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CITY OF MIDDLETOWN POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Date: January 12, 2018

To: Honorable Joseph M. DeStefano and Members of the Middletown Common Council

From: Chief John Ewanciw

Re: 2017 City of Middletown Police Department Year-End Review

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honor to present to you an in-depth review and analysis of the yearly activities and services provided by the City of Middletown Police Department in 2017. As you aware, the past year brought with it significant changes within the administrative structure of our organization, to include my promotion to the position of Chief of Police. I am eternally grateful for the opportunity to serve our great city in this capacity, and it is my pledge that I will work tirelessly to uphold the very high standards expected of me in this new position. Furthermore, I am confident that the appointments I have made of our most competent and capable police professionals will further our mission, and ensure that our agency continues to provide the highest level of professional service to our residents.

On July 31, 2017, Chief Ramon Bethencourt retired from the department after almost 25 years of service. This followed the retirement of Bureau Commander of Services, Gregory Metakes, on June 30, 2017, who provided almost 30 years of service to the agency. These two retirements were significant losses for our agency given the vast amount of knowledge and experience possessed by both individuals. We were fortunate, however, that they each left behind a legacy of professionalism, and our agency remains on a firm foundation that is more than 125 years in the making.

On many fronts, the Middletown Police Department reached important milestones in 2017. One of the most significant achievements was that the department promoted its first female supervisor, Sergeant Jacqueline Welch. Sergeant Welch is an accomplished member of our organization, with varied experience as a patrol officer assigned to the DARE program, as a Detective in our Detective Division, and as our "Accreditation Manager," responsible for our agency's continued compliance with the rigorous standards established by the New York State Law Enforcement Accreditation Program. Sergeant Welch is now assigned as the Unit Commander of our Community Policing Unit (formerly the Juvenile Aid Bureau/Crime Prevention Unit). I fully expect her to excel in this capacity, providing members of our community, particularly our youth, with outstanding opportunities for positive police interactions. She will also continue to assist with accreditation matters, with additional assistance provided by Police Officer Eric Harget.

In discussing our agency's accreditation certificate, I must acknowledge the exceptional work of both

Sergeant Welch and Officer Harget in assisting our agency in renewing our accreditation certification on December 12, 2017. In preparation for this event, the department underwent an intensive review of all of our policies and procedures. This took countless hours of preparation, and it is because of the great work of Sergeant Welch and Officer Harget that our agency will maintain our accreditation for another five year period, having now maintained this certificate continuously for 10 years. Accreditation is an accomplishment that only about 150 of New York State's over 500 law enforcement agencies have been able to achieve, and our participation provides many tangible benefits, the least of which is a more professional and capable set of police officers to serve our community.

In terms of police services rendered, our agency remained very active in responding to the diverse needs of the Middletown Community. The Patrol Division is the backbone of our organization, and remains the primary mechanism for handling emergency and non-emergency requests for assistance. Our agency currently has 65 sworn members, including the Chief of Police, and in 2017 we added our first ever part-time police officer in October. Officer Richard Hewitt comes to the Middletown Police Department with over 20 years of experience with the New York Police Department. He has been tasked with providing walking patrols and police service in the Downtown area of Middletown, as well as at large community events. Officer Hewitt will provide a valuable function for the department and the community, and we look forward to utilizing him for a number of events in 2018.

In 2017, the department handled 43,655 calls for service, an increase of 2,769 incidents above 2016 levels. This increase clearly placed a larger burden on our personnel; however, our patrol officers remained firmly committed to their duties. Across all units of the agency, our personnel effected 3,412 arrests, and issued 5,257 traffic summonses. Part I crimes, which are the major crimes listed in the FBI crime report, continued a steady five-year decline, with a decrease of approximately 1%. This is an outstanding accomplishment! These statistics should clearly demonstrate that our agency is working hard to meet the rigorous demands of our community, and that our officers will not waver in their support of providing our residents with the highest quality of life.

In furtherance of our agency's mission to protect human life and personal property, our Detective Division continued to play a pivotal role in ensuring the integrity of the criminal investigation process. Our detectives were responsible for the arrest and conviction of a number of violent and repeat criminal offenders. The division as a whole effected 268 arrests in 2017. A significant burden of proof exists to support the conviction of a defendant, and there is no substitute for a careful, in-depth criminal investigation to obtain that result. Our detectives handed 506 cases in 2017, to include two homicides that occurred only 1 week apart. These violent and heinous crimes placed an unprecedented burden upon our personnel, but the dedicated members of our Detective Division were up to the task. They worked feverishly to develop leads and suspects, making an arrest in one of the cases, while continuing to work every aspect of the second case in search of the person(s) responsible. Additionally, our detectives assisted patrol on hundreds of cases beyond those that were individually assigned to them. It should be noted that the homicide case from 2016 involving two month old Zachary Heil resulted in a guilty verdict and maximum sentence for the defendant, Michael Heil. This serves as a testament to the hard-work and dedication put forth by our detectives on every case, but this case involving a defenseless infant murdered at the hands of his father was especially grim and required special attention that our detectives did not hesitate to provide.

In addition to our focus on physical and property crimes, the Middletown Police Department has taken a strong position against the use of dangerous and illegal drugs in our community. Our Narcotics Unit has been instrumental in assisting us in working towards our goal of getting drug dealers and users off of our

streets and out of our neighborhoods. Our agency continues to handle more than our fair share of heroin related overdoses, as do many other agencies across our region. We have responded to this crisis not only by equipping all of our officers and supervisors with the life-saving antidote naloxone, but also by tasking our Narcotics Unit with devoting significantly more resources to the investigation and prosecution of heroin related drug crimes. The Narcotics Unit handled multiple long-term and complex investigations, utilizing resources from the local, state, and federal level to identify key players in the drug trade and arrest them. Overall, 39 drug related search warrants were executed in and around the City of Middletown, and significant quantities of dangerous narcotics were taken off of the streets. Additionally, several vehicles and over \$66,700 in cash proceeds were seized. Looking ahead to our future, the Narcotics Unit will look to maintain our pressure upon all drug suppliers, and utilize all available resources to keep our neighborhoods and schools drug-free.

While all of the statistics detailed above may seem important, they are only one aspect of the invaluable work that our officers perform every day while serving our community. It is no secret that many cities, towns, and villages across this country are experiencing a significant rise in the tensions that exists between members of the community and the police departments responsible for keeping them safe. There have been violent clashes and countless demonstrations demanding more accountability and professionalism on the part of all police officers. The root cause of these problems is not easily understood; however, I believe that there are certain simple measures that can be taken to ensure that the Middletown Police Department maintains a close bond with our community. I have implemented a number of programs and outreach activities specifically designed to build stronger relationships with our residents and business owners. I also continuously look for ways to expand our Community Policing strategy, actively soliciting input from not only my personnel, but also members of other community organizations and the public. Finally, I have also mandated that our officers receive the most up-to-date and advanced training that will ensure that our officers treat every individual with respect, dignity, and professionalism.

During 2017, the City of Middletown Police Department sought to greatly expand our community outreach programs, and develop a bond of mutual respect with our residents. No other division within the agency was more important to this initiative than the Community Policing Unit. During the summer of 2017, we added a third officer to our Neighborhood Enhancement assignment, Officer James Schoenleber who was tasked with resurrecting our Bicycle Patrol Unit. Officer Schoenleber covered hundreds of miles, and worked closely with Officers Kristopher Bailey and Richard Regino in meeting with residents to identify community concerns. These three officers were involved in numerous traffic and narcotics enforcement initiatives that targeted specific neighborhood complaints such as speeding, atv operation, and other safety related offenses. The officers utilized multiple approaches, and sought to do more than just simply arresting or summoning offenders. These officers provided the department and the community with substantial benefits, and I will look to renew their focus in 2018.

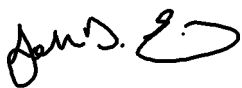
In addition to the Neighborhood Enhancement Officers, the Community Policing Unit organized and participated in a number of events, such as the City-Wide Clean-up, the Classic 10K, Family Fun Day, the Stars and Stripes Fireworks, the National Night Out Against Crime, and the Annual Holiday Tree Lighting. As in years past, these annual events required substantial planning and a large number of department resources, but more importantly they provided residents and visitors with a safe and highly enjoyable experience. One of our major developments this year was our close partnership with the Middletown Department of Recreation and Parks. Together, our two organizations developed several youth centered activities, which brought together our officers with younger residents to forge strong and lasting bonds. No event was more successful than our Jump-Out Barbecue program. For these events,

our officers randomly selected a park within the City of Middletown, and brought food, games, and several police officers to interact with the children in the park. The program was very-well received, and we will look to continue this practice in 2018. Other events such as our holiday “Cops and Cookies” event and “Cops and Kids Field Day” had similar themes, and provided outstanding opportunities for our personnel and our youth to connect.

As a component of the Community Policing Unit, Detective Kevin Brischoux of the Juvenile Aid Bureau worked closely with state and county law enforcement resources to provide a number of juvenile related criminal justice services and programs. Detective Brischoux expanded the Family Engagement Specialist Program, which provides juvenile delinquency diversionary services to young offenders. Overall, Detective Brischoux handled 209 juvenile cases and 28 adult cases. Officer Kristen Beebe, our agency’s Too Good for Drugs program coordinator, provided instruction to students in the four elementary schools within the Middletown Enlarged School District. This program remains an integral part of our agency’s approach to reducing drug and alcohol usage by our youth, and has enjoyed significant success. Additionally, Officer Beebe presided over three separate sections of our “Junior Police Academy” in July and August, which was well-attended by over 35 students.

Looking ahead to 2018, I look forward to expanding the programs and services that our agency provides to the City of Middletown. I am acutely aware of how very fortunate we are to have the close support and strong relationships with many community partners such as the Department of Recreation and Parks, Honor, federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies, and many other organizations. I also realize that in order for our agency to be successful, and to have businesses and residents continue to invest within our great city, our agency must provide the highest level of professional service to our community. In the 21st Century, police service involves much more than simple enforcement action on criminal offenses. It involves thinking outside the box to provide new opportunities for residents and business owners to communicate with our officers and develop meaningful solutions to complex community issues. I firmly believe that our agency is one of the premier law enforcement agencies within the Hudson Valley Region, and I know that I must continue to inspire the men and women of our agency to achieve our mission of reducing crime and improving the quality of life in order to maintain this coveted position. There are many challenges that exist ahead of us, yet I am supremely confident that we are well-prepared, and will meet and exceed the expectations of this community for years to come.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Ewanciw". The signature is stylized and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Chief John Ewanciw