

First Homicide There Since 1970s: Freeburg/Belleville Police Uncover Homicide

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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FREEBURG - Freeburg Police discovered its first homicide since the 1970s when authorities found the body of 55-year-old Linda Waller during a wellness check in the Deerfield Creek Mobile Home Court on Wednesday night.

The Belleville Police Department contacted the Freeburg Police that there might be a crime victim in that area. Officers then pulled over a vehicle registered to Waller and a driver was taken into custody.

Authorities say that man is the lone person of interest in the case.

At 7:02 p.m. on January 11, 2023, Belleville Police officers on patrol saw a silver Ford F-150 truck traveling north on Centreville Avenue. Officers continued to observe the vehicle and observed the driver make an improper turn from West Washington onto South 2nd Street. Officers conducted a traffic stop on the vehicle at First and West Main Street, police said.

"Officers identified the driver and observed the vehicle he was driving did not belong to him," Belleville Police said. "Officers further observed the driver to be extremely nervous. Officers asked the driver for consent to search the vehicle, which was granted by the driver. Evidence was located during the search of the vehicle that led officers to believe the driver could have been involved in a violent crime.

"Belleville officers requested Freeburg officers check a residence in Freeburg based on items inside the vehicle during the search. Freeburg officers checked the residence on Deerfield Court and located a person deceased in the residence that was the victim of a homicide. Belleville officers took the driver of the vehicle into custody at the request of the Freeburg Police Department. The driver remains in custody pending further investigation".

At the request of the Freeburg Police Department, Belleville detectives assisted in the investigation.

"This case is yet another illustration of the dangers police officers face every day. What appeared to be a simple traffic stop quickly escalated to the arrest of a suspect in a violent murder. The officers who stopped this vehicle should be commended for their proactivity, and their diligence in investigating further." - Assistant Chief Mark Heffernan said.

Freeburg Police also said they believe there is no other threat to the community in this situation.