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Job Satisfaction at the Marietta Police Department: A Comparative Analysis

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**Job Satisfaction at the Marietta Police Department:
A Comparative Analysis**

William J. Grogan

A Practicum Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the

Master of Public Administration

Kennesaw State University

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**JOB SATISFACTION AT THE MARIETTA POLICE DEPARTMENT: A
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....v

List of Illustrations.....vi

Executive Summary.....vii

I. Introduction.....1

II. Previous Recommendations.....4

III. Literature Review.....7

IV. Survey Methods.....11

V. Survey Results.....14

 Acceptable.....18

 Overall job satisfaction.....18-20

 If I could change departments without losing seniority I would change.....20

 If I received an offer for a better paying job outside of policing I would
immediately accept it.....22

 How satisfied are you with the current retirement system?.....22

 How satisfied are you with the process and selection for interdepartmental
transfers/vacancies?.....23

 How satisfied are you with supervisory support/backing?.....24

 How satisfied are you with the availability of your immediate supervisor
for “on-call” consultations?.....24

 How satisfied are you with the willingness of your immediate supervisor to
help in problem-solving and obtaining goals?.....25

| | |
|--|-------|
| How satisfied are you with the efficiency grading system?..... | 25 |
| How satisfied are you with the current appeal and grievance procedures?..... | 25 |
| How satisfied are you with departmental-community relations (handling of complaints/commendations)?..... | 26 |
| How satisfied are you with the current benefits: holidays, personal days, court time, etc.?..... | 26 |
| How satisfied are you with the current insurance coverage?..... | 27 |
| How satisfied are you with the compensation received for overtime court time, etc.?..... | 27 |
| How satisfied are you with the “approved off-duty” job policy?..... | 27 |
| How satisfied are you with the current education incentives?..... | 27 |
| How satisfied are you with the availability of in-service training or outside schools?..... | 28-30 |
| How satisfied are you with the current method for filing reports?..... | 30-31 |
| How satisfied are you with your present assignment?..... | 31 |
| How satisfied are you with the general job description/duties of your present assignment?..... | 31 |
| How satisfied are you with the department’s top administrators?..... | 32 |
| How satisfied are you with the educational requirements of new recruits?..... | 32 |
| How satisfied are you with the quality of equipment (radios, vehicles, weapons, etc.)?..... | 33 |
| How satisfied are you with the availability of equipment?..... | 33 |
| Borderline..... | 34 |

| | | |
|-------|--|-------|
| | How satisfied are you with the written promotional exam system?..... | 35-36 |
| | How satisfied are you with the current base pay and salary increases?..... | 36-38 |
| | Not Acceptable..... | 38-39 |
| | Other Comments..... | 39 |
| VI. | Conclusion & Recommendations..... | 40 |
| VII. | References..... | 46 |
| VIII. | Appendix A..... | 48 |
| | Appendix B..... | 51 |

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ILLUSTRATIONS

| | | |
|-----------|---|----|
| Figure 1: | Comparative Response Percentages..... | 13 |
| Figure 2: | Survey Results & Comparison..... | 15 |
| Figure 3: | Overall Job Satisfaction by Years of Experience..... | 18 |
| Figure 4: | Overall Job Satisfaction by Age..... | 18 |
| Figure 5: | Willingness to Leave Department if Would Not Loose Seniority..... | 20 |
| Figure 6: | Availability of In-Service Training and Outside Schools..... | 28 |
| Figure 7: | Written Promotional Exam..... | 34 |
| Figure 8: | Current Base Pay and Salary Increases..... | 36 |

JOB SATISFACTION AT THE MARIETTA POLICE DEPARTMENT: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 1997, Deputy Chief David Beam conducted a job satisfaction study of the Marietta Police Department as part of his practicum for his MPA. In 2002, Lieutenant Todd VandeZande completed a follow-up study of job satisfaction at the Marietta Police Department also as part of his practicum for his MPA. Both of them used a survey instrument designed by Dr. Mark Dantzler.

In the first study, the overall job satisfaction level of the Marietta Police Department had a mean score of 3.4 (Beam, 1997, 26). The survey contained 26 questions and although the overall job satisfaction level was satisfactory, many of the questions had mean scores indicating that improvement was needed. The second study showed marked improvement and the mean score rose to 3.8 for overall job satisfaction (VandeZande, 2002, 41). However, many of the questions had mean scores, which were unacceptable.

The current study used the same survey instrument, which was used in the two previous studies. There were 63 completed surveys returned, which equaled a 51 percent response rate. In this survey, the mean score for overall job satisfaction was a 4.1. This is an exceptional score. The inference from these results is that overall; the officers who work at the Marietta Police Department are very satisfied with their job. This is great news for the officers, department and the citizens they serve.

Fortunately, only two questions received a mean score considered to be borderline. These questions dealt with pay and the written promotional exam, both of which scored low on

the previous two surveys. This would indicate that the Marietta Police Department must take action to correct deficiencies in both of these areas.

The first area in need of improvement is the area of pay. Most police officers do not get into police work for the pay. In fact, most understand the pay of public servants is less than desirable. However, if police officers perceive that their pay does not compare well to other local agencies then pay does become a problem. The Marietta Police Department has done a fairly good job keeping the starting pay at a competitive level. However, they have fallen short as officers gain seniority and are promoted throughout the ranks.

As such, the department should immediately conduct a pay study comparing the Marietta Police Department to other comparable departments throughout the metro area. This comparison should closely examine the pay of officers for their years of service and at different ranks and compare those to other departments. In addition, the City of Marietta should treat the pay of police officers differently than the rest of the city employees.

The other area in need of improvement is the promotional exam. It appears that most of the respondents viewed the whole promotional process when answering this question based on several comments. The whole promotional process is in need of an overhaul.

A committee should be formed to study the promotional process, come up with recommendations and make the necessary changes. This would address an area which has been a subject of concern for a long time. Other recommendations include completing a job satisfaction survey routinely, increasing tuition reimbursement amounts and analyzing exit interviews to determine, more accurately, why officers leave the department.

JOB SATISFACTION AT THE MARIETTA POLICE DEPARTMENT: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Most police departments struggle with recruiting quality police officers and retaining them as well. There are many things to consider in the recruitment and retention of personnel. One of the most important elements in the retention of police officers is job satisfaction. There are many factors, that influence a police officer's job satisfaction level. Some of these factors include working conditions, retirement program, promotional process, pay, benefits and equipment to name a few. The Marietta Police Department, just like many other police departments, struggles with the retention of police personnel and is always looking for ways to improve the job satisfaction of its employees in order to improve employee retention.

As such, in 1997 Deputy Chief David Beam, while receiving his MPA at Kennesaw State University, completed his practicum on job satisfaction at the Marietta Police Department. Deputy Chief Beam's practicum was a comprehensive look at the history of the department and the changes that were taking place under the leadership of a progressive, new Chief of Police, Bobby Moody.

Specifically, Deputy Chief David Beam used a survey instrument designed by Dr. Mark Dantzker in his practicum to measure the job satisfaction level of officers (Beam, 1997, 12). Dr. Dantzker is an associate professor of political science at Georgia Southern University and a specialist in policing issues (Beam, 1997, 12). The survey instrument used was based on a Likert scale. The major parts of Beam's study included background material, the survey, a theoretical background of job satisfaction, results of the survey and practical recommendations.

In addition, in 2002 Lieutenant Todd VandeZande, while receiving his MPA at Kennesaw State University, completed his practicum on job satisfaction at the Marietta Police Department as a follow-up to Deputy Chief Beam's original study. Lt. VandeZande used the same Likert survey instrument developed by Dr. Mark Dantzker (VandeZande, 2002, 10).

In his study, Lt. VandeZande included the background of the problem, a literature review, the survey, survey results, recommendations and conclusions. Lt. VandeZande notes an overall improvement in the job satisfaction of police officers at the Marietta Police Department when compared with Beam's original survey (VandeZande, 2002, 41). Several of the original recommendations by Deputy Chief Beam had been implemented by the time Lieutenant VandeZande completed his paper, which seemed to have a positive impact on job satisfaction.

At the conclusion of his study, Lieutenant VandeZande made several recommendations that have since been implemented. These recommendations include providing pay for education, making changes to the department's transfer policy, and providing health benefits to employees upon retirement.

As a whole, the Marietta Police Department has experienced a number of changes since Lieutenant VandeZande completed his paper in May of 2002. In January of 2007, the department hired a new, outside Chief of Police named Dan Flynn. Chief Flynn replaced retiring Chief Bobby Moody who was Chief of Police for 10 years. Chief Moody was an agent of change for the department.

In addition, the department began giving incentive pay for education in 2006. A police officer with an associate degree now receives \$1,810 a year in additional pay, while an officer with a bachelor's degree now receives \$3,620 a year in additional pay. This program was well received by officers.

Another policy change involved the transfer policy. In previous years, the senior staff reviewed each officer assigned to a specialized position each year. The officer could be left in the position after the review or transferred. This policy has been amended and the review has been eliminated. Officers in specialized positions are now transferred based on the needs of the department and on their job performance.

Furthermore, the City of Marietta has changed its medical benefits policy. Now it provides medical insurance at 50 percent if an employee leaves after 10 years of service. An employee who stays 20 years with the department receives a 100 percent benefit.

This paper examines the current job satisfaction level of Marietta Police Officers compared to the previous two surveys completed by Deputy Chief Beam in 1997 and Lieutenant VandeZande in 2002. There have been a number of other changes at the department not mentioned specifically. One question to be examined is how these changes have affected the job satisfaction of employees.

An examination of current literature as it relates to job satisfaction at police departments is included. This examination looks at the theoretical factors which are traditionally important and compares those factors with the results of the survey.

In conclusion, the recruitment and retention of police personnel is often difficult. The results of this paper will help the department to identify any weak areas, that are contributing to low job satisfaction levels and strong job satisfaction levels and make recommendations accordingly. In addition, the department will be able to quantitatively measure the effects of the policy changes made within the last 5 years when compared to the 2 previous studies.

PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to understand and have a perspective about the improvement in job satisfaction at the Marietta Police Department, you must first have an understanding of the recommendations made by Beam (1997) and VandeZande (2002) in their respective studies and how many of these recommendations were actually adopted.

In 1997, Deputy Chief David Beam completed his paper titled “A Case Study: Job Satisfaction at the Marietta Police Department.” As a result, he had a number of recommendations to raise the job satisfaction level within the department. Listed below are his recommendations and a note about whether the recommendation was adopted or not. It is important to consider the recommendations that have been adopted to understand the progress that has been made between the three surveys.

Recommendations

- Adopt a Master Patrol Officer program with additional pay. (Adopted)
- Pay Field Training Officers. (Adopted)
- Increase tuition reimbursement to \$1,500 a year. (Adopted)
- Develop a career track program. (Adopted)
- Change the name of each division. (Partially Adopted)
- Develop a temporary assignment policy. (Adopted)
- Assign STEP and Bikes to Uniform Patrol. (Adopted)
- Civilianize some sworn positions. (Partially Adopted)
- Add 2 officers to training. (Adopted)
- Training unit offer in-service and firearms training. (Adopted)

- Evaluate FTO program and FTOs. (Adopted)
- Open lines of communications with supervisors. (Adopted)
- Create a Suggestion Board of patrol officers. (Not-Adopted)
- Involve more patrol officers on various internal boards. (Adopted)
- Combine various boards and name Risk Analysis Board (Adopted)
- Develop process for goal setting throughout department. (Adopted)
- Move assessment center responsibility to personnel. (Partially Adopted)
- Change transfer policy. (Adopted)
- Change evaluation and provide training. (Adopted)

It is, at times, difficult to provide hard evidence about whether a recommendation was adopted or not. In these cases, the suggestion was more generalized. Many of these suggestions are obviously being practiced since many of the concerns in Beam’s (1997) study were not prevalent when VandeZande (2002) completed his study or evident during the current research.

- Apply all rules and regulations impartially.
- Hire officers who are dedicated to public service.
- Fire officers who are not on board with the change of culture.
- Guide behaviors through reward and punishment.
- Change the value and beliefs of the organization.
- Create a positive culture through communication.
- Disperse members of the Rod and Gun club throughout organization.

In 2002, then Lieutenant Todd VandeZande, completed his study titled “A Job Satisfaction Study of the Marietta Police Department: Measuring the Progress Made Since

1997.” Many of the recommendations made by Beam had been adopted by the time VandeZande (2002) completed his research. As a result, the mean score for overall job satisfaction at the Marietta Police Department rose from 3.4 to 3.8. In his analysis, VandeZande (2002) also made a number of recommendations. These recommendations are listed below:

Recommendations

- Pay differential pay for officers with degrees. (Adopted)
- Reimburse officers who have student loans. (Not adopted)
- Develop a way to identify why officers leave the department. (Not adopted)
- Provide health insurance for officers who retire. (Partially Adopted)
- Do away with the Sergeant transfer policy. (Not adopted)
- Develop a mentoring program. (Not adopted)
- Adopt a formal survey instrument and procedure to periodically measure employee job satisfaction systematically. (Not adopted)

One of the key recommendations made by VandeZande (2002) is the differential pay for officers who have degrees. Once this measure was adopted, the department had an increase in the number of officers applying for employment who have degrees. In addition, the number of officers currently employed at the department returning to college has increased.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There seems to be a great deal of research related to job satisfaction available. This research is spread out among many types of professions. Some of the research includes “The Role of Selected Socio Demographic and Job Specific Variables in Predicting Patrol Officer Job Satisfaction: A Reexamination Ten Years Later ” (Buzawa et al, 1994), “Job Satisfaction, Burnout, and Perception of Unfair Treatment: The Relationship Between Race and Police Work” (Dowler, 2005), and “Police Job Satisfaction as a Function of Career Orientation and Position Tenure Implications for Selection and Community Policing” (Hoath et al., 1998). When examining the research related to job satisfaction among police officers, the majority of it seems to have been completed between the 1960s to the 1990s and very little has been done recently. However, a close examination of what research is available should shed some light on this topic.

Job satisfaction is an important topic to examine. Good job satisfaction offers many positive benefits to both the police employee as well as the police organization (Carlan, 2007, 75). In fact, one could argue that the community as a whole is better off if the police officer is satisfied with his or her job. When looking at the research related to job satisfaction among police officers, most seem to target the relationship between certain demographic factors and job satisfaction. These factors include, sex, race, education and time of service at the department (Zhao et al., 1999, 155-156).

Traditionally, police officers have been male. Only within the last 20 years have women started joining police departments in significant numbers. Because of this disparity, it would be logical to assume that male police officers might be more satisfied as a group than female officers. However, that is not the case. In 1998, Dantzker studied 2,734 police officers across 7

states and found similar satisfaction levels for males and females (Dantzker, 1998, 81). In other cases, women were found to be more satisfied and at times less satisfied depending on the department (Seltzer, 1996, 29). One explanation for this disparity could be the number of females employed at the department. One study, conducted by Gormley and Krimmel (2003) found that the job satisfaction level of female officers increases as more females are added to the department. Overall, there seems to be no significant difference in job satisfaction between male and female police officers.

In like fashion, minority officers, particularly African American officers, have faced discrimination in the past and may even face it today (Carlan, 2007, 76). As a result, African Americans may feel isolated in today's police culture. If this is true, you would expect African American officers to have lower levels of job satisfaction when compared to white officers. A 2003 study in New Jersey and Pennsylvania found slightly lower levels of job satisfaction among African American officers but this difference was not of statistical significance (Gormley and Krimmel, 2003, 76). Other research in this area has been inconsistent at best (Zhao et al., 1999, 156).

Another factor to consider is education. How does education affect the level of job satisfaction of a police officer? In general, the level of education among police officers has risen over the last ten years. This is especially true at the Marietta Police Department. One might expect that the higher the educational level of the officer, the more satisfied he or she becomes in their job (Zhao et al., 1999, 157). However, this does not appear to be the case.

In 1999, a study found that a police officers level of education did influence their level of job satisfaction but not in a way that might be expected (Lofkowitz, 1974, 225). In this research, Lofkowitz (1974) found that police officers who had masters degrees tended to have the lowest

level of job satisfaction with their job. Results varied from department to department. In a survey of 5 departments, Dantzker (1992) found that education was a positive influence on the level of job satisfaction.

The last commonly examined factor in job satisfaction levels is experience. Intuitively, it seems the longer an officer works at a department, the lower his or her job satisfaction level. According to Dantzker (1992), officers who are the most satisfied are those from 20 to 25 years old and that high level of satisfaction evens out between six and ten years. Other studies reveal an increase in job satisfaction over the years and through promotions (Carlan, 2007, 77). However, these results varied from study to study and department to department. Another study found the most dissatisfied officers were the new ones, which contradicts other similar studies (Carlan, 2007, 78).

Overall, there seems to be no clear consensus among academia about whether sex, race, education or experience influences job satisfaction levels among police officers. In fact, research in these areas has failed to provide clear answers. Instead, the research may suggest that there are more important and influential factors to consider when examining job satisfaction levels.

For example, police work tends to be a difficult job when compared to other professions. Police officers have to work in all conditions, in various situations and, in many cases, with limited resources. For the most part, the office for the police officer is his or her vehicle. All of these factors can be grouped as the police officer's work environment. In 1968, Frederick Herzberg found that work environment is the factor that influences job satisfaction levels the most (Herzberg, 1968, 56). Unfortunately, very little research has been done in this area, particularly with police departments (Zhao et al., 1999, 156-157).

Some of these work environment factors include achievement, recognition for achievement, the work itself, responsibility, and growth and advancement (Herzberg, 1968, 57). Conversely, work environment factors that lead to job dissatisfaction include company policy, supervision, relationship with supervisor, and work conditions (Herzberg 1968). It is evident that a police officer's work environment plays an important role in his or her job satisfaction level. This is an area that requires further research.

SURVEY METHODS

The data reported here are derived from a survey (see Appendix A) of the sworn officers of the Marietta Police Department. The survey used was the same survey, which was administered by Beam in 1997 and VandeZande in 2002. The use of the same survey made the comparison of the results with the two previous surveys simple and transferable.

As in the previous studies by Beam and VandeZande, contact was made with Dr. Mark Dantzker who originally designed the survey instrument titled “Job Satisfaction Survey.” Dr. Dantzker is a renowned expert in the field of criminal justice, and his Ph.D. in Administration is from the University of Texas-Arlington. He has also worked as a police officer and conducted research on various topics such as police job satisfaction, police chief requirements and police stress (Beam, 1997, 12).

The survey, designed by Dantzker (1994), is a Likert style survey, which was developed by Dr. Rensis Likert in 1932. The survey typically uses an ordinal scale for measurement and has from 4-7 responses per question (Allen and Seaman, 2007, 64). For example, the scale might run from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) or from inferior (1) to superior (5) (Allen and Seaman, 2007, 64). In the case of this survey instrument, Dantzker (1994) uses two different scales for measurement. The first scale ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The second scale ranges from extremely dissatisfied to extremely satisfied. Both responses are on a scale from 1 to 5.

Dantzker’s (1994) survey, which will be called the survey from this point on, contained 26 questions for respondents. In addition, the survey contained a comment section at the end of

the survey which provided valuable information. Unfortunately, only a few number of the respondents provided written comments.

The beginning of the survey has the typical questions or independent variables that most surveys have in order to aggregate the data to smaller groups with the exception of a few categories unique to police work. These independent variables included sex, ethnicity, age, rank, total years of police experience, level of education, whether college was completed before becoming an officer and afterwards, current shift, and current assignment.

Additionally, the body of the survey contained 26 questions or dependent variables for comparison. These questions covered a myriad of subjects including overall job satisfaction, whether the officer would change departments if they did not lose seniority, whether they would take a better paying job outside of policing, retirement program, written promotional exam, the process for interdepartmental transfers, supervisory support, availability of supervisor, willingness of supervisors to help problem solve, the efficiency grading system, the appeal and grievance procedures, departmental complaints and commendations, base pay and salary increases, current benefits, current insurance coverage, compensation for overtime and court, the off duty job policy, educational incentives, in-service training and outside schools, current method for filing reports, present assignment, job duties, top administrators, educational requirements for new recruits, quality of equipment, and availability of equipment.

In addition to the survey, a cover letter (see Appendix B) was attached to each survey. This cover letter was used for a number of purposes. The cover letter was used to inform the respondents about the purpose of the survey. In addition, the cover letter was used to explain the process of completing the survey, where to turn it in, how it would be secured, the nature of any

risk, and how the information will be used. Lastly, the cover letter was used to assure the respondent of his or her anonymity and the fact that completing the survey is voluntary.

In order to solicit the highest number of respondents, a copy of the survey and a cover sheet was placed into the mailbox of each sworn officer of the department. In contrast, the first survey by Beam was distributed in person at roll call and Beam had an overall response rate of 79 percent (Beam, 1997, 15). Likewise, the survey by VandeZande (2002) was distributed differently. In the case of the second survey, VandeZande (2002) had the survey distributed by each Shift Commander but did not remain in the room. As a result, VandeZande's (2002) survey had a response rate of 41 percent. In light of technological changes and time limitations, this survey was placed in each sworn officer's mailbox and an e-mail was sent to each individual officer asking for his or her assistance in completing the survey. The survey was placed in the mailboxes on Friday, August 24, 2008 and the e-mail was sent the same date. One week later, another e-mail was sent reminding everyone to complete the survey. In the end, 63 surveys were turned in which equated to a response rate of 51 percent. Although the sample is not as large as Beam's ample, it is still large enough to use for statistical analysis. The collection period for the surveys lasted three weeks.

SURVEY RESULTS

A total of 128 surveys were distributed over a three-week period of time, and 63 were returned for an overall response rate of 51 percent. Surveys were not given to the two Deputy Chiefs or the Chief of Police. Survey response levels across the independent variables varied considerably.

As an illustration, patrol officers responded at the rate of 44 percent, Sergeants responded at the rate of 66 percent, Lieutenants responded at the rate of 62 percent, and others, which were Commanders, responded at the rate of 100 percent. There was little difference in the response rate of males and females. Males responded at the rate of 49 percent and females responded at the rate of 55 percent. However, this was not the case with race. African Americans had a low response rate of 20 percent while whites had a response rate of 52 percent. Only two out of the ten African American officers completed a survey. As a result, it would be difficult to draw any inferences from their responses comparable to the representative group.

Furthermore, the response rates alone provide very little information without a comparison to similar surveys completed in the past with the same group. Listed below is a chart comparing the response rate results from the current survey in comparison to the response rate results from Beam and VandeZande's survey (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Comparative Response Percentages

| Category | Beam | VandeZande | Grogan |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Overall | 79% | 41% | 51% |
| Patrol Officers | 73% | 38% | 44% |

| | | | |
|------------------|--------------|--------------|------|
| Sergeants | 86% | 75% | 66% |
| Lieutenants | 100% | 25% | 62% |
| Other | 88% | 50% | 100% |
| Investigative | 96% | 35% | 26% |
| Support | 62% | 55% | 60% |
| Uniform | 76% | 42% | 46% |
| Females | 40% | 78% | 55% |
| Males | 81% | 39% | 49% |
| African American | 50% | 38% | 20% |
| White | Not Reported | Not Reported | 52% |

A close examination of the response levels from all three surveys reveals some interesting information. Overall, Beam's response rate was highest by a large margin. This may be due to his method of disseminating the survey. However, the higher response rate may also be an indicator of how dissatisfied the officers were with the department at that point in time. Fortunately, the response rate for the current survey exceeded that of the survey by VandeZande.

In most categories, the survey response was somewhere between Beam's results and VandeZande's results. There are a couple of exceptions to this statement. The response rate for Sergeants, African American officers, as well as for those assigned to Investigative Services followed a downward trend from Beam's response rate to VandeZande's (2002) response rate to the current response rate. Unfortunately, the current response rate only exceeded both Beam (1997) and VandeZande's (2002) response rates in one category. That category was other, which

includes Commanders, Deputy Chiefs and Chief of Police. The Chief of Police and Deputy Chiefs were excluded in the current survey and the Commanders had a 100 percent response rate.

In like manner, the results of the survey varied considerably from Beam and VandeZande's surveys. In most cases, the questions on the survey had possible answers ranging from 1 to 5, from extremely dissatisfied to extremely satisfied. There are a few exceptions to this, which will be explained later. In addition, there was a section for comments.

For the purposes of this research, responses are categorized and will be discussed in three categories; acceptable, borderline, and not acceptable. Both Beam and VandeZande categorized their results in similar fashion (VandeZande, 2002, 12). An acceptable mean score would be a 3.0 or higher. Although any response close to a 3.0 can still be improved upon, for the purposes of this report they are acceptable. The author of the survey agrees with interpreting 3.0 means or higher as acceptable (Dantzker, 1994, 80). A borderline mean score would be a 2.5 to 2.9 score. Certainly any response deemed borderline needs immediate attention. Lastly, a not acceptable response is any response with a mean of 2.4 or lower. These are the responses that need immediate attention.

Alone, the current survey has limited applicability and inferences from the results are limited. However, a comparative analysis of the current survey to Beam's survey of 1997 and VandeZande's survey of 2002 provides true meaning and perspective to the results and broader inferences can be made. Listed below is a chart comparing the results of the three surveys. Afterwards, responses will be broken down into the three categories mentioned earlier and discussed extensively (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Survey Results and Comparison

| Survey Questions | 1997 | 2002 | 2008 |
|---|------|------|------|
| Overall Satisfaction | 3.4 | 3.8 | 4.1 |
| If I could change departments without losing seniority I would. | 2.9 | 2.4 | 1.9 |
| If I received an offer for a better paying job outside of policing I would immediately accept it. | 3.0 | 2.4 | 2.6 |
| How satisfied are you with the current retirement system? | 3.4 | 2.4 | 3.3 |
| How satisfied are you with the written promotional exam system? | 2.3 | 2.7 | 2.7 |
| How satisfied are you with the process and selection for interdepartmental transfers/vacancies? | 2.7 | 2.9 | 3.5 |
| How satisfied are you with supervisory support/backing? | 3.0 | 3.4 | 4.0 |
| How satisfied are you with the availability of your immediate supervisor for “on-call” consultations? | 3.7 | 3.9 | 4.3 |
| How satisfied are you with the willingness of your immediate supervisor to help in problem-solving and obtaining goals? | 3.7 | 3.8 | 4.3 |
| How satisfied are you with the efficiency grading system? | 2.6 | 3.1 | 3.3 |
| How satisfied are you with the current appeal and grievance procedures? | 2.8 | 3.3 | 3.6 |
| How satisfied are you with the departmental-community relations (handling of complaints/commendations)? | 3.0 | 3.2 | 3.9 |
| How satisfied are you with the current base pay and salary increases? | 2.3 | 2.6 | 2.5 |
| How satisfied are you with the current benefits: holidays, personal days, vacation time, etc.? | 4.0 | 3.8 | 4.4 |
| How satisfied are you with the insurance coverage? | 3.6 | 3.3 | 3.9 |
| How satisfied are you with the compensation received for overtime, court time, etc.? | 4.0 | 3.6 | 4.2 |
| How satisfied are you with the “approved off-duty” job policy? | 3.7 | 2.9 | 4.1 |
| How satisfied are you with the current education incentives? | 2.4 | 3.1 | 3.7 |
| How satisfied are you with the availability of in-service training or outside schools? | 3.1 | 3.3 | 4.0 |
| How satisfied are you with the current method of filing reports? | 3.3 | 2.9 | 3.6 |
| How satisfied are you with your present assignment? | 4.0 | | 4.3 |
| How satisfied are you with the general job description/duties of your present position? | 3.7 | | 4.3 |
| How satisfied are you with the department’s top | 2.9 | 3.0 | 4.1 |

| | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|
| administrators? | | | |
| How satisfied are you with the educational requirements of new recruits? | 3.1 | 3.2 | 3.7 |
| How satisfied are you with the quality of equipment (radios, vehicles, weapons, etc.)? | 3.9 | 4.1 | 4.3 |
| How satisfied are you with the availability of equipment? | 3.6 | 3.9 | 4.3 |

As stated earlier, a more in depth analysis of the results may reveal important data not otherwise available. Each question will be examined and compared to the previous survey questions of Beam and VandeZande. In addition, a comparison of the various demographic factors will also be examined. These comparisons will be reported in the context of the results being acceptable, borderline, or not acceptable.

Acceptable

What is your overall job satisfaction?

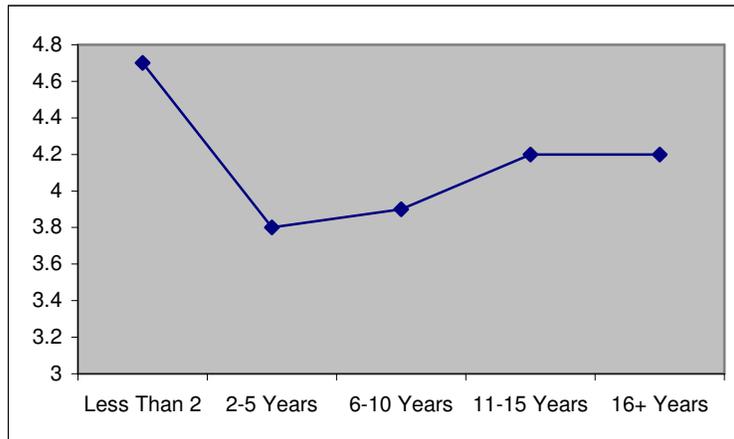
This question received a mean score of 4.1. This is a very high score and is an improvement over both of the previous surveys. This is certainly an indicator that overall job satisfaction has significantly improved since 1997 and somewhat since 2002. A break down of overall job satisfaction by various groups may reveal some variations by group.

In the original survey, the longer the officer had worked at the department, the lower his or her level of job satisfaction. This was also true when analyzed by the age of the officer (Beam, 1997, 26). In addition, VandeZande’s survey results followed a similar pattern with the exception of a spike in overall job satisfaction for those officers with 11 to 15 years of experience (VandeZande, 2002, 34).

However, the current survey had very different results. Those officers with less than 2 years of experience had the highest level of job satisfaction with a mean score of 4.7, which is expected. At the other extreme, those officers with 11 to 15 years of experience and those with

16 years or more had a mean score of 4.2 which was the second highest for this group (see Figure 3).

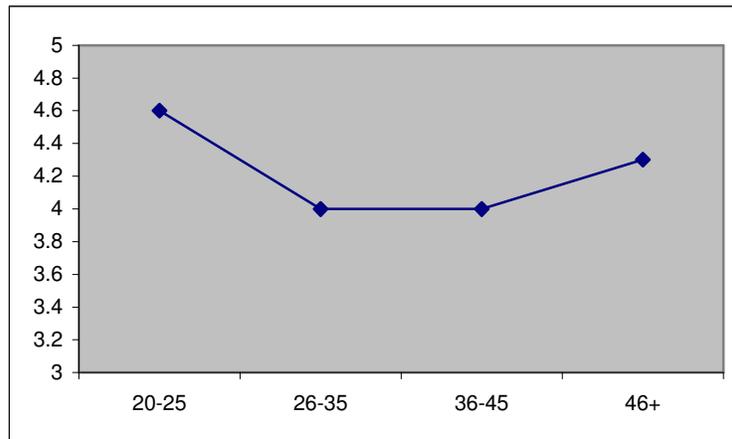
Figure 3: Overall Job Satisfaction by Years of Experience



There is no real explanation about why these results are so different from the two previous survey results. One explanation may be that many of the more senior officers who were in the original survey by Beam have retired. As a result, there are not as many senior officers who experienced the negative conditions present at the department prior to Chief Moody. Another explanation may be that the department is doing a better job of recognizing and rewarding the more senior officers than it has done in the past.

Similarly, the current survey results by age of the officer follows a similar pattern as years of service in contrast to the first two surveys (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Overall Job Satisfaction by Age



The only other significant variation in group results occurred in the gender group. The results of the current survey by gender were similar. However, when compared to Beam and VandeZande's results, females showed remarkable improvement. Female officers, in the current survey, had a mean score of 4.2 unlike the 3.3 results for Beam and the 3.0 results for VandeZande (2002). One possible explanation for this increase in job satisfaction for females is the promotion of a female, for the first time in department history, to Lieutenant in 2005. This was a much celebrated and long awaited event.

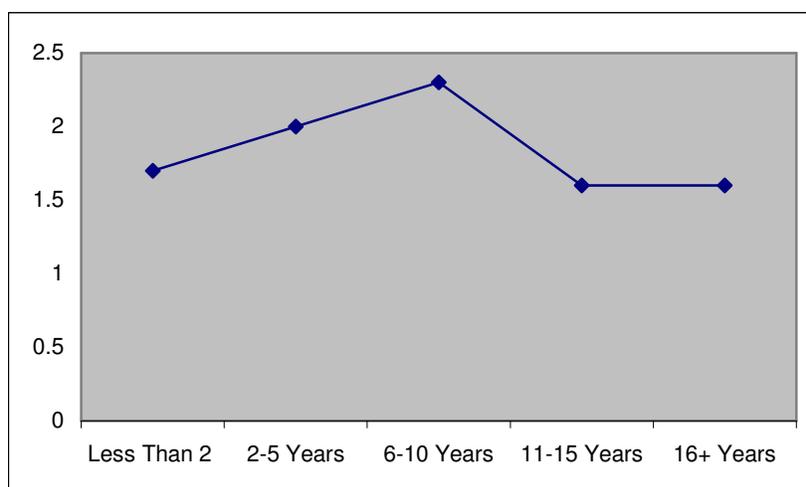
If I could change police departments without losing seniority I would change departments.

The scale for this question ranges from 1, which is strongly disagree, to 5, which is strongly agree. The mean score for this question was 1.9. This is a significant improvement compared to both Beam's and VandeZande's results. In Beam's survey, the mean response for this question was 2.9, which is fairly high. In VandeZande's survey, the results were somewhat better with a 2.4 response. However, both were still high compared to the current survey.

A close look at this question, based on the experience of officers, varies considerably when compared to the two previous surveys. According to Beam (1997), the trend was for

officers with more experience to be more willing to leave their job if they would not lose their seniority. In VandeZande's (2002) survey, the trend reversed with officers having more seniority being less willing to leave the department. In spite of the results from the previous surveys, the current survey revealed officers with less than two years experience and more than eleven were much less likely to seek employment elsewhere if they would not lose seniority when compared to officers with two to ten years experience (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Willingness to leave department if would not lose seniority by experience



As mentioned earlier, one explanation for this trend may be that the more experienced officers now feel their opinion matters and have something of value to contribute to the department. Of course the brand new officers are just starting out and the response for this group is what would be expected.

If I received an offer for a better paying job outside of policing I would accept it.

This question followed the same numerical rating as the previous question. A 1 equals strongly disagree and a 5 equals strongly agree. Overall, the mean score is 2.6, which could be considered a high score and is an increase from VandeZande's survey. Notwithstanding the fact

of the mean score improvement over Beam's survey result of 3.0, the small increase since VandeZande's survey is of concern.

In contrast to Beam's survey, the current survey identified the least experienced officers as the ones most likely to take a higher paying job outside of law enforcement. In Beam's study, the reverse was true. The more senior officers were the ones most likely to leave for a higher paying job outside of law enforcement (Beam, 1997, 29). One explanation for this change may be in the type of officer that is being hired at the Marietta Police Department today. The department is hiring officers with more education, typically new hires already have their Bachelor degrees, and these officers may or may not make a career out of law enforcement. Because of their education, they may perceive themselves as having other options.

In addition, the independent variable of age between 20 to 25 had a mean response of 3.4. This is an undesirably high score. As mentioned earlier, this very high response may be due to the education of the young officers as well as their view of other potential opportunities.

How satisfied are you with the current retirement system?

This question received a mean score of 3.3 compared with a 3.4 in Beam's original study and a 2.4 for VandeZande's (2002) study. One reason for the improvement in this area since VandeZande's survey is that the City of Marietta began offering medical insurance again, upon retirement, for employees. This was a benefit in the past and was taken away by the City for new employees and has been reinstated for employees along a graduated scale. The longer you work, the higher percentage the City pays for the insurance.

Unfortunately, the mean score for this question is less than Beam's (1997) original survey. This is somewhat surprising considering the significant gains made in almost all other areas of the survey. However, a logical explanation exists for these results. A couple of months

before the surveys were distributed; the City of Marietta made an announcement about the retirement system. Due to the poor performance of the retirement fund, all employees, except for a few in a certain class, are going to be required to contribute 4% out of their check each week into the retirement fund without any added benefit. Needless to say, this was a shock to most employees. The City also changed several other retirement type benefits including moving the vesting period from 5 to 7 years. If not for these changes, made just before the distribution of the survey, the results may have been quite different.

Only one comment was written in on a survey related to this question.

- “The retirement plan has been slowly eroding.”

Since this is the only written comment for this question and the question had a mean score of 3.3, this does not seem to be a big concern right now for most officers.

How satisfied are you with the process and selection for interdepartmental transfers/vacancies?

This question received a mean score of 3.5, which compared very favorably to Beam’s (1997) original survey of 2.7 and VandeZande’s (2002) follow-up survey of 2.9. This increase can probably be attributed to the change in the interdepartmental transfer policy (see Appendix B). This change was effective on March 1, 2008 and removed the automatic review of officers in specialized assignment after they have been in the assignment for 3 years. Instead, officers can be removed at any time for poor performance or for the good of the department.

Only the score of one group varied significantly from the overall group for this question. Officers who have been at department for a period of 2 to 5 years had a mean score of 2.8 for this question. This is a significantly poorer showing than anticipated. After careful consideration, one explanation for this may be the fierce competition for specialized assignments. Officers

within the 2 to 5 year range are the ones that usually have their first shot at applying for a specialized assignment since they have to have worked at the department for 3 years to apply for most assignments.

How satisfied are you with supervisory support/backing?

This question received a mean score of 4.0. In Beam's original research, this question received a mean score of 3.0. Beam was not satisfied with this result even though the result reached the acceptable level (Beam, 1997, 32). VandeZande's (2002) research showed some improvement with a mean score of 3.4. The increased score on this question may be indicative of the freedom supervisors have today to support and back-up the officers who work for them without fear of recriminations if they end up disagreeing with the leadership of the department. A change in culture has occurred.

Almost all groups had similar responses. There were no significant group differences except for two in the group experience. Officers with less than 2 years experience had a mean response of 4.5 and those with 16 or more years of experience had a mean score of 4.4. This is especially in stark contrast to Beam's results for the officers with 16 or more years of experience, which had a mean score of 2.5.

How satisfied are you with the availability of your immediate supervisor for "on-call" consultations?

This question received a mean score of 4.3, which is quite high. This compares favorably to Beam's survey, which had a mean score of 3.7, and VandeZande's survey, which had a mean score of 3.9. Overall, supervisors appear to be doing their job well. There were no significant group trends for this question.

How satisfied are you with the willingness of your immediate supervisor to help in problem-solving and obtaining goals?

This question received a mean score of 4.5. This is a very high score. In fact, this question received the second highest mean score of any question. This speaks well of the supervisors at the department and speak well of how far the department has progressed.

How satisfied are you with the efficiency grading system?

This question received a mean score of 3.3. Again, this response compared favorably to Beam's survey, which had a mean of 2.6 and VandeZande's survey, which had a mean score of 3.1. There were no significant group trends for this question with the exception of two responses. The mean score for supervisors was 2.9 compared to 3.5 for officers. This may be an indication from supervisors about their feelings about the complicated nature and heavy burden of completing evaluations correctly. In addition, officers with 16 or more years of experience had a mean score of 2.9. The current evaluation should be analyzed further and improvements made to it to raise the satisfaction level of supervisors, senior officers as well as the overall satisfaction level.

There was one written in comment for this question. The comment is as follows:

- "I believe that our evaluation system is too cumbersome and it has produced the "Halo" effect."

Again, there was only one written comment for this question and the mean score was a 3.3, which indicates an overall satisfaction with this issue.

How satisfied are you with the current appeal and grievance procedures?

This question received a mean score of 3.6. This is an improvement from the responses to Beam's and VandeZande's surveys. The mean for Beam's was 2.8 and VandeZande's was

3.3. This continued improvement suggests confidence in the department's appeal process and trust in the system. Another important factor to consider is the lack of grievances being filed. In contrast, there were many grievances being filed around the time of Beam's original survey. There were no significant group trends for this question.

How satisfied are you with departmental-community relations (handling of complaints/commendations)?

This question received a mean score of 3.9. This is a fairly significant improvement over the other two surveys. In the original survey, this question received a mean score of 3.0 (Beam 1997). In the follow-up survey, this question received a mean score of 3.2 (VandeZande, 2002, 23). The department's supervisors work hard to make sure officers are treated fairly when complaints are filed. In addition, a great deal of emphasis is put on commending employees for their performance. Since VandeZande's (2002) survey, the department instituted an award titled "The Difference Maker" award to recognize those employees who go above and beyond the call of duty. This award has been received positively. There were no significant group trends for this question.

How satisfied are you with the current benefits: holidays, personal days, vacation time, etc.?

This question received a mean score of 4.4. Both of the previous surveys received favorable scores. The mean score for Beam's survey was 4.0 and VandeZande's survey was 3.8. This question received the highest mean score of any question on the survey. There were no significant group trends for this question.

How satisfied are you with the current insurance coverage?

This question received a mean score of 3.9. This score indicates a high level of satisfaction. In Beam's survey, the mean score was 3.6 and in VandeZande's survey the mean score dropped slightly to 3.3. There were no significant group trends for this question.

How satisfied are you with the compensation received for overtime, court time, etc.?

This question received a mean score of 4.2. The mean response from Beam's survey was 4.0 and from VandeZande's 3.6. Overall, there seems to be a good level of satisfaction among the employees in this area. There were no significant group trends for this question.

How satisfied are you with the "approved off-duty" job policy?

This question received a mean score of 4.1. This is very high indeed. In Beam's study, the mean score for this question was an acceptable 3.7. However, in VandeZande's study, this question had a mean score of 2.9, which was a large decline. This decline can be attributed to change in the off-duty policy that was taking place at the time of distribution cutting back the number of hours an officer could work part-time and instituting a fee for employers to use a police vehicle (VandeZande, 2002, 17). In the current study, there have been no recent changes to the part-time job policy, which indicates the temporary dissatisfaction attributed to the previous change in policy has been assuaged. There were no significant group trends for this question.

How satisfied are you with the current educational incentives?

This question received a mean score of 3.7, which indicates a good level of satisfaction with the educational incentives. In the original research, the mean score for this question was a disappointing 2.4 (Beam, 1997, 33). Several of the suggestions offered by Beam were implemented and the subsequent response to this question improved to a 3.1 (VandeZande, 2002,

14-15). However, a 3.1 response is still low for this question. A recommendation was made to offer pay for education in the follow-up survey (VandeZande , 2002, 43).

As of the end of 2005, this recommendation was adopted. The City of Marietta's new pay plan paid each officer an additional \$1,810 for an associates degree and \$3,620 for a bachelors degree. This was well received by most officers, particularly the ones with degrees. In addition, tuition reimbursement was changed to include books as well instead of just tuition. Both of these changes contributed greatly to the improvement in response to this question.

In addition, the new pay plan also created a new position of Senior Patrol Officer. Any patrol officer who has worked at the department for 4 years, completed the intermediate and advanced certifications, and has a bachelors degree can qualify for a 5 percent raise and placement into a pay scale with a higher top out pay.

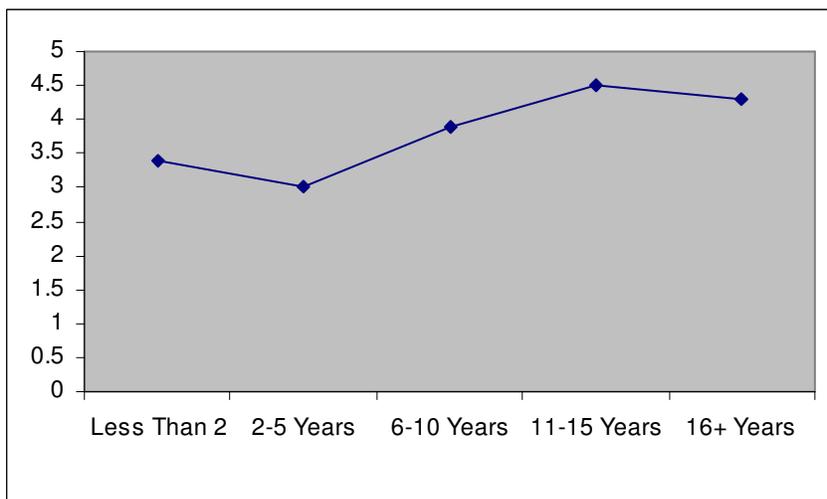
Another equally important change occurred around the same time. The previously passed promotional policy had built in changes that took effect on January 1, 2008. These changes include requiring different education levels to assess for promotion. In the current policy, you must have an associates degree to assess for Sergeant, a bachelors degree to assess for Lieutenant, a bachelors degree to apply for Commander and a masters degree to apply for Deputy Chief. All of these changes combined have placed significantly more emphasis on the importance of education in this organization. There were no significant group trends for this question.

How satisfied are you with the availability of in-service or outside schools?

This question received a mean score of 4.0, which is a fairly significant improvement over the previous surveys. In 1997, the mean score for this question was 3.1 (Beam, 1997, 30-31). In 2002, the mean score for this question was 3.3 (VandeZande, 2002, 31). Although the

3.1 score was acceptable, it was noted that this number should be higher (Beam, 1997, 31). Beam noted that the more experienced officers were less satisfied. This is quite the opposite in the current survey. In fact, officers with 11 to 15 years of experience were the most satisfied with this question compared to being the least satisfied with Beam's survey with a mean score of 2.7 (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Availability of in-service training or outside schools



Another interesting group trend occurred when you compare patrol officers to the supervisor group. As a group, patrol officers had a mean score of 3.7 for this question. Supervisors, on the other hand, had a mean score of 4.6 for this question. In general, all officers who work at the Marietta Police Department average about 120 hours of training. This is considered a healthy number as compared to other departments. However, one reason for the discrepancy between officers and supervisors may be the additional training opportunities afforded supervisors that are not available, in general, to patrol officers.

As an example, supervisors are encouraged to attend a command level school, which includes the FBI National Academy, Southern Police Institute or the Northwestern Police Staff

and Command School. All these programs are at least 10 weeks long. In addition, several other supervisory type advanced training has been allowed since the 2002 study. These include the Senior Management Institute for Police (SMIP) at Boston University as well as the Command College at Columbus State University. All these classes are exceptional opportunities to develop advanced leadership and policing skills for the future.

Equally important, are the opportunities afforded supervisors to attend professional conferences in Georgia as well as across the United States. These include the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police (GACP) conference, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) conference, Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) annual conference, the Federal Bureau of Investigation National Academy Associates (FBINAA) annual conference and other similar events. Without a doubt, these additional opportunities have contributed to the high mean score on this question for supervisors. Notwithstanding the high score of the supervisors, the officers mean response of 3.7 is very good.

Another group with notable results was the assigned division group. Officers assigned to uniform patrol had a mean score of 3.8 to this question. However, officers assigned to support services and investigative services both responded more positively to this question. Support services had a mean score of 4.7 to this question, while investigative services had a mean response of 4.4. One factor, which may contribute to this disparity, is the additional training officers assigned to specialized assignments receive as part of their specialized duties. There were no additional group trends for this question.

How satisfied are you with the current method of filing reports?

This question received a mean score of 3.6. In the original research, the mean score for this question was a 3.3 (Beam, 1997, 28). However, in the follow-up study, the mean score

dropped to 2.9. This was due, in large part, to the system “loosing” reports (VandeZande, 2002, 16). Overall, the functions and features of the report software have been considerably improved. This improvement is reflected in the increased satisfaction to this question. There were no significant group trends for this question.

There was one simple comment related to this question.

- “The current method of filing reports scored low because we need to implement the on-line reporting system.”

How satisfied are you with your present assignment?

This question received a mean score of 4.3. The mean score for this question in the original research was 4.0 (Beam, 1997, 28). However, the mean score on the follow-up research was not noted (VandeZande, 2002, 33). In Beam’s research, officers assigned to support services had a significantly lower mean score of 3.1 for this question. However, the research by VandeZande (2002) showed an improvement for those officers assigned to support services with a mean score of 4.3. This trend continued with the current survey. Officers assigned to support services had a mean score of 4.5 for this question. There were no significant group trends for this question.

How satisfied are you with the general job description/duties of your current position?

This question received a mean score of 4.3, which is very good. In the original survey, this question received a mean score of 3.7 (Beam, 1997, 29). Unfortunately, the follow-up survey did not contain the results for this question (VandeZande, 2002, 34). There was one interesting item of note for this question. One particular group, officers age 20 to 25, had a mean score of 5.0 for this question, which was the only question to receive a perfect 5.0 among any group. There were no significant group trends for this question.

How satisfied are you with the department's top administrators?

This question received a mean score of 4.1. In Beam's survey, the mean score for this question was a dismal 2.9. After 5 years with Chief Moody leading the department, the results were similar with a mean score of 3.0 (VandeZande, 2002, 24-26). This may be more of an indication of how line officers, in police work, view the administration in general at most departments rather than an indictment of this department's top administrators (VandeZande, 2002, 26). However, there has certainly been improvement in this area since 2002.

To this end, a simple explanation may exist. When Chief Moody was at the department, he was viewed as somewhat aloof. Part of the reason for this view was because he wore a suit to work everyday. He viewed himself as a Chief Executive Officer. In addition, Chief Moody made a jump from officer to Captain and to Chief in a short period of time and was, at times, criticized for not having paid his dues. Chief Flynn, on the other hand, wears a uniform to work everyday. He rose through the ranks at the Miami-Dade Police Department to the rank of Major. He then left the department to be Chief of the Savannah Police Department. In law enforcement, officers tend to be able to relate to someone like Chief Flynn better than Chief Moody. There were no significant group trends for this question.

There was one comment directed specifically at this question. The comment is as follows:

- "The us vs. them atmosphere created by the Senior Command Staff & Chief, between them and the rest of the department, has created a high level of dysfunction as perceived by the "them" crowd (the rank & file). There "seems" to be no one advocating for improved pay and benefits. It was disheartening to many that the Chief didn't care

enough to even learn how the new pay scale operates and affects his employees. * Take the time to start caring about the employees.”

Although this seems to be a clear indictment of the entire Senior Command Staff, the results of the survey suggest otherwise. The mean score for this question was 4.1 which is exceptional. This appears to be one officer’s opinion who may have had a recent incident occur which provided the negative framework for his comment. However, as with all comments, the Chief and Senior Staff should examine this comment for any kernels of truth and make corrections accordingly.

How satisfied are you with the educational requirements of new recruits?

This question received a mean score of 3.7 compared to a mean score of 3.1 from Beam’s survey and a 3.2 from VandeZande’s survey. There have been no changes in the department’s educational requirements for new recruits since the survey in 1997. However, most of the recruits that are hired today have a college degree. There were no significant group trends for this question.

How satisfied are you with the quality of equipment (radios, vehicles, weapons, etc.)?

This question received a mean score of 4.3. Beam’s survey results for this question were similar with a mean score of 3.9. The survey by VandeZande had a mean score of 4.1 for this question. In the group experience, the officers who had 16 years or more of experience were the most satisfied with the quality of equipment with a mean score of 4.7. This could be in large part because they have been around the department long enough to remember some of the old equipment they were forced to use in the past. There were no significant group trends for this question.

Surprisingly, this question received two different comments. This was a little unusual in light of the 4.3 mean score for this question. The comments are as follows:

- “It would be a 5 if we upgrade the patrol rifles to a standard rifle caliber such as .308 or 5.56mm. The current rifle is under power.”
- “Due to recent purchases made for the department, it would be nice for the officers to have some say so in where money is distributed, instead of coming to work and seeing certain very expensive items sitting around not being used.”

The last comment seems to be a reference to the recent purchase of 2 T-3 Motion machines, which are used for patrolling community events and specialized type patrols in apartment complexes and other areas. In addition, the respondent underlined the word radio on his survey and put a check mark by the other list of equipment, which indicates some dissatisfaction with the new radios, which were recently purchased.

How satisfied are you with the availability of equipment?

This question received a mean score of 4.3. The mean score in the original research was 3.6 (Beam, 1997, 29). An improvement continued in the follow-up research with a mean score of 3.9 (VandeZande, 2002, 14). The same trend continued in this question with officers with 16 or more years of experience. They were the most satisfied with a mean score of 4.7 for this question. There were no significant group trends for this question.

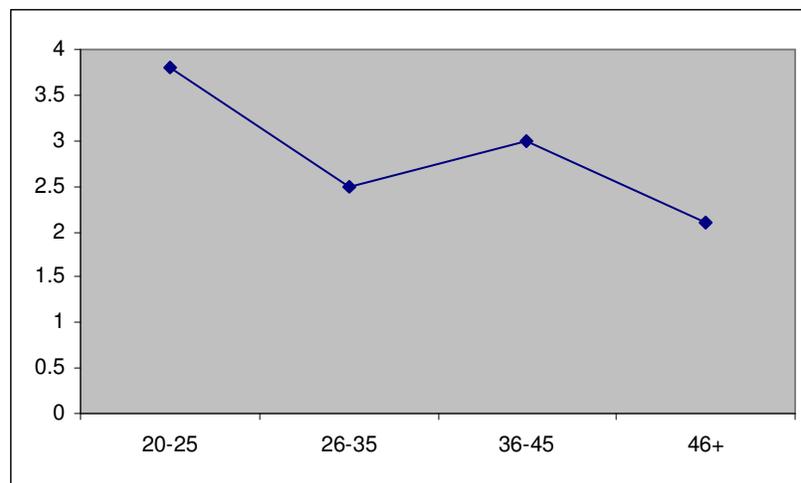
Borderline

In this survey only two questions received a borderline response. A borderline response is considered any response with a mean score of 2.5 to 2.9. In Beam’s survey, 5 questions received a mean score between 2.5 and 2.9. In VandeZande’s survey, 5 questions also received a mean score between 2.5 and 2.9. However, 2 questions had no mean score reported.

How satisfied are you with the written promotional exam system?

This question received a mean score of 2.7. In the original survey, this question received a mean score of 2.3 (Beam, 1997, 31). This improved slightly in the follow-up survey with a mean score of 2.7 (VandeZande, 2002, 30-31). However, it is of great concern to see the mean score for this question to consistently be below 3.0 over the last 11 years these surveys have been completed. The variation inside the age group is considerable (see Figure 7).

Figure 7: Written promotional exam



There are some inherent problems built into promotional exams. In many agencies, the promotional exam is a point of contention. This is partly due to the competitive nature of promotions and the fact that there are usually a small number of people who finish at the top while the bulk of those who assess, do not. However, this does not fully explain the consistent low mean score for this question. It is obvious something needs to be done to correct this perception. A recommendation to address this issue will be included later.

This question evoked several comments that seem to be directed more toward the overall promotional process. These comments are as follows:

- “The current policy regarding promotion is unfair to personnel who served terms in the military instead of college.”
- “The current promotional system needs changing. Under the current system, there are no points given for evaluation scores, work history on special units or input from command staff. One officer can outperform another officer 364 days out of the year and clearly be the better candidate for promotion but on that one day of the assessment the better officer is beaten out. Over the next three years, until the next assessment, the better candidates sit at the bottom of the list watching while less motivated and less experienced officers with poor decision making abilities are promoted ahead of them. All officers who pass the assessment center should be considered for promotion. They should not be ranked by an outsider. That person should only conduct a pass or fail score. All passing officers would have an opportunity to interview with the Chief of Police. Over the years, I’ve often overheard high ranking supervisors make the following comment; we promoted the lesser evil.”

The combined comments paired with the borderline mean score of 2.7 for this question would indicate that this is an area in need of improvement. The promotional process itself is always a contentious issue. Although this question only addressed the written promotional exam, it seems that most responses were focused on the entire promotional process rather than just the written portion of it.

How satisfied are you with the current base pay and salary increases?

This question received a mean score of 2.5. The original survey completed by Deputy Chief David Beam had a mean score of 2.3 for this question. In the follow-up survey, completed by Lt. VandeZande, the mean score for this question was 2.6. Again, all three survey responses

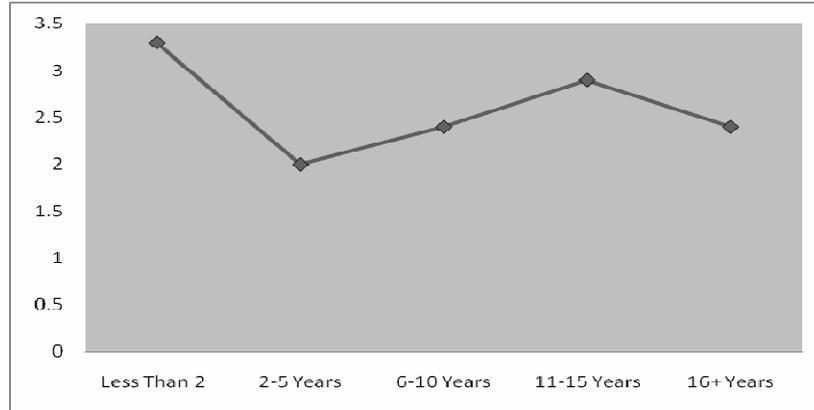
over a span of 11 years were either unacceptable or borderline. This is another area that requires improvement.

At first examination, the lower mean score for this question seemed out of place in comparison to the higher scores of many of the previous questions when compared to the previous surveys. However, just prior to the distribution of the current survey, the results of a pay and classification study were released and certain officers received pay increases. The pay adjustments were mainly made to the salary of the senior staff of the department including Chief, Deputy Chiefs, and Commanders. A few Lieutenants and a couple of Sergeants also received raises. Unfortunately, the rest of the department did not receive a pay adjustment although the top end of the salary range was increased for every rank.

Consequently, a fair number of supervisors as well as patrol officers are upset about not receiving a pay adjustment. The timing of the pay adjustment coupled with the distribution of the survey may have contributed to a lower mean score for this question than it would have otherwise received if no pay adjustment had been made.

A close examination of the groups reveals a possible trend in the length of service group. As would be expected, the brand new officers seem satisfied. However, officers with 2 to 5 years of experience had the lowest mean score. The mean score then increased for the next two groups and ended on a down note for the most experience officers (See figure 8).

Figure 8: Current Base Pay and Salary Increases



In most cases, pay is not a motivator (Hertzberg, 1968, 60). If this is considered true, then pay will not increase the job satisfaction level of officers. However, the absence of good pay or perceived poor pay may cause increased levels of job dissatisfaction (VandeZande, 2002, 32). A recommendation for improvement in this area will follow.

There were a couple of comments written in on the surveys that address this issue. The comments were as follows:

- “The latest salary study didn’t help the little guy and it’s the little guys that quit and leave.”
- “We have not had but 1 or 2 merit raises in the last 7 years. We need to do more about retaining our employees, than just raise the starting salaries.”

Not Acceptable

In this survey, no responses received a mean score of 2.4 or lower. This is an exceptional fact considering the size and diversity of the department. In the original survey, there were three questions that received a mean score of 2.4 or lower (Beam, 1997). In the follow-up survey, there was only one question that received a mean score of 2.4 or lower (VandeZande, 2002).

This indicates an overall improvement in job satisfaction at the Marietta Police Department across the board.

Other Comments

There were a number of comments that were generalized and did not fit well with one particular question. These comments are listed below.

- “We have a fantastic department. We do need to explore stagnation within specialized units for the benefit of everyone. Officers attend schools, put in their time, and wait patiently for someone to quit or get promoted. I personally believe term limits should be examined again. This would allow officers within a special unit to expand their skills in other areas as well as provide those on patrol the opportunity to build their resume.”
- “MPD is a great department to work at and I am thankful I have a job”.
- “I am not sure how I feel about SPO. There are more, or higher educational requirements for SPO than there are for the rank of Sergeant. Overall very happy with MPD.”
- “The general information on page 1 of this survey makes it easy to identify persons in this department given our size and departmental make-up. Though the questions are general in nature, they do not allow much room for a person to remain anonymous; therefore some questions may not have been answered as truthfully as possible even given the waiver on the cover page.”

In general, there were very few comments, especially compared to Beam’s original survey. In most cases, people only write down negative comments. Usually, people who feel positive about an organization do not complete corresponding positive comments. However, if someone has a negative opinion, it is usually expressed in the comments section.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall job satisfaction at the Marietta Police Department is on the rise and in great condition. In fact, it is in excellent condition. The department went through a difficult transition period after Chief Bobby Moody was hired in 1996. Once this transition period ended and the culture had been changed, the department improved significantly as evidenced by the 2nd survey which was completed by Todd VandeZande in 2002.

Similarly, the results of the current survey demonstrate the continued evolvement of the Marietta Police Department into a truly excellent department. Under the leadership of Chief Dan Flynn, the department continues to incrementally improve in almost all areas. Chief Flynn has placed special emphasis on employee development and recognition, strategic planning and preparedness, which have truly strengthened the department.

Specifically, when you compare the results of the current survey to Beam's (1997) survey you find that the mean score of each question improved significantly, in 25 out of the 26 questions. This is quite an accomplishment. When compared with the results of VandeZande's (2002) survey, the results are almost as impressive. The mean score of each question improved in 21 out of the 24 known scores on VandeZande's (2002) survey. There were two questions without a mean score on VandeZande's (2002) survey. In addition, only two questions in the current survey received a mean score of less than 3.0.

However, there is always room for improvement. A couple of obvious areas still in need of improvement are in the areas of pay and the promotional process. Questions related to these topics had less than desirable results on all three surveys. As such, both of these areas are the first in need of attention.

The first area in need of attention is pay. Pay has always been a point of contention at most police departments, particularly in departments that do not have collective bargaining. Historically, the Marietta Police Department has done a pretty good job of raising the starting pay so it stays competitive. However, the department has done a very good job of keeping the pay competitive throughout the rest of the pay ranges including patrol officers, Sergeants, Lieutenants, Commanders and Deputy Chiefs when compared with similar departments in their competitive market.

Recently, the department took a significant step toward making improvements in this area. A pay and classification study was completed for the entire City of Marietta. As part of the results of the study, the maximum pay within a pay grade was increased for every rank and a number of pay raises were given. However, the raises were too sparse and too little to really make a significant impact.

Instead, the Marietta Police Department should conduct a new study of police departments in the metro Atlanta area that are in their competitive market. The focus of this study should be the maximum pay for each rank and the average pay of each officer in each rank based on their time of service at the department as well as time in rank. Once the study has been completed, the City of Marietta should develop a multi-year plan to implement the recommended changes.

In order to fully implement such a plan, one particular change must be made to the way police employees are treated within the City. Right now, pay raises and other benefits are given to all employees in similar fashion. Police officers are not treated differently. In most cases, police raises are similar to the raises given to other employees.

Police officers have to go through a very tough background check to ever be hired. In addition, they must attend a ten-week academy prior to ever working on the road. They also must go through a 3 to 4 month field training officer program before they are released to ride in a car on their own. An officer must go through all this to just get to the point where he or she can be a police officer. The training and certifications only continue from here.

Every officer is required to go through 20 hours of additional training each year. The Marietta Police Department actually averages 115 hours of training per officer. Officers must qualify with their weapon twice a year. In addition, officers must get certified in areas such as radar, intoxilizer, laser, standard field sobriety, instructor, firearms, drug recognition expert and many more. Of course officers must also attend courses which allow them to reach certification levels of intermediate, advanced, supervision and management. The learning never stops. As you advance through the ranks, there are requirements for supervisors to attend a 10 week command school and other advanced leadership schools.

All these hiring and training requirements certainly set police officers apart from the rest of the City employees. Because of these requirements, the pay for police officers should be in a category by themselves so the City can treat this category of City employees different from the rest when it comes to pay.

Another area in need of improvement is the promotional process. Over the years, several changes have been made to the promotional process. Some of these changes include offering a written test, removing the formation of the test questions from the police department and designing the assessment center using Marietta scenarios and materials (Beam, 1997, 56-62). However, officers are still dissatisfied with the promotional process.

Since 1997, there have been other changes made in the promotional process with limited success. The department now uses an outside contractor to conduct the assessment center. The promotion potential rating, which used to be viewed as highly political, was done away with. Even after all these changes, the satisfaction level for this area remains low and unacceptable. Therefore, some changes need to be made in the promotional process.

First, the department should form a committee to study the promotional process. This committee should be headed by a Commander and have a member from each rank with two members from the rank of patrol officer. The first order of business for the committee would be to design an in-depth survey instrument to figure out the specific concerns officers have with the promotional process.

Once the survey has been completed and the results gathered, the committee should then work to design a new promotional process that employees can have confidence in from start to finish. One possible suggestion, depending on the results of the survey, would be to factor seniority into the promotional process. Another suggestion might be to factor in work experience and evaluations into the process. Lastly, there should be some type of supervisor input into the process, which is fair and balanced. All these changes and others should be designed to improve officer satisfaction in the promotional process and lead to the best candidates being promoted.

Another important suggestion is to adopt a survey instrument unique to the department, which can more accurately measure employee job satisfaction on a regular basis (VandeZande, 2002, 48-49). Although VandeZande recommended this suggestion in 2002 yet it has not been adopted. A survey, such as this, would be of benefit if done yearly because the leadership of the department would then have the data available to solve problematic issues which can be

identified quickly and adjustments made to allow the department to maintain a high level of job satisfaction.

The Marietta Police Department has placed increasing importance on formal education. The department requires various levels of advanced education to assess for promotion. In addition, the department now pays for advance education degrees. All this emphasis on higher education has influenced a large number of employees to return to school. Unfortunately, the \$2,000 a year tuition reimbursement does not cover all the expenses required. This needs to change.

To this end, the City of Marietta should raise the education reimbursement to \$3,000 a year. In addition, the items covered by the reimbursement should include any expenses incurred as a direct result of attending school. A good example of these expenses includes the normal fees, which are added on to the tuition each semester. These fees include technology, parking, recreation, etc. and, in many cases, amount to \$300 to \$400 a semester.

In many cases, police officers live paycheck to paycheck. The add-on fees associated with attending school become a burden that many cannot afford. Instead of attending school, the officer just decides not to attend or puts it off later. A change such as this would make attending college more accessible to police officers at the department.

Lastly, the department must do more to collect data about why employees leave the department. The turnover rate has been very high at times in the past. However, with such a high job satisfaction level, the turnover rate has been relatively low recently. Still, a mechanism should be put in place to capture the data necessary so that adjustments can be made inside the department if needed.

Generally, each employee who leaves the department is required to complete an exit interview by the City of Marietta prior to receiving their last check. In most cases, this exit interview is not routinely captured and analyzed by the department in order to identify any potential problem areas or common reasons why officers leave in order to make quick corrections. The Deputy Chief of Support Services should be assigned the task of collecting and reviewing each exit interview.

In addition, all the supervisors of the officer who leaves should be interviewed to determine if there were any additional factors at the department that might have contributed to the employee leaving that was left off of the exit interview. In many cases, employees are reluctant to bring up potential controversial issues in their exit interviews.

Another potential source of information about why an officer left the department is the officers who worked closely with the departed officer each and every day. This type of request must be handled in a delicate manner. The purpose of getting the information is to help improve the retention of employees.

Overall, the Marietta Police Department is in great shape. The job satisfaction level of police officers is at an all time high. The department needs no major overhaul. In fact, all the changes suggested are minor in nature with the exception of the promotional process.

The police officers that work at the department operate under the highest calling and are dedicated to performing their job at the highest possible level. They live by their core values of respect, commitment, loyalty, integrity, honesty and professionalism as they relate to that of the Police department. In addition, the level of service to the public is at an all time high. In short, the Marietta Police Department is operating in a highly efficient and effective manner and its future becomes brighter each day.

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- 12) Current insurance coverage 1 2 3 4 5
- 13) Compensation received for overtime, court time, etc. 1 2 3 4 5
- 14) The “approved off-duty” job policy 1 2 3 4 5
- 15) Current education incentives 1 2 3 4 5
- 16) The availability of in-service training or outside schools 1 2 3 4 5

- | Scale | Extremely
Dissatisfied | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Extremely
Satisfied |
|---|---------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|------------------------|
| 17) The current method for filing reports | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 18) Your present assignment | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 19) The general job description/duties of your present position | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 20) The department’s top administrators | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 21) The educational requirements for new recruits | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 22) The quality of equipment (radios, vehicles, weapons, etc.) | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 23) The availability of equipment | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |

AGAIN, THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE. Any and all comments are welcome.

APPENDIX B

Internal Memo

To: Survey Recipients/Marietta Police Officers
From: Deputy Chief Billy Grogan
240 Lemon Street
Marietta, GA 30060
770-794-5325
bgrogan@mariettaga.gov
Re: Job Satisfaction at the Marietta Police Department: A Comparative Analysis

In 1997, Deputy Chief David Beam completed his Practicum for his Master of Public Administration. The title of his work was *A Case Study: Job Satisfaction at the Marietta Police Department*. At the time, the Marietta Police Department was under the leadership of a new chief, Bobby Moody. In 2002, a former Lieutenant with the department completed a similar paper as a follow-up to the initial research.

In 2008, I plan on using the same job satisfaction survey which was used in the two previous papers to see what changes have occurred, identify any trends and make recommendations which may improve job satisfaction at the department. This research is important because several of the recommendations made in the previous research have now been adopted. In addition, the department is under the leadership of a new chief, Dan Flynn.

The results of this research may identify areas which are contributing to lower job satisfaction within the department. If this is the case, then the recommendations coming out of the research may spark improvements in the department which will benefit employees in the areas identified. These recommendations may lead to improved job satisfaction for employees.

The attached survey is being placed in each mailbox. This survey is designed to be anonymous and no identifying information will be collected. The survey should take 10-15 minutes to complete. The completed survey should be placed in mailbox number 85 by Friday, August 29, 2008. All completed surveys will be kept in my locked desk drawer while I am completing my research. Once my research is finished and the paper is completed, the original job satisfaction surveys will be destroyed.

The purpose of this research has been explained and my participation is voluntary. I have the right to stop participation at any time without penalty. I understand that the research has no known risks, and I will not be identified. By completing this survey, I am agreeing to participate in this research project.

THIS PAGE MAY BE REMOVED AND KEPT BY EACH PARTICIPANT

Research at Kennesaw State University that involves human participants is carried out under the oversight of an Institutional Review Board. Questions or problems regarding these activities should be addressed to Dr. Ginny Q. Zhan, Chairperson of the Institutional Review Board, Kennesaw State University, 1000 Chastain Rd, #2202, Kennesaw, GA 30144-5591, (770) 423-6679.