

Office of The Mayor  
Shreveport, Louisiana

**TOM ARCENEUX**  
MAYOR



505 TRAVIS STREET, SUITE 200  
SHREVEPORT, LOUISIANA 71101  
(318) 673-5050

December 20, 2023

Honorable Members of the City Council

Re: Resolution No. 156 and Declaration of Emergency

Honorable Ladies and Gentlemen:

I wanted to communicate with you about your request for action in Resolution No. 156. The request, quoting from the Resolution, is that I “call upon all local, state, and federal resources to be deployed on behalf of the City of Shreveport to address gun violence and violence against women and children.” You further stated that you desire for me “to use [my] discretion in forming task forces and reallocating funding in accomplishing this goal.”

I certainly have no objection to locating resources outside the City to assist in fighting gun violence and violence against women and children. In fact, the Shreveport Police Department already regularly scours grant and funding opportunities to enhance its efforts. SPD has a Grants Coordinator whose specific responsibility includes looking for outside resources and administering grants received by SPD. SPD currently has 43 active grants from other agencies, including:

1. The Violent Gun Reduction Program (VGRP) to help get illegal weapons off the street. This is a grant from the FBI that funds unlimited overtime for this activity. In 2022, SPD removed over 1200 such weapons, making it one of the top illegal weapon gatherers in the nation on a per capita basis. So far in 2023 SPD has seized over 1100 illegal weapons, on a pace to equal or exceed 2022.
2. Public Safety Partnership grant from the United States Department of Justice. Using this grant, SPD is in the process of developing a

detailed strategic plan to fight crime. DOJ facilitated a crime summit of local, state, and federal stakeholders in May, 2023, to get the strategic plan started. There will be plans for three areas: smarter policing, crime prevention, and better communication with the community. The deadline for drafts of the three strategies is January 15, 2024. The plan will include action steps to implement the plan. This should assist the Administration and SPD in taking the action you requested in Resolution 156.

As I mentioned to you in my letter dated December 12, the Administration and SPD already cooperate and collaborate with other local, state, and federal agencies to combat crime. These collaborations include those with the FBI, the DEA, the Bureau of ATF, the United States Attorney's Office, the Shreveport City Marshal, the Louisiana Office of Probation and Parole, the Caddo Parish Sheriff, the Caddo Parish District Attorney, the Bossier City Police, the Bossier Parish Sheriff, and the Louisiana State Police. Current task forces with one or more of these agencies include those with the FBI, the ATF, the U. S. Marshal Service, and the U. S. Attorney's Office, targeting narcotics traffic, gun violence, gang intelligence, and human trafficking.

SPD already is using technology to enhance its crime fighting efforts. Specific efforts include:

- The Real Time Crime Center (RTCC). One of the first things I did as Mayor was to authorize change of control over the RTCC from the Mayor's Office to SPD. That has proven to be a positive step. The RTCC now has over 1300 camera feeds deployed throughout the city. The current contract for RTCC allows it to follow 1500 camera feeds, and funding is available to increase that number as the RTCC hits its contractual capacity. The City has deployed all of these cameras since January 1, when SPD assumed responsibility for the RTCC. The deployment and management by SPD have allowed the RTCC to be effective at the street level and at the headquarters level. The effectiveness of the RTCC on apprehending criminals improves every month, and the operation of the RTCC has resulted in several arrests.

- License Plate Readers. License plate readers (LPRs) allow SPD to identify vehicles and “follow” their paths. Through cooperation with BlueLine Solutions, the city has employed 90 LPRs since January 1. LPRs are effective to identify and provide proof of movement of vehicles and criminal suspects. SPD will add additional LPRs in 2024.
- Drones. SPD has dramatically increased its use of drones and drone technology to aid in observation and investigation. SPD has added drones with greater capacity to its inventory of crime-fighting tools. Because of the sensitive nature of the use and technology, it is unwise to disclose the full use and capacity of the drones.
- Use of technology other than the RTCC, LPRs, and drones. SPD is making effective use of technologies other than the RTCC, LPRs, and drones. Further disclosure about this technology and its use could jeopardize its effectiveness in observation and investigation.

In addition to all of the above measures, SPD’s Violent Crime Abatement Team (VCAT), formed to track down the persons responsible for the most violent crimes in Shreveport, is effective and used as an example by the U. S. Attorney’s Office and ATF. In addition, SPD permits unlimited overtime for its investigators to follow leads in investigation.

The men and women of SPD are working well and effectively in trying times to enforce the law and bring criminals to justice. They provide exemplary service. Both the Administration and SPD are committed to using every resource available to enhance enforcement and crime prevention, so that Shreveport is safe and its citizens feel safe.

It is important to remember that SPD mostly has a role after a crime is committed. While it has outreach efforts for young people to encourage them to follow a positive path, the primary role of SPD as a first responder is to investigate crimes and arrest suspects. We all hope that as SPD becomes more effective in investigations and arrests, potential criminals will think twice about engaging in criminal activity. SPD’s direct role in crime prevention is limited.

Because of the public perception that violent crime is increasing, it is helpful to look at the crime statistics. I have included a copy of the Five-Year Comparison of Year-to-Date Totals for January-November, 2023. These statistics are instructive.

In terms of increases, two areas stand out, homicides and auto thefts. Every homicide is a tragic event. In the words of John Donne, "Each man's death diminishes me, For I am involved in mankind." Even so, most of this year's homicides appear to involve people who know each other, and some appear to be motivated by revenge for other homicides or other violence. SPD has made arrests in 30 of the 73 homicides committed in Shreveport this year and has identified suspects in another 13.

Thefts from autos and auto thefts have increased significantly from 2022. SPD is conducting special operations to target the thieves, using intelligence from multiple agencies to identify the persons responsible. SPD also believes that increased effectiveness of the RTCC will help drive these categories down.

Despite the increase in homicides and thefts from autos, the report discloses that overall violent crime is down in 2023 compared to prior years. The report calculates a "Violent Crime Index" using statistics from all the crimes on the report. Significantly, the Violent Crime Index for November, 2023 year-to-date is 1322, down from 1379 in 2022, 1576 in 2021, and 1608 in 2020, as well as the five-year average of 1444.4.

In light of the title of Resolution 156, saying that the resolution requests that I declare a public emergency, my Administration has reviewed applicable grants and statutes to see if a declaration of emergency would make any resources immediately available to SPD that are not already available. I do not believe that a declaration of emergency under the City's current facts would result in relief from the requirements of the Louisiana Procurement Code. We further have not identified any grants or resources that would become available upon a declaration of emergency as requested that are not already available to SPD.

While the rate of shootings and homicides are both unacceptably high, neither the facts nor the statistics support declaring an emergency. Moreover, I cannot determine any practical impact of such a declaration. Thus, I respectfully decline to declare an emergency.

We will continue to do what the Resolution requests, which is to call on all local, state, and federal resources to be deployed on behalf of the City of Shreveport to address gun violence and violence against women and

children. With the advice and assistance of SPD, I will determine if further task forces would be helpful and whether additional funding is warranted.

We stand committed to continue to receive your input and to work with you to address crime and gun violence, as well as crimes of domestic violence, in Shreveport.

Sincerely,



Tom Arceneaux  
Mayor

Enclosure

cc: LaTonya Bogan, Interim Clerk of Council  
Police Chief Wayne Smith  
Tom Dark, CAO  
Marcus E. Edwards, City Attorney  
Ms. Tari T. Bradford



## FIVE-YEAR COMPARISON OF YEAR-TO-DATE TOTALS

REPORTED OFFENSE	NUMBER OF OFFENSES					5-YR AVERAGE	LOW	HIGH
	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019			
<b>HOMICIDE</b>	68	45	77	66	32	57.6	41.1	74.1
<b>MANSLAUGHTER</b>	8	2	1	2	2	3.0	0.5	5.5
<b>JUSTIFIED HOMICIDE</b>	1	1	6	0	3	2.2	0.1	4.3
<b>TOTAL HOMICIDE</b>	77	48	84	68	37	62.8	45.1	80.5
<b>RAPE</b>								
Forcible Rape	117	133	133	108	125	123.2	113.6	132.8
<b>ROBBERY</b>								
Person Robbery								
Armed	173	124	117	107	126	129.4	106.6	152.2
Simple		59	73	72	91	73.8	62.4	85.1
<b>Total Person Robbery</b>	173	183	190	179	217	188.4	173.1	203.7
Business Robbery								
Armed	19	17	27	31	38	26.4	18.7	34.1
Simple		5	5	7	9	6.5	4.8	8.2
<b>Total Business Robbery</b>	19	22	32	38	47	31.6	21.3	41.9
<b>TOTAL ROBBERY</b>	192	205	222	217	264	220.0	195.7	244.3
<b>AGGRAVATED ASSAULT/ BATTERY</b>	936	993	1,137	1,215	911	1038.4	920.3	1156.5
<b>BURGLARY</b>								
Residential	982	818	917	1,029	1,108	970.8	872.2	1069.4
Business	498	340	304	338	372	370.4	303.1	437.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	1,480	1,158	1,221	1,367	1,480	1341.2	1209.1	1473.3
<b>THEFT</b>								
Purse Snatching	6	7	7	2	9	6.2	3.9	8.5
Shoplifting	1,090	1,035	946	1,751	1,988	1362.0	938.4	1785.6
Theft from Business	244	281	251	250	232	251.6	235.4	267.8
Theft from Residence	959	994	994	1,186	1,251	1076.8	958.6	1195.0
Auto Accessory Theft	370	633	445	419	439	461.2	371.3	551.1
Theft from Auto	1,915	1,203	1,471	1,850	1,390	1565.8	1292.2	1839.4
Other Thefts	809	699	788	815	1,048	831.8	716.0	947.6
<b>TOTAL</b>	5,393	4,852	4,902	6,273	6,357	5555.4	4906.5	6204.3
<b>AUTO THEFT</b>	1,157	631	683	624	584	735.8	522.9	948.7
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	9,352	8,020	8,382	9,872	9,758	9076.8	8332.3	9821.3
<b>VIOLENT CRIME INDEX</b>	1,322	1,379	1,576	1,608	1,337	1444.4	1322.0	1566.8
<b>PROPERTY CRIME INDEX</b>	8,030	6,641	6,806	8,264	8,421	7632.4	6878.1	8386.7
LOW = 5-YEAR AVERAGE - STANDARD DEVIATION      HIGH = 5-YEAR AVERAGE + STANDARD DEVIATION								
EXCEEDS AVERAGE			HIGH			LOW		