



POLICE DEPARTMENT

TOWN OF DEERING

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POLICE DEPARTMENT - ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT – FY2014

2014 has been yet another year of transition for the Police Department. We were very glad to welcome Part-Time Officer Mark Philibert safely back from his second deployment to Afghanistan with his National Guard Military Police unit. Ofc. Philibert got home early in 2014, and then starting working occasional shifts for us once more in late summer after he acclimated back to “civilian life.”

Also in early 2014, Officer Travis Bennett attended the Full Time Police Academy, and then went through his in-house Field Training Program, being assigned his own shifts in May 2014. Unfortunately, he was recruited to a full-time position in the Hillsboro Police Department. It was in early September that he left his position in Deering for Hillsboro, though he did agree to stay in Deering as a part time officer once his Hillsboro PD Field Training is completed. He will start working occasional Deering PD shifts again in early January 2015.

Being short-handed once again, the Department conducted another hiring process with a review of 15+ application files. We tested six applicants, and with the help of members of the Citizenry and the Board of Selectman, interviewed four well qualified applicants. After the evaluation process was completed, and with the support of the Selectman and our Citizenry, we were able to hire Ethan Vaillancourt as our newest Full Time Police Officer. Officer Vaillancourt comes to us with significant experience as a Police Officer in Florida, and once he completes certain “Law Package” training with the Police Academy, he will receive his certifications in New Hampshire.

While the Department was officially short-handed and/or short-handed due to training requirements, Chief Pushee and part-time Captain Thomas Cavanaugh were hard at work putting in many long hours and late nights. They both were involved in several highly involved investigations and cases, including (but not limited to) a Kidnapping & Felonious Assault case, several Sexual Assault cases, some very involved Domestic Violence cases, as well as multiple theft, burglary, assault, domestic violence, DWI, drug possession, and other such cases and investigations. Both will have happier families once the Department returns to a “full trained and certified” status, which should happen in Late Winter/Early Spring 2015.

Many thanks go out to our other Part-Time Officers (who have not yet been mentioned in this report) Cpl. Nick Hodgen and Officer Chris Parsons. Both have been also active in working shifts for us in Deering when their other full-time jobs with Hillsboro PD will allow them.

Our two Ford Police Interceptor Utility cruisers are up and running well. Our 2013 cruiser will surpass 32K miles by the end of FY2014, and our new 2014 cruiser will surpass 10K miles by that time as well. As these cruisers are still a “new” model to Police usage, we are hoping (but don’t really know for sure) that they will last longer than the 105K average miles that our previous cruisers did. As such, we are projecting the likely/necessary replacements of the 2013 cruiser to be in FY2017, and the likely/necessary replacement of the 2014 cruiser in 2019 or 2020.

We do need to very seriously discuss some other equipment items and their replacement schedules though, and these involve a couple of Warrant Articles on the 2015 Town Warrant. One is creating and funding a “Ballistic Vest Purchase and Replacement Trust Fund.” This will be similar to the Fire Department’s bunker gear

replacement fund, in that it will provide the Department with specific funding, outside of the annual budget, to schedule the timely purchase and replacement of required ballistic protective vests. Right now, because of the need to outfit officers as they are hired, the Department has not been able to fund replacement ballistic vests in a timely manner. Such personal protective equipment is rated for a 5 year life span and is supposed to be custom fit to each officer. Right now all of our vests are 6-9 years old, and several of them have been passed from one officer to the next, rather than having new ones ordered for new officers, which means the vest is not a proper fit past the first officer it was issued to.

The second warrant request is to create a "Police Equipment Purchase and Replacement Trust Fund." The purpose of this fund is to provide a "savings account" for the purchase and replacement of certain types of Police Equipment that is not normally associated with a "replacement schedule," but whose costs are below the threshold for inclusion in the Capital Improvement Program. Specific examples include (but are not limited to) the Mobile Radios in our cruisers, the Laptop Computers in our cruisers, and RADAR units in our cruisers. All of these items wear out or even become obsolete over time, but that wear process is very hard to define, and once an item dies or malfunctions, a determination of repair/replacement values must be made. Our mobile (cruiser based) radios, for example, have been transferred from cruiser to cruiser since the late 1990's. Both of them are exhibiting intermittent function issues, but because of their age, parts are no longer available. When those radios actually decide to "die," replacing them with new mobile radios will be absolutely required on short notice, and that cost is not covered or planned for in any budgetary line item that we have.

You will notice that the regular budget lines in the Police Department FY2015 budget request show a significant increase in certain areas. One of these is the Full Time Officer's salary line. This is contractual, and is based upon hiring a highly experienced officer at a rate that is hopefully competitive with other agencies. Along with the salary, we have an increase in insurances and retirement costs. These occur because in the past several years, our Full Time Officer(s) were single member plans, rather than family plan insurances, and in the matter of retirement, this is based upon a percentage of salary. One other line that is deceptively high is the overtime budget. This is because Town Administrator Russ McAlister has advised that the budget needs to show the moneys for overtime grants in the overtime budget line, knowing that those amounts will be offset in the "revenue" side of the budget by the grant reimbursements. In all, our overtime budget is actually only \$1000.00, the same as in last year's budget.

In conclusion, I thank the town folk for their continued support. We continue to ask that you act as our "eyes and ears" and call in anything that you see that appears out of place or suspicious. We would always rather check on something and find that it is innocuous than have to investigate a criminal act after the fact because someone saw something and didn't report it in a timely fashion.