



Hermantown Police Department
5111 Maple Grove Road, Hermantown, MN 55811
218.729.1200 // cops@hermantownmn.com

AROUND TOWN

During the week of 05/21/23 to 05/27/23, the Hermantown PD had 226 calls.
The following are selected incidents HPD responded to this week.

Chief

Jim Crace

Commanders

Mark Gunderson
Jon Esterbrooks

Sergeants

Griffin Pfeiffer - K9
Jon Pernu - K9

Detective

Jake Williams
Jeff Dwyer

Officers

Jason Salo
Tim Battaglia
Jon Enright
Erika Johnson - SRO
Olivia Gottschald
Jonathan Stracek
Andrew Leibel
Alex Prouse

K-9 Officers

Tuuko
Jack

Records

Jessica Sorensen
Dana Ross
Samantha Knapp

Assault

On the afternoon of 05/23/23, a 20-year-old man reported that he had been assaulted by a coworker at a moving service and that the suspect had been removed from the work site and fired. Officer Enright met with the man, who explained that his 37-year-old coworker was carrying a chair and it looked like it was going to hit the sides of the door, so he asked if the man needed help. He said that the man walked up to him and was confrontational before hitting him in the side of the head. Officer Enright spoke to another employee that had been on site when the assault occurred. She said that the older man was carrying a chair that too big for him to handle and he was struggling. The younger man asked him, "Hey, you got that big chief?" which she thought was a goofy way of offering help but didn't believe he was being rude. She said the older man then got into the younger man's face and hit him in the head. Officer Enright made contact with the suspect by phone. He said that the younger man has been rude and disrespectful since they started working together in March. He stated that he was the only one working and was carrying a chair by himself when the young man made a comment to him, causing him to "blow up." He said the younger man was being "a rude, disrespectful little kid so he got slapped upside the head and his hat went flying." A citation for 5th degree assault was mailed to the suspect.

On 05/24/23 at approximately 8:20 p.m., Officer Stracek was advised of an assault that occurred the previous evening at a Timber Ridge Lane residence. A 67-year-old woman reported that her son had been released from North East Regional Corrections Center (NERCC) a few weeks ago and she had allowed him to stay a few nights to help him get on his feet. She stated that she ended up kicking him out because he didn't want to do anything with his life and she suspected he was using drugs again. The woman explained that she had gotten home the previous night around 6 p.m. and when she unlocked the front door and entered the residence, she found her son sitting in a chair facing her. He told her that he didn't have anywhere to go and was out of money. When she told him he wasn't welcome at the residence, he exploded and threw his cell phone, which hit her in the thigh and fell on her foot. She said that he then chased her through the residence and she locked herself in the bathroom. She told Officer Enright that she believed he had taken multiple tools from her garage. Reports were forwarded to the prosecuting attorney's office for charges of domestic assault and burglary.

Drugs

On 05/23/23 at 12:42 a.m., Officer Stracek observed a motorcycle on northbound Miller Trunk Highway. The motorcycle kept stalling and the driver kept restarting it to make the turn onto Sugar Maple Drive. After the motorcycle turned into the Kwik Trip parking lot, Officer Stracek performed a traffic stop, as there was no license plate displayed. The 44-year-old driver said it had been a long time since he drove a motorcycle and this one belonged to a friend who told him he could drive it. When asked about the missing license plate, the man looked where it belonged and then stated it fell off. Officer Stracek then observed a motorcycle plate sticking out of the man's rear pants pocket. When asked why he lied about the license plate, the man said he thought he put it back on the motorcycle, explaining that the mounting bracket for the plate was loose. After Officer Gottschald arrived to assist, dispatch relayed that the motorcycle was listed as being stolen. The officers attempted to place the man in handcuffs, but he pulled away while saying he didn't steal the motorcycle. After a struggle, Officer Stracek escorted the man to the ground and Officer Gottschald secured a large hunting knife that was sheathed to the man's hip. The man was handcuffed and would not respond when asked if he had other weapons on him. The man's backpack was searched incident to arrest. Inside the backpack, officers located a 9mm handgun, multiple drug kits, suspected drugs, and weapons such as brass knuckles and a switchblade. Inside a matchbook, tinfoil containing fentanyl was found. While packaging the items for the evidence room, Officer Stracek noted the man had a "sale kit" that included two individual baggies of suspected methamphetamine, a scale, a large quantity of different sized baggies, \$471 in cash, hypodermic needles, pills, and other paraphernalia. In addition, the man had three cell phones on his person. The Glock 19's magazine was high capacity and was loaded with 31 rounds of hollow point expanding rounds. The man is prohibited from possessing a firearm due to multiple convictions over the years, including drug



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possession, robbery, burglary, false imprisonment, and assault. He was also previous convicted of being a felon in possession of a firearm. The man was lodged at the St. Louis County Jail for charges of controlled substance sales, possession of a firearm by ineligible person, possession of a stolen vehicle, carrying a pistol without a permit, obstruction with force, and two charges of possessing a dangerous weapon.

At 10:22 p.m. on 05/26/23, Officer Stracek observed a vehicle with burnt out license plate lights. The driver said he didn't have his license on him and provided his name and date of birth. While speaking with the driver, Officer Stracek observed a Ziplock baggie of marijuana in the cup holder. There was also a strong odor of fresh marijuana emitting from the vehicle. A license query on the 45-year-old driver showed a status of cancelled – inimical to public safety. The 43-year-old passenger had a revoked driving status. Officer Stracek confronted the driver about his driving status and the man held up an interlock unit and said he thought he was valid again. The man was then detained in the rear of a squad car. Officer Stracek had the passenger sit on the side of the road while he conducted a vehicle search. In the driver's door, he located two marijuana cigarettes that were burnt. Under the front passenger seat, he located a small baggie with a white crystalline substance, along with a glass pipe with burnt white residue inside. He believed that the male passenger had placed the items under his seat after the vehicle was stopped. The man would not admit that the suspected meth and pipe were his, but he didn't contest it. He was taken into custody and was later lodged at the St. Louis County Jail. The driver stated that the meth belonged to the passenger. Reports were forwarded to the prosecuting attorney for the driver's charge of driving after cancellation – inimical to public safety.

Driving Under the Influence

On 05/27/23 at 12:18 a.m., Officer Gottschald was on patrol on Miller Trunk Highway when the vehicle in front of her pulled into the parking lot of Batteries Plus, which was closed. After she passed by, the vehicle exited back onto the highway and quickly pulled into the Holiday gas station. Officer Gottschald pulled in behind the Mustang to conduct a license plate query and both occupants exited the vehicle. The female passenger was visibly upset and walked toward Officer Gottschald while the male followed, telling her everything was fine and to get back in the vehicle. Sgt. Pernu was working a Toward Zero Death special traffic enforcement shift and was at the intersection of Arrowhead Road and Miller Trunk Highway when Officer Gottschald aired that she was out with the Mustang and two occupants. He responded to the gas station and spoke with the male while Officer Gottschald was speaking to the female. The woman told Officer Gottschald they had gotten into an argument and were kicked out of a Duluth hotel for causing a disturbance. She explained that they had been drinking while out at dinner before returning to the hotel. The 22-year-old man told Sgt. Pernu that he and his girlfriend of approximately one month were arguing about "everyday things" and an Xbox. He said that he didn't drive the car anywhere else that night, but they got kicked out of a hotel and needed gas in the vehicle. He then continued to say that he was not driving it out of the gas station. Sgt. Pernu had the man perform field sobriety testing, as he appeared to be intoxicated. The man's preliminary breath test showed a reading of .129% blood alcohol content. The man had two previous DWIs in 2018 and 2019, which enhanced this charge. He was lodged at the St. Louis County Jail for 2nd degree DWI, .08 or more, and driving after revocation.

Fraud

On 05/22/23, an 18-year-old resident reported a scam that caused her to lose money. The woman stated that an Instagram follower contacted her and said that she wanted to use one of the woman's photos for a painting she was doing for a client. She said that she would pay the woman \$500 to use her photo. The woman said that the suspect emailed her three checks, two for \$1000 and one for \$500, with instructions to deposit them and send back \$2000 via PayPal or Venmo. The woman did as instructed and later noticed her bank account balance to be negative \$2000. She stated that her bank told her the checks were fake and she needed to report the incident to law enforcement.

Order Violation

Just before 8 p.m. on 05/24/23, Officer Stracek and Sgt. Pernu went to dinner at Dairy Queen. As Officer Stracek was headed inside, he was met by a woman exiting the building with food and drinks in her hands. He recognized



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the 29-year-old from previous law enforcement contacts. A short time later, a male exited the bathroom and appeared to hide his face with his hood up before walking outside. Sgt. Pernu explained that the male had been a passenger in the women's car when he arrived at the restaurant. The officers identified the 44-year-old man and discovered that there was an Order for Protection in place between the woman and man. As Officer Stracek was checking the area for the man, he observed the woman pull out of the Haines Road Kwik Trip parking lot and turn into the rear entrance toward TJ Maxx. He then observed the man walking southbound on Haines Road. As the man approached the intersection of Haines and Maple Grove Roads, the woman pulled out from behind TJ Maxx and turned southbound on Haines Road and it appeared they were trying to set up a location for the man to be picked up. Officer Stracek pulled his vehicle onto Haines Road, stopping the car and blocking the woman's view of the man. He then watched the woman make a call on her cell phone and as the man's phone began to ring. The woman was uncooperative and stated she wasn't with the man and refused to show Officer Stracek her call log. The man was also asked to show his call log and he started deleting the call history in front of Officer Stracek. The pair then traded phones, as they were in possession of each other's phone. The man was cited and lodged at the St. Louis County Jail for the order violation. At 11:48 p.m. on the same night, the woman called and asked for assistance at her step-daughter's Hermantown address, stating that the young woman asked her to call 911. A deputy was in the area and located the caller's vehicle and he performed a traffic stop on it. The woman continued calling 911 while she was pulled over by the deputy. Officer Stracek arrived at the location of the traffic stop and made contact with the woman, noting that she seemed like a different person compared to earlier that night when he was dealing with her. She was restless, had dilated pupils, and didn't seem to have control of her body movements. She denied drug use and was not willing to perform field sobriety tests. Officer Stracek observed a hypodermic needle in plain view on the floor of the vehicle. He saw that there was a fresh track mark on her arm, but she claimed she gave blood earlier in the day and the needle belonged to a diabetic friend. The woman was ultimately placed under arrest for suspected controlled substance DWI. She was transported to a local hospital for a blood draw. When Officer Stracek parked in the sally port at the emergency room, the woman began standing on her seat, sitting odd position, and she broke her eyeglasses on the cage of the squad car. She said she was hot and asked for the window to be rolled down, at which time she attempted to stick her hands out and open the door. While Officer Stracek was on the phone with the judge that was reviewing his blood draw search warrant, the woman began yelling that the building was on fire. After the blood draw was completed, the woman attempted to run away. She was caught and transported to the St. Louis County Jail shortly before 2 a.m. Just before 3 a.m., jail staff advised that the woman needed medical attention, as she claimed to have swallowed heroin. She was again transported to a local hospital. Charges are pending the results of the woman's blood test. She has had two prior DWIs in the past ten years.

Theft

On 05/26/23, a 47-year-old Arrowhead Road residence reported a vehicle prowling that occurred between 05/05/23 and 05/07/23. He said he had been out of town and when he returned, he noticed his shed door was open and the door to his vehicle was not completely shut all the way. He stated his Ford F150 had been parked in the driveway unlocked while he was gone and his Sig Sauer handgun is missing from the center console.

At approximately 5:30 p.m. on 05/27/23, Officer Enright was dispatched to a vehicle theft near Highway 2 and Old Highway 2. The reporting party said a man came to his door with mail and paperwork with his address that the man found in a culvert on Midway Road. The reporting party recognized the paperwork as items that had been in his 2007 Toyota Camry that was being stored on property he owns. He went to check the property and found that his Camry was gone. He stated that he moved the vehicle approximately two weeks prior, which was the last time he knew the vehicle was there. Just before 7:30 on the following morning, Officer Enright was advised that the vehicle was located in Duluth near the intersection of Cody Street and Central Avenue. The reporting party advised dispatch that there was a female in the passenger seat who appeared to be heavily intoxicated. The woman walked away before officers arrived and she was not located. Hermantown officers processed the vehicle for evidence and released it to the owner.