

# Memorandum

## City of Lawrence

### Police Department

TO: Anthony Brixius, Interim Chief of Police  
FROM: Shannon Riggs, Police Lieutenant  
CC: Troy Squire, Police Captain  
Date: January 19, 2021  
RE: 2020 Lawrence Police Use of Force Reporting

#### **DISCUSSION**

In accordance with the department's Use of Force policy, twenty (20) Use of Force Reports were submitted to the Use of Force Review Board between January 1, 2020 and December 31, 2020. The review board reviewed all twenty (20) reportable incidents to ensure policy compliance as well as identify potential training and/or policy issues.

Numerous minor changes were made to the Use of Force policy based upon recommendations from Lexipol, the department's policy provider. Lexipol routinely provides guidance based upon proven best practices as well as changes to case law and legislative decisions. This aids in maintaining an up-to-date and relevant policy. No policy modifications fundamentally changed any portion of the policies during this time period but primarily provided clarifying language and additions based upon evolving community sentiment.

#### **INCIDENT SUMMARIES**

##### January 24, 2020: Intentional Head Strike

Officers responded to the 800 block of Massachusetts Street regarding a male pedestrian who was reportedly wearing a bullet proof vest and causing a disturbance by yelling at passers-by. Upon officers' arrival, the suspect was non-compliant, and an arrest decision was made. While attempting to arrest the suspect, the suspect punched an officer and slammed another officer on the ground. While on the ground, the suspect bit and fractured an officer's finger. The officer defended herself by intentionally striking the suspect's head against the ground. This resulted in the suspect losing multiple teeth. The suspect continued to resist but was eventually placed under arrest. He refused any medical treatment and was transported to the jail where he was booked for Aggravated Battery on LEO, Battery on LEO, Disorderly Conduct, and Interference with LEO.

##### January 24, 2020: Taser Deployment

Officers responded to a domestic disturbance in the 1600 block of Haskell Avenue. A responding officer found the suspect leaving the area in a vehicle and attempted to conduct a car stop. The suspect did not immediately pull over but drove to a nearby parking lot before stopping and exiting the vehicle. The suspect was immediately confrontational, non-compliant and ignored the

officer's commands. The suspect shoved the officer when the officer attempted to detain the suspect. The officer attempted two Taser probe deployments as well as drive stuns, all of which, were minimally effective. The suspect was eventually secured in handcuffs and arrested for Criminal Threat, Domestic Battery, Battery on LEO, Interference with LEO, and Criminal Deprivation of Property.

#### February 19, 2020: OC Spray Deployment

Officers were dispatched to the 1500 block of Tennessee Street regarding a disturbance. The caller was concerned that their brother was high on methamphetamine and acting bizarre. Upon arrival, the suspect was non-compliant with officers, continued to yell at relatives, and caused concern that he might become violent. Officers learned the suspect had a warrant for his arrest. The suspect refused to follow officers' commands when informed he was under arrest and was eventually sprayed with OC. The OC was effective, and officers were able to secure the suspect in handcuffs without a struggle. The suspect was arrested for the bench warrant as well as a subsequent charge of Interference with LEO.

#### March 7, 2020: OC Spray Deployment

An officer responded to a follow-up call in the 2500 block of Ridge Court regarding an adult autistic (high functioning) son who had been previously reported missing by the parents but had since returned home. The officer responded to the residence to confirm the subject's welfare and presence. While on-scene, the subject became irate and assaultive toward his parents, then began swinging a skateboard at them. In defense of the parents, the officer dispensed OC Spray, then attempted to take physical control of the subject. Another officer arrived on-scene to assist and was kicked by the subject while they struggled to handcuff him. Once restrained, the subject was transported to the hospital for medical and mental evaluation then eventually booked into jail for Aggravated Battery and Battery on LEO.

#### March 23, 2020: Injury – Seen by Physician

Officers were dispatched to the 400 block of Indian Avenue regarding a burglary that had just occurred. When officers began arriving in the area, multiple suspects were observed, and all fled on foot in multiple directions. An officer gave pursuit of a female suspect who refused to stop when ordered by the officer. The officer eventually caught up to and tackled the suspect, which caused the suspect to fall and the officer to fall on top of the suspect. The suspect received minor injuries (abrasions) and was transported to the hospital for treatment. Officers eventually determined the female to be a 16-year-old juvenile who was already in State's custody and had an active warrant for her arrest. The suspect was released from the hospital and turned over to the Juvenile Detention Center pursuant the arrest warrant.

#### March 24, 2020: Injury – Seen by Physician

Officers responded to the 5400 block of Rock Chalk Drive to check the welfare of an adult female who had been displaying bizarre and erratic behavior. Upon officers' arrival, the subject was uncooperative, but officers developed information that there were two young children at the residence who might be in danger or neglected. Officers decided to enter the apartment to check on the children against the subject's wishes due to exigent circumstances. During this time, the

subject attacked the officers by pushing, attempting to strike with a cane and eventually biting and scratching one of the officers. At the conclusion of the incident, the subject claimed to be injured as a result of struggling with officers. She was transported to the hospital for medical and mental evaluations. The subject was not determined to be injured and was eventually booked into jail for Endangering a Child and Battery on LEO.

#### May 2, 2020: OC Spray Deployment

An officer was dispatched to a disturbance in the 1200 block of Prospect Avenue where a subject was reportedly having a psychotic break and was yelling and acting bizarre. Upon the officer's arrival, the subject disrobed, exposed his penis to the officer, and approached the officer in an aggressive manner. When the officer presented her taser, the subject turned and fled into the neighborhood while still completely nude. The subject was eventually cornered inside a shed where he remained uncooperative. The decision was made to take him into custody for an emergency mental health assessment. An officer dispensed OC Spray on the subject and after a brief struggle, the male was safely taken into custody and transported to the hospital.

#### May 4, 2020: OC Spray Deployment

Officers were dispatched to the 2700 block of Grand Circle Avenue for a reported domestic disturbance. Upon arrival, it was determined an involved female had already left the scene, but a male subject was out in the street yelling. As soon as officers arrived, the suspect immediately turned his attention toward an officer and approached in assaultive manner while yelling threats of violence. The male yelled that he was going to kill the officer while clenching his fists and attempting to get close to the officer. Eventually, the male was sprayed with OC Spray and taken into custody after a brief physical struggle. He was arrested for Criminal Threat and Assault on LEO.

#### May 22, 2020: Taser Deployment

Officers were dispatched to the 1700 block of W. 24<sup>th</sup> Street where witnesses reported a female exited a nearby apartment, began tearing things up and challenging random people to fight in a public parking lot. She then reportedly wandered away from the scene. A short time later, an officer located the suspect in a parking lot in the 2500 block of Iowa and noted she was acting bizarre and aggressive. As soon as the officer attempted to speak with the suspect, she became verbally aggressive toward the officer, assumed a fighting stance and began lunging toward the officer. The officer attempted to deploy his taser but there was a probe disconnect and the taser was ineffective. A second officer on scene deployed his taser, which was effective, and the officers were able to take the suspect into custody without further incident. The suspect was arrested for Assault on LEO and Interference with LEO.

#### May 25, 2020: OC Spray Deployment

Officers responded to a residence in the 1100 block of Tennessee Street for a domestic battery. As a result of the investigation they were obligated to arrest a male suspect at the residence. The male was uncooperative and refused to come out of a small, cluttered room and submit to the arrest. After a long period of negotiations, officers were forced to go into the room to make the arrest. An officer deployed OC Spray on the suspect, which was effective, and officers were

able to take him into custody after a short struggle. The suspect was arrested for Domestic Battery, Criminal Damage to Property, and Interference with LEO.

#### July 8, 2020: OC Spray Deployment

Officers responded to a business in the 1800 block of Massachusetts Street in reference to a trespasser. Officers contacted a male sitting outside the business with multiple signs and clutter surrounding him. The male refused to leave the property even after the officer attempted to work out alternative places where the male could go. Eventually an arrest decision was made, and the male refused to comply with the officer's commands or submit to the arrest. The officer deployed OC Spray upon the suspect, which was effective, and the suspect became compliant and allowed the officer to handcuff him. The suspect was booked into jail for Criminal Trespass and Interference with LEO.

#### July 25, 2020: OC Spray Deployment

Officers were dispatched to the 400 block of Illinois Street regarding a male, who was suspected to be under the influence of PCP, causing a disturbance. Officers contacted the male on the street, who was immediately confrontational and threatening toward officers while at the same time making threats of violence toward people at nearby residences. The suspect threatened to harm officers if they even asked him a question. Once a decision to arrest the suspect was made, the suspect refused to comply with being handcuffed and was subsequently sprayed with OC Spray. The suspect continued to physically resist officers' attempts to handcuff him, but he was eventually taken into custody. After being restrained in handcuffs, the suspect announced he had COVID-19 and spat on one of the officers. He was arrested for Battery on LEO, Criminal Threat, and Interference with LEO.

#### August 5, 2020: Injury – Seen by Physician

Officers were dispatched to a motel in the 700 block of Iowa Street in reference to a disturbance where two intoxicated males were disturbing the peace at the business. Upon arrival, officers attempted to get the males to calm down and go into their rooms. The intoxicated males would not comply and continued to be loud outside and accost other guests at the motel. Officers decided to arrest the males for Disorderly Conduct. One of the males attempted to flee from the officers on foot and ran to the second-floor landing of the motel. Officers caught up with the suspect and attempted to handcuff him, but he physically resisted. An officer used an Arm-Bar technique to take the suspect to the ground to establish control. As the suspect went to the ground, his head inadvertently struck the balcony railing, causing the suspect to be knocked unconscious with a laceration to the head. The male was treated at the hospital and subsequently booked into jail for Disorderly Conduct and Interference with LEO.

#### August 14, 2020: Taser Deployment

Officers were dispatched to a domestic disturbance at a residence in the 500 block of Florida. Upon arrival, they learned the female suspect had an argument with the male victim, went outside and broke out a window of his car with a wrench, then retreated into the residence. Upon attempting to contact the suspect, she barricaded herself in a bedroom and claimed she had a gun. Officers were able to determine the gun was a BB gun and recognized the female was

attempting to commit "suicide-by-cop" as she leveled the BB gun at officers stating she was going to shoot them. When officers did not shoot, the female set the bedroom on fire. An officer successfully deployed a Taser on the suspect, which allowed them to enter the room and secure the suspect in handcuffs while other officers extinguished the fire. Once the scene was under control, the suspect had a medical emergency (seizure). She was transported to the hospital for treatment then booked into jail for Aggravated Assault on LEO, Interference with LEO, Aggravated Arson, and Criminal Damage to Property.

#### September 20, 2020: Possible Injury – Seen by Physician

Officers were dispatched to a residence in the 1600 block of Haskell Avenue in reference to a domestic dispute. The victim reported her boyfriend had battered her then left the scene. Based upon the investigation, it was determined the suspect, if located, would be arrested for domestic violence related charges. A short time later, officers located the suspect in a business parking lot in the 1800 block of Massachusetts Street. When officers attempted to arrest the suspect, he resisted by flexing and attempting to prevent them from handcuffing him. The suspect was taken to the ground and handcuffed after a short struggle. The suspect claimed he had struck his head on the ground. There was no visible evidence of this, but officers transported him to the hospital to be seen by a physician as a precaution. Once medically cleared, the suspect was booked into jail for Domestic Battery, Criminal Threat, Criminal Restraint, and Interference with LEO.

#### September 30, 2020: OC Spray Deployment

Officers were dispatched to the area of Iowa and Bob Billings Pkwy for a male running into the street. Upon arrival, officers found the subject, believed to be high on PCP, who was making incoherent statements, displaying erratic behavior, and refusing to communicate with officers. Based upon concern the male was a danger to himself and/or others, officers decided to place the male into emergency detention and have him transported to a medical facility. When officers attempted to corral the subject, he fled into a nearby neighborhood. A short time later, officers located the subject sitting in bushes just outside a residence. The male would not comply with officers' orders to come out of the bushes and officers eventually decided to go into the bushes to retrieve him. An officer deployed OC Spray, which had no noticeable effect on the subject. After a short physical struggle, officers were able to place the subject in restraints and deliver him to the hospital for an evaluation. He was released at the hospital and a request for consideration of municipal violations, Pedestrian Unlawfully in the Roadway and Interference with LEO, were forwarded to the Municipal prosecutors.

#### November 7, 2020: Taser Deployment

Officers were dispatched to the 500 block of California Street in reference to a suicidal subject. A female reported her boyfriend was blocking her vehicle in, not allowing her to leave, and he was actively cutting himself with a knife. The female was locked inside her vehicle and the male subject was standing outside the vehicle. Upon officers' arrival, they found the subject standing outside the female's vehicle, bleeding from apparent lacerations to his arms. The subject refused to drop the knife and demanded that the officers shoot him. He would not otherwise comply or engage the officers in communication. The subject then began slicing his arm with the knife in the officers' presence. An officer deployed a taser on the male from a safe distance, which incapacitated the male long enough to take him into custody. The subject was transported to

the hospital for a mental health screening and medical treatment. Once released from the hospital, he was arrested for Criminal Restrain/Domestic Violence.

#### November 13, 2020: Injury – Seen by Physician

While investigating an unrelated incident in the 1700 block of W. 24<sup>th</sup> Street, an officer observed a leaving the scene (vehicle crash) suspect drive into the parking lot. When the officer attempted to contact the suspect, the suspect fled in his vehicle. At the conclusion of the pursuit, officers extracted the suspect and placed him into custody. Officers observed a laceration on the suspect's ankle that would possibly need stitches. The suspect also complained of pain in his knee, leg, and shoulder. The suspect was transported to the hospital for treatment. It was determined that the suspect's injuries were likely caused from the vehicle crash he had been recently involved and not during the physical arrest. A use of force review was requested out of precaution. The suspect was released from the hospital and booked into jail for Flee/Attempt to Elude, Failure to Report an Accident, No Valid Driver's License, No Insurance, and Reckless Driving.

#### November 30, 2020: Taser Deployment

Officers were initially dispatched to the 2300 block of Iowa regarding an intoxicated subject who had been the focus of numerous calls from citizens in the area for yelling at people, urinating in public, and disturbing the peace. He was initially contacted, cited and released. However, the male continued his behavior and officers decided to arrest him. The suspect refused to comply with officers' commands and threatened to strike officers with a belt he was holding in one hand while holding a large glass jar in his other hand. One officer deployed two Taser cartridges, but both were ineffective due to clothing disconnects. A second officer deployed a Taser cartridge with another clothing disconnect but was able to achieve partial NMI with a second deployment. This provided a window of opportunity for officers to move in and take physical control of the suspect and he was restrained without further incident. After a medical evaluation, the suspect was booked into jail for Criminal Threat, Aggravated Assault on LEO, Battery on LEO, Interference, Disorderly Conduct, and Consumption of Liquor in Public.

#### December 20, 2020: Injury – Seen by Physician

Officers responded to the 3000 block of Havrone Way in reference to an intoxicated male damaging a vehicle in the parking lot while yelling and screaming, prompting a neighbor to call the police. Upon officers' arrival, the suspect exited a nearby apartment and approached the officers in an aggressive manner, causing the officers to believe the suspect was preparing to attack them. The suspect also placed his hands in his pockets and refused to take them out to demonstrate he was not armed with a weapon. Officers eventually closed distance with the suspect and used a control hold to take him to the ground. The suspect physically resisted their efforts and struck his face on the ground during the takedown. The suspect was arrested for Interference with LEO and transported to the hospital where he was treated for a broken nose.

### **CONCLUSION**

In 2020, the Lawrence Police Department logged 60,643 calls, which includes officer-initiated activity and citizens' request for police services. From these calls, 1,786 individuals were arrested and taken into custody. Of the 60,643 calls, twenty (20) encounters resulted in reportable use

of force incidents. The Use of Force Review Board reviewed all twenty (20) incidents and found that in each case, officers operated within department policy. It should be noted that none of the reviewed incidents were related to formal complaints by community members or involved suspects. Each incident review was triggered by internal safeguards dictated by department policy.

The demographics of individuals of which force was applied in the twenty (20) reportable use of force incidents are as follows:

Race/Gender: White Male: 12  
White Female: 3  
Black Male: 3  
Black Female: 1  
Native American Male: 1

Age Range from 16 to 50 years of age

The following Kansas Statutes and Lawrence Municipal Ordinance violations were identified by arresting officers in the twenty (20) submitted Use of Force Reports:

Aggravated Battery on a Law Enforcement Officer  
Battery on a Law Enforcement Officer  
Interference with Duties of a Law Enforcement Officer  
Disorderly Conduct  
Domestic Battery  
Criminal Threat  
Aggravated Battery  
Criminal Trespass  
Criminal Damage to Property  
Endangering a Child  
Mental Health Emergency Detention  
Lewd and Lascivious Behavior  
Assault on a Law Enforcement Officer  
Aggravated Assault  
Aggravated Arson  
Criminal Restraint  
Pedestrian Under the Influence  
Flee or Attempt to Elude a Police Officer  
No Driver's License  
Leaving the Scene of an Accident  
Reckless Driving