Chief Spends Time with Littles—On Saturday, February 4, 2017, Chief Hiller visited the Owatonna Public Library to spend some time with many children in the community. He enjoyed reading the book, “My Town” - a book about a young boy and his father who go exploring around town. Hiller loves reading to children, and is honored that The Kiwanis Club provides this opportunity to the readers and children. Hiller believes these professional occasions in life are the true definition of community policing and community engagement.

Body Worn Camera Demo—This week, the division commanders, Chief Hiller and the City IT staff attended two presentations on body worn camera (BWC) platforms. The first was Taser’s Axon and Flex body camera products. The second, a product from Visual Labs that is predominantly on the east coast, is introducing a market in Minnesota and recently launched their products in Washington County (MN). In a 2016 market survey conducted by the National Institute of Justice, there were 66 BWC products featured by 38 vendors. Our police staff continue to explore the vast variety of camera options, upcoming technologies, and products to make informed decisions on a product that will best serve our officers, administration and the community.

Are You Lost? On Wednesday evening officers were called to 116 Hobart Street SE for a suspicious vehicle. A subject, later identified as Jeffrey Averbeck, was parked in the driveway and standing outside his truck. A family friend stopped by to check this out. The household friend found Averbeck in the driver’s seat with the truck running. The friend got Averbeck out of the truck and noticed he nearly fell and was swaying. When OPD officer’s arrived, Averbeck said he had been out ice fishing and came to this house to see his buddy’s fish. Averbeck was showing signs of impairment but refused sobriety tests. He was arrested for drunk driving. Once at the detention center, a certified breath test operator reported Averbeck’s alcohol concentration at .23, this is nearly three times the state’s impaired driving limit. Averbeck was formally charged with 3rd Degree DWI.

TRAFFIC SAFETY —Preliminary traffic safety data released by the OTS (Officer of Traffic Safety) suggests that drivers and pedestrians need to do their part by making better choices and remain attentive to reduce preventable accidents. In 2015, Minnesota deaths on roadways accounted for 411 motor vehicle crashes and 41 pedestrian fatalities. Crash data for 2016 isn’t final; however the projected number of traffic fatalities will be close to 412 deaths; pedestrians hit on roadways spiked to 60 deaths. Speed, impaired driving, distracted driving and unbelted/unrestrained occupants are the contributing factors – let’s agree these are all preventable actions. Do your part – stay alert while using the road and make better choices and keep safety as your priority.