

Breathalyzer for testing the sobriety of drivers, video equipment for video taping suspected drinking/drunken drivers, a motorcycle, and a scooter, and a four-wheel drive emergency vehicle. A radio transmitter at headquarters permits contact with all mobile units. Walkie-talkies are provided in each radio patrol car and to each officer on foot patrol. Instant information can also be relayed by teletype machine at headquarters to and from police units throughout Union County, a sixteen-state area, and Washington, D.C. An officer is in twenty-four hour attendance at Police Headquarters. The Department is also linked via computer to the Department of Motor Vehicles and the National Crime Information Center in Washington, D.C.

Jails

The municipal jail located in Police Headquarters has a five-cell block. After booking, suspects may be kept overnight and then transferred to the county jail or juvenile detention center in Elizabeth. The cost of operating the municipal jail is borne by the Township.

Courts

The Municipal Court is in session Wednesday evenings. The magistrate is appointed every three years by the Township Council and must be licensed by the state of New Jersey. Most cases involve traffic violations and criminal complaints. The Municipal Court has no jurisdiction in juvenile cases. Juvenile offenders (under 18 years of age) are handled by the Police Department and the Union County Juvenile Court. All parole work is handled by the county.

Juvenile Conference Committee

Under a ruling of the Supreme Court of New Jersey, the Juvenile Conference Committee was established in 1953. Upon recommendations of municipal mayors, the judge of the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court of each county appoints the committee in each municipality. The members of the Juvenile Conference Committee serve three-year appointments with the terms of one-third of the members expiring each year. Scotch Plains presently has eight members on its Committee, all of whom serve without compensation.

Technical acts of delinquency, which in the opinion of the Juvenile Court are not serious enough to merit a formal hearing, are referred to the Conference Committee. Cases of petty theft, property damage, obscene language, and first offender marijuana drug use are the complaints most frequently heard by the Committee. In all cases, a formal complaint against the delinquent has first been filed with the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court in Elizabeth.

The Committee meets when necessary in the Municipal Building, Monday evenings, 6-8 P.M. Although appearance before the Committee is on a voluntary basis, it is required that the child's parent or guardian be present. If the parents desire, or if there is failure to cooperate with the Committee, the case will be returned to the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court. After evaluation of each case, the Committee recommends corrective actions to fit the individual and the circumstances involved. Actions recommended may entail the services of social agencies, churches and physicians.

Fire Department

Members of the Department consist of the Chief, one Deputy Chief, two captains, four lieutenants, nineteen North-side and thirteen South-side volunteers. The Fire Chief, having been certified by Civil Service examination, is appointed from the ranks of the Department. All firemen must reside in Scotch Plains, pass a physical examination, and take fire-fighter training courses at State and County Fire Schools. The Township also conducts a training program.

Equipment and Facilities

There are two fire stations -- one located on the North-side and one on the South-side of town. The Department has four combination pumpers, (one of which is replaced every ten years), two four-wheel drive trucks, a utility truck, and a Chief's car.

The Township budget allocates funds toward the purchase of new equipment.