



Manchester by-the-Sea Police Department

Annual Report 2024

As we reflect on the year 2024, the Manchester by-the-Sea Police Department is proud to present our annual report, highlighting our unwavering commitment to enhancing community safety and fostering positive relationships. This year has brought challenges and triumphs, underscoring our dedication to transparency, accountability, and service excellence. Our dedicated officers have worked tirelessly to ensure the well-being of our residents and visitors, responding swiftly to incidents, engaging in proactive community policing, and promoting initiatives focused on education and prevention. Together, we continue to build a safer, more vibrant community, and we look forward to the opportunities that lie ahead as we strive to serve with integrity and compassion. Thank you for your continued support and partnership in making Manchester by-the-Sea a remarkable place to live and visit.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The Manchester by-the-Sea Police Department, in partnership with the Manchester community, is committed to maintaining tranquility, respecting the sanctity of human life and reducing risk for all. We seek to accomplish this mission through accountability, transparency, strategic partnerships, community engagement, and the selection and professional development of high-quality personnel. Above all, the Manchester by-the-Sea Police Department seeks to provide services with compassion, dignity, and the highest level of customer service.

IN MEMORIAM

In 2024, Manchester by-the-Sea lost a great leader and a true friend. Retired Fire Chief Bruce MacDonald was a remarkable leader and an inspiring mentor to many within the Manchester by-the-Sea Fire Department. His unwavering dedication to service and community safety was matched only by his genuine kindness and compassion for those around him. Chief MacDonald's vast knowledge and expertise not only shaped the department but also fostered a culture of teamwork and camaraderie that has endured long past his tenure. For me as a very young police officer, Chief MacDonald was a steadfast friend. He always took the time to listen, offer guidance, and share wisdom, leaving an indelible mark on me both professionally and personally. His legacy will continue to inspire current and future generations of firefighters and other public safety officials as we strive to uphold the values he instilled in all of us: integrity, bravery, and unwavering dedication to the community we serve.

BY THE NUMBERS *(This is a snapshot, does not include all calls for service/activity)*

Manchester-by-the-Sea Police Department Calls for Service
(2024 as of 12/19/2024)

NATURE	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
911 Calls (<i>now 911 Accidental calls in 2024</i>)	786	888	1209	1149	n/a	n/a
Alarms (Residential & Commercial Police/Fire)	566	465	462	492	433	398
Animal Control (All)	483	411	356	430	282	272
Arrests (Adult)	28	22	40	65	53	72
Arrests (Juvenile)	1	0	0	1	1	0
Assault (Including Assault on Police Officer)	6	0	7	2	1	22
Burglary/Breaking & Entering (Residential, includes attempted)	5	1	3	5	3	10*
Burglary/Breaking & Entering (Commercial, includes attempted)	1	0	0	0	3	10*
Burglary/Breaking & Entering (Motor Vehicle, includes attempted)	1	7	0	2	3	10*
Disorderly Conduct (<i>now Disturbances in 2024</i>)	6	2	0	0	0	69
Domestic (includes physical, verbal, 209A violations)	25	56	68	29	22	6
Fraud (all types)	21	35	21	31	35	31
Harassment (includes phone and other electronic communication)	2	21	44	64	24	10
Identity Theft (<i>see Fraud</i>)	7	85	14	18	21	-
Juvenile Matters/SRO	27	26	11	17	22	21
Larceny (all types, including attempted)	27	25	18	29	n/a	11
Larceny (of Motor Vehicle)	1	1	0	0	1	0
Missing Persons (Adult)	8	3	11	4	1	5*
Missing Persons (Juvenile)	20	4	10	2	0	5*
Erratic Operation (Motor Vehicle)	98	94	112	102	42	18
Motor Vehicle Crashes	183	107	119	125	89	58
OUI (Alcohol or Drugs)	6	5	13	27	10	10
Protective Custody (Adult)	4	0	8	5	1	0
Protective Custody (Juvenile)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Robbery (all types)	1	0	1	0	n/a	0
Sexual Assault	4	2	4	2	2	1
Threats (all types)	7	3	3	4	6	3
Property Damage (town and personal property)	29	31	18	43	26	6
Town bylaw Violations	7	5	0	3	1	0
Trespassing	10	33	2	10	8	0

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

In 2024, Emergency Management emerged as a vital focus for the community of Manchester by-the-Sea, reflecting our commitment to safeguarding residents and visitors alike in an unpredictable world. As we have witnessed across the country this year through various challenges, ranging from natural disasters to public

health crises, the need for a proactive and effective emergency management strategy has never been more crucial. Engaging in comprehensive planning enables us to enhance our readiness, streamline response efforts, and foster resilience within our community. Moving forward, it is essential that we prioritize collaboration among local agencies, stakeholders, and residents to ensure that Manchester by-the-Sea remains a safe and vibrant place to live, work, and play, even in the face of adversity.

TABLETOP EXERCISE (TTX)

On June 5, 2024, we hosted a successful Cape Ann tabletop exercise that simulated a direct hit of a Category 3 hurricane striking the Cape Ann Region. The following objectives were developed and associated with the appropriate FEMA and MEMA capability:

- **Objective 1:** Evaluate the region's ability to establish preparedness, response and recovery plans, and protocols 72 hours before hurricane landfall, during landfall, and 72 hours after.
- **Objective 2:** Evaluate each community's ability to operationalize shelter plans during a worst-case scenario hurricane.
- **Objective 3:** Assess internal and external communication across the region 72 hours before hurricane landfall, during landfall, and 72 hours after.
- **Objective 4:** Identify critical infrastructure and vulnerable populations during the preparedness, response, and recovery phases.
- **Objective 5:** Identify and operationalize staff, resources, and critical equipment required 72 hours before hurricane landfall, during landfall, and 72 hours after.

At the end of the day, we were able to identify 10 strengths and 6 key areas for improvement and to create a list of our top 5 priorities that need to be addressed in the short term. If any resident would like to review the final AAR (After Action Report) along with an executive summary, please reach out to me and I would be happy to share it with you. As a result of this collaboration and my communications with Gloucester on July 11, 2024, we have reconvened the Cape Ann Emergency Management Team for future planning purposes.

MASS CARE, SHELTER, AND COORDINATION PLAN

May 2024 marked a significant milestone in our community's preparedness efforts as we were able to finalize the Mass Care, shelter, and coordination plan. This comprehensive plan ensures that in the event of a disaster or emergency, we have the necessary resources and systems in place to provide support and assistance to those in need. Through collaboration and diligent planning, we have created new frameworks and updated old ones that will help us respond effectively and efficiently during challenging times. This achievement is a testament to the dedication and hard work of all who have worked on developing and implementing this vital plan.

As a final phase of the project, we were also able to develop a one-page brochure targeting vulnerable populations and residents to increase their awareness of Manchester by-the-Sea, Essex, Gloucester, Rockport, and Ipswich individual local shelter plans. If you would like a copy, please let me know. This has been distributed to the COA with the assistance of COA Director Nancy Hammond. On June 25th, 2024, we held a senior luncheon where a representative from the Commonwealth of Mass came in to discuss sheltering and

Emergency preparedness. There were about 50 attendees who took our brochures and other preparedness items given out by the state.

We are also working regionally here in Cape Ann on our preparedness and response to active shooter or hostile intruders. Most of the Cape Ann Police Chiefs have met in collaboration with the MPTC (Municipal Police Training Council) and, in September, with the collaboration of the MERSD we held a regional drill. Since Manchester's school buildings are the most modern, Manchester was asked to host the training. Middle School Principal Joanne Maino, who is the head of the MERSD School Safety Committee, along with Jason Walderon MERSD Facilities Director played instrumental role in helping to work out the logistics. Chief McNeilly and I plan to expand on this ever-important training in 2025.

REGIONAL SHELTER

Throughout 2024 we have partnered with MAPC (Metropolitan Area Planning Council) and continue to work on a regional shelter plan which is different than our local plan. This is in collaboration with several communities across Cape Ann and the North Shore. This project will be housed at Gordon College in Wenham, and we look forward to its positive impact on the community.

By coming together with neighboring towns and prioritizing the well-being of all residents, we are creating a safe and welcoming environment for those in need of shelter during a crisis. This project will not only provide shelter for individuals facing homelessness because of a catastrophic event, but it will also support local businesses, and our hope is to promote a sense of unity among all members of the community.

We are proud to be a part of this initiative and look forward to continuing this work in 2025 to thrive and flourish as a united and harmonious town. More to follow on this project in 2025.

FURTHER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANNING 2025

One of the next steps in our emergency preparedness efforts for the Town is the development of a debris management plan. We will be collaborating with the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) and our local Department of Public Works (DPW) to create this essential plan. Once we have established a rough draft, we intend to engage other key departments, including the Board of Health and local schools, to gather their input and ensure a comprehensive approach. This collaborative effort will help us effectively manage debris during emergencies, ultimately enhancing our community's resilience and preparedness. A debris management plan is a strategic framework designed to prepare for, respond to, and recover from incidents that generate significant amounts of debris, such as natural disasters (hurricanes, earthquakes, floods), industrial accidents, or other emergencies. The purpose of this plan is to ensure an organized and efficient approach to managing debris, minimizing its impact on the community, and facilitating recovery efforts.

A well-structured debris management plan is essential for effective emergency response. By anticipating the challenges posed by debris, communities can enhance their resilience, promote public safety, and expedite recovery efforts following a disaster. It is a vital component of an overall emergency management strategy that ultimately aids in restoring normalcy and supporting affected individuals and businesses.

MASSACHUSETTS EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT EMD ADVISORY BOARD

As your Chief of Police and Emergency Management Director, I am honored to announce that in early 2024 I was invited by the Deputy Director of the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) to serve on the State's Emergency Management Directors Advisory Board. This opportunity allows me to represent our community and Greater Cape Ann at a higher level and collaborate with state officials and other local leaders on critical emergency management issues. By participating in this advisory board, I can bring our Town's unique challenges and needs to the forefront, ensuring that our voices are heard in discussions that shape emergency response strategies and resource allocation. This position not only enhances our Town's preparedness and resilience but also fosters stronger partnerships with state agencies, ultimately benefiting all our residents in times of need.

NEMLEC (NORTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS LAW ENFORCEMENT COUNCIL)

In early 2024 the remaining three Cape Ann Community police departments (Rockport, Manchester, Essex) met and decided to join the Northeastern Massachusetts Law Enforcement Council. (NEMLEC) which brings about numerous benefits to the community and our agency itself. By becoming a part of NEMLEC, a small police department such as ours has enhanced its capabilities, strengthened relationships with neighboring departments, and improved overall public safety.

Firstly, joining NEMLEC provides access to a wide range of resources and specialized units that may not be economically feasible for our small Cape Ann police department to maintain on its own. By pooling resources, departments within NEMLEC can share equipment, personnel, and training programs. This allows smaller departments to tap into expertise and acquire advanced tools and technologies that promote efficient law enforcement practices. Benefits such as tactical response units, specialized investigative resources, and intelligence-sharing platforms can greatly enhance the effectiveness of a small police department.

Additionally, NEMLEC fosters collaboration and cooperation among law enforcement agencies in the region. Through regular meetings, joint training exercises, and information sharing, participating departments can establish strong relationships and enhance communication channels. This collaboration ensures a coordinated response to emergencies, effectively tackling crime and providing seamless support during major incidents. By working together, small police departments can leverage the collective knowledge and experience of their counterparts, leading to improved strategies and outcomes.

Moreover, joining NEMLEC enhances public safety by promoting a unified approach to addressing issues within the community. Participating departments can collectively identify emerging challenges and develop proactive solutions. By sharing intelligence and coordinating efforts, they can effectively combat criminal activities such as drug trafficking, gang violence, or organized crime. The smaller police departments benefit from a broader network of support, making them better equipped to respond to public safety concerns promptly and efficiently.

Furthermore, being a part of NEMLEC offers opportunities for professional growth and development for individual officers. The council organizes various training programs, workshops, and seminars on topics such as leadership, crisis management, and new policing techniques. These initiatives enrich the skill set of officers, fostering a culture of continuous learning and improvement within the department. Small police departments can leverage these resources to enhance the capabilities of their personnel and provide better services to their communities. By joining the Northeastern Massachusetts Law Enforcement Council at a minimal annual cost of \$5,500, a small police department is provided numerous benefits almost like an insurance policy. It provides access to specialized units (for our July 4th celebration), equipment, and training programs that may not be economically viable individually. Additionally, it fosters collaboration, communication, and cooperation among law enforcement agencies, which leads to enhanced public safety. The resources, expertise, and collective efforts of NEMLEC contribute to stronger and more efficient law enforcement practices. Ultimately, by becoming a part of NEMLEC, a small police department can better serve its community and face the evolving challenges of modern policing at minimal costs to the town.

ACCREDITATION

On September 17th, 2024, a team of assessors from the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission arrived for our three-day, on-site re-accreditation evaluation. At the end of the grueling assessment, the team determined that we were in compliance with 273 out of 274 mandatory standards, plus another 74 optional standards (only needed 55). The one standard that they flagged was regarding parking enforcement training, but we were able to immediately rectify the deficiency on-site. I would like to give my heartfelt thanks to our accreditation manager, Sergeant Ryan Machain, for his preparation and diligence in getting us through this process. Ryan's subject matter expertise is truly exceptional when it comes to accreditation and MBTS is lucky to have such a dedicated sergeant on the command staff. Further I would like to thank Lieutenant Mark McCoy and Sergeant Stephen Louf for their assistance in helping Sergeant Machain finalize some of the finer details of this process. Lastly, I would like to thank our administrative assistant, Patrice Rotondo, for her role in helping organize the three days and assisting with some of the finer details of the accreditation process. I truly believe that Patrice's knowledge, professionalism, and willingness and ability to adapt on the fly truly makes both public safety departments a better place to work.

COMMUNITY POLICING

In our ever-evolving society, the importance of community policing cannot be overstated. As we reflect on the achievements and challenges of the past year in Manchester-by-the-Sea, it is vital to recognize that fostering strong relationships between law enforcement and the community is foundational to creating a safe and vibrant environment for all residents. Community policing emphasizes collaboration, trust, and open communication, empowering residents to play an active role in shaping the safety and quality of life in our town. By prioritizing partnerships with community members, we not only enhance public safety but also build resilience, promote understanding, and respond more effectively to the unique needs of our population. Through this annual report, we reaffirm our commitment to community policing principles and highlight the positive impact they have on our efforts to ensure a secure and welcoming town for everyone.

COMFORT DOG DAISY

Since joining our Department in April, Officer K-9 Daisy has been incredibly well-received. Her presence has brought so much comfort and joy to everyone here in the community and the police department.

With Daisy being assigned to our School Resource Officer, Andrea Locke, middle school principal Joanne Maino has expressed glowing feedback regarding Daisy - highlighting her remarkable impact on a few students who have faced challenges adapting to the school environment. The principal noted that Daisy has become a source of emotional support, fostering a sense of safety and calm among the students, which has significantly improved their overall well-being. Her gentle demeanor encourages students to open up about their feelings, helping them feel more comfortable in their school setting. As a result, these students have shown notable improvements in their engagement, social

interactions, and academic performance, demonstrating how Daisy's presence has not only eased their anxiety but also enriched the school community as a whole. I would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone that has donated our Police Comfort Dog Program. I would like to thank the many residents, Cape Ann Savings Bank, Manchester Essex Rotary, Manchester Club, and Manchester Woman's Club, for their generous donations. Also, my sincere thanks goes to the Hooper Fund for their substantial donation of \$5,000 in support of our comfort dog program. This remarkable contribution will significantly enhance our ability to provide much-needed comfort and companionship to those in our community facing difficult times. Their commitment to improving the lives of others, especially our local youth, through this initiative is truly inspiring, and it enables us to continue our mission of promoting healing and well-being. Thank you for believing in Daisy and for your unwavering support!



PUBLIC SAFETY DAY

The Annual Public Safety Day, a collaboration between our local law enforcement officers, Manchester Fire Department, the Parks and Recreation Department, and the Summer Playground program, was a resounding success! Officers engaged with our local youth, fostering positive relationships while promoting safety awareness. A highlight of the



event was the exciting demonstration by the Massachusetts State Police K9 Unit, who showed the incredible skills of their canine partners. These talented dogs captivated the audience with their agility and training, providing a thrilling yet educational experience for all attendees. This event continues not only to strengthen community bonds but also emphasizes the vital role of public safety. Thank you to everyone who participated and contributed to making this day memorable! We look forward to next summer.

GLOUCESTER POLICE LOBSTER CRATE RACE

On July 20th Lieutenant Mark McCoy and Officer Sean Mullins participated in the Gloucester Lobster Crate Race at Pavilion Beach. Lt. McCoy was able to get across 7 crates, but Ofc. Mullins beat him by getting across 8 before veering off course. Given Ofc. Mullins' history of sinking when he participates in the Manchester Cardboard Boat Regatta, the department is happy he was able to get more than 1 crate down the course! All donations at this wonderful event benefit the Gloucester Stage Company. Pictured with Lt. McCoy and Ofc. Mullins are Gloucester Police Officer Joe Parady and SRO Mike Scola. Thanks for having us, can't wait for next year's race!



END OF SCHOOL ICE CREAM SOCIAL



On June 13, in collaboration with Chief McNeilly and Chief Francis of Essex PD, we hosted our annual ice cream social. Thanks to Lisa Bartlett and her Captain Dusty's team for helping with the event. Again, like last year, we hosted over 100 students from Manchester and Essex. It was a great day, and Officer Daisy was another huge hit.



BACK TO SCHOOL SLUSH



With the Manchester Fire Department we hosted a very successful back to school slush celebration. There were an estimated 300 students who took advantage of this event. Officers and Firefighters served the slush and everyone had a fun-time playing with Daisy.

BIKE RUN FOR THE TROOPS

On September 7th the Manchester by-the-Sea Police Department assisted with the Bike Run for the Troops organized by Operation Troop Support. Sgt. Stephen Louf was on our department's motorcycle, and members from the NEMLEC Motors Unit joined as well. It was a phenomenal day for a ride.

HARVEST FEST

The Manchester Welcoming Committee sponsored a Harvest event on the weekend of October 18th. They hosted an apple pie contest on Friday Oct 18th and a chili cook-off on Saturday October 19th during the carnival. Lt. McCoy, SRO Locke, Officer K-9 Daisy and I volunteered to be part of a panel of judges for both events. It was a great time and great weather. Congratulations to the winners of both contests.



MANCHESTER BY THE SEA JULY 4 CELEBRATIONS

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude for all the collaboration and efforts in organizing/working the July 3rd fireworks and July 4th parade. The hard work and dedication of all the departments involved truly made the celebrations of 2024 memorable and enjoyable for everyone in our town. I had many residents express to me their appreciation and gratitude for how well coordinated they thought July 3rd and 4th festivities were. Special shout out to Sergeants Louf and Machain for their great work as incident commanders for both days; Lt. McCoy, Officer Mullins, and Detective Ramos for their time in setting up; and to Officer Mullins for cooking breakfast for all public safety staff on the morning of the parade.



I also want to thank Chief McNeilly and the rest of the Fire Department along with Chuck Dam, Shawn Johnson, Frank Miles and the rest of the DPW team for all their assistance with the fireworks. Parks & Rec Director Cheryl Marshall once again outdid herself and organized two great days of events. The fireworks were a true team effort and would not have happened without the efforts from all. With that said the

budgetary impact of these two days of events continues to significantly affect our operations each year. The cost of police overtime (OT) amounting to \$13,690.82 for the July 3 Fireworks and July 4 Parade is a necessary but costly expense associated with ensuring public safety during these high-profile events. **However, as I have stated in the past,** we need to separate this expense from our regular overtime budget into a distinct line item and funding it appropriately is crucial, as it would create a clearer financial picture and better aid resource allocation. By doing so, we can more accurately track and budget for these significant annual events **without impact on the resources available for regular operations.** This separation would alleviate the financial strain on our budget each fiscal year, allowing for more effective planning and prioritization of funds, ultimately leading to improved community safety and service delivery during these festive occasions every year. In our preliminary budget preparation for FY26 I have made this initial request to the Finance Committee and Select Board for approval.



TEAM BUILDING/STAFF

The Manchester Police and Fire Departments engaged in a friendly softball game against the Essex Police and Fire Departments on Sunday, October 12, at 11 AM. The event took place at the Memorial Ball Field located at



24 Martin Street in Essex. This game served as a fantastic team-building exercise, fostering camaraderie and collaboration between the two departments while also providing an opportunity for community members to come out and support their local heroes.

CARDBOARD BOAT REGATTA

On Sunday October 13th Ofc. Mullins continued his 3-year strong tradition of attempting to build a boat. He's convinced it is seaworthy but somehow sinks before even getting to the buoy. This year he got the MFD to get in the race. Chief McNeilly (wearing a cold-water rescue suit, so maybe not the most confident in their boat) managed to take a quick lead at the start and kept it going as Ofc. Mullins sank but swam the remainder of the course. A huge congrats to the FD as they got the first win in what we hope is a tradition that continues for many years.



Ofc. Mullins and Richard



Ofc. Mullins and Chief McNeilly

SWEARING IN OF NEWEST SERGEANT

On July 2, 2024, the Manchester by-the-Sea Police Department swore in our newest Sergeant, Ryan Machain. He was joined by friends, family, and members of the department. Sergeant Machain is a paramedic, a licensed drone operator, and our accreditation manager. He is a lifelong resident and has been with our department since 2004. Sergeant Machain is our fourth sergeant, joining Sgts. Louf, Newton, and Shrewsberry. Congratulations Sgt. Machain!



Lt. McCoy, Sgt. Machain, Ch. Fitzgerald

SWEARING IN OF NEW OFFICER

In August, after graduating at the top of her class from the Lynnfield Police Academy, Officer Chelsie Reilly was officially sworn in as a police officer for our town. Officer Reilly had previously joined the Department in May 2016 as a Public Safety Dispatcher, where she served until July 2023. She also worked as a Reserve Police Officer from 2021 to 2023 before heading off to the Police Academy to become a full-time sworn officer. Having completed rigorous training and successfully passed all academic courses, along with her many years of public service as dispatcher, Officer Reilly is well-prepared to face the challenges of the job and continue to build strong connections with the community she has sworn to protect. Officer Reilly holds an Associate Degree in Criminal Justice, she is an EMT and serves on our Overdose and Mental Health Outreach team. Congratulations, Officer Reilly!



Ch. Fitzgerald, Ofc. Reilly, Lt. McCoy

SWEARING IN OF NEWEST OFFICER

At the December 16, 2024 Selectboard meeting, Officer Kevin David was officially sworn in by Town Clerk Christine Dixon, surrounded by family and friends who proudly supported him. Having served part-time with our department since 2021, Officer David has shown immense dedication and commitment to our community. A proud graduate of Triton Regional High School's Class of 2016, he furthered his education by earning a Bachelor of Science Degree in Criminal Justice with a minor in Psychology. With his extensive training and status as a fully certified police officer, Officer David is well-prepared to take on his new role and contribute positively to the safety and well-being of our residents. Congratulations Officer David!



Ch. Fitzgerald, Ofc. David, Lt. McCoy

SERGEANT STEPHEN LOUF COMPLETES FBI LEEDA TRAINING

I would like to recognize Sergeant Stephen Louf, who recently earned his Trilogy Award through FBI-LEEDA. The FBI-LEEDA Program is recognized as one of the leading providers of law enforcement leadership education in the nation. They offer three different course curriculums encompassing the best national practices towards effective leadership (Supervisory Institute, Command Institute, and Executive Institute). This award is presented to students who successfully complete all three, resulting in what's referred to as the Trilogy. FBI-LEEDA presented him with a diploma, and glass plaque for his achievement. Sgt. Louf is our dayshift supervisor as well as a field training officer and the leader of our department outreach team.



Sgt: Stephen Louf

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT PATRICE ROTONDO COMPLETES MMA-SUFFOLK CERTIFICATE

I would like to congratulate my Administrative Assistant, Patrice Rotondo, who graduated from the MMA-Suffolk Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management program in June 2024. The Massachusetts Municipal Association in collaboration with Suffolk University offers a Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management which is an academic program for public management. Over the course of 25 Fridays from September to May, five, graduate-level courses were taught by Suffolk University professors covering topics in strategic leadership, public policy and safety, budgeting and financial management, human resource management and foundations in local government administration. I'd like to commend Patrice on her ability to juggle the intense academic workload of this nine-month long certificate program along with her full-time responsibilities at the Police and Fire Departments.



Admin Asst. Patrice Rotondo

TRAINING

As we prepare the budget for Fiscal Year 2026, I feel it is essential to address the increased training requirements mandated by the Police Officers Standards of Training (POST) and the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission. Below outlines the necessary budget adjustments to accommodate these mandatory training sessions, which are crucial for enhancing the skills, safety, and preparedness of our police officers. The standards require the following training sessions for all officers:

1. Firearms Qualifications 4 hours
2. Firearms low light training / Use of Force annual review
3. Defensive Tactics Practical 4 hours
4. Taser Training 4 hours
5. CPR Certification 4 hours
6. Police Armorer Certification 16 hours x2
7. ASHER Training 16 hours every other year
8. CIT/Mental health First Aid Avg 8 hours per year
9. Emergency Vehicle Operation Recert 8 hours
10. New Firearms transition course (FY26 only) 8 hours

Each of these training components plays a vital role in ensuring our officers are equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to perform their duties effectively and safely. The proposed \$13,919 increase in the training line represents a vital investment in the professional development of our workforce, specifically aimed at ensuring that 17 full-time officers can complete their mandatory yearly in-service training. This additional funding will also facilitate an allocation of 8 hours of professional development per officer each year, which is essential for enhancing skills and knowledge within our team. By providing this training, we not only comply with necessary regulations but also reinforce our commitment to maintaining high standards of service and preparedness. Investing in our officers' ongoing education helps improve overall performance and effectiveness, ultimately benefiting the community we serve. In the years past we have been able to offset some of the training costs with our State 911 Support and Incentive & Training grants. However, we are no longer able to participate in these grants since we have regionalized our dispatch services.

In addition, annual classroom in-service training of 40 hours for our officers is conducted every year while on duty, allowing officers to complete their required courses without the need to leave their posts. This approach not only ensures that our officers remain on duty and actively serving the community at no additional cost to the town, but it also represents significant savings compared to traditional training methods. If we were to send officers to an external police academy, as many other departments do, we would incur substantial expenses for travel, and substitute coverage for the officers' shifts. By utilizing online training, we maintain operational efficiency and budgetary responsibility while ensuring our team stays up to date with essential skills and knowledge.

REGIONAL TRAINING EXERCISE

As mentioned, previously and part of our ongoing training and our commitment to public safety in 2024 I have worked with the Manchester Essex Regional School District (MERSD) to host an Active Attack Integrated Response class that was held on October 26th & 27th. For this training we partnered with The ALERRT Center of Massachusetts, EOPSS, MPTC, DFS, and MSP and co-hosted by the towns of Manchester by-the-Sea, Rockport and Essex. ALERRT, or Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training, is a critical program designed to prepare public safety personnel for active shooter situations and other high-pressure crisis events. This specialized training equips public safety personnel with the skills necessary to effectively respond in real-time, ensuring they can protect themselves and the public while minimizing casualties. Conducting regional integrated training is essential as it fosters collaboration and communication among different agencies, allowing them to work seamlessly together during emergencies. Additionally, such training helps standardize response protocols, enhance situational awareness, and build trust within the community, ultimately leading to a more resilient and prepared response to potential threats. By investing in ALERRT training, we prioritize safety and preparedness, enabling our public safety team to face challenges with confidence and competence.

YEAR END

In conclusion, as I wrap up our 2024 Annual Report, we celebrate the significant strides we've made in enhancing public safety and community trust. Our continued commitment to emergency management will enable us to respond effectively to crises, ensuring the well-being of our residents. The department's expanding commitment in 2024 to Community Policing has fostered stronger relationships between officers and citizens, creating a collaborative environment where safety thrives. Looking ahead to the Fiscal Year 2026 budget, I am hopeful that we will continue to secure the resources necessary to advance our ongoing initiatives. This includes completing our mandatory training programs that are now required to uphold the highest standards of professionalism and ethics, as well as investing in officer professional development to empower our personnel with the skills needed to meet the evolving challenges of law enforcement. The FY26 budget put forward is a well thought out process and together these efforts will fortify our mission to serve and protect, ensuring a safer and more resilient community for all. Thank you for your unwavering support as we move forward on this important journey into 2025.

I remain humbled that I have been able to serve this police department and Town for over 33 years. I also want to thank the Officers for their continued professionalism and commitment to the town and its residents. Lastly, I would like to acknowledge our Administrative Assistant, Patrice Rotondo. Patrice is someone behind the scenes that works tirelessly everyday not only to support both myself and Fire Chief McNeilly but every Police Officer and Firefighter in town. I want to thank her for her continued professionalism, support and dedication to the success of Public Safety in Manchester.

Respectfully,

Todd J. Fitzgerald

Todd J. Fitzgerald
Chief of Police