

Dan Hoffman:

Hello, and welcome to part two of the Rouss Review City Works portion of our podcast, part two. Let's go ahead and bring in our guests. Today we're going to talk about policing, community policing, data, crime analytics, lots of interesting stuff. So let's jump right into it.

Dan Hoffman:

All right. Welcome Amanda Behan. Hi Amanda.

Amanda Behan:

Hello.

Dan Hoffman:

Welcome back.

Amanda Behan:

Thank you.

Dan Hoffman:

Were you on before?

Amanda Behan:

No.

Dan Hoffman:

Oh, this is your first time?

Amanda Behan:

Yes.

Dan Hoffman:

I thought maybe Piper drug you in here with one of the previous ones.

Amanda Behan:

No. I haven't had the pleasure yet.

Dan Hoffman:

Well, then now I'm very happy. I've got two new people here with me, although you're not new to the City in any way, shape or form.

Amanda Behan:

Definitely not.

Dan Hoffman:

How long have you been with the city now?

Amanda Behan:

21 years.

Dan Hoffman:

21 years?

Amanda Behan:

Yes.

Dan Hoffman:

So your career can legally drink now?

Amanda Behan:

Oh my gosh. That's fabulous.

Dan Hoffman:

That doesn't mean you can do it at the office, but I guess-

Amanda Behan:

Correct.

Dan Hoffman:

But yeah, that's a long time.

Amanda Behan:

Yes.

Dan Hoffman:

That's a good stretch.

Amanda Behan:

Yes.

Dan Hoffman:

And you're now deputy chief.

Amanda Behan:

I am as of one year.

Dan Hoffman:

I think you've been three positions in the year and a half I've been here. Because before that you were captain?

Amanda Behan:

Correct, in the Criminal Investigations Division.

Dan Hoffman:

Yeah, in investigations. And before that you were?

Amanda Behan:

The lieutenant in the Office of Professional Standards.

Dan Hoffman:

I don't think I knew you as lieutenant, I think I take that back. I think I've just known you as captain and deputy chief.

Amanda Behan:

Likely, yes.

Dan Hoffman:

Likely because how long ago were you a lieutenant?

Amanda Behan:

My goodness. The time has just gone by so quickly. I cannot remember.

Dan Hoffman:

You didn't know this was going to be a pop quiz about your career.

Amanda Behan:

December, 2020.

Dan Hoffman:

Okay. So I did know you as lieutenant.

Amanda Behan:

Yes. I remember seeing you and-

Dan Hoffman:

I remember. Yeah. Because this is what happens when you have shooting stars.

Amanda Behan:

That's right. Watch out now.

Dan Hoffman:

Watch out, yeah. Trust me. You can have this job if you want it. No, it's been great to see you progress in the limited time I've been here and yeah sky's the limits.

Amanda Behan:

Thank you.

Dan Hoffman:

So, and you have somebody here to introduce to us.

Amanda Behan:

I do, another all-star.

Dan Hoffman:

Her name is not Kara.

Amanda Behan:

No, it is Tara.

Dan Hoffman:

Tara.

Amanda Behan:

Tara Cardenas. She is our crime analyst.

Dan Hoffman:

What is that?

Amanda Behan:

Welcome, Tara.

Tara Cardenas:

Thank you. Thanks for having me.

Dan Hoffman:

Tara, where'd you come from?

Tara Cardenas:

Well, originally I'm from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, but I actually came over here from Woodbridge, Virginia.

Dan Hoffman:

Okay. And where were you before work wise?

Tara Cardenas:

Before work wise, I was actually in California.

Dan Hoffman:

Oh okay.

Tara Cardenas:

So I've kind of been all over the place. I... You can hear me okay, right?

Dan Hoffman:

Yeah. I can hear you.

Tara Cardenas:

Okay. I was-

Dan Hoffman:

What were you doing?

Tara Cardenas:

I was in the military. I was a Marine Corps signals intelligence.

Dan Hoffman:

Oh, that's pretty awesome. What does that mean?

Tara Cardenas:

A little bit of everything. So I worked with computers pretty heavily with a lot of, I had TS/SCI clearance. So a lot of secrets world stuff that I can't talk about.

Dan Hoffman:

Top secret, oh I got my specialized [inaudible 00:03:06] in compartmentalize and I can go into the skiffs and [inaudible 00:03:08], yeah.

Tara Cardenas:

Yes. I worked in a building that had no doors and windows. Yeah, so I worked a lot with computers, and a lot with radios and just supported the overall mission of the unit.

Dan Hoffman:

Worked up with computers and radios.

Tara Cardenas:

Yes.

Dan Hoffman:

It sounds fun. It sounds like I'm going to RadioShack.

Tara Cardenas:

I didn't stay for a reason.

Dan Hoffman:

Oh, okay. Well, yeah. Well thank you for your service.

Tara Cardenas:

Thank you very much.

Dan Hoffman:

And we're happy to have you here.

Tara Cardenas:

I appreciate it.

Dan Hoffman:

So why Winchester then?

Tara Cardenas:

So Winchester really stood out to me because I really wanted to move to a small town, so-

Dan Hoffman:

Where in California where you?

Tara Cardenas:

San Diego County.

Dan Hoffman:

That's a-

Tara Cardenas:

Very big area with a lot of people.

Dan Hoffman:

Big jurisdiction, yeah.

Tara Cardenas:

Yes.

Dan Hoffman:

Beautiful though.

Tara Cardenas:

It's very nice. The weather is great so I can't complain, but wanted to move back to the east coast where I'm from and live in a smaller area of Virginia. I really liked Virginia when I moved over here. So I wanted to find work around here, so.

Dan Hoffman:

Wow. So we were the appropriate size?

Tara Cardenas:

It worked out perfectly.

Dan Hoffman:

Yeah. Interesting. So what else do you, I'm going to go a little off topic because we were just talking, Amanda and I was just talking about this a little bit the other day, why Winchester? Other than its size. I mean, I'm sure you didn't just pull a list of cities with 30,000 people and said, ah, this one. Why this one?

Tara Cardenas:

Well, I really knew what I wanted to do work wise. So there were really only a few different areas around here that were offering a job that I wanted to do. And Winchester was one of them that also matched exactly kind of where I wanted to be, career are related and also personal life. So I went with Winchester.

Dan Hoffman:

There you go.

Tara Cardenas:

And I also connected with Amanda really well so that worked out.

Dan Hoffman:

She's very connectable.

Tara Cardenas:

Yes she is.

Amanda Behan:

Thank you.

Dan Hoffman:

She's like our human Lego piece. Human Lego block.

Amanda Behan:

I have not been described like that before.

Dan Hoffman:

Yeah. I wasn't sure how it was going to come out. And I was like, 'oh, hope this analogy works.' But no, I think it's right. She's a good face for the department.

Tara Cardenas:

Absolutely.

Amanda Behan:

Thank you.

Tara Cardenas:

Went on an interview with her. And the first thing she asked me was, do you want to come be part of the family? So that's memorable.

Dan Hoffman:

That's right. And that's a good way to put it. Folks like to work in big jurisdictions that's cool. Chief Piper came from a large jurisdiction, but sometimes in those bigger places, you're a number, you're a part of the machine. And you might see a lot of cool stuff and do a lot of cool things, but here you're definitely part of a much more close knit. At this point, I think I could probably name by sight most of our officers out on the street. I ran into Yang and Morris this morning going out to an event and like, that's just the kind of the way it is around here. It's nice. Welcome aboard.

Tara Cardenas:

Thank you.

Dan Hoffman:

So as a crime analyst, what do you do?

Tara Cardenas:

So bigger picture, I look at incident data. I look at the things that are going on in the city and I help break that down on smaller level and kind of give patrol a better idea of what to focus on, and any major things to be aware of and kind of point them in the right direction.

Dan Hoffman:

Gotcha. So Amanda, you and patrol and other folks are the consumers of her product.

Amanda Behan:

Yes.

Dan Hoffman:

How is it helpful to you guys?

Amanda Behan:

It's helpful in a number of ways. First and foremost, crime prevention. So we take the data that she gives us. And for an example, the city faces regularly larceny for motor vehicles. And so she was able to pull locations for us to determine where we could potentially put a bait car in order to try to identify suspects in a case like that.

Dan Hoffman:

And by the way people, lock your doors at night.

Amanda Behan:

Absolutely.

Dan Hoffman:

Seriously like how many, all right analysts, how many of these break-ins to cars are just people checking latches to see if the car's unlocked?

Tara Cardenas:

Oh all of them.

Dan Hoffman:

All of them?

Tara Cardenas:

Yes.

Amanda Behan:

All of them.

Dan Hoffman:

Just lock your car. It's all you got to do.

Amanda Behan:

Yes.

Tara Cardenas:

And don't leave valuable things in it.

Dan Hoffman:

In sight. Yep.

Tara Cardenas:

Everyone's going to go out after that. As soon as they see that, oh, let's see if it's unlocked.

Dan Hoffman:

Oh, here's a purse, check it. And if it looks tasty enough, yeah they might bust your window. It's just so simple. Anyways, sorry, I digress.

Amanda Behan:

So another way that she helps us is tracking the information on traffic crashes so that we know where to place officers for directed patrols, whether it would be for speeding or stoplight violations, so that's another way that she helps us. Another way is really with our criminal investigations division, when they are working a major case, it kind of switches over a bit to the intel analyst side of things, where she is digging up data to help them progress their cases, whether it be tracking down a suspect or trying to find associates involved in the case.

Dan Hoffman:

Gotcha. So in this particular portion of the podcast, we talk about things that are pretty relevant. Even if you were living in Leesburg or out west somewhere, if you have happen to stumble across this and you're interested in the topic, we want to make sure it's relevant to a lot of places, is this I'm assuming, is something that happens in pretty much every jurisdiction. Everybody has, well, maybe not as good as Tara.

Amanda Behan:

That's correct.

Dan Hoffman:

But no one has as good as Tara, but a lot of places have their own version of Tara. What does it look like in those other places? How does this job change from jurisdiction to jurisdiction?

Amanda Behan:

I think Tara could probably expand on that a little bit more because the analyst position encompasses quite a lot and she had specific educational training in that and probably could expand a little more.

Dan Hoffman:

Expand.

Tara Cardenas:

Sure. So I guess it basically would depend on the area and the size of the area that you're working in. For example, Roanoke has six analysts, so different areas of the country will have more analysts, they'll have an analyst center that will be specifically tasked to do different things for that location. So I kind of do a little bit of everything and I help out our department in all sorts of ways. Whereas other ones will specifically focus on a certain crime type or assist in just the criminal investigations or so on and so forth.

Amanda Behan:

Right. So you're going to have analysts that are a trained specifically or just focus on drug intel or gang intel. Here, Tara does it all.

Dan Hoffman:

Gotcha because we only need the one. She does everything.

Tara Cardenas:

Yeah. I'm just that good.

Dan Hoffman:

So there you go. Now she's feeling it a little bit.

Amanda Behan:

Yeah, she is.

Dan Hoffman:

So one of the most frequent questions we get is, you referenced it earlier and it's speeding. Oh, look at traffic this and we need somebody here all the time. I also get the occasional, someone keeps letting their dog poop in my yard and they're not cleaning it up. You have to do something about this. So we get all out of these just little...They're important to that person, so I don't mean to minimize it, but these little things that it's really hard to say, 'well, we're just going to have an officer sit right there all day waiting for the person to not clean up after their dog. Or waiting for maybe the truck that you say speeds every day.' We can't really dedicate officers to do that. Talk a little bit more about how your role helps us focus in. What kind of tools do you use? What kind of data do you pull?

Tara Cardenas:

Well, I pull all sorts of data just specifically from our RMS, our Records Management System, I'll pull all of our incident data, call data, pretty much all of the fields and focus on specifically what-

Dan Hoffman:

What's in the fields?

Tara Cardenas:

Oh, sorry. So like the call that is being responded to the location of that, the person that's involved, the time of day, the day of the week, things like that, I'll break that down and go from there.

Amanda Behan:

So in the example that you're giving, the information that she would give us are dates, times, days of the weeks that we could direct those patrols to happen. In addition, when we receive a complaint for a location, we're able to respond back to that person making the complaint with data that supports whether or not we are doing enforcement in that area, which is really good. And it happens oftentimes there's a perception that we may not be there, but we can go back to them and say in fact, over the past year we wrote a hundred tickets in that specific area.

Dan Hoffman:

That's actually very helpful because I do hear that occasionally. Oh, I never see the police officers down at this intersection.

Tara Cardenas:

I'd also like to add just this is where also like looking at trends, will come in and looking at those incidents over time, you'll see it increase or decrease. And that's how you can prove if what you're doing is working or if it's not working and you can change or go from there.

Dan Hoffman:

Very cool. What's the most interesting thing you've come across so far?

Tara Cardenas:

Well...

Dan Hoffman:

That you can tell us, I guess. Well, you can always leave names out, I guess.

Tara Cardenas:

I guess I can go into it a little bit. We are looking into quite a large gang issue in the city of Winchester currently. There's been a lot of tagging if you're in the Winchester area, you may have seen that. So I would say that's probably the top, most interesting thing that I've been looking into that's more of the criminal investigation side.

Dan Hoffman:

So what are you looking for in the data with that type of situation?

Tara Cardenas:

So in this, I'm looking specifically for who was involved, and making connections between those individuals, and who to be on the look for.

Amanda Behan:

So a patrol officer will encounter somebody who is wearing the clothing that is typical for that gang. And they can have Tara go into the body worn camera and take a look at it. And based on the information that she has, she can confirm whether that matches, she can start looking at that person specifically, looking into different databases to see if they have associates. And so it's extremely helpful.

Dan Hoffman:

How does tagging play into that?

Tara Cardenas:

So tagging is a way for a gang to-

Dan Hoffman:

And tagging by the way, it's graffiti.

Tara Cardenas:

Yes graffiti, sorry. To make a mark, to show that they are taking over the city. They're showing that they are claiming that as their territory. Which is where you can see an issue between gangs, if you have multiple gangs in one city. So the that's kind of them leaving their mark in Winchester.

Dan Hoffman:

So how does that help you?

Tara Cardenas:

That helps me because it shows me an area of where we know that they are. So you'll see-

Dan Hoffman:

Or claim to be.

Tara Cardenas:

Claim to be, yes, they could be moving around, quite a bit. I mean, you'll see tagging in different areas of the city, but that helps out by showing where they're located and potentially telling officers to go patrol those areas more in hopes to maybe find someone.

Amanda Behan:

It also can be a prediction of violence. So if we have graffiti from one gang and they are tagging over top of another gang, then we know that there's a potential for violence against the two gangs.

Dan Hoffman:

Yeah. And just for the record, everybody listening, the gangs are not taking over Winchester. Just FYI because of efforts like this. But we have seen an uptick in tagging recently as Tara and Amanda just said, so if you do happen to see something graffiti that pops up overnight, that looks strange. Or even if you don't understand what it says, call it in, call the non-emergency number over PD and let them know about it. What we do in that situation is we go out, take a picture of it, mark where it is. We remove it as quickly as possible for a number of reasons. But so if you do come across anything like that, we do act on them pretty quickly, but you need to call it in because we can't have eyes everywhere. So we talked about gangs. We talked about traffic. What else?

Amanda Behan:

Another way is transparency. So our department has many reports found within its website on [winchesterpolice.org](http://winchesterpolice.org). And we report quarterly, a traffic summary so that people can access how many tickets we're writing, how many warnings we're writing, who we are writing them to, what ages. We do that with our use of force. Also we report data on complaints on officers. So having her position to run this data and stats, it just helps move our transparency efforts forward.

Dan Hoffman:

Gotcha. So the next six months to a year, what are you looking to bring to the department?

Tara Cardenas:

Everything that I possibly can bring to the department.

Dan Hoffman:

That's a cop out answer. What's on the, and I guess this is for either of you, what's on the agenda. What's what kind of things do you want to try to implement that maybe we couldn't before? Or now with Tara's skill set that we would like to... What tools in the toolbox we want to pull out more?

Amanda Behan:

Some of the things that we've talked about we want to expand on, Tara's been with us for a few months and she's had to learn quite a bit. And she has had some challenges along the way, not by anything that she's done, it's because of deficiencies in some of the systems that we're trying to work through. And she's been great in that. So we're looking forward to the next six months in her being able to expand and do more of these things that will help with our community policing efforts.

Dan Hoffman:

Yeah. And by systems one of the big ones that we just talked about the other day here on the office was our CAD system, our Computer Aided Dispatch system, which is a little older.

Amanda Behan:

Yes.

Tara Cardenas:

Just a little bit.

Dan Hoffman:

A little bit. It needs be replaced. And that's probably one of the bigger sources for you, I would assume right?

Tara Cardenas:

I would say that's my main source.

Dan Hoffman:

Your main source.

Tara Cardenas:

Yes.

Dan Hoffman:

So replacing our dispatch system is something that we will definitely be taking a look at. But for those of you who aren't aware, this is not a matter of going down to Best Buy and grabbing a new CAD system off the shelf. This is a large, very expensive project. So it'll be the subject of I'm sure budget discussions in the coming year so,

Amanda Behan:

Yes, we look forward to progressing in the future and we are patient, we have had some issues for a number of years, but it will pay off in the end for sure.

Tara Cardenas:

Absolutely. The progress that we can make with the new system will be unbelievable compared to what we're working with right now.

Dan Hoffman:

Excellent. So we've talked a lot about the data side of it, things that Tara pulls from various sources to help in the day to day operations, but for the typical resident and some of the new ways in which we engage with residents, how does this feed into that community policing?

Amanda Behan:

So we talked about how it helps us connect and give specific fake data to our citizens so that we can report back to them. But community policing has just evolved tremendously in the modern day. It used to be that officers, and while they still go out and conduct full patrols and meet and greet and talk to residents, it is much more now. We have a large social media presence and a lot of followers, great community support, but we also take the time in those opportunities to reply back to comments or messages that are received. So that's a different aspect of community policing. And again we may be tasking Tara with, hey can you pull this data for us or help us with a plan on how we can attack that. But it also is holding events and years ago it was national night out was the big event. But now we are holding events throughout the year so that we can reach as many people as possible throughout several areas of our community.

Dan Hoffman:

Excellent. All right. Well, thank you guys very much for coming in any final thoughts?

Amanda Behan:

No, thank you for having us.

Tara Cardenas:

Thank you for having us.

Dan Hoffman:

Awesome. Thanks for coming in and we'll see you next time.

Dan Hoffman:

So there go Deputy Chief Behan and Tara, I almost feel like I need to give her a rank. Everyone else over there is like, oh, it's lieutenant or sergeant or deputy chief or chief. And I think we need to call her-

Amy Simmons:

And she was a Marine.

Dan Hoffman:

She was a Marine.

Amy Simmons:

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She needs a title.

Dan Hoffman:

She has to have a title, we'll have to figure that out. For now, we'll call her analyst. Analyst Cardenas.

Amy Simmons:

We should have asked what her rank was in the Marines. We could have used that.

Dan Hoffman:

That's true.

Amy Simmons:

We'll have to figure that out. Yep.

Dan Hoffman:

For next time. And until next time, thanks for checking out this podcast. We hope you enjoyed it. We hope you found it interesting. And we'll see you around next time.