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## **REPORT**

### **TOWN OF PRINCETON, MASSACHUSETTS POLICE DEPARTMENT RISK REVIEW DECEMBER 2022**

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**TOWN OF PRINCETON, MASSACHUSETTS  
POLICE DEPARTMENT RISK REVIEW  
DECEMBER 2022**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Town of Princeton has made a prudent and valuable decision to evaluate the current delivery of police services to the community to enable greater effectiveness and efficiency for its delivery in the future. In the absence of programmatic oversight, available to the Town through the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission or CALEA, a risk review such as this one can be a valuable tool to assess the current state and provide a road map to the future for the police department.

This risk review was intended to be a high-level examination of physical, financial, and reputational risks as they pertain to the operations of the Princeton Police Department. Immediately apparent and nearly overwhelming in nature are two factors that have the potential for substantial liability for the town. Without correction, these two factors have a negative downhill effect with the potential for devastating consequences:

- the police facility is inadequate as it relates to officer and community safety; compliance with industry standards; and its impact on the good morale and esprit de corps of the police force
- direction of the agency in the form of policies, procedures, rules, and regulations is substantially inadequate

As Princeton appropriately seeks to have a high-performing police department, it must realize that the current building is a negative factor. When people speak of officer safety it is almost exclusively in the context of “on the streets.” Unfortunately, the police facility extends those concerns inside its walls. Reasonable steps should be undertaken to garner community support for the replacement of the aged police facility at the earliest opportunity.

In preparing for the future, Princeton officials should underpin the delivery of police services on a business and strategic planning basis. From a private sector enterprise perspective, having a business plan is essential in gaining start-up financing. The plan must be frequently updated to meet the competition of the marketplace. The public sector is different in that police departments do not have competitors and traditionally they have not had strategic plans to guide their delivery of services. Strategic planning will be beneficial, as it will require priorities to be set by commonly understood goals and objectives. By the clear delineation of assignments



consistent with established goals and objectives, followed by organizational and personnel evaluation of performance, accountability for defined outcomes can be assigned and expected.

Personnel costs in most police departments account for 80% or more of the department's annual budget. The patrol function of police departments has the lion's share of the personnel; in this instance, with the exception of the Chief, 100% of officers are responsible for patrol related tasks as a matter of routine. For police departments to be efficient, they must effectively manage the patrol function. With data currently available to the department, the Princeton Police Department should be conducting an analysis of calls for service data based on the geographic location of the calls to better configure patrol assignments. In the present state of the department, MRI's staffing analysis has demonstrated that the PPD will need to hire additional officers to meet the scheduling needs of the department. In the interim, data analysis could improve the department's ability to respond to calls and prevent crime and temporarily fill the gap while new positions are funded and filled.

Training in a police department serves several important requirements; meeting the legal requirements of recruit training that lead to a police officers' certification, enhancement of basic skills, meeting in-service training requirements for veteran officers, and meeting certification requirements for officers with specialized skills. The Princeton police can be characterized as having barely/minimally met these critical training requirements. For those seeking advancement, and for the purpose of succession, there has been virtually no leadership and management training provided.

Training helps safeguard the community from liability stemming from the behavior of untrained officers. Training also goes hand-in-hand with career development and can be a significant morale booster. For available training to be most effective, three things are required: first, the department must set its training needs in a priority fashion while conducting an inventory of skills already found within the ranks; second, a training plan to meet the priorities and sustain the level of needed training must be developed; and thirdly, the training plan must be supported and sustained in the annual department budget.

The current financial situation for municipal governments across the country today is challenging. Increased costs associated with fuel, durable and expendable goods, health care, and other cost centers make budgeting as much an art as a science. With no apparent relief in sight, it is all the more necessary for department managers to act more strategically based on data-driven planning, and to build organizations that strive for every efficiency to be gained in their operation. The annual budget becomes the expression of these efforts as the budget sets out the priorities established by department managers. The Princeton Police will be more viable in competing for



scarce municipal resources when it adopts a more strategic, business plan model for its budget development. With the adoption of greater inventory control, maintenance planning, and equipment replacement schedules, the department will also become efficient with the resources it acquires.

Working together, the Selectboard, Town Administrator, and the Chief of Police should review the recommendations found in the last pages of this report and establish an order of priority and reasonable timeline within the restrictions of budget, as applicable. MRI further recommends that those items related to life safety risks should be addressed with the highest priority.



## **INTRODUCTION and SCOPE OF WORK**

### **Introduction**

The Town of Princeton, Massachusetts retained the services of Municipal Resources, Incorporated (MRI) to develop a high-level overview of the Princeton Police Department for the purposes of assessing risk management and potential organizational enhancements that could be offered for consideration and implementation.

Princeton is governed by a Selectboard consisting of three (3) members who are elected at large for staggered three (3) year terms. Selectboard members hold policy-making and legislative authority; are responsible for passing ordinances; adopting the budget; appointing Board, Committee and Commission members, the Town Administrator, and all employees.

The Selectboard has appointed a Town Administrator Sherry Patch to oversee all municipal departments, coordinate the daily operations and ensure that the policies of the Town are adhered to and satisfactorily completed. Her role is to function as the principal liaison between the Selectboard, the department heads, and the public. Her work is wide-reaching, including budgeting, oversight of purchasing, capital improvement projects, identifying grant funding when available, while representing the Town in a host of external meetings with other governmental entities.

### **Scope of Work**

The organizational review of the Princeton Police Department included an assessment of the organizational structure/governance; the communications, cross-functionality, and horizontal integration of the departments' internal workings; the efficiency and effectiveness of the policies, procedures, rules, and regulations giving guidance to the department; the application of professional standards and organizational accountability; along with the management, operations and culture of the Princeton Police Department. Criteria such as Town size, demographics, form of government, etc. have been used in the comparisons wherever applicable. In addition, unique aspects of the community pertaining to special risks or other unique challenges have been considered.

The audit is meant to focus on the management structure, staffing levels, efficiency and effectiveness of day-to-day operations, and the sufficiency of supporting data management tools and data collected, etc., used by Princeton Police Department to prepare for and guide the department as it relates to the management of risk of emergencies, and in day-to-day operations



well. For the purposes of this review, risk includes physical danger, financial liability, and reputational liability as they relate to police operations and the community at large.

## **Methodology**

Key personnel from MRI and the Town of Princeton met and began to discuss the purpose of the study, as well as the expectations of the Selectboard, and anticipated needs of the police department. A team of experienced MRI police consultants was assembled and the review of the requirements for this undertaking was begun.

Meetings were held with various elected officials, appointed officials, and employees of the Town.

At MRI's request, the Town of Princeton and other interested parties contributed significant data for review by MRI consultants. This information included but is not limited to:

- Princeton Police Department manuals for Organization, Policies and Procedures, Rules and Regulations, and Personnel Practices
- Princeton Police Department Personnel Roster and Organizational Chart
- A broad array of reports with data for police officer response to incidents and overall activity for police officers, investigators, and supervisors
- Call for Service data
- Training records

Additional information was requested during the course of the assessment. Examples would be the use of overtime and sick leave by department members, compilation of court time by officers, and other relevant data needed to assess workload and other operations related to risk management.

In September and October 2022, the MRI team traveled to Princeton. During the first visit, a tour of the facility was given, where department members were met. During the tour, safety, and security concerns (in the broad sense) were noted. After the tour, members of the team spent time with department personnel in an effort to gather information that would put observations of the physical plant, written directives, and other factors into context. The second visit resulted in two SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) exercises that are designed to garner input from department heads and community members.

This report is the work product derived from this extensive research. The observations made within this report are believed to be accurate based on the information gathered and the



combined judgment of the MRI team. The resulting recommendations are based upon an acknowledgment that police departments are living organizations; they must constantly change and adapt to current conditions and realities. Municipal policing, while holding steadfastly to its traditions, is a profession that requires constant improvement. The environment in which policing takes place is besieged with demands from the society it serves, as well as changes in the law, court decisions, impositions of the state Attorney General, technology, and new generations of men and women entering this public service career. The delivery of high-quality police service requires energetic, enlightened leadership at all levels of a police department. Every day must include an effort to improve and move forward.

MRI would like to take this opportunity to thank the Town of Princeton, the Selectboard, Town Administrator Sherry Patch, and the members of the Princeton Police Department for their cooperation and assistance with this endeavor.

## **COMMUNITY AND DEPARTMENT PROFILE**

Established in 1759 from land that had been part of Rutland, the Town of Princeton includes a total of 35.8 square miles, with .4 miles of water. In the 1800's, Princeton annexed portions of Hubbardston and Westminster to reach its current square mileage. Of significance, though not the primary host, Princeton is the primary access to the Mt. Wachusett ski and recreational area. Discussed elsewhere in this report as both a threat and an opportunity to the community, this recreation area plays a significant role in the dialogue of the town as elected and appointed leaders work to understand the management of risks identified in this report.

Princeton is a Town in Worcester County with an estimated population of 3,478. Available demographic statistics show that Princeton has a racial makeup of 96% white, 1.4% Hispanic, 1.2% Asian, .4% African American, .03% Native American and .9% from two or more races.

Today, the Princeton Police Department budget authorizes 6 full-time police officers; a comprehensive discussion of staffing levels is found below.



## **CULTURAL ASSESSMENT**

### **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT)**

MRI approached this process as an opportunity to focus upon implementation points that will assist the newly appointed incoming Police Chief with an overview of recommendations designed to improve organizational effectiveness. In the effort to gather insight, MRI used an abbreviated SWOT analysis designed to encourage discussion with the employees at the Princeton Police Department. Homing in on similarities under each category of **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats**, offered starting points for gathering information regarding each of the categories originally identified by the Town Management team. MRI met with separate stakeholders to gather the SWOT data: police department staff, town department heads, and the town appointed police chief selection committee.

#### **Police Department Staff SWOT**

Unfortunately, there were only three staff members (two sworn staff and one civilian member) who were available when the MRI team arrived for the scheduled on-site visit. Though otherwise available, MRI requested that Chief Powers not attend the exercise so that officers and staff would feel freer to speak openly. The MRI team was advised that other staff were unavailable while working details in other communities. Ironically, the topic of details emerges later in the exercise. For readers unfamiliar with the term “details” as it relates to policing, details are privately funded projects that require police presence for safety and/or security. Project managers hire and pay for police on an as needed basis. Details are performed during officers regularly scheduled off-duty time; they represent a financial earning opportunity for officers that are not tax based.

#### **Strengths of the Princeton Police Department**

- Flexible work schedule
- Numerous details in neighboring communities

#### **Perceived Weakness of the Princeton Police Department**

- Substandard equipment
- Lack of maintenance for agency owned equipment
- Three adequately functioning police vehicles
- Single officer shifts
- Lack of training - funds were added this year for the first time



- Poor morale
- Mobile Data Terminals are not up to date and must be disconnected frequently to reboot

### Opportunities that exist for the Princeton Police Department

- A better work schedule needs to be developed and authorized by the Chief
- Finish set-up of AFIS machine (Automated Fingerprint Identification System)
- Training needs to occur with new funding

### Emerging threats for the Princeton Police Department

- Officers leaving the department for more money
- Liability exposure due to poor training of staff
- Absence of current policy manual
- Needed body worn camera system

The SWOT exercise, albeit with a very small number of employees contributing, was enlightening for the MRI team. Having facilitated many of these exercises, the team was surprised at the lack of response within the category of Strengths of the department. It is MRI's experience that comments about fellow workers, support from the community, or a good working environment are immediately offered as examples of organizational strength; that was not the case in Princeton. However, later in the exercise, a **Strength** surfaced when one officer highlighted choosing to work in Princeton due to the Chief's willingness to allow flexibility in the development of a schedule. The officer articulated that the Sterling Police, an immediate neighbor, offered \$15,000 more in annual compensation but could not guarantee a fixed schedule of a day and three-night shifts which allowed flexibility needed for personal reasons. While this work-life conflict is a common problem in a profession that demands 24/7 shift coverage, providing a junior person with a favorable schedule of their choice also creates a unique situation that often alienates co-workers who may deem this as favoritism.

In the category of **Weakness**, common themes emerged regarding the increasingly poor morale throughout the agency. Given the small size of the Princeton Police Department, it was not surprising to hear concerns about single officer shift coverage during which the nearest back-up is from a neighboring community if they are available. Occasionally, there are overlapping shifts during which two officers work together for a period of hours, but that is not the norm. There was discussion regarding the development of various shift configurations designed to maximize the existing personnel and create overlapping of shifts in a more deliberate manner. MRI was



told that numerous shift proposals had been provided to the Chief with no action taken nor discussion regarding the assets or failings of the proposals. As one staff member stated, many proposals seem to simply disappear on the Chief's desk.

The lack of equipment maintained in a state of operational readiness was a prevalent topic. Regarding the emergency vehicle fleet (cruisers), one officer stated that only three of six vehicles would be considered reliable and/or safe for emergency uses. This officer highlighted that in one of the Ford Explorers, the front driver's seat had been broken and had not been repaired for months. This rendered the vehicle unusable as this driver could not see over the dashboard with the malfunctioning seat still in place. In another instance, a modern Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) had been acquired through a grant from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts but had not been connected to the State Police via an internet connection. In essence, the AFIS machine takes up already limited facility space but in its current state offers no positive return to the department.

Despite the fact that the AFIS machine was not functioning, MRI was impressed to note that such an instrument was available; knowing that the cost of such a machine is more than \$20,000, it is uncommon to find them in small police departments. When examples were being provided of the poor maintenance of agency property, it was related that the AFIS machine had been installed in January of 2021 and has sat idle ever since. According to the staff, they had been told by the Chief that the town IT specialist was busy and unable to make the connection. In the current state, the AFIS equipment is useless. Officers indicated that they have stopped making inquiries about the AFIS and view its presence in the police facility as a joke and a prime example of "nothing getting done".

An additional example of poor or no maintenance highlighted the Mobile Data Terminals (MDT, computers installed in each police vehicle). One officer said that when the MDT needs to be rebooted, it must be uninstalled from the vehicle, reassembled, and then rebooted, wasting significant time in the process.

There was discussion regarding the number of private details that officers of the Princeton Police Department work. When the MRI team expressed surprise that Princeton would have so many road construction details, it was explained that most of the details occur in neighboring communities. One of the SWOT participants stated that the Princeton Police are "a detail-oriented department," with officers heavily dependent upon the funds derived from these details to overcome low pay. MRI found this notable; it explained why there was such little participation in the SWOT after the site visit had been prearranged with ample time to enable participation in the SWOT by all employees.



There was significant discussion regarding the poor morale of the agency. MRI noted that the participants appeared and sounded dispirited when speaking of the years long, down turning of organizational morale. When asked as to a common reason, there was obvious hesitancy to share with the MRI team. Ultimately, it was disclosed that there is one sergeant who complains frequently, is constantly a negative voice, and files many union grievances that are not always embraced by the membership. Frustration with the toxic environment that is the by-product of several of his complaints and grievances has developed a tense atmosphere not only within the agency but appears to have permanented the community. Later, when discussed with members of the Selectboard, the community has been impacted by this atmosphere following a personnel action taken to prevent the town requiring vaccinations as a condition of employment that arose during the pandemic.

The small group discussed **Opportunities** that if implemented, could enhance the agency and its' delivery of police services to the community. While the focus was on developing a more robust work schedule and entering into maintenance agreements to fix those things not functioning as intended, there was an acknowledgment that training for the agency was recently being addressed by allocations in the 2023 operating budget. When MRI inquired about past training initiatives, there was silence. When the staff was pressed to share, it became evident that the lack of training prior to this injection of funding was creating an overt risk to the community. Officers described that they are undertrained when compared to their peers in other agencies; they felt that the lack of training was a risk to their safety as well as their organizational reputation. For example, MRI learned that firearms training had been accomplished in a timely and appropriate manner but when asked about the Tasers that the officers were issued, again there was silence. MRI was able to discern that the Department "instructor" was not certified and therefore, the agency was not appropriately trained. MRI cautions that if the town is sued over the use of a Taser or any other police tool for which the officers have not been fully trained and tested on policy and practical application, there is a significant financial risk to the community.

MRI learned that training on police theory, skills, and practices prior to this year's budget authorization, was minimal at best. Though they believed they had, officers were not certain whether they'd received the necessary training to retain their certification as police officers in the Commonwealth. One of the sergeants, who aspires to become Chief one day, shared that the only training provided to him related to management, supervision, and leadership occurred when he was first promoted to sergeant more than a decade ago. The sergeant feels that he has been left at a disadvantage in his quest, as he believes that other agencies are engaging in leadership



development training routinely, not only enhancing the capacity of their personnel but raising the quality of work product.

The category of **Threats** are those topics where staff can see an issue looming that should be addressed. While no one could have predicted a pandemic, the impact of such an event is similar to what topics participants were asked to consider. While discussions pertaining to threats were limited, the concern over officers leaving due to lower pay structure than those agencies surrounding Princeton was at the forefront. There was also concern about the effect that a police chief coming from outside the department may have; the known unknown was troubling to some.

### **Department Head SWOT**

The town's department head SWOT meeting was well attended. Town leadership actively participated in the exercise, each giving examples of SWOT that, from their perspective, represent the current and future state of the police department.

After the protocol was explained, under **Strengths** the various participants highlighted that overall, the members of the police department worked well with all departments but especially the Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS). The police are recognized throughout the community for their quick response to emergencies. Recently, there has been a noticeable recommitment to communicating and interacting with the community. The Department Heads all concurred that Princeton police should be praised for their intimate knowledge of the roads and geography, residents, and problematic addresses/areas within the community. Additional categories of strengths described include:

- The members of the Princeton Police Department are well regarded by the senior population of the community.
- There was consensus that the agency is well respected by mutual aid agencies.
- There was a belief that the agency does a nice job with the budget. There was the realization that 2021 was a difficult year and they did their best to find grants.
- There was a sense that they issue more warnings instead of tickets for traffic violations.
- With respect to the Police Chief Recruitment process, all felt that the candidate should have a philosophy of developing positive relationships with other departments.
- There needs to be more of a commitment by the town to the police staff because of the perception/reality that the town is "losing them" (officers leaving to take law enforcement positions in other communities).



Within the category of **Weakness**, there emerged common themes for the need to develop/enhance communication throughout the community. All the Department heads expressed disappointment with the lack of an organized and structured presentation by the police department as to why the proposed public safety complex was so crucial to the police and the community. The Department Heads shared that there was ongoing discussion that silence from the police was an indication to residents that an upgrade wasn't needed or could at least be postponed. This lack of communication with the community was highlighted as an area where the new chief could benefit from a thoughtful and engaging strategy to share information with the community. Consensus indicated that the challenges facing the department and the community such as opioid abuse and senior fraud issues should be highlighted and shared with the community. Other highlights in this category included:

- A perception that the department was not arresting “bad actors” or persons who should be arrested simply because Princeton Police do not have a lock-up or the facility do deal with arrests.
- An active traffic enforcement initiative was non-existent for a while but there appears to be more police presence on the roadways over the last six months.
- The Department is often overwhelmed by the annual 600,000 visitors to the community due to the Wachusett ski mountain, hikers, and leaf peepers.
- There was little or no follow-up regarding criminal investigations, but this appears to be getting better due to the recent hires who have the investigative skills and training.
- The current Chief has not communicated the police budget needs effectively which has led to level funding when advocacy for their needs may have at least been enlightening to the community. It was recognized by the department heads that “level funding” was a false belief because of cost increases that are unavoidable to local government. “Level funding” results in diminished ability to deliver law enforcement and police services in an effective way. Compounded over years, the department heads have observed the police increasingly stagnant and ineffectual.

The Department Heads discussed **Opportunities** that if implemented, could enhance the agency and its' delivery of police services to the Princeton community. The weakness of communication strategies remains a significant topic in this area. Initiatives that would focus on educating the community were discussed as an opportunity missed by the Princeton Police. Some of those suggestions and others were highlighted:



- More education provided to the residents such as elderly crime. Regardless of the topic, it would allow the police to interact with population segments in a positive way that would also be valuable to the overarching crime reduction strategy.
- The Department needs to “be engaged in branding” so that the community knows what the police do and what needs to be done.
- The upgrading of a police facility may address, in part, the low morale that permeates the agency in the aftermath of the public safety building not being approved. Everyone realizes that the current building is “sick”, and the addition of male and female lockers/facilities and other critical infrastructure elements would be a positive. Replacement of the police facility will substantially reduce the risk associated with the current state of the building.
- Low revenue from Mt. Wachusett in the amount of \$35-70,000 per year when the facility dominates significant police time. It was pointed out that the 600,000+ visitors to the recreational facilities at the mountain must travel through Princeton; the resultant workload on (all departments) is an increasing stressor on the police department’s ability to be an effective presence elsewhere in the community.
- Career development needs to be considered as a training and retention tool.

The category of **Threats** includes those topics where the Department Heads can see an issue looming that should be addressed before becoming problematic. While discussions pertaining to threats were limited, several concerns from the Department Heads highlighted issues that may be out of the control of any police department, even an outside Chief with fresh ideas and meaningful energy. Some of the topics highlighted were:

- The Princeton community currently undervalues public safety because the residents have no concept of what is going on due to the police not being transparent.
- The physical infrastructure of the police department may be a health threat with black mold currently present.
- The recent and pending legislation due to the Massachusetts Police Reform may create unfunded and untenable mandates with unintended consequences in small communities such as Princeton.
- The overtly negative national dialogue about policing.
- Staffing levels...skeleton shifts are an officer safety threat.
- State roads through Princeton are main arteries between Route 2, Worcester, and other populated areas.
- Physical fitness to perform essential job tasks.



## Community Panel SWOT

Immediately following the Department Heads SWOT exercise, several Princeton residents that have been appointed by the Selectboard to assist with identifying the next police chief gathered; it was explained how this exercise centered upon their personal perceptions as end users of the Department. They were urged to share openly and thoughtfully. Additionally, many residents of the community, of which they were representing, were unaware of what the police chief selection element known as an assessment center exercise consisted of and what their role as community members would be in the selection process. Consequently, this opportunity was also used as a training moment for the appointed committee to address any concerns and provide insight to the police chief selection process, what traits were being sought from the applicants, and how qualified candidates would be identified.

As the SWOT exercise proceeded, MRI took the opportunity to expand the discussion so that the panel would also consider each SWOT element in terms of what they were looking for from the next Princeton Chief of Police.

The community members identified several **Strengths**. Principal among the strengths, and repeated several times, was that officers all projected a high level of dedication to the community. There was consensus that they accomplished their role under the most stressful situations and that overall, people are happy with the police response to calls for service and the individuals who work at the Department. Additionally, there was agreement that they were pleased to see the agency comprised of such a diverse representation of the community with several female and ethnic representatives. Other comments included:

- Over the history of the Department there had only been two police chiefs. Each had been trusted and appreciated for their character and values.
- The agency provided good service without complaints. To the resident's knowledge, there were no known inappropriate behaviors, and the community's trust in the officers was high.
- Until recently, the longevity of staff was notable. Employees would come and rarely leave the employ of the Princeton Police.

Within the category of **Weakness** there again emerged many common themes that were highlighted. The participants discussed the impact of a perceived lack of traffic enforcement to slow down those persons using Princeton as a "cut-through" or a shortcut to get elsewhere. All the participants agreed that this was an easy fix but that no program appeared to be in place; officers were rarely observed stopping vehicles. Interestingly, many of the same items identified



by the Department Heads earlier in the day were highlighted by the community panel. Topics included:

- No formal communication with the community. While there may be initiatives ongoing at the Department, there was little to no sharing of police information with the community.
- There could be significant efforts regarding improving proactive approaches to dealing with problems in the town.
- Enhance the visibility of the chief of police throughout the community.
- Better connection with youths and the elderly. Having officers at Thomas Prince School at opening and closing would be a small but impactful effort.
- Police are not seen in the community in the same way as the Fire Department. At community events where the Fire Department is often selling hot dogs or showing the equipment to young people, the police are irregularly present and are perceived as stand-offish when in attendance.
- All urged that there be some structured effort to communicate more frequently and effectively with the Princeton community. The terms “branding and marketing” were used frequently.

The community panel discussed **Opportunities** that, if implemented, could enhance the agency and its’ delivery of police services to the Princeton community. The majority of emphasis focused on a communication strategy with the community. Clearly, the new chief must be predisposed to reach out to the community and engage them in the work and delivery of services to the community. Some of those suggestions and others were highlighted:

- Assigning an officer to be at the Thomas Prince school for opening and closing.
- Community engagement must be a focus. Any initiative that creates an opportunity for the community to be involved in the Department would be a plus.
- The Chief should provide “fresh air” and have energy and new ideas.
- There must be deliberate and sustained agency advocacy for a new police facility.
- Professionalize the department with a training strategy.

The category of **Threats** includes those topics where the community panel can anticipate that challenges are forthcoming and should be addressed before becoming problematic. While discussions pertaining to threats were limited, several concerns from the community panel highlighted issues that may be out of the control of any police department. Some of the topics highlighted were:



- The price of providing policing is going up due to salaries, benefits, and retirement. The new chief should have significant budget experience.
- Princeton is not immune from the opiate crisis.
- Mt. Wachusett injects a significant number of visitors and ancillary traffic issues without offsetting revenue.
- The traffic and the accompanying speeds of those navigating through Princeton.
- Gun control challenges for the police.
- A general sense that people are not being held accountable. The example of the events surrounding the January 6<sup>th</sup> insurrection in Washington DC was provided as a global issue that could be reflected locally.
- The unknowns of what a new police chief from out of town may mean. While most believe this is positive, it is a new venture for the community.
- Succession planning must be part of the new strategy for the incoming chief.

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND STAFFING

### Comparative Community Assessment

Just how many police officers are required to adequately provide competent services to a community has always been a topic for debate. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has long tracked police officers per 1,000 residents; the largest police presence is reported to be in Washington, DC, where there are 6.1 officers for every 1,000 residents, followed closely behind by Wilmington, Delaware, with 4.3 officers per 1,000. Obviously, larger agencies have a greater call volume to address, but they also have flexibility to assign their larger staff numbers to issues as they arise whether by event, location, or time of day. According to FBI statistics<sup>1</sup>, New England communities with a population under 10,000 residents have an average of 3.8 police officers per thousand residents. These smaller agencies, such as the Princeton Police Department, which has 1.7 officers per thousand, do not have the flexibility to reassign officers. Additionally, they may not be confronted with an increase as the daily work population expands. Once again, the MRI staffing model does not rely on the population as a single variant for calculating staff demands. Composition of the population is simply too varied as there are significantly different policing requirements when there are 1,000 college students versus 1,000 active retired persons. However, Municipal Resources recognizes any increase in population of any demographic will typically result in additional workload demands upon the police. These population shifts are often

<sup>1</sup> <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2018/crime-in-the-u.s.-2018/tables/table-70>



predictable and measurable and must be understood to have an adverse impact upon demands for police services. As we will highlight, determining the need for staffing allocations for the Princeton Police is a combination of workload demands and the ability of the police agency to adequately respond to the community on a 24/7 basis.

What is the optimum allocation of human resources in a police department? This is a challenging problem not only for the police manager, but also for Town Administrators, elected officials, and ultimately, the taxpayer. Likewise, the quality of law enforcement is directly related to the effective distribution of police personnel, especially patrol officers, who represent the most important element in the police service as they relate to the perception of the police department by the community. For this reason, the proper staffing and distribution of personnel should be given prime consideration and be well-conceived by the governing body. While what occurs in one community may have no relationship to another, it is always interesting to note what comparable communities are investing to provide policing services within their community. While each community has a variety of unique dynamics that drive the composition of their police agency, often they are more similar than not and can offer insight as to how Princeton is approaching the delivery of policing services.

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## Comparable Communities

Town	Population	Police Officers	Calls 2021	FY23 Budget	Calls Per Officer	Cost Per Resident	Officers per Thousand
Wellfleet	3,011	18	8,192	\$2,060,411	455	\$684	5.97
Ashby	3,357	8	6,332	\$996,960	792	\$297	2.38
Dunstable	3,358	9	16,984	\$1,321,890	1,887	\$394	2.68
Brookfield	3,439	7	4,506	\$629,198	644	\$183	2
Berlin	3,500	10	12,000	\$979,000	1,200	\$279	2.86
<b>Princeton</b>	<b>3,507</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8,163</b>	<b>\$1,052,297</b>	<b>1,360</b>	<b>\$300</b>	<b>1.7</b>
Sunderland	3,659	6	8,200	\$585,100	1,367	\$160	1.63
Hubbardston	4,248	7	8,444	\$723,641	1,206	\$170	1.64
Hadley	5,500	22	17,211	\$1,600,000	782	\$290	4.0
Barre	5,530	14	9,440	\$930,465	674	\$168	2.53
Ashburnham	6,346	17	19,900	\$2,058,631	1,170	\$324	2.67

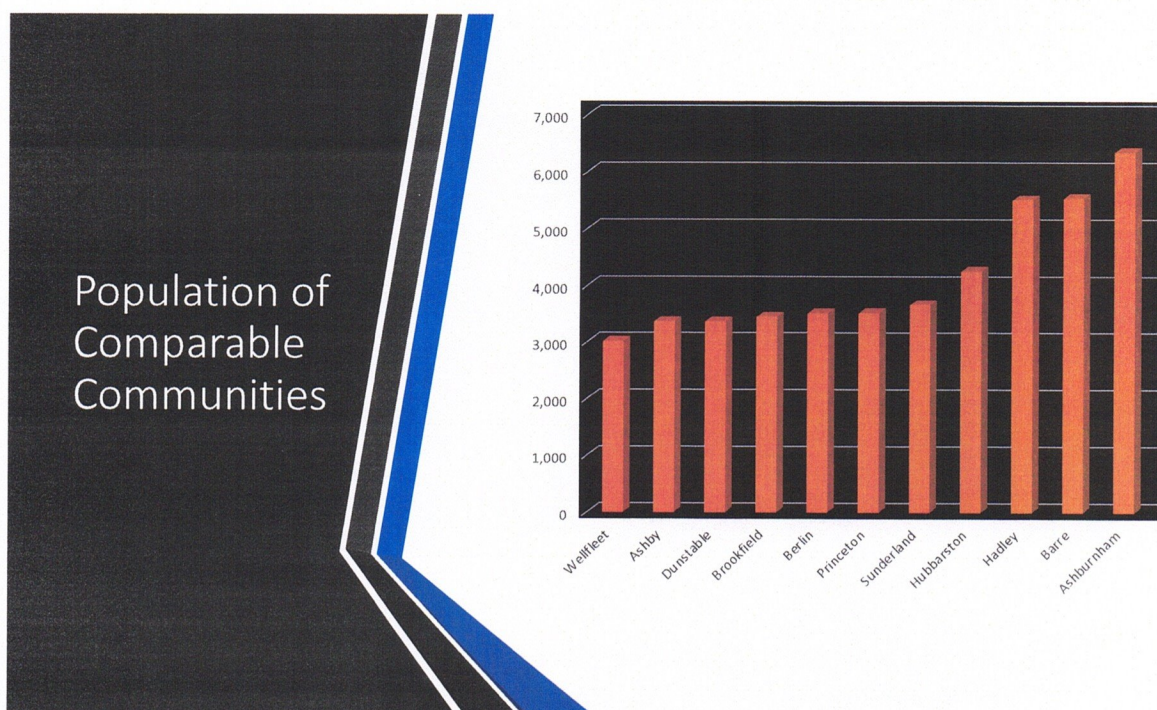
The manner in which law enforcement services are provided by the police department, and the types of services that it provides are a reflection of the character and demands of that community. The continuing challenge for the police will be the ability to define the appropriate allocation and deployment of officers to meet the desired demands of the residents of Princeton. While this report could focus upon crime statistics as the driving factor for determining how many police officers are necessary, MRI believes that is a counter-productive strategy as more crime may dictate more police but if there is less crime, should there be less police? MRI can be definitive that determining what is “just right” and maintaining that status quo in a proactive way is far more cost-effective in the long term than being reactive.

In today’s policing profession, calls for service are obligated functions to which officers must adequately respond. Many calls are not criminal in nature, but the police are responsible for resolving the issue regardless and the community expectations are high to do so in an efficient,



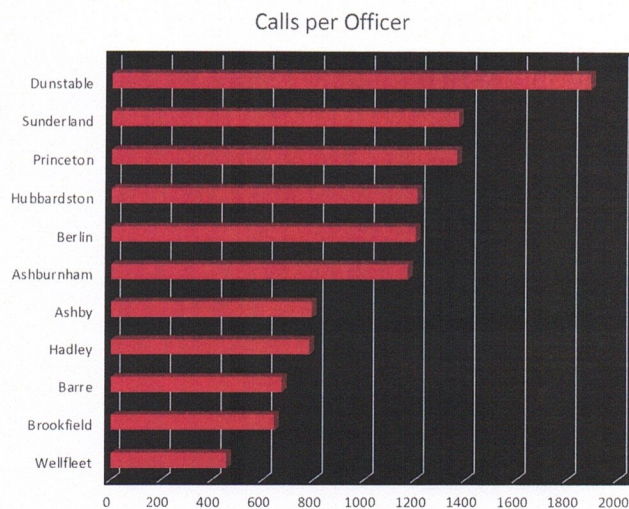
compassionate, and professional manner. Consequently, one of the key components of the community comparable list is calls for service and the corresponding calls handled per officer.

Today's police are challenged with complicated issues such as mental health, juvenile challenges, and other incidents that are not easily or immediately resolved within the prescribed time allocation. If officers do not have adequate time to address the service demands, community satisfaction wanes and management of risk by the agency increases.





## Calls for service per Officer

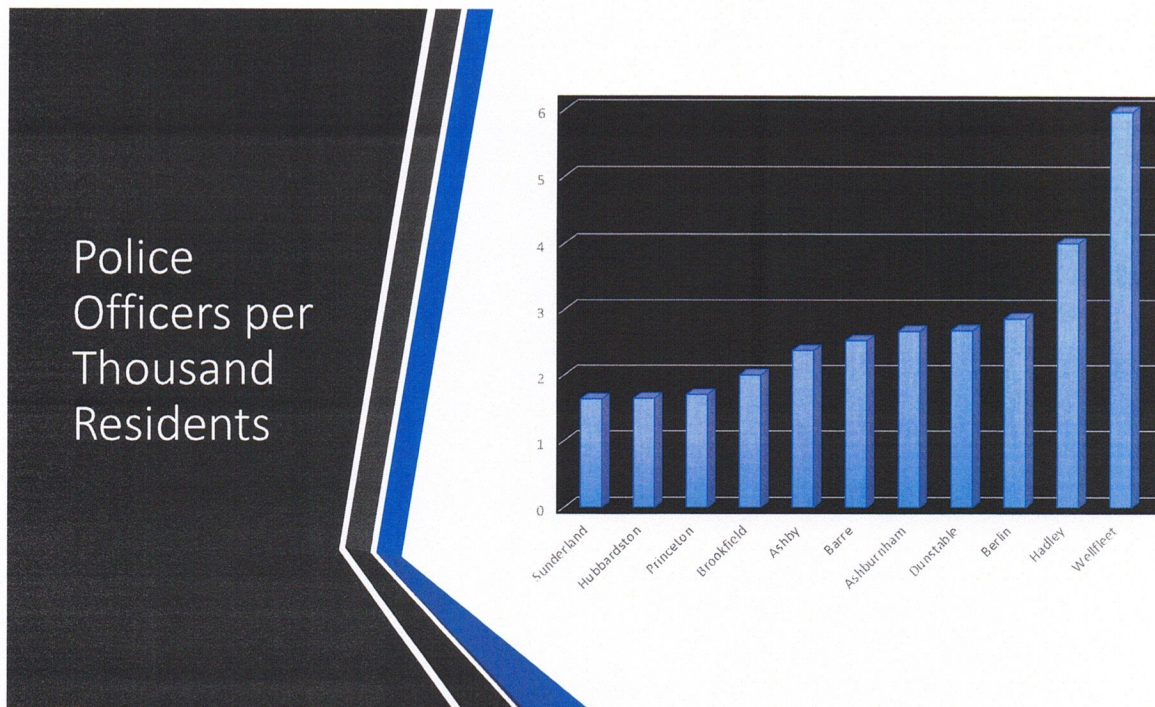


The “Calls Per Officer” matrix above reveals that Princeton Police rank 3<sup>rd</sup> for most calls per officer when compared to the eleven agencies identified. Police need to be available to accomplish more than just responding to calls for service. Additionally, the purpose of the police department, and particularly those who work within the patrol function, is to arrest criminals, reduce crime, reduce the fear of crime, and to use proactive problem-solving methods in partnership with the citizens of Princeton. This is accomplished through a variety of law enforcement and police services, not the least of which are active patrol, traffic enforcement, DUI enforcement, criminal investigations, evidence/crime scene processing, and drug enforcement.

Patrol personnel respond to emergency and non-emergency calls for service; when not responding to these calls, they use non-obligated time to actively patrol the community. Due to the rather random nature of service demands and needs, it is a challenge to distribute patrol forces effectively. Police managers design purposeful patrol activities to prevent a given number of incidents, but for purposes of tabulation and statistical analysis, being definitive with the number of incidents that were prevented is not possible as you can’t measure what didn’t happen. However, the objective is to create a high-visibility philosophy of police presence, thereby encouraging those with nefarious intent to leave Princeton and go to a community with



a more passive patrol strategy. That is a difficult premise to accomplish if officers are constantly “responding” to calls.



The Princeton Police Department is the 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest of the number of officers per thousand among the comparable communities. Regardless of the staffing allocation, in communities such as Princeton, there is a firm expectation that police services will be delivered in a timely, very personal, and compassionate manner. This concept of policing often consumes significant officer time. An additional, yet possibly the most critical component of managing personnel in a law enforcement agency, is the expectation that officers will be available to perform requested or required tasks when needed. While police operational budgets must calculate that employees are compensated for 52 weeks of work, factors such as vacation, training, sick leave, and/or court time make officers unavailable to perform obligated work. All these influences literally deduct from police officer’s availability to respond, thereby reducing the ability of the department to react in a timely fashion to the community’s requests.

The matrix below is designed to highlight the organizational structure of the eleven police agencies identified as comparable communities. They share one or more features that may offer insight as to what other communities are doing with their police departments.



Town	Chief	Captain	Lieutenant	Sergeant	Detectives	Patrol Officers	Specialized	Total Sworn	Civilian Staff
Princeton	1			2		3		6	1
Berlin	1			2		7		10	1
Brookfield	1			1		6	1 (SRO)	7	1 PT
Ashby	1			1		6		8	1
Sunderland	1			1		4		6	1
Wellfleet	1		1	4	1	11		18	1
Hubbardston	1			2	1	3		7	1
Barre	1		1	1	1	9	1 (SRO)	14	2
Dunstable	1			2		6	1 (NEMLEC)	9	1
Hadley	1		2	4	2	10	1 (SRO) 1 (K-9)	22	1

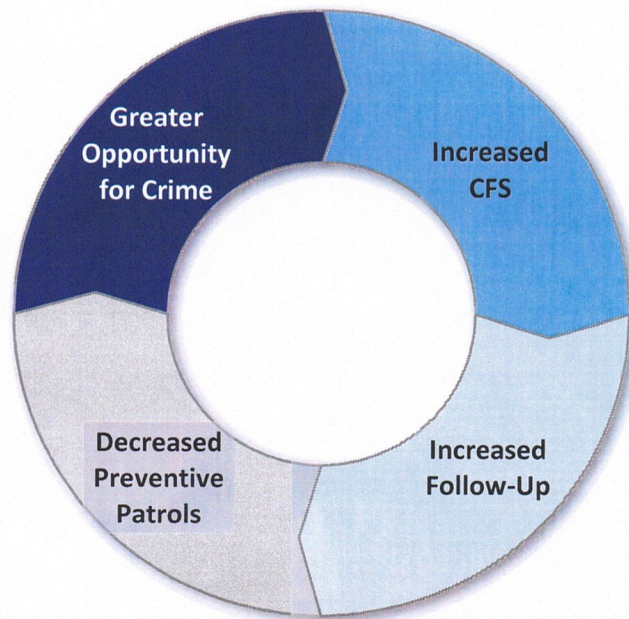
## Workload Analysis

The following exercise is designed to assist the Town of Princeton in determining officer availability and therefore, the number of officers required to meet the demands of the community. Additionally, it may serve as one factor enabling the Town of Princeton to plan accordingly for setting of benchmarks or when additional personnel should be considered.

As stated earlier, performing a workload analysis for a police department is not an exact science. One strategy is based upon the premise that suggests an officer's day is routinely divided into three equal parts including:

- Obligated police officer work or responding to calls for service
- Administrative/Report writing
- Proactive community policing and/or preventive patrol





**The Crime Cycle**

The crime cycle illustrated above is directly impacted by the ability of a department to balance the workload of its police officers. Ideally, an officer should be responding to calls for service or needs and resolving problems for approximately one-third of their day. This is referred to as “obligated” work, as police literally have no option but to respond to these requests. Police work is recognized as a very paper intensive profession. For virtually every action an officer performs, there is the necessity to complete a report or form so that the events and subsequent actions are memorialized. It is often the case that the time committed to report development, and the writing of the report, may take longer than the act of resolving the original issue that resulted in a report. These report writing/follow-up functions account for another third of the officer’s time. The remaining one-third of the officer’s time should be committed to community policing or active patrol designed to protect and deter criminal activity, as well as to conduct traffic enforcement initiatives desired throughout the community. Without high visibility of police officers patrolling throughout the community, criminal activity will fill that void. Today, the community is predisposed to want meaningful interaction with their police officers, even if it is as basic as performing directed traffic patrols throughout neighborhoods.

With this entire premise determined to be true in any community, but especially smaller agencies where policing is more “up close and personal”, one must first gain insight of the actual



availability or optimal use of a Princeton Police officer. The importance of this segment of the exercise is the reality that even though a community compensates an employee within a budgeted calendar year for 52 weeks of employment, they are factually not available for actual patrol duties as the following demonstrates:

40 hours of work per week X 52 weeks	<u><b>2080 hours</b></u>
--------------------------------------	--------------------------

By contractual agreement, the Princeton Police are entitled to vacation or annual leave. An analysis of that data revealed that each of the police officers must use an average of three weeks of time off for vacation purposes, with the ability to “carry-over” an additional 40 hours. Given this reality, the calculations remain conservative as those carried-over hours are not included in these equations:

Average 136 hours combined vacation leave	<u><b>136 hours</b></u>
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<u><b>Remaining</b></u>	<u><b>1944 Hours</b></u>
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During 2020, the average use of sick time per officer was approximately 96 hours:

96 hours of sick leave	<u><b>96 hours</b></u>
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<u><b>Remaining</b></u>	<u><b>1848 hours</b></u>
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Massachusetts Police Training Council (MPTC) requires a minimum of forty (40) hours of training to maintain their certification. In the aftermath of the recent legislation pertaining to police reform, there has been significant discussions regarding increasing this mandatory minimum to eighty (80) hours annually. Princeton Police officers routinely complete 80 hours of training annually to ensure they are keeping abreast of modern best practices while delivering services to the Princeton community. Additionally, all the officers have additional specialized training as Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT), which is essential for Princeton as often the police are the first at the scene of any medical issue. These hours recognize a minimum time and do not consider other specialized training attended that may consume additional time away from patrol duties. Of course, during these training classes and exercises, the officer is eliminated from patrol activity. Regardless of where this training occurs, off-site or in-house, officers are not engaged in proactive or reactive policing initiatives. While training is recognized as a critical component in



the management of a police agency, the absence of staff due to these needs is an important component for management to gage.

Anticipated training for each officer with EMT

127 hours

**Remaining**

**1721 hours**

Whenever a Princeton Police officer effects an arrest or issues a traffic summons, there is the possibility that they will need to attend court proceedings, taking them away from performing tasks within the community. While the vast majority of police action will not result in a trial, officers are routinely in consultation with court officials preparing for the potential trial. Princeton Police are routinely tasked with attending court primarily in Leominster which is approximately a 40-minute round-trip drive. Additionally, officers also attend Fitchburg District Court for juvenile issues and several jury trials. Unfortunately, Fitchburg is approximately an hour round-trip drive. Finally, Grand Jury matters related to felony cases occur in Worcester District/Superior Court which consumes another half-hour of officers being absent from conducting patrol duties. Ultimately, it is the time away from the community that must be calculated and managed so as to continuing servicing the community regardless of the tasks that equates to officers being absent.

Projected Court Time

17 hours

**Remaining**

**1704 hours**

Princeton Police are entitled to eleven (11) holiday days (88 hours), which are often hours worked or taken as days off.

88 hours

**Remaining**

**1616 hours**

Additionally, officers perform a variety of community outreach tasks that are not patrol related such as safety presentations, responding to school events and/or calls. Unfortunately, Chief Powers explained that Covid and the inability to deviate patrol resources has greatly diminished



flexibility. Based upon this years' commitment to community outreach, there were only eight (8) hours dedicated.

8 hours

**Remaining**

**1608 hours**

Based upon the “one-third principal” discussed earlier, each officer is available for work approximately 1,608 hours. Divide that number by 3 will equal 536 hours. This draws the conclusion that officers at the Princeton Police Department will be committing 536 hours annually to each task demonstrated in the following manner:

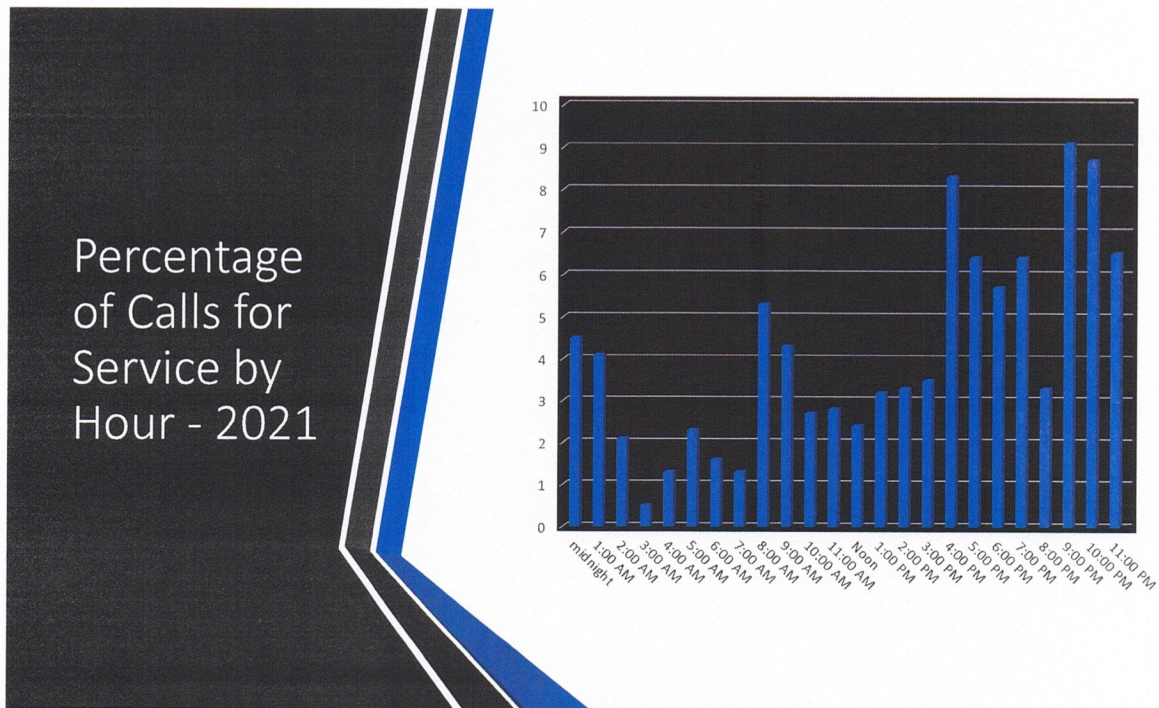
• Obligated police officer work	536 hours
• Administrative/Report writing	536 hours
• Proactive community policing and/or preventive patrol	<u>536 hours</u>
	1608 hours

Continuing with the exercise, MRI found that the Princeton Police have a robust records management system that can produce detailed reports, including when the most demands, or “call for service” (CFS) upon the department exist. A call for service is defined as any event or task that the public requests the department to accomplish. Regardless of the magnitude of the event, or how diminutive the police may view the situation, the Princeton Police Department must respond and satisfactorily address the issue. MRI concluded that all officers, including the Chief and the two patrol sergeants who are deemed to be “working supervisors”, routinely respond to calls for service. However, as the exercise is also designed to quantify and articulate the fact that simply because an officer is employed by an agency, does not necessarily indicate that the officer is available to respond to the community’s requests.

After all the external and internal influences upon officer time is calculated, each officer has 1,608 hours annually in which they can deliver police service to the citizens of Princeton, not the entire 2080 hours for which the officer is compensated. In essence each patrol officer is unavailable to provide services to the community for almost twelve (12) weeks, or three months out of each fiscal year. This reality creates an immediate shortfall in the ability to provide responsive police services to the Princeton community without the use of significant overtime, engaging part-time officers who have attended a full-time academy, or hiring an additional full-time officer.



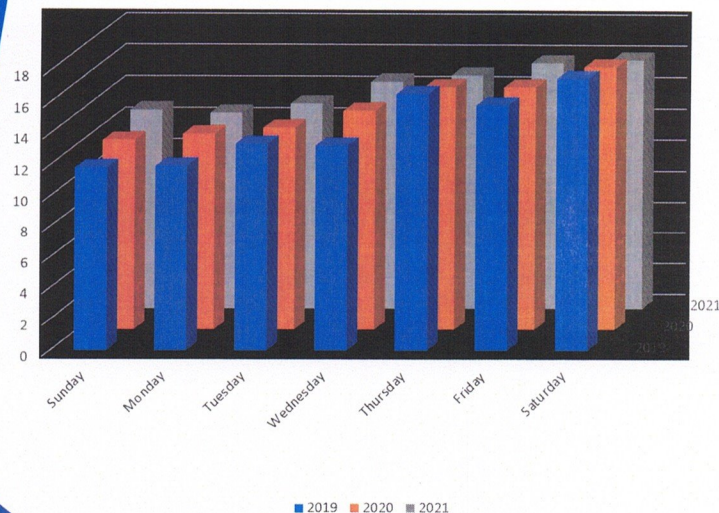
As a side note, unless the existing Princeton part-time officers attend the so-called “Bridge Academy” governed by the MPTC, newly enacted Massachusetts law will prohibit anyone other than a certified full-time officer from actively patrolling any community within the Commonwealth as a police officer.



Statistical data points to the most pressing need for patrol staff to be capable of responding to the community’s demands from 4:00PM to 12:00AM. It would be appropriate to recognize that the calls from 8:00AM to 4:00PM would be oriented towards quality-of-life concerns as opposed to the more potentially challenging period of 4:00PM to 10:00PM where the acts could be more disorderly in nature, significantly requiring additional time and focus of officer’s time. After 2:00AM to 7:00AM there is a notable drop in calls for service. This statistical data is precisely what MRI would expect to see in a community such as Princeton. The vast majority of police calls in Princeton can be categorized as quality-of-life issues such as crimes against persons, nuisances, traffic complaints, and assisting the public. In an agency such as Princeton, the 24/7 service demands pose a significant challenge as the agency strives to maintain a high level of responsiveness to the residents of Princeton.



## Percentage of Calls for Service by Day



The overwhelming challenge for the CEO of a smaller agency such as Princeton is to assign personnel in a way that maximizes coverage and minimizes vacant shifts which would require overtime expenditures. Providing patrol coverage seven days a week for 24-hours is a unique challenge for Chief Powers as she must contemplate community demands for obligated work while ensuring there is adequate staff to effectively respond, resolve the issue and do so with officer and resident safety at the forefront. An agency the size of Princeton with six (6) officers including the Chief, has no option regarding minimum staffing.

It is clear to MRI that during Wednesday through Saturday, between the hours of 4PM and 12AM there should be two officers available. The call volume and the need for the Chief to be able to commit to the often-overwhelming demands related to budget development, purchasing, overseeing a host of Commonwealth mandates is not simply a luxury. There remains the need for proactive policing rather than the reactive platform that often exists in agencies this small. MRI recognizes that the staffing required to provide coverage 24/7 requires a minimum of five (5) officers. Considering these factors, MRI would recommend that for a specific period of time during these peak days and hours, two (2) officers be considered as minimum staffing. As noted in the previous availability calculations, due to vacations and other tasks related to providing services, officers are available to patrol the community only 1608 hours not the 2080 for which they are compensated.



Given this reality, the Chief must be considered as part of the patrol function to fill vacancies on any given shift. Currently, part-time officers assist in filling these vacancies. As noted previously, this will become a significant challenge in the immediate future due to the Police Reform laws recently enacted in the Commonwealth that limit part-time officers to only those who have been academy trained and certified as full-time officers. These factors highlight one of the many negative aspects of a smaller agency where staff simply needs to have a day off and repeatedly “going to the well”, especially when it is a small well, can be extremely problematic and stressful to the limited human resources available.

As noted, the current staffing level of the Princeton Police is comprised of six (6) police officers including the Chief. She is included in this exercise even though she has a host of administrative and other critical duties unrelated to responding to obligated calls for service.

6 Officers X 40 hours/week X 52 weeks equates to 12,480 hours.

Each of the six (6) full-time officers is compensated for 2080 hours per year, those officers should be capable of adequately responding to obligated calls for service for 12,480 hours in a year. However, as the previous exercise demonstrates, MRI concludes that due to previous contractual obligations and other tasks required of the patrol officers which prevents them from being readily available for their patrol duties, the six (6) officers are only available 9,648 hours.

6 Officers X 1,608 hours equates to 9,648

For an officer to be capable of responding 24 hours per day for 365 days annually, requires officer availability of 8,760 hours. ***MRI recommends that an additional shift with minimum staffing occur on Wednesday through Saturday during the hours of 3:00PM to 11:00PM which adds another 2080 hours to the calculations***

One officer X 24 hours X 365 days = 8,760

One officer X 40 X 52 weeks = 2,080

Total hours needed = 10,840

When officer availability is factored in, there is a gap of 1,192 hours, or essentially almost one additional officer.

10,840 hours needed for recommended staffing – 9,648 of actual hours available = 1,192



While the precise mathematical result is .57 of one officer, obviously a whole human will be required to fill the gap. Additionally, the challenge of filling these needed hours must be accomplished within reasonable parameters of the officer's capacity to be available. For instance, it is unreasonable to have an officer fill two hours in the middle of the night and then perform duties for 6 hours later in the day. Yet these are the struggles that the Chief must address on a daily basis.

Ultimately, the single most important factor in determining adequate staffing for any police agency is determining what level of service the community desires and demands. Often, this reality is driven by how much the community resolves to expend on police resources, as personnel are the costliest item in any police budget. While it is the community which ultimately determines staffing levels, there are a number of questions that must be answered by the community, such as how long are residents willing to wait for an officer to respond for a routine (non-emergency) call for service? Does the Princeton community desire a high-visible police patrol presence, designed to deter crime or address those who speed through neighborhoods? The decision regarding embracing important yet ancillary programs such as School Resource Officers has already been determined and rejected by the community. While other programs focusing on the elderly, or the current opioid crisis would appear to be highly doubtful as stand-alone programs without ancillary responsibilities, MRI can conclude that the Princeton community desires their police department to focus exclusively on patrol activities and basic investigative services which have resulted in the lean organization that currently exists.

Given the fluctuation in staffing levels over the recent year, it appears to MRI that the department is rarely at full complement of personnel. While this reality creates challenges to calculate a workload analysis when positions that are budgeted are vacant, a viable analysis must engage all authorized positions enabling the incoming Chief to evaluate the potentials. These calculations are important to the Selectboard who need to understand the capacity of an agency at full strength and grasp the implications of the challenges for the Police Department when it is not fully staffed.

As with any mathematical approach to a profession that must respond and satisfy subjective consumers, in this case the residents of Princeton, there are acknowledged shortcomings. MRI suggests caution be exercised interpreting these results. However, there is ample information within these calculations to provide the incoming Chief and governing officials with abundant evidence that staffing levels at the Princeton Police Department are below those necessary to provide highly responsive policing services on a 24/7 basis. Despite these challenges, the



Princeton community does enjoy a low crime rate, seemingly satisfying police response time to resident's requests, and an acceptable crime solvability rate.

A fact that must be monitored closely is the potential for a subtle shift towards a reactive agency where police reports would be completed for insurance purposes or to simply check off a box as opposed to a proactive, problem-solving, and engaged strategy. The Princeton Police are far from that one-dimensional approach to policing, but this warrants attention as such a swing would create a gap of resident dissatisfaction.

Not to be underestimated is officer awareness that they could and should be accomplishing more; if that awareness is not addressed, officers may seek employment in a community where that policing philosophy is embraced. Before the potential of community dissatisfaction arrives at that intersection, and while the need to address the immediate patrol officer shortage is more immediate, there will also be the opportunity to strategically plan by gradually addressing staff challenges and community satisfaction. While these expectations will undoubtedly surface due to staff shortages, every call for service will still require an appropriate police response. When reaction to service requests is delayed or ignored due to more serious incidents or large volume of calls, there needs to be an assessment of the level of services the department can provide.

If the backlog becomes too lengthy, or clearance rates decline due to the Princeton Police inability to adequately investigate; or traffic accidents increase due to the agency's inability to perform directed traffic patrols, there must be preparation to make suggestions that may not be embraced by a community accustomed to personalized service. Ultimately, without additional human resources or the necessary tools to accomplish the mission, the community will need to determine the level of service that it can ultimately afford or is willing to fund.

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>Calls*</b>	6,385	7,179	7,365	8,163*	8,490	8,829	9,182
<b># Patrol Officers</b>	6	6	6	6	7	8	8
<b>Call Per Officer</b>	1,064	1,197	1,228	1,360	1,213	1,104	1,148

A 4% increase is projected annually to perform this analysis. \* Based upon call volume existing end of August 2022.



The exercise above is designed to further enhance the ability of the Princeton community to monitor and reasonably project demands upon the existing staff and react accordingly. The matrix is deliberately designed to be conservative by using ALL officers in the calculations when it has already been determined that not all staff routinely respond to calls for service, nor are they routinely assigned to proactive preventive patrols.

MRI can safely project future calls for service based upon the known history. For example, between 2019 and 2020 the obligated call volume rose 8% and then 9% from 2020 to 2021. Based upon the number of calls for service as of 8/30/2022, MRI can safely project that there will be yet another 9% increase in obligated demands. These are not insignificant increases given the realities of the Covid environment and the societal changes experienced during this period, coupled with the reasonable expectations of the Princeton community.

To maintain a conservative approach to the matrix above, MRI calculations anticipate a 4% yearly increase in obligated calls for service. Regardless, at approximately 1,228 calls per officer for last year, the agency must be judged to be on the threshold of reactive rather than proactive. If this is in fact determined to be the conclusion, then the call volume per officer must be lowered, or at least stabilized, enabling the staff to attempt to proactively address community issues. The lower the calls per officer become, the more attentive and problem-solving the officer is capable of being over time, and the more positive the resolutions will be for the resident taxpayer. MRI believes that reducing the number of calls per officer by adding a patrol officer in the projected years may permit further assessment and allow the agency to transition to that of a more proactive strategy.

It is important to note that the previous data focuses on patrol capacity exclusively to respond to obligated calls for service. If there are any deviations of personnel to specialized assignments such as the creation of a School Resource Officer (SRO), a Detective or any administrative function, the projections will fail and must be re-calculated. The burden of the number of calls for service increasing will ultimately fall to the patrol officers to adequately address, not a detective or command staff that is required to fulfill a host of administrative tasks. When patrol staff begins simply responding and not problem-solving due to the pressures of calls for service backing up, then community dissatisfaction will escalate, creating an undesirable reality for Town government that will ultimately cost more tax-payer funds to rectify as opposed to a well-planned systematic approach to maintain status quo. Additionally, it is important to note that the Town should plan on adding additional police officers as the community grows in population or calls for service rise sharply. As noted previously, FBI statistics cite an average of 3.8 full-time officers



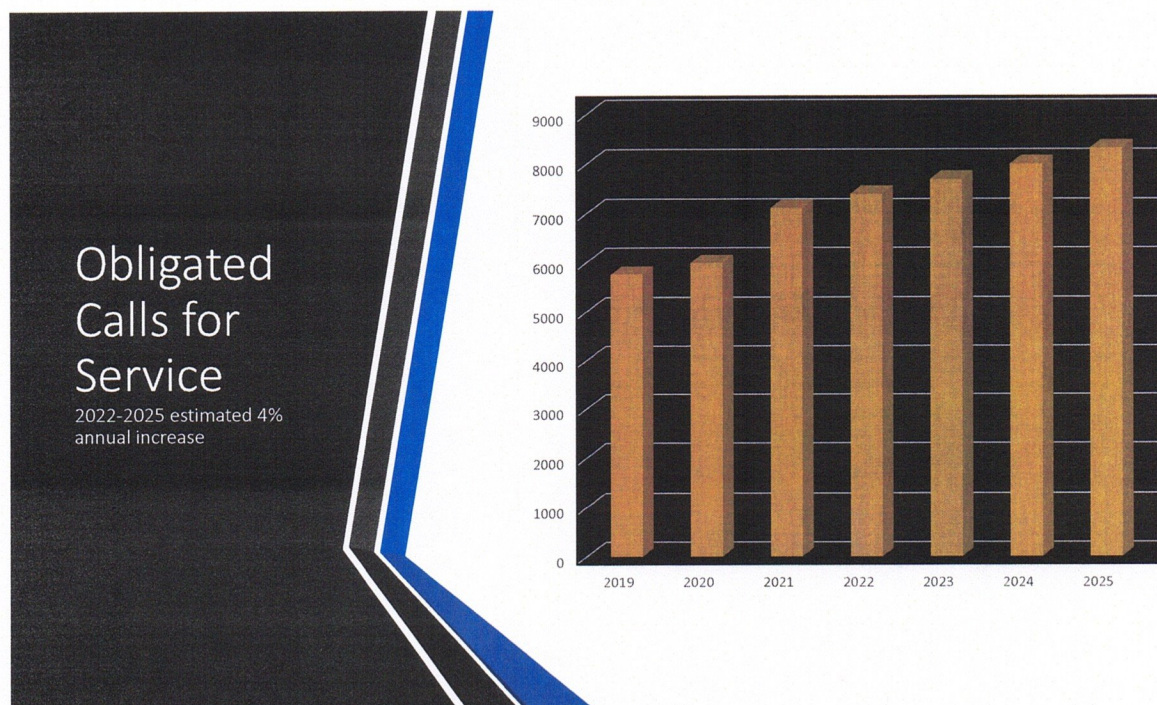
per 1000 inhabitants in Northeast communities with populations less than 10,000. Princeton is not now, and most likely will not soon approach that statistical measure which would equate to approximately 13 officers.

To address crime data during a pandemic presents a challenge of consistency for analyzing the provided data. MRI is aware of the national trends concerning crime and the fact that the pandemic has sharply curtailed the incidents of crime by almost 24%. Ironically, in Princeton, between 2019 and 2020 the obligated call volume rose 8% and then 9% from 2020 to 2021. MRI's projections appear to have merit with the obligated calls for service increasing 9% in all of 2021 with the sharpest increases occurring at the end of the year. Regardless, MRI is continuing with a cautious and conservative approach to our data forecasts. Additionally, it is important to note that, at the national level, there has been significant discussion in the police profession that calls for service are becoming more complex and time-consuming. It is widely recognized that police agencies across the nation are being subjected to the new paradigm of delivering police services. The demands upon law enforcement agencies have greatly expanded the mission for the police with a significant change of focus to quality-of-life issues, mental health, and coordinated community services that are predicated upon mutual trust and respect. While on a smaller scale, Princeton is no different!

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MRI has engaged several formulas and methodologies for determining prescribed staffing levels for police agencies, all connected directly to the *obligated workload* for the department. Obligated workload concerns the time exhausted on calls for service that originate from the public; by design, this excludes most officer-initiated activity. While the matrix may include some officer-initiated calls, the vast majority of the data consists of obligated workload volume. The chart found below illustrates a conservative projection of calls for service through 2025.



As described above, without increasing the authorized budget for staffing, the projected increase in calls for service Princeton Police Department will result in the department becoming almost completely reactive.



## **POLICY and BEST PRACTICES**

### **The Written Directive System**

Guidance for police agencies is most often found within the written directive system administered by the Chief of Police. Commonly referred to as a “policy manual,” the written directive system is made up of the policies, procedures, rules, and regulations of the agency. The department’s written directive system often points staff in the direction of external regulations that are binding on the agency, such as training manuals, AG protocols, employment agreements, laws, and constitutional requirements that give guidance to ensure that the department behaves honorably, ethically, and lawfully.

A well-written policy manual should be thought of as a living document, reflective of organizational core values. The policy manual must be reviewed and revised frequently to ensure that it remains relevant, reflective of the community needs, and addresses such changes that may come with shifting technology or other influences on the agency. Regardless of changes made by the department, the Chief of Police must ensure that the manual is understood and applied consistently, fairly, and justly.

Proper application of policy instills community confidence and trust in the organization. A law enforcement agency is often the most visible evidence of government in a community. The police department’s interaction with a community has the far-reaching effect of influencing people’s belief in fair government, either negative or positive. Police officers swear an oath in Princeton. It is a promise to the community that they will uphold the constitutions of the United States and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the rule of law derived therefrom. For officers and staff to fulfill this promise, the Chief of Police has an obligation to lead and manage the agency fairly, equitably, and impartially, at least in part through its system of written directives.

Officers selected for their character must be carefully trained to understand and apply the written directive system in their formative years with the department; these directives and learned skills become habits. It is imperative that the application of the written directive system evokes practices from employees that are reflective of the agency’s core values, honor, ethics, and the law. By equitable and repetitive enforcement of the regulations during times of ordinary police operations, officers can perform their sworn tasks under duress and in the absence of supervision. With the guidance of the organizational mission and written directives, officers and staff are enabled to dedicate their professional lives to the service of the community.

For a policy manual to be effective, it must thoroughly guide staff, while also allowing discretion to apply the directives when flexibility is needed. A policy can be spirit crushing if it is



overbearing. When overly restrictive, the policy manual becomes an unnecessary burden to employees and management. Officers hired for their character should be entrusted to administer the expectations of the community fairly and justly within the spirit of the intended outcomes. In this regard, the risk is managed by a written directive system that supports effective leadership, communication of expectations, repetitive training, commendations, and self-discipline. By virtue of effective leadership and the just, fair, and impartial management of the written directive system, the Chief of Police and supervisory staff should ideally find the imposition of punitive discipline to be uncommon ground.

Observed objectively, the existing policy manual is substantially less comprehensive than others reviewed by MRI. In its present state, the Princeton Police Department Policy Manual does not provide the guidance necessary to effectively operate a modern police department. Also, without exercising the few policies found in the manual as a matter of day-to-day operations, and in the absence of proof of such exercise, the manual is of even less value to organizational management of liability.

One of the most important components of the management structure of any police department is a set of written directives that guide and direct employees as they deliver services to the community. The policy and procedures manual is the foundation for all of the department's operations, actions and ultimately determine the manner in which members of the organization conduct business. When properly developed and implemented, a policy-procedure manual provides staff with the information to act decisively, consistently, and legally. Policy directs the training program for the department and assists in the development of a training plan, a training calendar, and a training budget. It also promotes confidence and professional conduct among staff at all levels of the organization. Ideally, these directives should be readily accessible to each employee so that they may immediately access them for guidance. In today's technologically savvy workplace, having the policies and procedures readily available on agency desktops/laptops allows employees access while facilitating ease of periodic updating. As policies are a living document that provide timely guidance and reflect modern policing environments, each policy should have a review date in order to ensure that they are revised when appropriate and remain relevant. To ensure that each employee has reviewed the directive, there should be a mechanism whereby each staff member signs an acknowledgment of receipt and completion of review.

The value of a sound policy and procedure manual is paramount. Without it, it is virtually impossible to discipline an errant officer and have the discipline imposed survive a legal challenge. Additionally, the existence of policies, particularly in such high liability areas as domestic violence, uses of force, police pursuits, and sexual harassment, provides a sound risk



management commitment that ultimately protects the Town of Princeton and its officers against lawsuits and more importantly, the financial implications of losing a lawsuit. Finally, good policies, when accompanied by regular training and established supervision, help to ensure that the Princeton Police are consistent in the way it handles similar situations, regardless of when they are handled, or which officer handles them. Additionally, it is appropriate to have transparency in the way the law enforcement services are provided to the Princeton community. The periodic publication of annual reports also serves to confirm the manner in which those services are delivered. However, if policies are only in place and there is minimal and/or inconsistent demonstration of adherence, then exposure to litigation and the defense of the organization becomes untenable at best while public confidence gradually erodes.

## **HIGH RISK POLICY REVIEW**

MRI has conducted a review of a sampling of Princeton Police Department written directives that give guidance to officer activities that are characterized by high risk, whether in the form of danger to the officer/public, or in the form of financial or reputation liability to the community that have been associated with this review through MRI's observations and interviews of employees.

As this report was designed to provide a high-level overview of the agency, MRI focused upon several high-liability policies including Evidence, Use of Force (in this case Tasers), Training, and Personnel Management. MRI received what was described as a complete set of policies and procedures from the agency. Chief Powers explained that the current policy manual was developed by the Massachusetts Municipal Police Institute (MPI) and implemented several years ago. Chief Powers shared that she had been working to develop and implement policy related to the recent passage of the Massachusetts Police Reform legislation; MRI noted recent additions to the policy manual that reflected the Police Reform legislation.

### **Use of Force**

After an initial review of these documents, many policies were aged indicating an issue date from 2011/12 with several signed in 2006 by the previous Chief. There were recent addendums pertaining to the Police Reform legislation that appeared to be in good order and reflected Massachusetts accreditation guidelines as standard numbers were strategically placed in the written directives. Those from MPI reflected best practices and had obviously been massaged to adapt to the needs of the Princeton Police Department. This is an appropriate strategy for a smaller police agency and an administration that has numerous tasks as well as patrol duties.



Policies on any topic can and should be obtained from other police agencies with the philosophy that the “wheel has been invented” which allows massaging of the boilerplate directive to meet the needs of Princeton. However, MRI found numerous references in policy that directed the reader to other policies such as “*see career development policy*” or “*see disciplinary procedure policy*”. However, these policies did not exist in the manual. Such references diminish the importance of policies and leaves the end user (employees) with choices to make about what sections of policy they should or shouldn’t comply with in practice. Such decisions should not be left to the employee.

As indicated, the massaging of policies to meet the needs of the Princeton Police is an acceptable and recommended tactic. However, simply implementing a model policy without the required adjustments ensuring reflection of the actual conditions at Princeton Police is misguided and contributes to litigation exposure as a haphazard approach.

The review became more problematic when MRI learned or observed that some required procedures are not being followed. A glaring example that poses a significant liability to the community is the Princeton policy relative to “Electrical Weapons” or Tasers where the Princeton policy (1.03) states, “only officers who have been trained and authorized may carry this device.” MRI concurs that this is appropriate language but learned during discussions with staff that there has been no annual training by a certified instructor. So critical is this training, that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts established special regulations governing these weapons which falls under standards 501-CMR 8.04 that mandates the following:

*“All authorized officers who have successfully completed the authorized training program pursuant to 501 CMR 8.05(1) must then complete an annual recertification training of no less than one hour consisting of:*

- (a) A review of the department's use-of-force policy and other policies and procedures related to electronic control weapons;*
- (b) Updates regarding the electronic control weapon;*
- (c) Testing to demonstrate knowledge of areas such as policies, protocols, use, and effects of electronic control weapons; and*
- (d) A demonstration of proficiency with the electronic control weapon.”*



Massachusetts Secretary of Public Safety and Security also requires the following:

*Prior to training authorized officers, every department and agency must submit to the Secretary of Public Safety and Security:*

- (a) A copy of the department's use-of-force policy incorporating electronic control weapons.*
- (b) A copy of the department's policy regarding training, recertification, and training hours related to electronic control weapons;*
- (c) An overview of the department's data collection protocol; and*
- (d) A copy of the department's policy affirming it will comply with the statutory reporting requirements as set forth in M.G.L. c. 140, § 131J.*

Princeton's training is not accomplished by a certified instructor thereby negating adherence to Princeton's own policy but in addition, those of the Commonwealth.

Most of the use of force policies, or as the profession is beginning to label, "response to resistance" as a subtle reminder to all law enforcement that any force used, is always a "response to resistance", in fact are following best practices. These policies were recently implemented reflecting the Police Reform legislation now governing these actions. Additionally, the policies were reflective of Massachusetts Police Accreditation standards ensuring the best practices of the profession. However, changes made to policy in the wake of the police reform act are so recently made that determining whether they have been/are being complied with in practice has not been possible.

## Evidence



As noted, many of the policies are outdated or are in the development stage. However, MRI could find no policies related to evidence other than associated policies such as search warrants, motor vehicle inventory, and search and seizure procedures. With no policy discussing the security and control of seized evidentiary items, successful prosecutions, timely and appropriate return of property may fall under unwelcome scrutiny. MRI believes it is critical that a police agency's property and evidence control





function maintains a strict measure for the receipt, handling, security and disposition of property and evidence. In viewing the evidence room, which was in actuality a closet, the appearance was disorganized and cluttered. As seen in the photographs, agency-owned property is inter-mingled with evidence and other property held for safekeeping by the Princeton Police Department. Industry standards and best practices prohibit the intermingling of such articles.

Guidance can be found at the state and national level, but is summarized here<sup>2</sup>:

*The property and evidence control function should provide for the security and control of seized, recovered, evidentiary, abandoned, lost, or found property in the custody of the agency. This is critically important in supporting investigations, in helping to guarantee successful prosecution at criminal/civil trials, in facilitating the timely return of property to its rightful owners, and in establishing the agency's reputation as an honest, reputable agency worthy of the public's confidence and trust.*

*Administrative and physical security procedures are mandatory to ensure that all property taken into custody and stored by the agency in any manner is properly controlled and protected while in agency custody. Entry to property areas should be controlled to prevent the alteration, unauthorized removal, theft, or other compromise of property stored by the agency and to maintain chain of custody.*

*Some items of in-custody property, by their very nature, require extra protection, security, and handling precautions. Items such as money, precious metals, jewelry, firearms, explosives, and drugs are some that should be considered. The agency may set its own guidelines and determine the degree of extra security required. Providing locked containers, such as vaults, lockers, or interior rooms, should satisfy the requirements of the standard. Further restrictions on access to certain areas also enhance security precautions. It is not necessary, however, for each type of item to have its own separate secure area.*

The Chief shared that she had recently overseen the disposal of property no longer required. MRI affirms that this closet is sufficient for the safe storage of small amounts of evidence. However, there are a host of procedures that accompany best practices and accredited standards that were not noted. One such industry expectation requires firearms to be separately secured (additional security features specific to the safe retention of firearms) inside the evidence room. As noted in the photograph of the evidence room, there is a rifle leaning against a shelf.

Additionally, MRI anticipated that there would have been some form of documentation that MRI would have signed when entering the room, but there was not. This standard is designed to maintain the integrity of the room and therefore the evidence in agency custody. Unfortunately,

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<sup>2</sup> Commission on Accreditation For Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc.  
Princeton, MA: Police Department Risk Review  
Prepared by Municipal Resources, Inc.  
December 2022



the evidence function was an example of no policy being in place or adherence to best practices as both attributes were absent. The Town should expect a request from an incoming police chief who will likely require an inventory of all evidence before they assume command (or shortly thereafter) readily accepting responsibility for what is determined to be in evidence rather than what is “assumed” to be in the possession of the Princeton Police.

## Arrest

Arrest policy gives little guidance to Princeton officers. The policy also revealed the absence of unique guidance to officers with respect to arrests involving persons with special risks. Examples of policy are available in the region; models should be reviewed and incorporated into Princeton PD policies and practices.

A review of the physical space available to Princeton officers for the movement of prisoners within the facility and booking thereof has been completed. Princeton Police Department has grossly inadequate temporary detention facilities available for use. As seen here, the chair is not bolted to the floor; the tool used for detention is “leg irons” designed for use when transporting prisoners. Leg irons are intended to limit a prisoner’s stride/movement when walking to prevent escape and limit the risk to officer and community safety; it is NOT intended for use for arms/wrists as a temporary detention device in an office or booking environment. The limited space around the moveable chair, coupled with the length and flexibility of the leg irons allows substantial movement by a detainee. Risk of injury to an officer or escape of the prisoner is unmistakable.



The space shown in the limited photograph is accessible to the public once someone is let through the front door of the police station. An apparent cooperative detainee can become combative quickly and without warning. The safety of the space used specifically for the temporary detention of prisoners is paramount. The proximity of other workspaces within the facility substantially increases the risk to an officer and public safety, as well as the risk of escape.



## Harassment

Workplace harassment in its many forms is a significant area of high risk to any community. Found in the General Laws of the Commonwealth and in federal law, as well as countless administrative regulations at the state and federal level, harassment is not found in the policies of the Princeton Police Department.

Typically, harassment is a low frequency event. Because harassment is often under-reported and handled infrequently, administrators do not have the skill set ingrained by repetitive application to respond to complaints of harassment appropriately without definitive guidance of policy. Due to the broad scope of harassment to those that may be affected, it is imperative that the Princeton Police Department have such a policy and provide training to all personnel at the time of employment and during the lifetime of their employment on a frequently repeated schedule.

## PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Industry standards include a substantial number of standards and best practices to the oversight of personnel employed by the agency. From classification of duties and responsibilities, compensation, work conditions, training, recruitment, selection, and discipline to incorporating union contracts, these are important policies to establish. Unfortunately, MRI found no personnel standards in the policy manual provided for review. In checking with Town Hall about applicable policies related to the selection process, Town Administrator Sherry Patch shared that the past practice has been that the Chief interviews candidates for a police officer and recommends their hire to the Selectboard who is the appointing authority. Ms. Patch is unaware of any procedures in place to select police officers.

It appears that personnel matters are addressed through memorialized actions rather than a set of established directives. This is a significant problem that must be addressed by the new Chief as a priority. The selection of police officers from a field of potential candidates is a critically important task affecting not only the police department, but the community as well. It is imperative that the recruitment and selection process attract desirable candidates and that the processes not only follow Federal, state, and local law, but be fundamentally fair and without bias. Having standardized recruitment and selection process in place is essential to identifying qualified persons to serve the citizens of Princeton. Involving citizens in the process of selection through oral boards not only recognizes the importance of community engagement but highlights to candidates the importance of ensuring the participation of taxpayers as the ultimate



arbitrator of what constitutes good policing. With consistency as the goal, a sound policy and procedure manual is paramount for the proper and consistent operation of any police agency.

Generally, the intended purpose of a Princeton Police Department selection process should be to identify those people with skills, knowledge, and ability to be successful in law enforcement. MRI suggests that, as part of policy development, consideration be given to recruiting and selecting people with the character and values that are important to the community. Though these two trains of thought can be complementary, when given the choice, Princeton Police should opt for character over skills. Skills, knowledge, and ability can be trained; new employees must come to the department with character, values, and high sense of morality...these cannot be taught.

Policy should include statements of the department's commitment to equal opportunity employment. All advertisements and communications with any future candidate pool should include a statement of the Princeton Police Department's commitment to equal employment opportunity.

Particularly when considering the national discussion and social uncertainty with respect to police, adherence to best practices and industry standards that require agencies to conduct analysis of the community demographics and develop plans for recruiting and selecting personnel reflective of the results is recommended. For instance, though females available for the regional workforce is likely to be significantly less than the actual population, according to 2020 census data, the Town of Princeton is comprised of 49% females. With few of the sworn staff being female, it is logical that the Princeton Police Department would be well served to develop plans to attract women to law enforcement.

Though not in the immediate area, Princeton police may benefit from recruiting potential female officers on college campuses, at sororities, in women's athletic groups, and at gyms catering to female membership. Developing relationships with multicultural organizations at nearby colleges and universities may open doors to a breadth of possible candidates, representative of the community. Princeton Police Department should consider seeking advice from the National Association of Women Law Enforcement Executives (NAWLEE), the Massachusetts Association of Women in Law Enforcement, and the National Center for Women and Policing for recruiting strategies more likely to yield positive results within this very specific demographic. Also, the United States Department of Justice COPS Office and the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) both offer advice for attracting military veterans to police work and have links to advice for transitioning veteran women to policing. Additionally, the department may benefit from partnering with local civic groups such as Lions and Rotary Club, to work with successful local



women in business and industry to identify strategies that may be useful for attracting female candidates to law enforcement. An ancillary effect could be improved local relations with these important opinion makers in the community.

MRI recommends the adoption and implementation of uniform personnel selection policy/procedures reflective of industry standards and best practices, specifically designed to attract and retain persons with character and values important to the community. MRI recommends that the selection process consists of the following elements as applicable to the Commonwealth's General Laws:

1. **Submission of Town of Princeton Employment Application, Professional Letter of Interest, and Resume.** In addition to establishing a list of interested candidates, this enables Princeton police to examine a writing sample of candidates in a first effort to determine the ability of a candidate to prepare coherent, professionally appearing documents. Combined with written instructions to submit the application with the letter and resume, this enables Princeton police to determine a candidate's ability to follow simple instructions (submit all three documents). Later, these documents can be comparatively analyzed with candidate responses to the uniform background questionnaire described below.
2. **Written Examination.** Civil service testing has limitations. Consideration of petitioning out of civil service is recommended.
3. **Physical Fitness Testing.** Due to the demands of health and wellness on police officers, MRI recommends that the Princeton police conduct such testing independent of any preceding tests that may have been performed by candidates for other police departments, as applicable. Physical fitness testing of groups of candidates offers an ancillary opportunity for the department to observe behaviors reflective of character: Do candidates interact with other candidates and examiners in a polite and respectful way? Do candidates with superior ability celebrate their own success, or do they encourage other candidates to excellence? Do candidates with less physical fitness ability show drive, determination, and "never quit" attitude?
4. **Oral Board Examination.** This critical community-centric step should never be bypassed. Every viable police officer candidate should be required to meet with a board of examiners that have been trained to ask uniform questions and score responses in a uniform way. Keeping in mind that police skills can be taught, MRI recommends that the board of examiners is made up of a team of police officers and residents/key stakeholders from the community



to assure the candidate(s) have the qualities and character sought by the community. It is important to remind the interviewers that they are under no obligation to identify someone for further testing; if they don't find people with character qualities of interest to them, they should make no recommendation.

5. **Conditional Offer of Employment.** A conditional offer of employment is given to candidates to inform them that, if they successfully complete certain steps in the process, they will have a job. Typically, the conditional offer is given before particularly intrusive steps are taken, that would otherwise be protected by the Americans With Disabilities Act or other applicable employee protection/anti-discrimination laws.
6. **Medical Examination.** The Commonwealth mandates a medical examination of un-certified police officer candidates. Due to the demands of health and wellness on police officers, MRI recommends that the Princeton police conduct such medical examinations of all police officer candidates independent of any preceding examination that may have been performed by candidates for other police departments.
7. **Psychological Examination.** Though not required by the Commonwealth, MRI recommends that due to the demands of health and wellness on police officers, Princeton Police Department conduct such psychological and emotional fitness testing examinations and interview(s) by a qualified mental health professional of all candidates independent of any preceding examination that may have been performed by candidates for other police departments.
8. **Extensive Background Investigation.** MRI recommends that this step be performed using uniform questionnaires; and that that personnel assigned to conduct a background investigation have been specifically trained in this skill. MRI suggests that it is not enough to speak only to those that appear on the candidate' submitted documents; it is expected that candidates will include the names of persons likely to speak favorably of their candidacy. Every reference should be asked for other people that may have information about the candidate...and those "one-off" people should be interviewed.

The background investigation should continue until a very clear picture emerges that illustrates that the character of the candidate is everything that the Town is looking for in its next police officer.



9. **Interview with Chief of Police.** The Chief of Police should review the selection process in totality. By interviewing candidates, knowing that police skills can be taught to suitable candidates after hiring, the Chief's final interview affords an additional opportunity to determine whether a candidate likely has the character, honor, ethics, morality, and mental acuity to be successful in Princeton.

MRI recommends that the comprehensive background investigation, psychological testing, and medical testing be conducted independently of those performed by other police departments, regardless of proximity by time. By conducting an independent investigation and testing, Princeton Police Department will have an opportunity to conduct a comparative analysis of candidates' responses to other agencies. Discrepancies should be carefully examined.

## **RADIO COMMUNICATIONS**



Due to the critical need for effective radio communications, industry standards and best practices call for specific measures to be in place to secure emergency services communications infrastructure. For instance, radio towers, transmission wires, and generators used for alternate power during outages must be secure from those with criminal intent.

Particularly in the northeast, it is common for power to be interrupted by weather; reliance on an alternate power source, in the case of Princeton police, a Kohler generator, is important to ensuring continuous emergency communications.

Seen here, though the radio tower is surrounded by a chain link fence, the associated transmission lines and generator are easily accessible. With little effort, those with nefarious intent could substantially disrupt emergency radio communications by cutting exposed cables and damaging the generator.



## **TRAINING**

Recent events around the United States have brought the conduct of police officers to the forefront of social consciousness. Repeated often in response to the "defund police" suggestion,



it has been recommended that police officer training be enhanced. In 2020, the Commonwealth passed significant police reform legislation that every department must comply with.

Particularly today, it can be argued that training is, perhaps, one of the most important responsibilities of any community when it comes to the police. Generally, well trained police officers are more capable of responding effectively and appropriately to the stimulus that may be experienced at any number or variety of calls for service; and, by the shared experience, police officers may experience greater levels of inter- and intra-agency cooperation. With similar training supported by common policies/written directives, it is more likely that officers will respond in a more uniform way, making it easier to deliver services effectively. And, by extension, it makes the police more easily understood by their service population. When comprehensively and repeatedly trained in critical skills, officers can be counted on to provide a much higher level of law enforcement and police service delivery.

Training should be purposeful (as opposed to merely checking a box for regulatory compliance). Additionally, officers promoted or assigned to specialties should be extensively trained for their new jobs.

As for training regarding succession strategy, there has been a complete lack of effort and focus related to succession planning in the organization. One of the highest priorities for a department should be the development of staff to enable members of the organization to prepare to be the next chief executive while performing at a high level. Strategically, the Princeton Police should treat promotions not simply as a career stepping stone but as a new position requiring preparatory training that ensures officers are fully grasping their new role. In the immediate aftermath of promotion, training commensurate with the position should be provided. Succession planning should be equated to FTO for supervisors! The agency must philosophically retool and begin placing a premium on education and training. There must be a strategy consistent with emerging “best practice” standards as Princeton seeks to elevate professionalism in delivering policing services. Roger Williams Police Command Supervisory Institute should be standard for all sergeants as should the Southern Police Institute or FBI National Academy for higher ranks if they are implemented.

The history of training police officers at the Princeton Police Department was found to be lacking and below expectations for a department that must engage officers as a retention strategy. Beyond the basic tenant of training new officers at the MPTC, a designed field training (FTO) curriculum is critical for the officer’s success as well as the community’s expectation for the delivery of consistent and professional law enforcement services. An FTO program with policies, evaluations and other nuances should be developed and implemented. Not only will this prepare



officers for providing professional policing services to the Princeton community, but it begins preparing future leaders within the agency.

MRI also suggests that a training committee be established that will engage staff into the process of operating a modern police agency while beginning the process of identifying appropriate training that best serves the community and the organization. Not only will the use of a committee inform the Chief of Police, but it may also serve to begin training personnel in the administrative tasks of the department...another critical job task of those pursuing advancement to the executive level of police leadership.

As mentioned, the review of the existing Princeton Police policies scrutinized for this high-level review were chosen due to the critically important nature of each to the management of risk. Given the fact that only one of the policies reflected best practices in its content, but found to be ignored in practice, while others did not even exist creates a significant problem for the agency.

MRI recommends that the new police administration establishes a commitment to the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission (MassPAC). MassPAC provides the organization with greater accountability within the agency allowing the new Chief a proven management system of written directives, training regime, clearly defined lines of authority, and routine reports that support decision-making and resource allocation. Ultimately, the MassPAC process seeks to establish best practices through standards that prescribe “what” a law enforcement agency should be doing but not “how” they should be doing it! That decision is left up to the individual agency and its Chief. That said, it should be widely understood that being accredited under the MassPAC format is not a passive process; it requires a shifting and/or a retooling of the organization to ensure that there are systemic management directives in place. Every fourth-year assessors from MassPAC arrive at the agency to inspect these systems, ensuring that policies and procedures that have been implemented and that there is sufficient documentation demonstrating adherence and compliance to them. That is the true essence of the accreditation philosophy...best practice procedures that are followed by the agency!

Many CEOs point to the overwhelming work that must be accomplished to achieve and maintain accreditation. This is a factual statement! MRI submits that properly managing a law enforcement agency is not without challenge but also stresses that there are no standards contained in the MassPAC format that any law enforcement agency should not be accomplishing in the first instance. The standards that make up the MassPAC certification program are recognized as the absolute minimum needed to effectively manage risk in the modern age. Among other critical job tasks, the certification standards require demonstration of compliance



by practice with constitutional protections, laws, and judicial review. Critical areas covered include force, searches, arrests, bias, and other protections guaranteed to all.

While having relevant policies in place that reflect the best practices of the law enforcement profession is the desired goal, if little or no indoctrination training has occurred and the procedures are not followed and adhered too, then the policies are meaningless documents. At that point the cost of a mistake/s can manifest in significant civil liability exposure to the Town. If during litigation it can be demonstrated that viable policies were in place, but management did not require staff to adhere to the policy creating an illusion of practices, liability exposure grows exponentially.

Not to be underestimated is how this façade of best practices without adherence can have significant negative cultural implications upon the police administration. The perceived lack of leadership demonstrated by the CEO can permeate the entire police organization creating a dreadful morale problem. Staff quickly gauges this house of cards approach to management, and the police administration quickly loses credibility. Further, the Selectboard are led to believe that the organization is in good order having been told that policies and procedures, which can be observed, are in place. Yet routinely Town Administrators and the Selectboard do not have the law enforcement expertise to measure the validity of these systems. Not to be negated are the citizens of Princeton who are the ultimate arbitrators of good policing as they must trust and have confidence in the local police to enforce the laws in a consistent and equitable fashion. If the Princeton police lack that trust and legitimacy, ultimately the entire local government apparatus is put at risk.

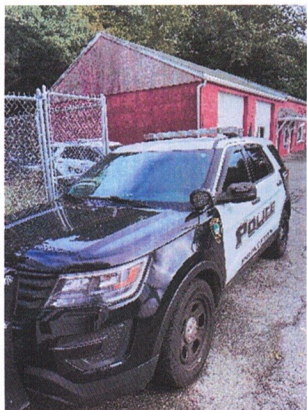
It is for all these reasons combined with MRI's observations that a host of systems need to be created and applied by the new administration that the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission format is strongly recommended for implementation.

## **FLEET VEHICLES**

In Princeton, police patrol covers 80 miles of roadway. Though Princeton is not responsible for the maintenance of all 80 miles, the police must still patrol roads that are owned/maintained by other governmental subdivisions. As a result, no vehicle in the Town fleet receives as much continuous use as those found in the PPD fleet. Efficient management of a police motor vehicle fleet involves keeping mileage, maintenance, performance, and repair records for each vehicle. It involves the regular scheduling of routine preventative maintenance and safety inspections for all vehicles. When consideration is given to the critical mission of the police fleet, one must



conclude that police vehicle maintenance is of the utmost importance. During the SWOT exercise, the fleet was widely criticized for not being in a state of operational readiness.



Police vehicles are classed as emergency vehicles (along with fire trucks, ambulances, and rescue vehicles) and as such, must have more frequent preventative maintenance and safety inspections, particularly since they are operated 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. When good vehicle fleet management programs are followed, it is not uncommon to reduce the total operating costs of the fleet while improving the operational capability and condition of all vehicles.

Often, police chiefs are questioned about whether a fleet vehicle requires replacement when mileage is thought to be low compared to the average resident's personal vehicle with similar mileage. Replacement recommendations made by the Chief of Police must account for the critical need for use as an emergency vehicle used under the harshest of conditions when the average vehicle may be parked in a garage for the duration of similar conditions. Additional consideration must be given to engine use when the vehicle is not in motion. At present, the PPD fleet is made up of Ford models. Ford estimates that engine use when not in motion equates to approximately 25 miles for every hour idling.

MRI observed that, if all vehicles were in a state of operational readiness, the number of fleet vehicles for PPD would be sufficient for the needs of the organizational structure.

## **INTRA-GOVERNMENT RELATIONS, COMMUNITY POLICING AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

The terms community outreach and community policing are often used interchangeably, but the terms have substantially different meanings. Community outreach often refers to programs that police departments provide to their communities, programs being delivered typically under the heading of community relations such as Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE), and school resource officer (SRO). Community relations programs are provided by police departments that are based on the traditional policing model. Traditional police departments primarily respond to calls for services received from the community and do not create meaningful partnerships with the community which allow the community to have an equal say in the issues that define the public safety agenda of the community.

In the 1930s, police departments began a process of reform moving away from the previous decades of policing that were very much influenced by partisan politics with a fair amount of



corruption. The reforms resulted in the professionalization of police agencies, resulting in the so-called professional or traditional policing model that is widely used today. The reforms also caused police departments to focus on "crime-fighting" increasingly at the expense of positive community relations and engagement with community members.

The social turmoil of the 1960s and 1970s caused a greater separation between police agencies and the communities they served. Those unsettling times resulted in the development of a philosophy of community policing which has ushered in the first substantial reforms to the institution of policing in America since the reform efforts of the 1930s. Many of the reforms introduced in the 60's and 70's have been revised and refined in the most recent iteration of the Commonwealth's Police Reform Act.

The philosophy of community policing has several core ideals which include community input, developing trust with the community, sharing power with the community, and creative methods of resolving problems identified through a collaboration between the police department and its community partners.

Making the transition from a traditional policing department to a community policing department is a substantial undertaking. The mission of the police department and its guiding core values must be reviewed and made consistent with the community policing philosophy. The skills and abilities necessary for police officers to successfully affect community policing will require an emphasis on training in community policing. Supervisory practices will need to change to support the front-line officers who will have greater discretion for decision-making and problem-solving. Discussed in more depth elsewhere, to support this premise, PPD should consider revising policy so that position/job descriptions and personnel evaluations are tailored to the performance of the officers and consistent with the organizational philosophy.

There are many valuable resources available to police agencies that embark on the transition to community policing through the International Association of Chiefs of Police ([www.theiacp.org](http://www.theiacp.org)) and the United States Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services ([www.cops.usdoj.gov](http://www.cops.usdoj.gov)). Among the first steps in becoming a community policing agency is to complete a strategic plan which defines the public safety goals and objectives for the police department and the community that it serves. In creating the strategic plan, the police department needs to formalize existing partnerships with community members to assist in identifying and solving community problems. Typical community partners include representation from civic organizations, business leaders, community leaders, medical and mental health



organizations, social services providers, churches, neighborhood groups, individual citizens, and representatives from minority communities. As of this writing, MRI notes that the department has loose but positive relationships with Princeton's elderly community, but the relationship with the larger community has been described as damaged since the pandemic.

In May 2015, the Final Report of The President's Task Force on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing was published. Through the report, the nation was introduced to the Six Pillars that form the foundation of policing in the new millennium.

*"Trust between law enforcement agencies and the people they protect and serve is essential in a democracy. It is key to the stability of our communities, the integrity of our criminal justice system, and the safe and effective delivery of policing services."*

Applied with vigor, the report is intended to be a road map to connecting a police department with the people it serves. When considering the applicability of the Six Pillars, the size of a police agency does not matter.

## **FUTURE VIEW**

The Princeton Police Department is a small police agency employing six police officers who are tasked with providing a full array of law enforcement services to the community. As a small agency the Princeton Police face several challenges, all of them under the same microscope as larger agencies. For instance, regardless of the size of the agency (think LAPD vs. PPD), when a resident calls 911 for help in the middle of the night, the expectation for swift, professional, and complete service is the same.

One of the immediate challenges for Princeton is the reality that having a full-service police agency is a costly endeavor. Personnel costs comprise much of any police department budget followed by the commodity list that supports the mission such as capital equipment, gasoline, electricity, maintenance of existing equipment, uniforms, and myriad other smaller, but no less important products. This is followed by training funds designed to enable officers to deal with high-risk, complex situations adequately. To do so requires expansive knowledge and skills which police only acquire in training. While many in Princeton may be heard to say, "nothing ever happens in Princeton", the Town has determined to fund a police agency and that decision is



accompanied by the responsibility to do it properly. To do less may result in overwhelming litigation exposure that could bankrupt any community.

The establishment of a police department has been decided; accordingly, the need to appropriately fund the Princeton Police Department must occur. While there is recognition that a police agency this small cannot carry out all tasks asked of law enforcement without outside consultation/assistance, the new Chief should engage the community and determine the desires and then formulate a cost center for those tasks and secure the financial resources to meet those goals.

Besides basic funding, there are equipment needs that are costly at the time of purchase and that subsequently require a maintenance program to sustain operational readiness. Items such as police vehicles, body-worn and dashboard cameras, and computers, radio communications, and other evolving technologies are experiencing mainstream adoption in law enforcement. Massachusetts Police Reform recommends some of this technology; future consideration should be given to implementing body cameras and other new technologies as funds become available as part of an overarching risk management program. While the equipment is expensive, there should also be an awareness of expenses associated with the often-unforeseen costs of responding to open records laws which may require the agency to redact protected content before releasing it to the public.

On a positive note, smaller agencies often have the benefit of first seeing how larger agencies overcome pitfalls and manage successes with new technologies before local implementation. Additionally, a smaller agency like Princeton is nimbler, making it easier to begin using a new technology given the smaller scale of implementation. However, a challenge for Princeton is the lack of IT employees combined with a governing body that may not be familiar with the needs and demands of police work, creating a separation of understanding when discussing or implementing new technologies. Communication remains a key to success when informing community leaders of the needed changes.

Another issue facing Princeton concerns scheduling employees in a business that operates 24/7/365 days a year. There are numerous factors such as union contracts, sleep deprivation, overtime, and officer availability issues throughout the scheduling process. The reality is that obligated police services must be provided 24 hours per day, seven days a week. While work schedules vary to meet a community's needs, Princeton has implemented a schedule comprised of 8-hour shifts that each officer is assigned to work.



While changing a work schedule is a significant challenge, Princeton may want to consider a shift schedule that addresses heavier workload hours where there may be a compelling need to maximize the efficiency of existing personnel. Implementing a 10-hour work schedule (four days on, three days off) for patrol staff, designed to place as many officers as possible on “the street” during statistically busy periods may offer a viable option for the Princeton community. This format results in the “overlapping” of the employee’s work schedule as opposed to the more “typical” schedule discussed above where employees arrive to work while others are leaving. However, while this may seem like a quick adjustment, there will be a need for additional police vehicles as single officer/single vehicles must be engaged to be effective. A practice of two officers in one patrol vehicle is simply counterproductive to this strategy.

While there are a host of variables that comprise an eight-hour schedule such as 5 days on with 2 days off or 4 days on and 2 days off, the common theme is that when those on a shift come to work, others are leaving. One advantage to a 4 on/2 off schedule is that all officers working that schedule can enjoy a scheduled weekend off through every 6-week cycle. Alternatively, officers working a 5 on/2 off schedule work the same 5 days each week which likely means some officers are off every weekend while others are never scheduled for a weekend off. It’s important to consider morale, officer productivity, recruitment and retention when considering a schedule

Another area of review may focus on a consolidation of law enforcement services with a neighboring community. MRI understands that this topic has been discussed in Princeton but received little if any, traction. This is not surprising to MRI which has been involved in several studies pertaining to police consolidation. Merging police organizations is a complex process as each community has its own traditions, history, style, policy, procedures, structure, and benefits systems that they want to protect. Research confirms that even those who were able to overcome the political apprehension with successful integration have found that the efficiency of services enhances while the desired financial savings are often more elusive.

At the top of every police chief’s concerns is the hiring and retention of quality employees. This is uniquely challenging for Princeton as larger agencies can offer greater compensation and benefits as well as internal promotions and opportunities that only become available when other officers retire in smaller agencies. These challenges make it difficult for agency leaders to maintain appropriate staffing levels and generate job satisfaction as well as positive morale.

A 2021 survey from the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) showed a 45% increase in retirements, and a nearly 20% spike in resignations, over the previous year<sup>3</sup>. Unfortunately, the

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.policeforum.org/workforcesurveyjune2021>



applicant pool for police officers across the nation, especially as nightly news broadcasts another bad police officer action, is becoming almost dangerously shallow. Nationally, police agencies are struggling to keep departments fully staffed as resignations increase and hiring gets tougher in a tight labor market. At the same time, officers describe the job as more stressful, less rewarding than it was in the past, and awareness that the role of policing is expanding with new duties requiring officers to have a greater breadth of unique skills. Complicating the myriad challenges for the Princeton Police is the concern over smaller agencies that historically have less career opportunities, poor salary compensation, and less than modern equipment.

Once hired, the challenge is finding affordable ways to retain good officers. This fact is resulting in certified and highly trained officers evaluating their positions and exploring alternative opportunities elsewhere. The demand for qualified applicants from a labor pool that is sparse is challenging police agencies who have now attached a name to the reality that is now occurring openly in the profession. "Poaching" certified officers to larger, higher-paying police agencies has evolved into a definitive strategy of some agencies to fill their vacant positions. By all accounts that appears to be the situation where several trained officers left Princeton for the Sterling Police Department where there is more career diversity, higher wages, modern equipment, and a new police facility. While MRI is aware that police managers throughout New England face multiple challenges in recruiting and retaining officers, this recent rather negative strategy is becoming more predatory, especially for smaller agencies like Princeton.

MRI noted that retention at Princeton Police has been historically favorable as only recently have police officers left for other towns. Employee turnover is an expensive proposition. Significant research has concluded that it is better to avoid the necessity of recruiting "new" employees by focusing efforts on retaining incumbent staff. While some of the retention techniques used by police agencies have included increased salaries and benefits there is significant data to support the premise that job satisfaction, a supportive work environment, mentoring programs, and other job enhancement strategies has more to do with why employees remain at a position. Simply stated, they find that positions that offer these attributes provide them with fulfillment. In their book "The Leadership Challenge", Kouzes and Posner suggest that employees remain in their positions in spite of significant pay increase opportunities elsewhere when they are "proud to tell others they are part of the organization, they feel a strong sense of team spirit, they see their own personal values as consistent with those of the organization, they feel attached and committed to the organization and ultimately have a sense of ownership of the organization<sup>4</sup>."

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<sup>4</sup> The Leadership Challenge; Kouzes and Posner  
Princeton, MA: Police Department Risk Review  
Prepared by Municipal Resources, Inc.  
December 2022



The cost of employee turnover in the past has been simply considered the price of doing business and is routinely absorbed into the operating budget. Since these costs do not appear as a line item, little attention has been given to the cost of losing employees. However, it is important to first have a full understanding of the organizational and financial investment an agency has in its staff. Often, there is a tendency to focus on the short-term costs of replacing an officer and ignore the investment that has compounded over the years. Much of the knowledge and experience an officer possesses can only be obtained by doing the actual job itself. A great portion of this knowledge is gained in the first five years of employment. When an officer is recruited away, or "poached", the knowledge and experience the department paid for the officer to obtain is lost forever. This investment serves as a substantial grant to the new employer. Basically, the provider agency paid to extensively train the leaving officer for the new employer. Compounding the problem, the strength and cohesion that a department gains by having experienced staff is diminished and cannot be replaced. Over time, agencies with higher turnover and less experienced officers often suffer reduced productivity, lower quality of service delivery, more frequent complaints, and liability risks. While these costs are difficult to quantify, they are just as real to the organization as salaries and training costs.

As MRI attempts to project a conservative estimate of Princeton's financial investment in an employee, we wanted to focus on the cost of selecting and training a new officer. However, there are a host of intangible costs when an incumbent officer leaves employment such as the deviation of the Chief's salary and benefits from the role already expected of this position. While often mundane work, there are a host of tasks that need to be addressed in the process to hire a new employee.

Currently, much of the selection process at the Princeton Police Department is the singular responsibility of the Chief. In seeking to understand the recruitment, selection and retention protocols of the agency, a review of the Princeton policy manual provided by Chief Powers, the tab "Personnel Administration" was empty. MRI was advised that there is a memorialized process but ultimately the discretion is with the Chief as to how the process is conducted.

Best practices recommend that while the upper management of any law enforcement agency must oversee this most important process, the early phases involving recruitment are administrative in function and do not necessitate the involvement of this level of the organization. In a smaller agency such as Princeton, often the tasks are left to the discretion of the Chief as to who is involved and when.

In the exercise below, MRI analyzed the costs for a variety of functions from the Princeton Police Administration for the purpose of placing a financial implication upon the function of processing



the recruitment, selection, and training of a new employee. Ultimately, MRI recommends that Princeton Police review best practice strategies and implement policies and procedures related to engaging the most effective ways to recruit and more importantly, to retain employees.

### Recruitment Cost

While there are no direct annual advertising and recruitment costs because the Chief oversees this process by diverting her time and energy towards this endeavor, two hours of her hourly salary of \$60.00 diverted to this task is calculated for each employee:

$$2 \times \$60.21 = \$120.42$$

The Chief is tasked with reviewing all of the resumes to determine a list of qualified applicants interested in the Princeton Police Department. The time reviewing, analyzing, and determining who proceeds to the next phase consumes approximately eight (8) hours of time over the course of this process:

$$8 \times \$60.21 = \$481.68$$

During the interview process, which consists of the Chief and one or two sergeants, a full day of interviews may be necessary to narrow the candidate field:

$$8 \times \$60.21 = \$481.68$$

$$8 \times \$31.80 \text{ (double this if two sergeants are used and re-calculate the total)} = \underline{\$254.40}$$

$$\$736.08$$

$$\text{Cost of the applicant's medical and drug screening:} \quad \$350.00$$

$$\text{Cost of psychological screening exams:} \quad \$400.00$$

$$\text{Total selection costs} \quad \underline{\$2,088.18}$$



## New Employee Costs

Once the position is offered, there is an orientation for salary, benefits, and setting up new employee credentials and ancillary completion of required employment paperwork, often with Town Hall staff. These numerous administrative duties consume most of one-day for the Field Training Officer (FTO) to assist and coordinate:

8 X \$28.80 = \$230.40

The new employee requires a set of new uniforms and equipment with the FTO accompanying the recruit to the uniform vendor:

8 X \$28.80 = \$230.40

Uniforms/Equipment \$2,500.00

## Training Costs

Massachusetts charges tuition and supplies for basic police training: \$3,000.00

Mileage to and from training @ .45. (estimate due to unknown location) \$3,600.00

Recruit's salary and benefits while attending academy training: \$15,590.40

Upon completion of the required State of Massachusetts training for a basic police officer, the Town of Princeton provides field training specific to the Princeton environment. During this period the officer is accompanied by a certified Field Training Officer so that the new officer can be oriented to the nuances of providing policing services to the Princeton community. Familiarity with all of the community streets, businesses, radio protocol and report completion requirements are accomplished throughout this ten-week (10) period and are part of this critical training. While the officer's salary and the FTO's salary are budgeted, the reality during this period is that two officers are accomplishing the task of one. For the purposes of this exercise, MRI has assigned the salary of the FTO as added cost during this period:

10 weeks x \$28.80 = \$11,520



The total direct cost associated with recruiting, selecting, and training a new employee is conservatively assessed at **\$38,759.38**. An indirect cost that is routinely experienced during the recruitment and training process includes the hourly overtime needed to fill vacant shifts. Conceivably, if the need to fill shifts with overtime is prolonged, the strain over additional work hours without adequate rest and recovery by officers remaining in the ranks can take a physical and emotional toll that results in officers seeking better working conditions elsewhere...and the downward spiral continues.

There are a number of ancillary tasks that require attention and while it is factual that they are accomplished by persons already on the Princeton Police Department payroll, when they are focusing on a new hire, they are not attending to their original job description to the level called for by community expectations. These are the tasks and nuances of employee retention that, while difficult to dissect appropriately, dominate the agency's time and distract from the mission of the organization. These ancillary tasks combined with the obligated tasks described elsewhere in this report will likely contribute to the strain on staff. The question then remains, what is the cost in dollars that can be reasonably assigned to that strain? That cost cannot be reasonably calculated. To manage risk at the personnel support level, if not already in place, the Town of Princeton should consider contracting with a service that provides employee assistance programming (EAP) to assist with issues related to stress, depression, substance abuse, family, grief, financial issues et al.

## CONCLUSION

This document strongly endorses a commitment to the accreditation process. MRI believes that many of the items articulated in this report and those identified as weaknesses through the abbreviated SWOT exercise with the Princeton Police are covered by standards required by accreditation. Whether the new chief determines that Massachusetts Accreditation or CALEA accreditation is the more proper venue for Princeton is a professional preference. The critical component is the need to ensure departmental adherence to the policy is in place.

MRI believes that many of the systemic concerns identified by this report would be addressed through the process of accreditation as the essence of accreditation is that, if the agency is charged with "doing something," then there must be a procedure describing how the agency wants the task accomplished; officers should be trained to that standard, and then the organization must demonstrate that it follows the directive in practice.



As stated at the beginning of this report, the document is designed to provide a tangible roadmap for the new chief to quickly identify areas deserving focus. It was not the goal to offer quantifiable analysis of existing practices, other than to offer examples where MRI believes enhancement is required or possible. It will, however, allow the newly arrived Chief an opportunity to quickly home in on those topics where enhancement would benefit the Princeton Police organization.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

This review provides a high-level overview of the current state of the Princeton Police Department as it relates to the management of risk. Though shown numerically below, these recommendations are not listed in order of priority. Generally, they are repeated here in part from the contents of the report. Working together, the Selectboard, Town Administrator, and the Chief of Police should review these recommendations and establish an order of priority and reasonable timeline within the restrictions of budget, as applicable. MRI further recommends that those items found below that are related to life safety risks should be addressed soonest.

1. **Inventory and Maintenance:** MRI recommends that the new chief perform a documented agency inventory of equipment. From that inventory, determine which equipment is antiquated and not useful. Those items deemed relevant should be supported via a defined maintenance plan to keep in a perpetual state of operational readiness with an associated budget to support the initiative. Additionally, a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) should be developed in coordination with the Town Administrator and the Selectboard.

MRI recommends that the inventory of firearms and less lethal weapons occur as soon as possible.

2. **Add one additional patrol officer:** MRI recommends that an additional shift with minimum staffing occur on Wednesday through Saturday during the hours of 3:00PM to 11:00PM which adds another 2080 hours to the calculations. This calculation addressed only the need associated with filling out a patrol shift schedule that covers a 24-hour clock with a minimum staffing level of one officer. Anecdotal information learned by interview suggests that the addition of officers needed to have more than one police officer per shift is at least desirable.
3. **Internal Communication:** MRI recommends that there be an annual departmental meeting for discussions pertaining to goal/objective setting, future training opportunities, and reaffirming the Chief's policing philosophy. At least quarterly, the Chief should conduct



formal meetings with department leadership. From these established meetings, identifying problem/s, issues and project/s for action and resolution can be easily addressed while also measuring progress, and celebrating wins. The new Chief must recognize that these meetings enable mentoring, opportunity for department personnel to “lead up,” and ultimately creates a positive work environment.

Though formal meetings are important, the size of the Princeton Police Department suggests that direct communication from the chief between formal meetings should be frequent and meaningful. The same principle should be applied by the chief’s subordinate supervisors.

4. **Policies and Procedures:** MRI found the existing policies and procedures severely lacking. Basic policies pertaining to personnel and training were absent, and several policies were noted to be best practices but were not adhered to ritually. MRI recommends that the new Chief establish a goal that the Princeton Police Department uses a law enforcement accreditation program as a road map to ensure solid policy is put in place. Further, MRI recommends that this same effort be applied to achieving accredited or certified status as soon as possible so that the agency will have substantive proof of compliance in place to demonstrate practical application of the policies in day-to-day operations. The critical issue noted was that the current policies were “canned” and dated boilerplate documents from the Massachusetts Police Institute. MRI noted that there were newer policies implemented in the aftermath of Police Reform; whether the newly enacted policies have been or will be practiced remains to be seen. While policies modeled after other agencies make good sense, it is important to make the necessary revisions to the “canned” documents so that they are reflective of Princeton’s community and police department culture.
5. **Recruitment and Selection:** MRI recommends that the new Chief implement policies related to this topic. Additionally, MRI suggests that the department engage a cross-section of the agency such as a patrol officer, a sergeant, and two Princeton residents in the oral board process. Engaging staff mentors demonstrates the importance of retaining the most qualified. Community engagement must be a goal for the new Chief; involving community members in the selection of new police officers begins that process, creates transparency, garners insight from the community, and builds in a core group of residents that are likely to be pre-disposed to speak positively about the department publicly and informally.
6. **Evidence Function:** MRI recommends a complete inventory of all evidence currently in the possession of the Princeton Police. Once an inventory is complete, quarterly audits should be



accomplished. The department's evidence policy should incorporate all aspects required to be compliant with CALEA standards on Property and Evidence Control. Of particular concern is the absence of separate and secure storage of critical articles of held evidence and property such as guns, drugs, money, jewels, and other items of high risk to the agency. Given the absence of space needed for storage of evidence, purging evidence and property at the earliest moment allowed by law is recommended.

7. **Training:** MRI recommends the new Chief organize a Training Committee comprised of a patrol officer, a Sergeant, and a civilian member to identify gaps in departmental training needs. Actively engaged, such a committee enhances staff competencies, allows for training to be prioritized, and serves to include staff in a meaningful way. Including the community on the committee may result in a greater understanding about the "why" of policing techniques and may inform the community about the need for a new facility from a perspective other than the town capital budget process. Efforts should focus upon succession planning and appropriate leadership training for all levels of the organization.
8. **Job descriptions:** MRI recommends that each position in the agency be described for general tasks and responsibilities; and defines the chain of command by position. By policy, each employee should understand who their immediate supervisor is; this concept should be reflected in an organizational chart.
9. **Community engagement:** The new Chief should facilitate a community meeting within the first few months of assuming command of the Princeton Police. Using a SWOT format, the Chief can identify issues while simultaneously beginning to formalize relationships with community stakeholders. This meeting can inform the Chief as to the current level of community engagement and determine how community participation can be enhanced throughout the department.

Effective community engagement strategies for continuous dialogue are paramount to the building of trust and legitimacy in the police department. Faith lost in the police by some during pandemic may (likely) require significant effort to reacquire. Without community support, concerns and risk management recommendations found within this report are likely to be difficult to overcome. When considering the nearly two-hundred-year-old principle described by Sir Robert Peel that "...the police are the public and the public are the police...", the need for a program of engagement at every level is critical to the success of the next chief



of police. It is important that the principles of community engagement become the lifestyle of the Princeton Police Department.

10. **Strategic Plan:** MRI recommends the development of a strategic plan that provides a formalized approach to addressing issues in the immediate as well as long-term future of the agency. In coordination with the Town Administrator, the development of a long-range capital improvement plan is warranted. This plan should be updated on an annual basis and include input from all shareholders.

A well-developed strategic plan identifies organizational goals supported by attainable objectives, and a method of periodic assessment. The strategic plan should allow flexibility that enables course correction on an as needed basis. All steps of the strategic planning process should include the department membership and representatives of the community.

11. **Construct New Public Safety Facility:** MRI notes that every physical plant feature of substance in the current state of the police station does not comply with nationally recognized standards and best practices; Princeton is in desperate need of a new police facility. Combined with the otherwise “sick building” assessment, the critical need for a new facility must be addressed as soon as possible.

It appears that the governing body recognizes the need as funding for the complex has been brought to town meeting for a vote twice yet defeated by the residents of Princeton both times. MRI did not delve into the reasons behind the defeat. While speculation has focused on cost, it seems that community dissatisfaction regarding the collective aversion of police officers to being vaccinated during the recent pandemic may have negatively impacted the perception of the two departments. Additionally, the concern over the perception of silence from the police is concerning to a number of residents. Regardless, MRI recommends an enhanced effort by the new chief to “sell” the more than justified need to replace these substandard facilities. As noted throughout this report, community engagement is key to the future success of this effort.