

Fiscal Year 2017 Narrative

Department: POLICE

1. What do you want the Selectmen, Finance Committee and public know about what you've done in Fiscal Year 2015 and Fiscal Year 2016 (to date)?

We have continued our Community Policing programs and outreach to the community members. This is one of my proudest and most important priorities. I feel more confident than ever that the town and the community truly support the police department and our efforts. The community outreach that we have been performing has allowed the community members to have a far better understanding of what it is that we do every day and what we are really about. So many have approached me and stated that they never knew we did so many of the things that we do and they absolutely love the fact that we are sharing our work and progress with them, the community.

It is really nice and feels so good to hear and see people recognizing our efforts to help this community. About 1-5% of our job involves actually arresting the bad guys. The remainder of our job involves helping this community and its members and being there for them, even if it means changing a flat tire, speaking at an event for them, reading to the children at school, holding safety meetings, cleaning off some graffiti from their property, letting them see our K9 or have our K9 do a demonstration for them, etc etc.

We held a Public Safety Open House this year that we combined with the Turners Falls Fire Department. This was a huge success. This was our 3rd Open House event since I became the Police Chief. I teamed up with the TF Fire Department to come up with the idea of sharing what we do with the community and allowing them the opportunity to come see us and ask us questions. The TF Fire was just as excited to grow a program that they already had in place.

With help from many police and dispatch department volunteers as well as TF Firefighters, we held very successful combined Open Houses in 2013, 2014 then again this year, 2015. We decided last year that it would be best to hold the event every other year to keep the public excitement and attendance up.

The event has been a blast. Getting to watch the children and adults try the Segway, watch the K9 demonstrations and pet our Department K9, look at our equipment and just talk with all of our officers and firemen was priceless for both departments. We look forward to our next open house in 2017.

Our goal and main priority is, and will continue to be, to have a very open relationship that is built on honesty and trust with this community. Our officers are almost all local residents and they truly understand the importance of being involved and close with the community.

We have saved our department a significant amount of money by:

- 1) having many of our officers become training instructors for the required annual trainings,
- 2) we have an officer who has been trained to make all of our computer upgrades and repairs, preventing the high costs of hiring an IT person (Town Hall pays \$28,000 a year for this),

- 3) we have a School Resource Officer assigned to the Franklin County Tech School at no cost to us; The Tech pays the entire bill for this position,
 - 4) We have cut our fuel costs by 42% compared to this time last year, (2015 spent \$17,893.83 vs. 2016 \$10,379.15 = \$7,519.68 savings). I attribute the more economical 6 cycle cruisers vs 8 cylinders as well as the lower fuel prices.
 - 5) We have spent much less on vehicle repairs. I attribute this savings to the newer cruisers we now have on the road.
 - 6) We have lowered one of our bigger lease payments by looking into better programs. The lease payment for our main department copy, fax, scan, etc. machines. It is now \$373.29 a month vs \$400+/- mo.
 - 7) For the 3rd year in a row we have saved a great deal of money by having a shared Animal Control Officer. This costs us 25% of the actual cost of having a fulltime ACO. \$16,000.00 a year shared vs. \$64,000.00 for our own
 - 8) I obtained over \$18,000 in grant money to help purchase new bullet proof vests for the officers
 - 9) I obtained a \$4,535.00 grant to purchase body cameras for our officers
 - 10) We obtained a \$40,000 +/- AFIS System: Catching people who used a false name somewhere and getting LTC's back in weeks instead of months now
 - 11) We have been fundraising to purchase a new K9 Cruiser so we don't have to ask the town for the money
2. Please explain any significant changes in your budget for Fiscal Year 2017, including any staff changes (if that impacts your budget).

Sadly, we will be losing a total of 4 Veteran Police Officers between September 2015 and possibly August 2016. Detective Bill Doyle is factored into this equation and he retired back in October. The other officers that will be leaving at some point include another veteran Detective, a veteran Sergeant and the final loss results by one of our patrol officers transferring to another agency.

The 3 retirements are all very highly paid positions due to their time on the job and each of them had college educations. The patrol Officer that is leaving is also about half way up the pay scale. The officers that will be hired to replace these positions will all start at the bottom of the pay scales. This will cause an employee salary savings for next year but some of the savings will depend on who the replacements are, when the positions become available and if the replacements have college education and are eligible to receive additional incentive pay.

Our current budgeted Overtime Line Item is about 10% behind where it should be. I will have to watch this for next budget season. Right now we are trying to not fill some of the open shifts when it is safe to do so to try to make up for the deficit. I would like to increase our overtime budget next year by at least \$10,000 to try to keep us operating much closer to budget. I will be adding the additional \$10,000 into my FY 2017 Budget Request for a total of \$120,000.

3. Is there anything specific or new that you plan to accomplish in Fiscal Year 2017 with the level-services budget you've requested?

Right now I am concentrating on the staffing changes only. There are some Capital Projects and Special Articles that I am submitting that would be very helpful and beneficial but those are separate and distinct projects.

4. Is there anything you'd like to ADD to your level-services budget for Fiscal Year 2017? If so, describe what it is, what it would cost, and the benefit to the town.

I will be adding a second in command Administrative Lieutenant position to our department but this is not an additional new officer. This is simply replacing one current position for another. I would love to be able to add an additional officer to our department staff to help carry out our Community Policing success and have an additional officer to assign to the street duty however I am not sure how everyone else will feel about this request. I would like to talk about the possibility of adding an officer #17 to our department at the budget hearings if time allows and the timing is right. I can certainly wait until another day if time doesn't allow for this discussion. I completely understand.

5. What are your plans for improvements and projects for the next five years?

Every day I am looking for ways to save money and be able to provide better services to our community.

I am bringing Special Police Officers back to our department. These are part time officers that are paid at a much lower rate than the fulltime officers, **\$14.62 – 16.00 an hour vs \$32.27 - \$39.27 an hour** (Fulltime officers pay at time and a half). The Specials will cover some of the open shifts instead of a fulltime officer having to at the much higher rate.

I need to look into purchasing a new average vehicle to serve as an undercover Detective Vehicle. We currently have an old Ford Crown Vic police cruiser that is unmarked however it is extremely obvious and it is a gas guzzler. I want something small and affordable as well as average and unnoticeable. I think we can get this vehicle very cheap if I am allocated the funds and given approval to shop for one. This must be an additional vehicle request on top of the annual patrol cruiser that I request. I can't allow us to skip a year replacing our normal patrol vehicles or we will once again fall behind and have to deal with expensive repair bills.

We are in need of an additional building/Garage to be used for both storage of supplies, equipment and evidence such as impounded vehicles, etc. We have no other options for any of the things I just mentioned above and the only way to get the extra space is to construct another building on our property and near the police department building itself. I would love to build something similar to what the Fire department has in their rear parking lot however I won't expect too much ☺...

Our radio system needs to be upgraded and this is a huge priority of mine for safety reasons. If I am unable to secure any outside funding sources it could cost up to \$50,000 to complete. I am confident however that I will be getting some great financial assistance from both the FRCOG as well as our radio technician, whom I have a great relationship with. I am also looking into Homeland Security money to cover this project to save the town the expense. Chief John Paciorek of Deerfield has some great connections with the Homeland Security funds and he has offered to help me submit a request for funding for this radio project. It is my understanding that Chief Paciorek has already submitted the request and we are just waiting for the answer.

Our radio Technician, Bruce Beliveau, is very confident he can keep the project cost very low for us and possibly well below the \$50,000 amount.

I would like to proceed with at least getting the funding allocated for this project so that I will be able to move quickly when I can. I will however be patient and not spend the allocated funds until I am absolutely convinced there are no other funding sources available to us.

In Summary:

Well, that's it folks. This is where we stand right now and things are looking great. As the head of 3 very important public safety departments, I feel like I have the support of all of the committees and board members in this town and there is no better feeling than that. All of you work very hard at what you do and you make a department head like me believe you truly care about what we have to say as well as the town employee's safety, even if you can't always give us everything we need. I understand you must look out for the tax payers as well, which includes me, and for that I am also grateful to you all.

Chief Chip Dodge
Montague Police Department