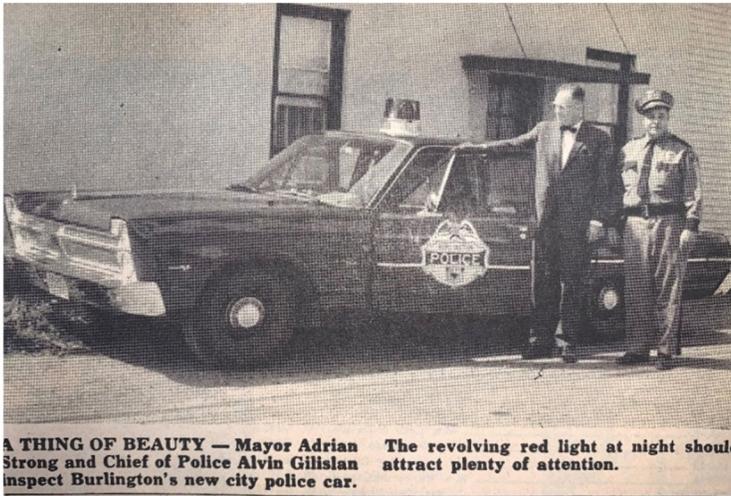


Newsletter

Winter 2021



**1965**

Mayor Strong and Chief Gilfillan with the new BPD patrol car purchased for just under \$2,000 dollars.

Today's patrol vehicles and equipment can cost over \$50,000 dollars.

## The Chief's Corner

By Michael Luvera

In recent newsletters, I have written about changes BPD has endured. These are not just COVID related but also include personnel changes and visual changes such as our uniform patch and patrol vehicle graphics. 2021 started with more organizational adjustments. We have flattened our organizational chart to improve efficiencies and communication throughout the agency. We have created two Commander positions. One Commander oversees detectives, training and administrative tasks while the other Commander oversees the patrol division. In February, Kyle Spevacek, a BPD member for over 30 years, was promoted to Commander. Commander Spevacek will lead the patrol division with a vision of increasing our community involvement.

Continued page 2



## The Chief's Corner continued:

Our Senators and Representatives have been busy in Olympia and police reform appears to be the theme of the session. I am not opposed to change and hope that the magnitude of changes BPD has endeavored is a show of our commitment to improved, evolved and engaged policing. However, I am concerned that the basis of these reform efforts may not achieve the result intended. Prescribed “fixes” without first, fully identifying the root cause or considering the long-term impacts of legislation is troubling. Each city is unique and blanket legislation to improve one community can cause negative impacts on others.

I believe that Burlington could be the model of community and police relations that others could use for the betterment of their community. BPD understands the importance of community partnerships. The strengthening of relationships only happens when there is listening. Not just listening to spoken words, but listening to gain understanding and meaning. It is from this exchange of listening and understanding that we continue to evolve as your community police department.

**SERVICE**      **INTEGRITY**  
**PROFESSIONALISM**



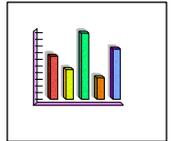
## CALLS FOR SERVICE

Yearly, BPD receives 190 calls for assistance, every week of the year. In addition, officers conduct about 1,600 traffic stops each year.

How long does an officer spend on each call?

This depends on a variety of factors. A call for a found purse or wallet sounds quite simple but can take up to 1 hour. The officer will need to respond and retrieve the item; attempt to locate the owner; if the owner cannot be immediately found, the item must be logged and booked into our

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## CITY OPERATIONS

**City staff continue to work diligently, doing our best to offer services and provide services to you, our community. We are prepared to fully open and are excited to get back to some normalcy, when the time comes. For now, offices remain closed to walk in public access but we can be reached via email and telephone.**

See [www.burlingtonwa.gov](http://www.burlingtonwa.gov) for the latest updates and contact information for services.

## Continued **CALLS FOR SERVICE**

property room, and finally the officer must complete a report to document all of the activity.

Other calls can take several hours involving several officers, such as an arrest for domestic violence. Serious and complex calls may necessitate one or more, detectives being sent to the scene which could include hundreds of hours of follow up investigation.

A traffic stop with no citation issued, can take 10 minutes. A traffic stop resulting in arrests such as DUI could cause the officers to spend 3 or 4 hours on just that call. The workload of the DUI continues into the future with officer time spent at Court hearings and testifying at trial.

## Town Laws and Rules of early 1900

Section XIII. Any person selling intoxicating liquors in the Town of Burlington without having first obtained a license therefore shall be fined in any sum not less than \$25.00 or more than \$100.00 and such person may be imprisoned in the city or county jail until such fine and costs of suit are paid.

Burlington incorporated as a town in 1902. The third ordinance written (literally hand-written), established laws around intoxicating liquors. Ordinance 3, Section 8 called for a fine of "not less than \$25.00" if someone sold liquor without a license.

\*For our younger readers this style of writing is cursive. Ask your parents or grandparents to help with the translation.



# Stay Connected

Burlington City Council Meetings are held via telephone at 7:00 pm on the second and fourth Thursday of each month. Go to [Burlingtonwa.gov](http://Burlingtonwa.gov) for call-in information.

## INFORMATION NEEDED



**Burlington Woman And Son Are Responsible For Emergency Calls**

MRS. GERTRUDE WATKINSON, 77, takes up a natural pose on the Burlington emergency extension phone which is in her bedroom. She and her son are on duty 24 hours per day and have been for the past 10 years.

Residents of Burlington are apt to spot the red emergency light atop the power pole at Fairhaven and Cherry burning brightly most any of these foggy or rainy mornings. But chances are it never burns very long, before the policeman on duty starts trying to find the problem. The light can be seen from most of Burlington.

And who is responsible for that light being on? Gertrude Watkinson, 77, and her son, Woody, have taken the responsibility for the past 10 years. One of them is on duty 24 hours per day to answer emergency fire and police calls, all for only \$125 per month. They have an extension of the police phone in their home and if it rings more than a couple of times they know nobody is at the station to answer it.

The busiest time, says Mrs. Watkinson is Friday night when the phone is continually ringing.

But she says any success she and Woody have ever enjoyed in reporting emergencies can be credited to the police and fire departments in Burlington. The morning this reporter talked to her, a fire call had come in at 8:45 and a fire truck manned by volunteers was on its way within four minutes.

Mrs. Watkinson couldn't give any estimate of the total number of calls she receives each month, but she said, it is a lot of them.

Mrs. Watkinson moved to Burlington from Annapolis, Washington, 14 years ago and after working several other places, took a job as cashier for West Coast Telephone Company in Burlington 10 years ago. Manning the emergency phone was part of her duties and when the office moved to Everett five years ago she retained that part of her job.

She and Woody have continued to live in the old telephone building.

In 1963, those in need of a Burlington police officer might have spoken with Mrs. Gertrude Watkinson or her son, Woody. Mrs. Watkinson or Woody would answer the telephone, gather the information, and then turn a switch activating the red emergency light atop the power pole near Fairhaven and Cherry Streets. This beacon notified the on duty officer of an emergent situation.

The article mentions that Mrs. Watkinson worked for West Coast Telephone Company for 10 years (1953?) and part of her job was to answer the police telephone calls. It says that "five years ago" (1958?) the telephone company moved to Everett and Mrs. Watkinson remained living in the telephone building retaining the responsibility of answering the emergency telephone.

**BPD is seeking more information about our history. Anyone with information about the Watkinson family and their endeavors as the 911 telecommunicators of their day is asked to contact us at 360-755-0921 or email [pdrecords@burlingtonwa.gov](mailto:pdrecords@burlingtonwa.gov)**

# Did You Know?

- Based on 2019 figures, there are only 11,000 police officers in the State of Washington, serving a population of 7.615 million people. BPD is budgeted for 27 police officers.
- Can you guess the one letter that does not appear in any U.S. state name? (“Q”)
- Petrified wood is our official gem stone, adopted in 1975. In 2021 House Bill 1067 seeks to name the Suciastaurus rex as the official dinosaur of the State of Washington.

## PROMOTIONS ~ February 1, 2021

We are excited to announce the promotions of Kyle Spevacek and Preston Payne. Commander Spevacek (L) and Sergeant Payne (R) receive their oaths by Mayor Sexton.



**Congratulations Commander Spevacek and Sergeant Payne!**

**Burlington.WA.PD**



Burlington, WA Police Department 311 Cedar Street Burlington, WA 98233 [www.burlingtonwa.gov](http://www.burlingtonwa.gov)