



## ***Town of Adams*** • Massachusetts 01220

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TOWN HALL  
8 PARK STREET – Room 210  
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### **Wednesday, October 7, 2020, 5:30 p.m. PUBLIC SAFETY SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**CALL TO ORDER:** On October 7, 2020 the Public Safety Sub-Committee met in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Town Administrator's Office of Town Hall. Members Blanchard and Duval, Town Administrator Green and Interim Police Chief Bacon were present. The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

**PUBLIC CALL-IN NUMBER:** (413) 743-8300 x201

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The minutes for July 28, 2020 were submitted for approval. *Consensus was reached by Sub-Committee Members to approve the minutes as submitted.*

#### **OFFICIAL BUSINESS**

**Police Department Update:** *Interim Chief Bacon* reviewed information emailed previously to Sub-Committee Members of a snapshot of the offenses handled by the Police Department since January, 2020. The numbers were discussed and it was noted that there is a call uptick for domestic violence. It was explained that speeding was the highest number of offenses. The reporting and formatting of the metrics was outlined and state and federal reporting requirements were detailed. It was noted that typically the data is published a year behind, after it has been reviewed. Speeding, operating with a suspended license and equipment violations were the top reported motor vehicle violations. Index crimes were explained and the top five were pointed out from the Uniform Crime Reports. It was outlined that the top two things people look at when moving into a community are the school system and the crime rate. Shift staffing was reviewed regarding overtime costs. He advised he reviewed the budget versus what has been paid and overtime increased in 2016 when dispatch changed. He explained the department used to have three officers out on the road and now one is on the desk. It was clarified that there used to be a Dispatcher and a "Desk Sergeant", and the dispatch change got the radio system fixed. It was pointed out that the department needs more Reserve Officers. Having all calls go to the Sheriff's Department Dispatch after 4:00 p.m. and to deploying all resources out on the road was considered. 12-hour shifts were discussed as an option but it would require a change in the contract. It was explained that unless the minimum number of officers able to take time off on a shift was adjusted, overtime will continue to be paid out. A recommendation was made to limit to two officers, maximum, taking time off on a shift. It was pointed out that there will always be necessary overtime that cannot be eliminated, and right now there is no limit to personnel taking time off so the department has to backfill and there are multiple things that need to be looked at. Concern was expressed about a staff response if overtime is cut. Having a Reserve Officer cover the desk and having the Sergeant out on the road was suggested. The need for Reserve Officers and the difficulty in hiring Patrolmen was discussed at length. Consideration was given to utilizing former Police Officers, Special Officers and Reserve Officers in different capacities to maximize the personnel.

It was explained that Reserve Officers don't want to just sit at the desk but also want to participate in police work, and there is no internal policy regarding opportunities for detail work. A recommendation was made that if a person declines shifts three times in a row they may be dismissed from the roster and have no access to details. Accountability and expectations were noted as being important and staff has to participate and come in to work. Sergeant Malloy is currently tracking that. It was explained that there are issues with staff not working for Adams but working on details. It was pointed out that the Town controls employment and that is the way to manage it, though there is not just one fix and high-level decisions need to be made at some point. Interim Chief Bacon advised there are three solutions to fix the policy updating. The first is to break it up and submit it out to be worked on. The second is to hire a company to do work on it. It was explained that Pittsfield is hiring Lexipol to work with them to update the policies specific to Massachusetts to maintain up-to-date policies and policy-based training. The third solution is to aspire to become an accredited agency, which will reduce liability, communicate to the community that the department has achieved the gold standard and makes sure policy is being followed. It was noted that all three solutions have a cost, and boils down to what the Board wants. It was stated that staff doing the work would be the bottom of the list, and that a recurring annual fee for training and updates needs to be considered. It was recalled that the last time it was done it took three years to complete and this may be something a future sub-committee meeting can look at for accreditation and at companies that would look at it over time. Quotes will be gotten and provided on this. Savings on insurance gleaned from this work could potentially be deducted from the cost. It was advised that this will be brought to the Budget Sub-Committee to look toward the Board setting goals for the budget and for the Police Department to meet overtime costs. Past overtime costs of \$50,000 to \$60,000 were noted and it was explained the department needs to start doing this or reduce staff and search out efficiencies and new ways of doing things, which could include charter changes. A request was made for the department to be innovative on how to get change to happen and it was noted that a bar will be set by the Board of Selectmen. One tool that has not been utilized well was noted as compensatory time, and it was explained that limits have been set by the labor agreement which have been exceeded. The Fair Standards Labor Act explaining undue hardship was reviewed. It was noted that the Town can limit it and cannot short a shift with compensatory time. A review was done on how overtime works on a four-days-on and two-days-off work shift, and the strategy of how that would work was discussed. The expectation that overtime costs would trend downward without impacting safety was expressed. It was explained that the intent was to find out what the natural organic cost of overtime is, and to get there. Staffing was outlined for the Sub-Committee Members. Brief discussion took place on the academy and strategy for hiring officers. It was noted that the Massachusetts Police Training Council (MPTC) would be consulted on it to inform the way to stabilize it.

**Review of Detective Position:** *Town Administrator Green* advised that staff was used to larger paychecks and it was important to look at the culture of the department. The Detective's resignation letter was reviewed. A review of the case workload took place and it was noted that Covid-19 was an impact on outsourcing since the District Attorney's Office and the Federal Government refused to take cases. Contract negotiations from the Union requesting an appointment of a Detective and pay for the position were outlined. Pay possibilities for the Detective position were reviewed and a need to look at how the Town compensates for the position and the department structure was noted. The selection of a Detective and the need to send that person to training were outlined. It was noted that it would be possible to create a Detective pay scale. The thought of developing a "swing" Detective was rejected and a suggestion of making a Detective Corporal above the Patrolman level was made. It was noted that there would be a severe impact to the department without a detective and there is a need to fill the position. The need to advertise the position quickly was noted. A side agreement with the union to address the position of Detective would be needed to address and outline the position of Detective. It will be important to develop a job description to include required courses and pay scale.

It was pointed out that there has been no structure or job environment impact, and it is not a good precedent to reverse course in the agreement. It was noted that as the Detective is a full-time job, it is requested that the Corporal position be looked into, and research done to determine whether a test is required to be a Corporal. It was explained that it is written in the contract that there is a requirement to test for Sergeant. Differential pay that can be offered was noted and it was explained that a cost analysis was done. Midnight shift differential pay compensation was outlined, and it was explained that the position of Detective may be advertised with the third shift differential.

**Interim Police Chief Review:** *Town Administrator Green* recommended the permanent appointment of the Chief of Police position to Interim Chief Bacon. He expressed he would provide a letter of recommendation by the Town Administrator, input from staff, officers and others for consideration. It was noted that the Interim Chief was working on policy and staffing reviews, community engagement and other initiatives and he recommends endorsement for this transition. It was noted that the Public Safety Sub-Committee will meet again next week and put the recommendation forth the following week to the full Board.

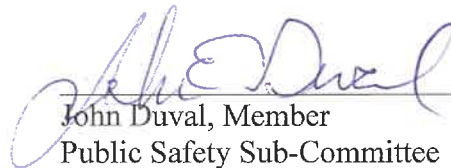
**ANNOUNCEMENTS AND GOOD OF THE ORDER:** *There were no announcements made.*

**ADJOURNMENT:** *The Public Safety Committee Meeting adjourned at 6:57 p.m.*

Respectfully Submitted by Deborah J. Dunlap,  
Recording Secretary



Richard Blanchard, Member  
Public Safety Sub-Committee



John Duval, Member  
Public Safety Sub-Committee