ask graduates of CPA's to play a more active role in the community, such as citizens on patrol (FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin, 1985).

A survey was conducted with twenty-four different law enforcement agencies of all sizes in Texas (see Appendix). CPA's are relatively new to Texas. The first was only thirteen years ago.

Agency Name	CPA Program	Age	Response
Webster PD	Yes	3 years	Good
Lubbock PD	Yes	8 years	Good
Lufkin PD	Yes	3 years	N/A
Arlington PD	Yes	6 years	Excellent
Midland PD	Yes	6 years	Good
Fritch PD	No	N/A	N/A
Sulphur Springs PD	No	N/A	N/A

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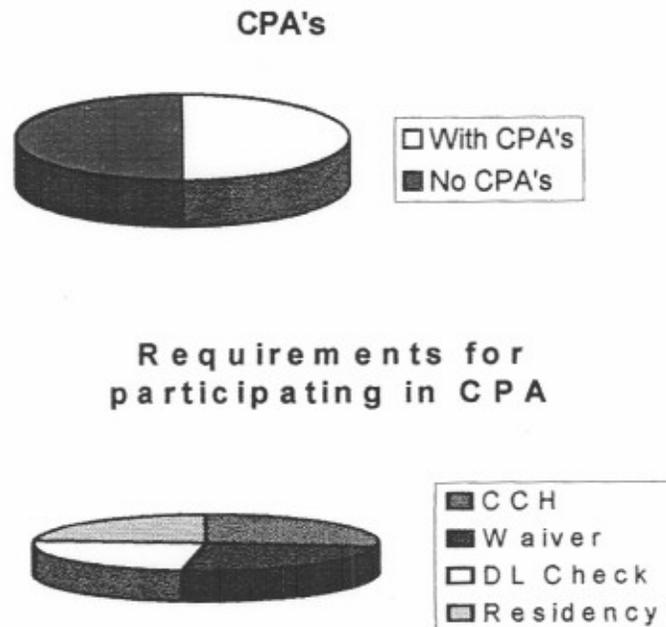
Sunset Valley PD	No	N/A	N/A
DeLeon PD	No	N/A	N/A
Galveston Co SO	No	N/A	N/A
University of Texas	No	N/A	N/A
Wells PD	No	N/A	N/A
Travis Co SO	Yes	8 years	Excellent
Longview PD	Yes	3 years	Good
Lacy-Lakeview PD	No	N/A	N/A
DART	No	N/A	N/A
Dallas PD	Yes	6 years	Good
Shallowater PD	No	N/A	N/A
Orange Co SO	No	N/A	N/A
Houston PD	Yes	5 years	Excellent
Highland Village	No	N/A	N/A
Ennis PD	No	N/A	N/A
Pharr PD	Yes	2 years	Excellent
LaGrange PD	Yes	1 year	N/A

Fourteen agencies did not have CPA's at the time the survey was conducted in September of 1998. Of the fourteen agencies that did not have CPA's, two are going to implement a program within a year. Of the agencies that have CPA's, the average program is less than six years old.

The agencies that have CPA's have them to better the public's perception of their agency. The survey showed that the agencies that do have CPA's now show the public's response to their department ranged from good to excellent.

All of the agencies explained that a waiver of liability is signed in this program by the participants and there has been no problem or issue raised in civil liability.

A majority of the departments explained that they have officers who teach in the CPA's volunteer their time to the department. This holds down the cost to the department.



(Hilson, 1994)

Each CPA is run differently depending on the department. Some are as short as two day or as long as twelve weeks. Most are between ten and twelve weeks. They meet usually one night a week for two hours a night. Most require the participants to perform

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other duties such as riding along with the officers and write a short paper about their experiences outside of the classroom experience (Cohn, 1996).

One member of a CPA stated that once he went through a CPA he began to understand why police do what they do. Bo Howard, a bank executive, stated that before he went through the CPA he took the actions of police as personal attacks against himself his family. Once he went through the CPA he understood that many of the reasons police do the things that they do are due to officer safety. He also explained that he understood that it was not personal, and officers did not take into consideration the sex, age, race, religion, or economic status when they stopped individuals. (Howard, 1999)

A coordinator of a CPA (Klepfer, 1999) stated that the program is also a good recruiting tool to use. With the economy being very good, not many people want to become police officers because of the lower pay compared to the private sector. With the CPA program giving interested people a taste of what this profession holds it can win over people who are not convinced about becoming a police officer. According to the coordinator, more than one member of a CPA has now been accepted in to a full-time police academy.

The CPA can also spin off another program that target youth in the community called an explorer program. This program is through the Boy Scouts of America that focuses on 14-20 year olds. The program is run identically like the CPA program with the exception that members of the Explorer program have election of officers with rank and they wear a distinctive uniform. The uniform traditionally is very different from the uniform worn by the officers of the M.P.P.D. to differentiate them from law enforcement officers of the department. (Klepfer, 1999)

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Discussion of Relevant Issues

Should there be qualifications to be a member of a CPA, if so what type of qualifications should a CPA implement? Some of the questions that may arise will be listed below.

The first issue that must be addressed in a CPA policy is that of eligibility of entry. It is important to qualify who will be eligible to enter the CPA program because the department will want to uphold the credibility and integrity of the department and the CPA program. Some options that can be considered is the residency of the applicant, an applicants background, and reasons for wanting to enter the program.

A closely associated second element to be addressed must be the inclusion in the policy of a screening process. The applicants go through a screening process because the process must try and eliminate applicants that will not benefit the program. Most CPA's require a background screening process, a driver license and criminal history check.

The third element that needs to be included in a through policy is a clear definition of authority and a chain of command. CPA's are a form of community policing and usually fall under the umbrella of responsibility of the community policing officers within the department. Other options are placing the responsibility of the program under the operations commander or special services commander of the department. A clear leadership component is necessary because this program is important to the relationship between the public and the department.

The fourth element in a good CPA policy is a provision for instruction. It is a lot of responsibility for just the community policing officers to handle and they should seek the assistance of officers and other personnel within the department to teach the

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curriculum. It is important to outline the qualifications (etc) of CPA teachers because the department needs competent people who are comfortable with the topic they are teaching. Many participants will have questions to ask about the topic being taught.

The fifth element to be addressed is what type of curriculum will be taught in the CPA? That should be discussed with the administration and the officer in-charge of the program. Curriculum can include Penal Code, Code of Criminal Procedures, Judicial System, Criminal Investigations, SWAT, Traffic, Patrol duties and many more in order to give the participants an idea of what the department does in a typical day.

The sixth element to be addressed is the role that administration wants the members of the CPA to play and why. Members can play a restrictive role within the department, which protect the department from civil liability issues. A more restrictive role is when the members observe more than participate. Conversely, members can play a very active role. This would be good because members would get hands on experience and would feel that they are doing more for the department. It would be bad because the department would be liable for the members and their actions.

The initial cost should be minimal. The majority of the cost will be for supplies as a start-up cost. The benefits will far out weight the cost of the CPA program. The expected benefits would be a more positive relationship between the department and the public.

Conclusion/Recommendations

The purpose of this project is to explore whether a CPA program would be workable and benefit the M.P.P.D. The M.P.P.D. would benefit by having a CPA by increasing the image of the department and gaining greater support from the citizens of

Mt. Pleasant. With the new support that the department will gain, complaints against officers from a lack of understanding would presumably decrease. With the decrease in complaints against officers less time and manpower hours would be spent on Internal Affairs investigations.

The problem that the City of Mt. Pleasant has is the separation between the Police Department and the community. There is a lack of understanding and communication between the M.P.P.D. and the citizens of Mt. Pleasant. With this program the Police Department would be able to improve it's public image and gain support.

It is concluded that it would be workable and beneficial for the M.P.P.D. to have a CPA and that it is important for a CPA policy to address several key issues. To address the issue of qualification, it is proposed that the CPA policies include an application process that screens by having interested parties complete a written application. Applicants must be residents of Titus County or a business owner in the City of Mt. Pleasant.

To address the issue of a screening process it is proposed that the CPA policies include a driver license (DL) check along with a criminal history check (CCH). Once the applicant shows that they do not have any outstanding warrants and they do not have a criminal history a police officer will conduct a background investigation.

To address the issue of who will be in-charge of the CPA program it is proposed that the community policing officers are responsible for the program. The CPA program is considered a part of a community-policing program (Cohn, 1996).

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To address the issue of who is going to teach in the CPA program it is proposed that officers within the M.P.P.D. teach in the program with the approval of the community policing officers that are in-charge of the program.

To address the issue of what type of curriculum will be taught in the CPA program, it is recommended that many different topics be instructed. Some of the topics could include but not be limited to: defensive tactics, firing departmental weapons, first aid, penal code, code of criminal procedure, judicial and court procedure, S.W.A.T. tactics, and the Honor Guard program.

To address the issue of what type of role administration will want members of the CPA to play in the department, it is proposed that members of the CPA have a restrictive role in the department. Members of the CPA should be required to sign a waiver of liability form as a part of the application process. Members of the CPA will not be doing police duties once they graduate the academy. The member of the CPA will simply be an observer with an officer of the department. Safety will be a primary concern of the department for its members of the CPA. There are no known cases of litigation against a law enforcement agency due to their CPA program. It has been suggested that the department's potential for civil litigation and liability will decrease in the long-term role because citizens will become reliant on their police and will have a personal relationship with them (Kappeler, 1997).

The cost incurred by the implementation of CPA program will be minimal. The initial cost may include supplies such as paper, pens, and notebooks. However, most of the cost will be covered by donations from members of the community and once a CPA class graduates an alumni association will be created and fund raisers can be held to

cover the cost of future academies. Once members of the CPA graduate they will become advocates of the police department and their actions. The department will then have members of the community that can support the department against members of the community that are not supportive of the department. With more and more members of the community becoming supporters of the department it will spread thought out the community (Fox, L. 1999)

All in all, the CPA program can lead to other community policing programs like the explorer program. With these programs the police department can better relationships and communication skills between the two groups. It will be a cost effective and beneficial program to the department and the community.

APPENDIX

Survey

University of Texas-Dallas Police
Wells Police Department
Cherokee County Sheriff's Office
DeLeon Police Department
Webster Police Department
Travis County Sheriff's Office
Fritch Police Department
Galveston County Sheriff's Office
Longview Police Department
Lacy-Lake Police Department
Dallas DART Police
Dallas Police Department
Shallowater Police Department
Midland Police Department
Orange County Sheriff's Office
Houston Police Department
Lubbock Police Department
Pharr Police Department
Ennis Police Department
LaGrange Police Department
Sulphur Springs Police Department
Sunset Valley Police Department

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Richland College Police Department

Arlington Police Department

Lufkin Police Department

Loretta Fox – *Personal Interview*

Bo Howard- *Personal Interview*

Sherman Klepfer- *Personal Interview*

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