

2023
St. Johns Police Department
Annual Report



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St. Johns Police Department

David Kirk, *Chief of Police*

“Ready to Protect, Proud to Serve”

To the Mayor, City Commissioners, City Manager and the Citizens of St. Johns, Michigan:

It is my privilege to present you with the 2023 St. Johns Police Department annual report for your information and review.

SJPD’s 2023 was a year of transformation and transition. I can honestly say, this year was the most collectively successful both operationally and administratively in my tenure with the city. Over the course of 2023, our department hired four new members including a Deputy Chief and three police officers. As part of those acquisitions, I took a very microscopic look at our operations to identify where we were deficient and, with collaboration from the city’s administrative team, created some extremely specific qualifications. I can report that unconditionally, the additional efforts in that area have paid off. Our department culture has had a palpable shift, and we are taking noteworthy steps toward addressing the department’s core responsibilities consistent with the city’s strategic plan. As of this writing, our department is fully staffed, and the potential brought in by our fresh staff has me incredibly optimistic moving into 2024.

As it relates to crime trends within the city, 2023 showed a decline in all areas related to “index crimes” which encompass the more serious criminal acts. As far as the “non-index” or less serious criminal matters are concerned, there were slight upticks in simple assaults, fraud, shoplifting and family offenses but the increases in all areas were very marginal. As we move into 2024, I feel that a disclaimer may be warranted as it relates to our metrics in all areas. With our staffing changes, the department has embraced the true community policing philosophy. One of the primary tenets of that philosophy is self-initiated activity so that our department is effectively engaging the community. This change has resulted in some of the metric areas with enforcement totals that surpassed last year’s cumulative totals after one month. With that noted, there is a high probability that our reportable metrics will reflect significant increases. It is likely that the shift into a self-initiated mantra is going to dramatically skew those statistics and should not be a cause for alarm when reviewed. We are seeking out more actionable activity which previously has gone unaddressed.

With the support of city administrators and the City Commission our department was successful in securing a \$22,000.00 grant to outfit our officers with Axon cameras both body and vehicle mounted. The system is far more comprehensive and user friendly than our former system and has already proven to be an irreplaceable investigative and administrative asset. With the addition of the body cameras, we have joined other agencies in the area with a noted increase in FOIA requests related to cameras. We will continue to assess that workload and make recommendations and requests for management of it accordingly.

Staffing has already been referenced, but I would like to further expand on our staffing status. As noted, our agency is currently fully staffed to our allotted number. As part of strategic planning, there was robust and deliberate discussion on how, as a city, we would like to structure our hiring process. Due to shortages of law enforcement candidates at every rank, some jurisdictions have relaxed hiring standards to fill vacancies. The city administration and commission clearly put forward that they were not in favor of relaxing standards and we as agency should assure that we are hiring qualified, ethical, and professional personnel for police officer positions by emphasizing what St. Johns has to offer potential employees. It is worth noting that we accepted those parameters, turned applicants away, and currently not only are fully staffed but have received applications and resumes in the event a position in the department becomes available. This fact is even more impactful when understood that there are agencies within the county operating at 60% and below while attempting to attract, hire and retain qualified officers. As noted in the movie Field of Dreams “If you build it, they will come.” The community support for the police as well as what we have to offer potential applicants is being noticed and I could not be more optimistic regarding the direction our agency is moving in.

CRIME

INDEX AND NON-INDEX

The State of Michigan Crime Reporting System has two categories of crime: Index (Serious) Crime and Non-Index Crime.

Index Crime includes: Murder, Criminal Sexual Conduct, Robbery, Aggravated Assault, Burglary (B&E), Larceny Over \$1000, Motor Vehicle Theft (UDAA) and Arson. (See Table 1)

Non-Index Crime includes: Simple Assault, Larceny Under \$1000, Bad Checks, Embezzlement, Forgery, Retail Fraud (Shoplifting), Malicious Destruction of Property (MDOP), Disorderly Persons, Domestic Assaults, Child Neglect and Stalking. (See Table 2)

This department and the city have a long-standing tradition of significantly lower than average crime rates in most reported categories. As a trend, law enforcement agencies nationally have recognized that in order to be successful, departments must continue to seek out strategies that allow them to be progressive. For the most part, community engagement and frequency-based assessments to direct patrol resources have recorded the most success.



ST. JOHNS POLICE DEPARTMENT

CRIME

INDEX (SERIOUS) CRIME								
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Murder	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Criminal Sexual Conduct	9	8	8	14	6	10	12	10
Robbery	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Assault (Aggravated)	1	3	3	2	6	5	7	5
B&E (Burglary)	10	21	11	11	15	9	7	4
Larceny (Over \$1000)	3	3	5	2	1	3	8	4
UDAA (Stolen Vehicle)	1	2	1	3	3	1	6	4
Arson	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL INDEX CRIME	24	37	28	33	31	29	40	27

NON-INDEX CRIME								
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Assault (Simple)	12	9	9	10	10	22	14	17
Larceny (U/\$1000) Non-Business	52	41	16	32	33	19	25	24
Larceny--Business								
*Fraud/Bad Checks/Forgery, etc.	27	39	37	25	25	30	28	29
*Fail to Pay	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
*Shoplifting	2	4	6	0	4	1	1	3
Malicious Destruction of Property	27	24	14	22	31	22	28	20
Disorderly Persons	9	15	9	21	17	14	15	13
Family/Children Offenses*	8	29	17	28	17	24	26	27
*Includes: Neglect/Abuse/Domestic								
Stalking	1	1	0	3	1	7	10	2
TOTAL NON-INDEX CRIME	143	163	108	141	138	139	147	135

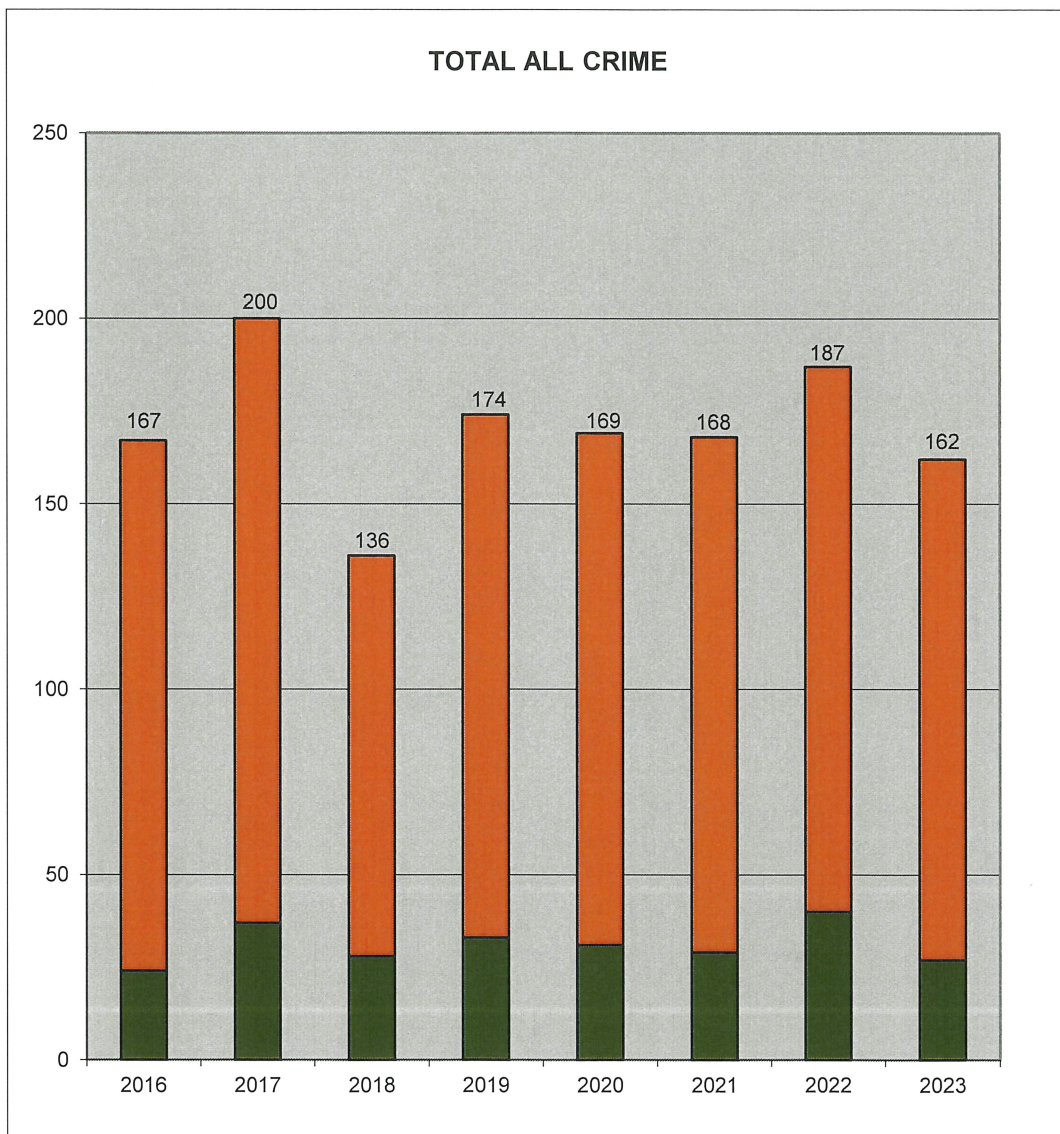
INDEX AND NON-INDEX CRIME								
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
TOTAL ALL CRIME	167	200	136	174	169	168	187	162

ARRESTS								
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Drug Law Violations	27	38	20	6	5	6	4	0
Liquor Law Violations	22	15	6	4	0	3	0	0
O.W.I.	36	23	33	14	18	18	5	4
Other Traffic	109	84	46	57	36	34	27	26
Warrants	86	64	62	46	46	47	13	6
Other	16	18	36	32	40	37	24	12
TOTAL ARRESTS	296	242	203	159	145	145	73	48

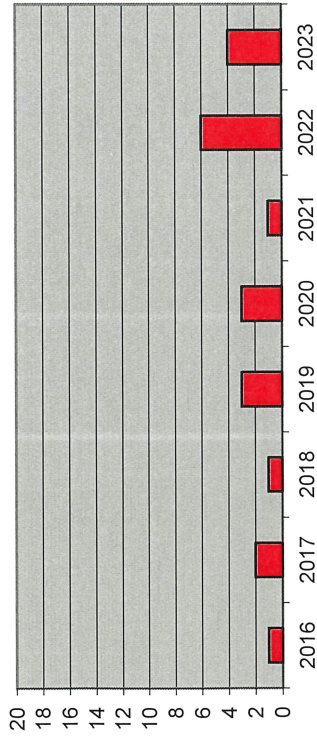
CRIME

BREAK DOWN OF INDEX AND NON-INDEX

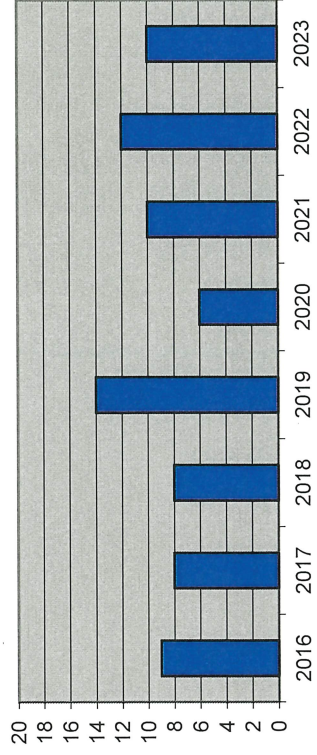
	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
Index Crime	24	37	28	33	31	29	40	27
Non-Index Crime	143	163	108	141	138	139	147	135
Total All Crime	167	200	136	174	169	168	187	162



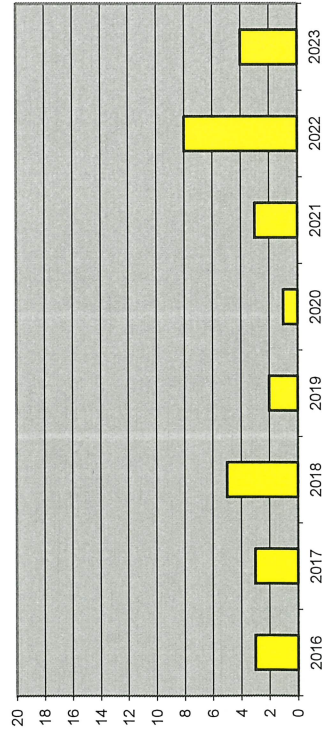
UDAA (Stolen Vehicle)



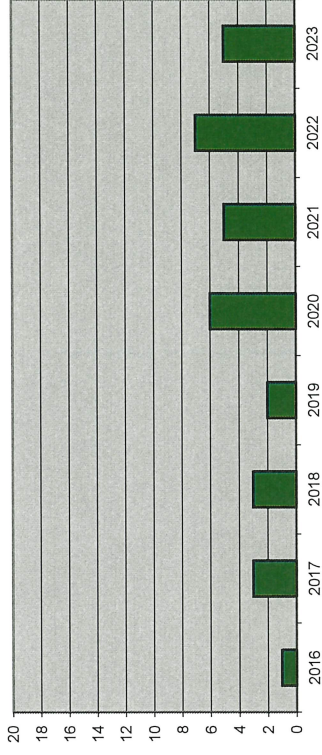
Criminal Sexual Conduct



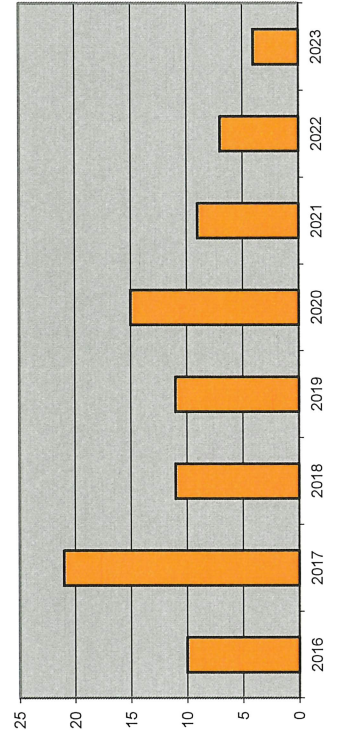
Larceny (Over \$1000)



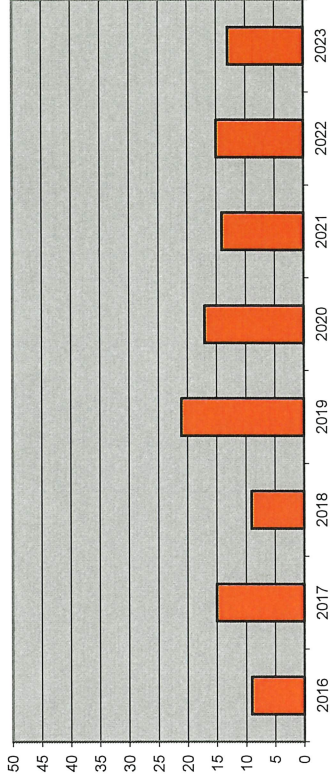
Assault (Aggravated)



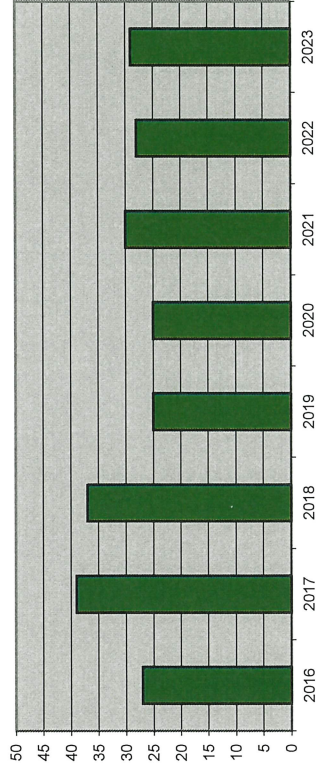
B&E (Burglary)



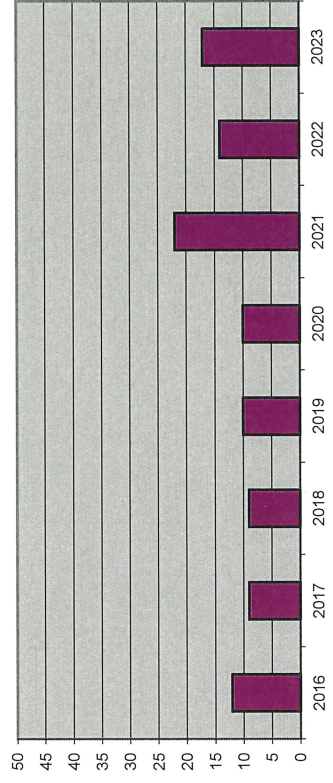
Disorderly Persons



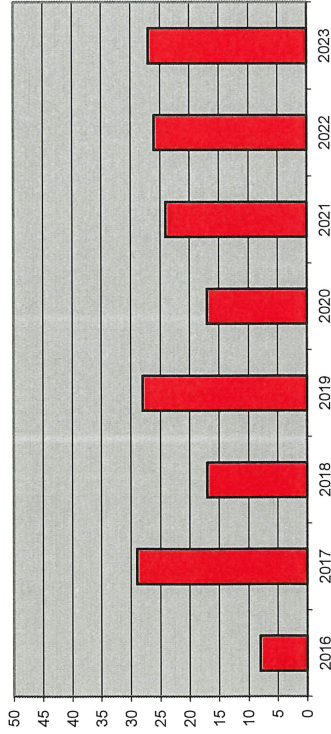
Fraud/Bad Checks/Forgery, etc.



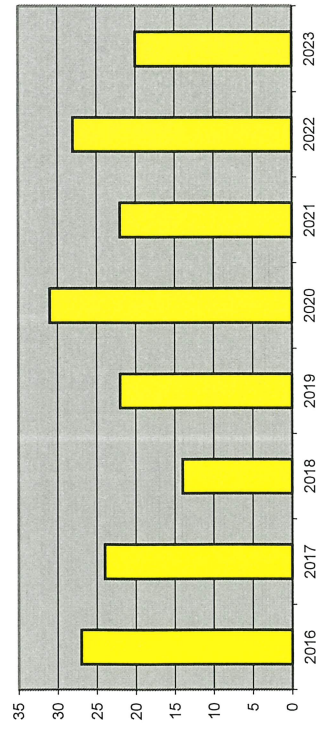
Assault (Simple)



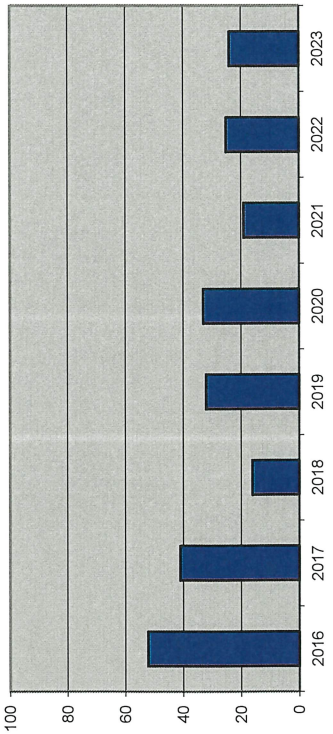
Family/Children Offenses



Malicious Destruction of Property



Larceny U/\$1000 Non-Business



TRAFFIC

HOW SAFE ARE OUR ROADWAYS?

Traffic numbers in 2023 saw some changes in terms of crashes. Injury crashes decreased from 24 to 15, property damage crashes went down slightly from 92 to 88, and private property crashes decreased from 65 to 52. Total state reportable crashes decreased from 116 to 103. Traffic violations and parking violations decreased from 2022.

A major part of reducing injuries is uniform presence, enforcement and education. To that end, officers will continue to be tasked to provide a recognizable presence to assure compliance with traffic laws. In 2022 we worked cooperatively with the city administration to secure two additional speed monitoring signs that have been utilized to both calm traffic as well as assist in collecting traffic-related data. Those signs were put into service on westbound Townsend Road and eastbound Walker Road.



ST. JOHNS POLICE DEPARTMENT

TRAFFIC

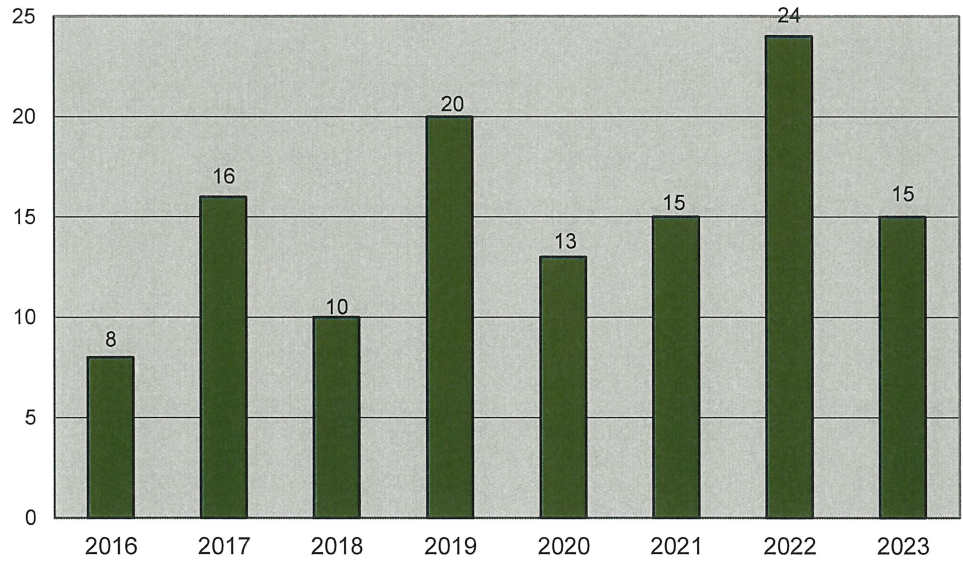
ACCIDENTS								
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
**Property Damage Accidents	91	97	113	103	92	82	92	88
**Personal Injury Accidents	8	16	10	20	13	15	24	15
Total Roadway Accidents	99	113	123	123	105	97	116	103
Private Property Accidents	77	62	56	69	54	61	65	52

TRAFFIC CITATIONS								
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Operating While Intoxicated	36	23	33	14	18	18	5	4
Drove While License Suspended	49	44	37	26	17	30	10	1
Reckless or Careless Driving	4	5	1	2	0	2	4	2
Speeding	191	139	90	102	80	121	15	8
Safety Belt Violations	53	73	32	32	13	8	1	4
Other Hazardous Violations	61	51	56	65	51	35	22	30
Other Non-Hazardous Violations	514	505	359	298	149	196	89	73
TOTAL TRAFFIC CITATIONS	908	840	608	539	328	410	146	122

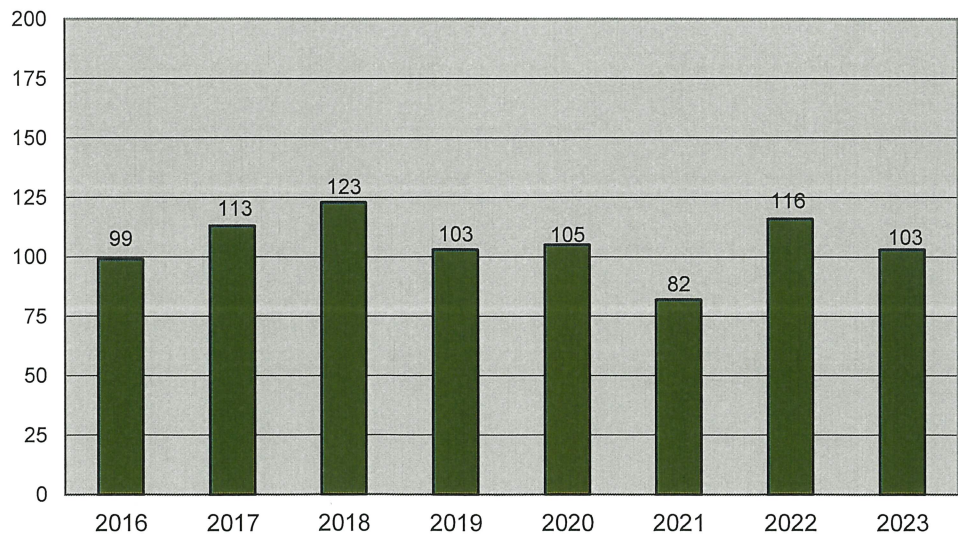
PARKING TICKETS								
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Parking Violations (Patrol)	829	765	606	581	721	822	901	628
Overtime Parking Violations (Downtown)	122	57	111	26	0	109	0	0
TOTAL PARKING TICKETS	951	822	717	607	721	931	901	628



PERSONAL INJURY ACCIDENTS



TOTAL ROADWAY ACCIDENTS



ST. JOHNS POLICE DEPARTMENT

GENERAL SERVICE

PROVIDED TO THE CITIZENS OF ST. JOHNS

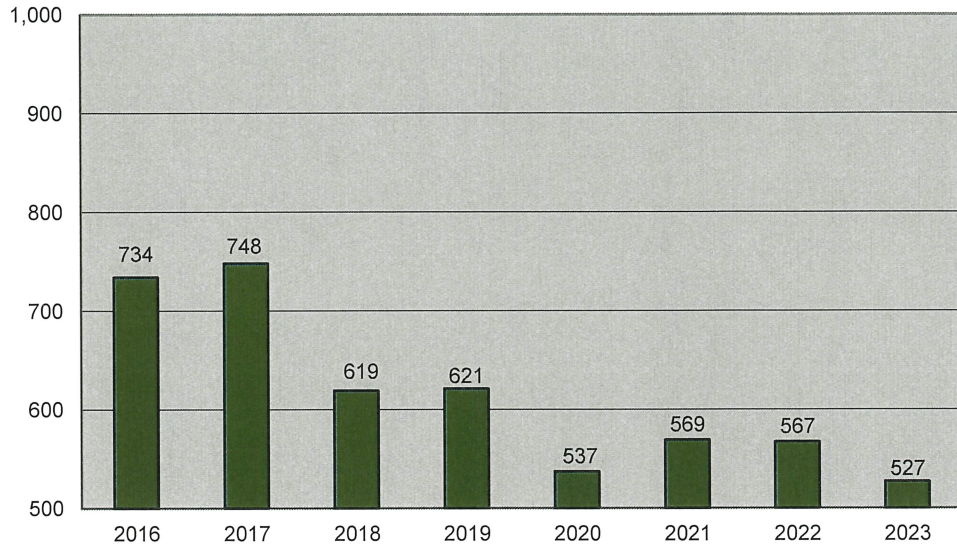
GENERAL SERVICES The St. Johns Police Department stopped providing lockout assistance part way through 2022, but we are still able to provide funeral escorts and subpoena service.

GENERAL SERVICE								
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Alarms(Business/Bank/Residential)	108	88	103	92	97	86	65	98
Funeral Escorts	63	64	67	59	60	93	65	58
Lockouts	281	256	240	236	164	170	145	n/a
Subpoenas Served	86	67	63	64	89	113	47	36

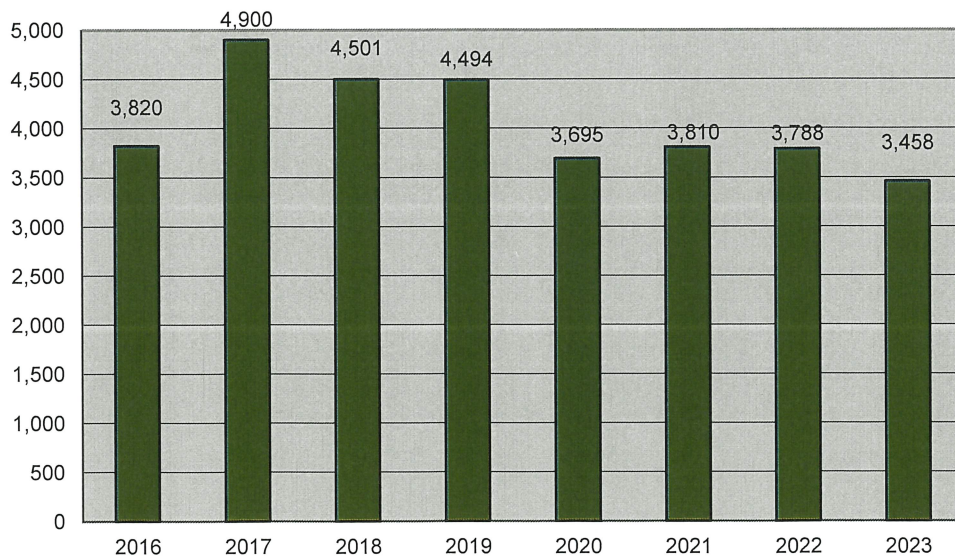
MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION								
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Written Reports	734	748	619	621	537	569	567	527
Calls Dispatched	3,820	4,900	4,501	4,494	3,695	3,810	3,788	3,458
Revenues Received	\$33,982	\$29,980	\$32,768	\$31,228	\$28,513	\$40,139	\$26,353	\$21,202



WRITTEN REPORTS



CALLS DISPATCHED



Community Events

National Night Out

This popular event was held at the City Park again this year and had a great turnout! Many residents joined us to once again celebrate a night out against crime. Those in attendance were treated to refreshments, bounce houses, games, a DJ, face painting, a JAWS demonstration by the fire department, as well as prizes and some water fun in the Spray Park! Officers handed out safety materials and had the opportunity to interact with the community, listening to their concerns and promoting city programs. This annual event would not be possible without the generous donations of time and money from several local businesses and service groups.

Fill-A-Cop Car

Our department organizes this event each year, joining with the Clinton County Sheriff's Department, DeWitt Township, Bath Township and Ovid Police Departments at five different grocery stores in Clinton County to collect grocery donations for local food banks.

Shop With a Cop

Our officers joined with officers from the Clinton County Sheriff Department and other departments within the county deliver Christmas gifts to kids. This is an enjoyable experience that our officers look forward to each year.

Assist PSD/DDA

We assisted with car shows, several parades, some additional new festivals, and hosted a safe Mint Festival and Beverage Tent.



GOALS

RESULT OF 2023 GOALS

GOAL: Continue School Liaison Officer Program and increase officer presence and enhance school/law enforcement relationships at all levels.

RESULT: Our contacts in and relationships with the schools could not be better. With the replacement of staff, we once again have specific assignments so the schools have a dedicated point of contact for non-emergent situations. As this relationship continues to develop, our officers routinely stop at a lunch for engagement opportunities and are always well received.

GOAL: Increase police visibility in high traffic areas with increased stops. The emphasis requested was not necessarily an increase in ticket numbers, but enforcement at a level sufficient to keep traffic operating prudently within the city.

RESULT: This is one of the metric areas in which the progress is impressive. In one month, we have already surpassed in some traffic areas last year's totals. True to our core principles, we continue to balance enforcement with education for our residents to assure we create a safe traffic environment while not sacrificing any of our positive community perceptions.

GOAL: Increase in foot patrols at events as a preventative measure.

RESULT: We are routinely downtown on foot making contact with businesses while providing a uniform presence in those areas. That presence continues to foster positive relationships with the community.

GOAL: Increase in problem oriented/intelligence base policing to concentrate resources in the areas most commonly impacted by criminal activity.

RESULT: We have and will continue to review daily activity reports as well as requests for additional patrol in conjunction with work assignments. There have also been some technology recommendations including security cameras and electric locks on public restrooms in hopes of reducing incidents in those areas as well as increasing the likelihood of successful investigations.

GOAL: Complete the downtown phase of the security camera initiative.

RESULT: The downtown camera project is complete. The investigative value of that system became rapidly apparent and played a pivotal role in investigating an accident in that area.

GOAL: Continue Lexipol policy roll out until completion.

RESULT: All policies have been completed and are in final review for issuance. Once completed they will be available to officers on departmental cellular telephones for ease of reference. On that front, our agency was requested to share LEIN (Law Enforcement Information Network) policies with Lexipol incorporated to be used statewide. Our LEIN TAC and Office Manager April Lech reviewed, updated and transitioned those policies into the system in a fashion stellar enough to be used by a large, national, policy provider.

GOAL: Work to make regular, reoccurring tasks as efficient as possible while adhering to necessary tracking and reporting standards.

RESULT: We have adjusted, requested the acquisition of and have plans in place some of which will assist in audited tracking areas (use of force, bias etc.) to transition formerly paper driven process within the records management system to an electronic format. I anticipate those will be completed by June of 2024.

GOAL: Increase employee satisfaction, overall wellness and subsequently employee retention.

RESULT: Although changing culture can be difficult, we are making substantial progress and receiving buy in on fundamental core responsibilities. Our members are being provided with not only the tasks, but also qualification on why it is necessary. The change has been extremely effective and I anticipate further success in 2024.

GOALS

GOALS SET FOR 2024

1. Complete and execute the Lexipol policy format.
2. Work toward transitioning away from paper format in favor of electronic format in all operational areas focusing on those related to records management. This includes but is not limited to evidence and property management, internal informational processes, and case submissions.
3. Increase specialized training opportunities for the officers.
4. Sustain hiring and retention standards focusing on job satisfaction within the ranks.
5. Continue improving concentration on core performance areas.
6. Sustain our problem based, prioritized response plan.
7. Assess, qualify, and potentially request additional staff. As noted in previous reports, our agency is still operating with ½ less administrative position and two less officer/specialist positions that were present in 2000.

The True Cost of Maintaining the Thin Blue Line

Once again, 2023 was a dangerous and deadly year for our police officers. 136 officers died in the line of duty. Of those, 47 were deaths by gunfire, 37 traffic related deaths, and 52 classified as “other”. A troubling trend was noted that although gunfire deaths were down, the number of officers being shot in the line of duty was 378 which is an increase of 14%. The lower fatality rate was attributed to medical advancement including tactical first aid being delivered by other officers.

Out of this total, one was a Michigan Police Officer. Please remember these law enforcement professionals and their families in your prayers. As these troubling trends continue, we reaffirm our pledge to seek the most contemporary and effective practices to minimize avoidable risks to our officers in all aspects of their operations.

Our department continues to recognize and appreciate your support and hope that 2024 is filled with continued progress and success.