

The Maine Chiefs of Police Association
Review of the
Belfast Police Department



November 2020

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and the
Maine Chiefs of Police Association
wish to thank:**

Belfast City Manager Erin Herbig

Belfast Department Heads

Chief Gerald Lincoln Jr. and Deputy Chief Dean Jackson

Staff and Officers of the Belfast Police Department

and

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INTRODUCTION

In mid-2020, the *Maine Chiefs of Police Association* received a request for an evaluation of the Belfast Police Department. The Belfast City Manager requested a comprehensive study of the Belfast Police Department and for a report containing recommendations based on the review's findings. Acting upon this request, the Board of Directors of the *Maine Chiefs of Police Association* agreed to undertake such a study. Recognizing the need for objectivity in the assessment of the operation of the Belfast Police Department, the Association selected a Review Panel comprised of three police chiefs who were not acquainted with the operations of the department or the recent history of the City and its residents. Members of the Panel were:

Chief James K. Willis Jr., Panel Chair Mount Desert and Bar Harbor Police Departments

James Willis began his law enforcement career in 1986 at the Hancock County Sheriff's Department. In addition to patrol, his duties included being an instructor for the Maine Criminal Justice Academy and working on a multi-disciplinary team as a forensic interviewer for sexually abused children. He was a Patrol Lieutenant when he left the agency in 2002 to work as a Victim Witness Advocate in the Hancock County District Attorney's Office. In 2003, he became the Chief of Police for the Town of Mount Desert and in 2013; he became the Chief of the Bar Harbor Police Department, in addition to Mount Desert. He continues to work in that capacity while working to integrate the two departments as much as possible.

Along the way, he has served as representative to several committees for the Maine Chiefs of Police Association, the District 7 Representative for MCOPA, and as President of the MCOPA from 2014-2015. Chief Willis worked on focus groups with the International Chiefs of Police Association, which led to the development of the IACP's Leading by Legacy training program. He also served as a mentor for newly appointed Police Chiefs through the IACP New Chiefs Mentoring Program.

Chief Willis is currently the Chairman of the MCOPA's Maine Law Enforcement Accreditation Program. MLEAP is the compilation of what Maine law enforcement professionals believe are basic business practice needed to address the most critical tasks of law enforcement in our state.

Chief Willis received his Associate's Degree in Business Management from Eastern Maine Technical College in 1985, a B.S. in Rural Public Safety Administration from UMFK in 2014, and has completed a number of law enforcement administrative and leadership training programs.

Chief Jared Mills, Augusta Police Department

Chief Mills received his undergraduate degree in Criminal Justice from Saint Anselm College in Manchester New Hampshire and his graduate degree in Public Policy and Management from The University of Southern Maine. He is a member of the Adjunct Faculty at Thomas College and the University of Maine at Augusta.

Chief Mills' professional career began as Reserve Police Officer for the Town of Winslow in 1997 before being hired full-time with the City of Augusta in 1998. That same year, he graduated from the Maine Criminal Justice Academy subsequently attending countless in-service training sessions to include the Harvard Kennedy School of Government along with the F.B.I National Academy's 237th Class.

After rising through the ranks, Chief Mills was appointed as the Deputy Chief in 2011 before being appointed as the Chief of Police in 2018. He is currently the First Vice President of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association, an active member with the International Chiefs of Police and the FBI National Academy Association.

He serves on the Augusta Downtown Alliance Board; the Augusta Boys and Girls Club Board of Directors; the Board of Licensure of Professional Investigators along with being the Maine Chief's representative for the Domestic Violence Homicide Review Panel and their legislative liaison.

Chief Joseph Massey, Waterville Police Department

Chief Joe Massey's law enforcement career has spanned more than 40 years beginning in 1978 with the Oakland Police Department. In 1981, he joined the Rumford Police Department as a patrol officer and held the positions of detective and sergeant until his departure in 1987. Hired as a patrol officer for the Waterville Police Department in July of 1987, he has held every rank within the department with his promotion to Police Chief in July 2007.

Chief Massey holds a BS Degree in Public Administration from UMA, and an MBA from Thomas College. Chief Massey was an Associate Professor at Thomas College for several years where he taught criminal justice courses. He is also a Graduate of the 191st Session of the FBI National Academy, a Graduate of New England Institute of Command Training, and the FBI's Executive Development Training program.

Chief Massey served as the Maine Chiefs of Police District IV Representative for Kennebec/Somerset Counties from 2009 until 2016. During his 34 years with the Waterville Police Department, he has instituted several innovative Community Policing Programs such as the Mid-Night Team Mental Health Provider, Prescription Drug Diversion Program, and the Pharmacy and Bank Robbery Training and Response Protocols. In January of 2017, he

implemented Project HOPE, a program designed to help those suffering from substance abuse disorders. One of his top priorities is to combat the current opioid crisis that we are facing with innovative approaches such as Operation HOPE. He believes that strengthening community ties between the police and community is essential in ensuring public safety for all.

As requested, the Review Panel initiated a study of operational and management practices within the Belfast Police Department in November of 2020. The review was conducted in three general phases. They were:

Phase 1: Review of Materials

In conjunction with the on-site evaluation, the panel members individually and collectively reviewed pertinent materials supplied by the City of Belfast and the Belfast Police Department. These materials included, but were not limited to:

Belfast Police Department Budget, BPD Policies and Procedures, Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Police Union and the City, Call for Service Data and Crime Statistics

Phase 2: On-Site Evaluation

From November 18th through November 20th, the Review Panel conducted an on-site evaluation. The on-site evaluation included personal observations of the Belfast Police Department by Panel members, as well as interviews that were conducted with individuals from within and outside of the City government who possessed relevant information regarding the activities of BPD. Those interviewed included, but were not limited to:

City Manager Erin Herbig
Chief of Police Gerald Lincoln
Deputy Police Chief Dean Jackson
City Clerk Amy Flood
Treasurer Theresa Butler
Fire Chief / Emergency Medical Services Director James Richards
School Superintendent Mary-Alice McLean
Belfast High School Principal Jeff Lovejoy
Troy Howard School Principal Bruce Bailey
Waldo County Communications Center Director Owen Smith
Community Members
Each Belfast Police Department Supervisor, Officer, and Civilian Staff
MCOPA District 7 Representative Chief Michael Field
Neighboring Police Chiefs
Waldo County Assistant District Attorney William Entwisle
Waldo County Sheriff Jeffrey Trafton

Additionally, the on-site evaluation included the inspection, analysis, and review of:

Department Equipment Facilities

Training Records

Records and Data Management Systems

Waldo County Communications Center Department Policies

Collective Bargaining Agreement

Phase 3: Analysis and Report

Following the completion of the on-site evaluation, the Review Panel met on multiple occasions to analyze gathered information and materials, and to generate this report. The following is the work product of the Belfast Police Department Review Panel. The focus areas of this report are arranged so that the reader is provided with a general explanation and/or philosophy regarding the focus area, the findings of the Review Panel, and any recommendations for modification or improvement.

The delivery of this report was delayed by the unforeseen pandemic outbreak of COVID-19. The Panel does not believe this delay in any way negatively impacts our findings.

REPORT OBJECTIVES

The intent of this report is not to criticize the present police department, its practices, or those responsible for them. Rather, the Review Panel's goal is to present, in an objective fashion, a comprehensive set of recommendations which, if adopted, should result in improvements of the effectiveness and efficiency of the Belfast Police Department.

The report should not be considered as an indictment of the past, but rather as a blueprint for the future. This report is not to be construed as a "report card" of the Belfast Police Department, since it does not fully explore the many positive activities which are undoubtedly presently undertaken by the department.

Finally, the Review Panel sincerely hopes that its efforts serve as a catalyst for positive change within the Belfast Police Department and urges all those interested – City officials, department members, and concerned citizens – to seize this opportunity to bolster the professional status and effectiveness of the Belfast Police Department. The brave women and men of the agency who watch over the community deserve no less.

REVIEW PANEL MISSION STATEMENTS

To provide, through application of law enforcement best practices and through diligent effort, care, and research, a navigable pathway to elevate delivery of police services. To recognize the noble efforts of the professional police officers of the Belfast Police Department and through our work, to enhance their safety and wellness.

One never hears that a police department is doing **too good** a job, or that the officers and administrators are **too dedicated** or **too well-trained**. Frequently, all we hear are complaints of real or perceived shortcomings, frequently by those with little or no basis of knowledge to level that criticism. However, as self-critical professionals constantly striving for the betterment of ourselves and those in our charge, we acknowledge that no department is perfect and that as humans we are fallible. Consequently, to better ensure a reasonable and realistic perspective, the Review Panel has endeavored to identify positive areas in this department as well as those that would benefit the organization and the City by change and improvement.

It is becoming an accepted event for the leaders of a community to request that an outside group of experienced and qualified professionals conduct an audit of the management and practices within their police department. These requests are often preceded by some organizational change, such as a new City Manager or Police Chief taking the helm. Occasionally these requests are preceded by an extended period of conflict in the agency.

Faulty perceptions, rumors, unreasonable expectations and poor communication can easily become destructive components in the organizational equation which must be identified and excised in order to allow accurate findings, and to make good and viable recommendations.

Problems and issues in most law enforcement agencies are generally complicated and involved, with many people influencing and being influenced by them. Law enforcement officers are selected for personal attributes including assertiveness and the ability to make quick decisions and take decisive action. These same attributes can create challenges in convincing every employee to form up and march in the same direction. Police administrators stand on a slippery rock in the middle of a stream with far too many people willing to give them a nudge in the wrong direction, so they fall into that stream. In no other municipal profession is one expected to govern individuals who possess the power, authority and autonomy of police officers, and to do so willingly, with a caring and compassionate attitude, where every move and decision is a matter of public record.

Society rightfully demands the best from its police. Overwhelmingly, police officers serve with the selfless desire to protect their community from humanity's worst. We hope this report helps them to achieve their admirable goal.

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

The City of Belfast is a community of approximately 6,679 residents (2019 US Census figures) with a total area of just over 38 square miles of land. This population figure is slightly higher than the 2000 census figure of 6,668. Belfast is located in Waldo County at the mouth of the Passagassawakeag River estuary on Belfast Bay and Penobscot Bay.

The City of Belfast is governed by a Mayor and City Council who are elected by the people of Belfast. The Mayor and City Council acting together are the governing body. All governing body members serve two-year terms. The governing body, being the elected representative of the people, adopts all ordinances and resolutions and determines the general goals and policies.

According to the 2010 Census, Belfast's population is slightly more diverse than the State of Maine, and is broken down as follows:

Race	Percentage
White	93.7%
Black or African American	1.7%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.5%
Asian	0.0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.0%
Two or More Races	2.2%
Hispanic or Latino	1.8%

The population density of Belfast is 175 people per square mile (2010 Census), much denser than Maine's average of 43.1.

Median household income for Belfast (in 2019 dollars) is \$62,857, higher than the state's \$55,425. Average travel time to work for a Belfast resident is 17.6 minutes.

The charming City of Belfast has it all! Seafood and a hip brewery on a working waterfront, one of Maine's best vegetarian restaurants, the iconic Belfast Co-op, the art-deco Colonial Theatre, art galleries, antiques, renowned book shops, the oldest shoe store in America and the largest, year-round Maine farmers' market with 70+ vendors. It is home to several well-known Maine festivals.

POLICE DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

The Belfast Police Department has an authorized compliment of fifteen full-time officers, two parking enforcement employees, four part-time reserve officers, and one administrative staff.

The Belfast Police Department provides 24-hour police protection for the community.

BPD provides patrol coverage with at least one patrol officer, every hour of the week, most hours of the day are covered by multiple Officers. The Patrol Division has four (4) Patrol Sergeants and one (1) Deputy Chief overseeing operations. The schedule reflects command coverage all seven days with some variation, but there is a commitment from command to have 24/7 coverage. The Deputy Chief and Chief maintain on call duties, covering availability to a Supervisor during times when the Sergeants are not on duty and to the Sergeants at all times.

Dispatching is handled 24/7 by the Waldo County Communications Center. This system appears to work acceptably for the department and community.

DEPARTMENT MISSION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Department Mission

A mission statement is a formal summary of the aims and values of an organization. Its effectiveness is determined by how well it is constructed, communicated to - and internalized by - members of the organization, and whether it is used to inform agency goals and objectives. A mission statement should clearly communicate what the agency does. Many mission statements succumb to an overuse of words in general, but especially jargon. A good mission statement should be clear, concise, and useful. If it can be inspiring, so much the better.

Department Goals

Goals are broad, over-arching destinations that an organization intends to reach. A generic example of a police department goal (not necessarily relevant for BPD) might be “a 25% reduction in shoplifting.”

Department Objectives

Objectives are the specific steps an organization intends to take in order to achieve established goals. In order to achieve the desired goal of a reduction in shoplifting, a department might establish an objective to “impart theft detection training to 10 retail stores,” or “initiate a social media campaign to discourage shoplifting,” or “target shoplifting through a combination of uniformed and plainclothes patrols through retail stores for 2 hours per day, 5 days per week.”

Department missions, goals, and objectives should all complement each other, and must never be in conflict.

Department Mission / Goals / Objectives - Findings:

The Belfast Police Department mission statement published on their web page reads:

“The Belfast Police Department is a full service police department serving the citizens and visitors of the City of Belfast. The officers strive to deliver police services in an innovative, professional and compassionate manner. We work hard to partner with the community to address its concerns and make this City a great place to live, work, and play.”

During our interviews, we found that many members of the BPD were not familiar with the agency mission statement or its purpose.

The Belfast Police Department does not have any established goals or objectives.

Department Mission / Goals / Objectives - Recommendations:

The department mission statement should be reviewed by the department on a regular basis, to ensure it continues to accomplish its intent. Input from a cross-section of the department should be sought in any update or replacement of the mission statement. This will improve the acceptance and internalization of the mission by both administrative and line personnel.

The mission statement should be a prominent part of the department. It should be published or posted in areas likely to be seen on a regular basis by department members, or else it risks becoming nothing more than a checkmark in a box. The mission statement can serve to define, sustain, and at times, change agency culture to ensure the agencies leadership guides the agency toward the community’s needs and values.

Many small police departments do not engage in structured goal and objective setting. However, if possible, the department should work to establish annual goals and objectives. Objectives should be sanctioned by the municipal government because there may be a fiscal component, and communicated clearly and regularly to all members of BPD, since their efforts will be necessary for success. Goals and objectives should be reviewed regularly to determine whether they are still relevant, and how well the department is meeting them.

If mission, goal, and objective establishment cannot be accomplished internally, there are professional facilitators readily available to assist with the process. Guidance for mission statement development can be found in the International Association of Chiefs of Police’s Police Chief’s Desk reference, available on the IACP’s web site through this link; <https://www.theiacp.org/resources/document/police-chiefs-desk-reference-a-guide-for-newly-appointed-police-leaders>.

ADMINISTRATION

The administration of any police agency should not be undertaken by anyone who is not willing to sacrifice a significant amount of time and effort. Police chiefs are entrusted with millions of taxpayer dollars. In turn, they are expected to spend those dollars wisely. To be perceived as (and be) effective, a Chief must become a proficient personnel and resource manager, financial planner, labor negotiator, mentor and visionary. He or she must be engaged not only in the department and community, but also with professional peers and organizations. The Chief must remain aware of developments in law, professional best practices and norms in order to maintain credibility with staff and the public, but most importantly to ensure the safety of the officers in his or her care and minimize the risks inherent in policing.

As with any organization, the administration is the key to organizational efficiency and effectiveness. The Police Chief must be a leader and must set the example for the members of the department to follow.

In the Belfast Police Department, the administration consists of the Police Chief and Deputy Chief. Direct supervision of line staff is performed mainly by the Deputy Chief during the weekday, and by the Sergeants in the evenings and on weekends. The department has an organizational chart which clearly delineates each staff member's position in the agency and the person to whom the employee reports. In a paramilitary organization like a police department, this organizational chart is often referred to as the "chain of command," due to the necessity of clear lines of communication and responsibility.

Budget

The budget is a plan accepted by management to determine its course of action. The budget becomes a functional standard that guides the agency's operations. During the budgeting process certain principles should be observed:

1. The focus should be on future as well as present problems.
2. Budgeting should be considered as one aspect of the overall planning process.
3. Budgets should be created to meet the goals and objectives of the agency.
4. Specific attainable and measurable objectives need to be set if overall goals are to be met.

Even in times of static or decreasing funding, department goals and objectives must be reviewed and revised within the framework of the budget process. Failure to do so results in stagnation.

Police work is a 24-hour, 365-day business. Overtime costs can skyrocket due to unforeseen absences and circumstances. The Fair Labor Standards Act and the Garcia decision combine to require the payment of overtime for required training and extended workdays after 40 hours in a week. In short, the “meter is running” anytime a police employee is performing a professional duty.

Every community makes decisions about the appropriate level of funding for their law enforcement services. While this Review Panel will make suggestions that we believe to be appropriate and fiscally responsible, only the leaders of the City of Belfast, armed with knowledge of the needs of the entire City, can decide whether they will accept or are willing to finance these suggestions.

Budget and Cost of Police Services - Findings:

In most public safety agency budgets, personnel expenses account for the greatest portion of the budget. Belfast PD’s Fiscal Year 2020/2021 budget appears to bear this out, with approximately 82% in salary and wages, 6.5% overtime costs, and 11.5% for department operations.

After reviewing the current budget, the Panel finds no issues and observes that allocations and expenditures appear to be consistent with our professional experience.

Per capita cost for police protection was figured using a population of 6,679 in 2018 (Source: US Census). Belfast’s cost for police services during the current budget year with an approved budget of \$1,234,611 equals \$184.84 per capita. Comparative analysis with other City police departments is difficult, due to a lack of consistency in budgeting processes. For example, some City’s budget for all employee benefit costs in an HR or similar budget instead of tracking those expenses in the PD budget. Another example, municipalities utilizing capital improvement plans may or may not include related CIP funding in their budgetary totals.

Keeping in mind that the comparison may be flawed due to these variables, we offer the following:

CITY	POPULATION (2018 US CENSUS DATA)	POLICE BUDGET	POLICE COSTS PER RESIDENT
Belfast	6,679	\$1,234,611	\$184.84
Falmouth	12,240	\$2,258,483	\$184.51
Cape Elizabeth	9,313	\$1,769,045	\$189.95
Freeport	8,510	\$1,408,335	\$165.49
Yarmouth	8,518	\$1,388,739	\$163.04
Cumberland	8,165	\$1,272,648	\$155.87

Budget and Cost of Police Services - Recommendations:

The Review Panel recognizes that the City Manager and Police Chief have both served less than one year in their present positions. As the two highest ranking city officials, it is imperative that they share similar visions and values for their police department. They must continue to build on their professional relationship to better understand each other's perspective to support one another during the budget process. Trust and open communications between them are essential for developing a budget that supports all police services and the department's mission.

The Review Panel recommends that the police department budget includes the cost of all fringe benefits and other costs directly related to police department employees and operational functions. This will provide a more accurate representation of the budget allowing the Chief to see the true costs of police operations.

It is recommended that the police chief consult with all members of the department to determine department needs. Employees can be a valuable source of information during budget preparations. Because they perform the day-to-day operational tasks, they are in a unique position to determine the needs required to accomplish their jobs efficiently.

The Chief currently uses a budget request sheet for each line item in the police department budget. The budget request sheet contains the account number for each line item, account title (computer supplies etc.), and the budgeted amount of the line item for the last three years for a comparison to the current costs. The budget sheet also provides a brief detailed explanation for the request.

The Review Panel recommends that a capital improvement account be established for future capital improvements that include equipment, building repairs and improvements, and other infrastructure improvements that supports operations and police services.

It does not appear that in the past, regularly scheduled meetings have been held with members of the leadership team (Chief, Lieutenant, Sergeants). This should change moving forward, as will be discussed elsewhere in this report. During these regularly scheduled meetings, a review of the year-to-date budget should be conducted, with shortages noted and a plan devised to operate the department within budget. When armed with this budgetary information, team members are better able to explain to line staff why mid-stream modifications are being made to staffing, gasoline consumption, training, etc.

Community Relations

No law enforcement agency can be effective without community support. This can be particularly true in a community like Belfast: the police department is perhaps the most visible embodiment of City government and the only one that is consistently present in the community, 365 days per year.

Gone are the days when Chiefs could make decisions affecting the communities they serve without seeking input from those same communities. Citizens have greater expectations than ever before and demand a voice regarding the provision of police services. Developing a positive relationship with the community is the responsibility of every professional law enforcement officer. Developing favorable relationships and working collaboratively with the members of a community can cultivate the support necessary to succeed.

Enlightened law enforcement administrators accept, as a basic tenet of their profession, the statement that “the police should be a part of the community, not apart from it.” While many police agencies profess to be community oriented, a large number are program driven and do not philosophically embrace a true partnership between the police and their customers.

What is a community? When defined as a group of people living in the same place (the residents of Belfast), or having a particular characteristic in common (other department heads, neighboring police departments, non-profits, etc.) it quickly becomes obvious that much of what police departments do – and police administrators specifically - must be considered as community relations.

The Review Panel realizes that it is difficult to assess a department’s relationship with its community, based upon the very limited amount of time allotted for this evaluation. We do believe, however, that underlying trends can be identified while keeping in mind that the most vocal respondents do not necessarily represent the majority view.

Community Relations - Findings:

A community event was publicly advertised mid-November 2020 from 7PM to 9PM. The event was organized by the City Manager to provide a forum for residents to provide any feedback regarding their police department. A phone was also set up so that residents could call in and give input. There was no one in attendance, nor did anyone call in. Also, anyone wishing to offer written comments about BPD was requested to write the City Manager. The City Manager did not receive any written comments from the public.

The review panel felt that BPD officers were receptive to engaging in community engagement activities and took opportunities to interact with while on patrol and answering calls for service. It must be noted that community events, engagements and other proactive efforts by BPD to engage the community has been very limited by the Covid19 pandemic they have been working under since March of 2020.

The Review Panel interviewed all City of Belfast department heads in order to get a sense of the level of communication, responsiveness and effectiveness of the PD. There were mixed responses among department heads. Some department heads had positive reviews and felt that the department is generally responsive to their needs and are professional in the

performance of their duties. Most department heads felt they needed to give Chief Lincoln more time in his new position as Police Chief to grow in his position. One department head did not want to comment on the police department, while a second department head was very critical of the department officers and Chief. The department head said there was no working relationship between the departments, very little communications with the Chief, and did not see the relationship improving.

During our interviews, the panel learned that at times, elected officials interact directly with Department Heads, including the Police Chief. The City Charter of the City of Belfast, Article 2, section 13-c states “Neither the Council nor any of its members thereof shall give orders to any subordinates of the City Manager, either publicly or privately.”

The panel is unaware of any prior community survey instruments being utilized or any programs in place to help the agency connect with community members.

Neighboring law enforcement agencies report they enjoy a friendly and professional relationship with BPD. The Waldo County Sheriff’s Office works closely with BPD officers and has high praise for the officers and Chief Lincoln. The Police Chiefs from Rockland and Searsport Police Departments, and Waldo County Sheriff reported having a professional relationship with Chief Lincoln and said he was providing the leadership needed at BPD.

Community Relations - Recommendations:

BPD should enhance its image in the community and seek additional opportunities to be visible to citizens. Public events of nearly every type represent avenues for the police department to increase contact with citizens. The panel recommends that a comprehensive review of all community policing activities be undertaken, and a concerted effort be made to involve as many officers as possible in them. It also recommends that Chief Lincoln continue to strengthen the relationship between his agency and the schools.

We recommend that Belfast PD develop a community survey to be used as a tool to learn about the communities concerns, expectations and satisfaction relating to how they are policed. Professional assistance is likely available from a variety of entities to ensure an unbiased, professional and informative survey tool.

We recognize that Police Departments depend on varying degrees of openness of their organizational systems to ensure its members are interacting with and learning from community members to insure the community receives effective policing services as environments change. We recommend that the City Manager develop a policy and or procedure, which provides guidance for how communications between elected officials and department heads should take place. This policy or procedure should incorporate City Charter requirements and require that communications of this nature go through the City Manager.

We also recommend that the City Manager require the Police Chief and other Department Heads to notify her of any communications they have with elected officials.

The panel recommends that Belfast PD work with community members to facilitate open communication to help the agency and community become more familiar with each other so that BPD can ensure they are fostering good community relationships and that they are meeting policing needs of the community. Suggestions for this recommendation include developing a Volunteer in Policing program, a Citizens Police Academy and Coffee with a Cop events. Panel members are available to assist with these efforts. Information about Volunteers in Policing programming can be found here; <https://www.theiacp.org/projects/volunteers-in-police-service-vips> and by consulting the Augusta Maine Police Department web site here; https://www.augustamaine.gov/departments/police_department/volunteer_program.php#reform_rz202. Resources for community policing topics can often be found on the Department of Justice's Community Oriented Policing Service (COPS). The COPS website can be found here; <https://cops.usdoj.gov>.

Chief Lincoln and Deputy Chief Jackson should continue to seek out opportunities to interact and collaborate with fellow department heads establishing open and effective communication between departments that will help foster a collaborative relationship between departments that is beneficial to providing city services.

It is promising that neighboring agencies report healthy relationships among line staff, however, it is imperative that Chief Lincoln and Deputy Chief Jackson work to ensure responsiveness and collaboration with their peers. These relationships not only help to facilitate cooperation during times of crisis, but they also form a professional network which ultimately results in the elevation of policing for all agencies involved.

While the choice of social media platforms and the relative level of engagement is a decision specific to each department, BPD should take advantage of social media platforms to engage their community at all levels. Posts that not only inform but entertain the public will help them see BPD officers as dedicated, humorous human beings that want to be part of the community.

Crime Analysis

Every citizen needs to feel safe within their community and rising crime rates are always cause for alarm. The Review Panel was charged with comparing the Belfast Police Department's crime rates, crime clearance rates, patterns and trends with other departments of similar makeup. In most cases, it is relatively easy to find departments of similar size, population, and demographics for comparative purposes. The Panel compared the statistics which are compiled through agency reporting to the Maine Department of Public Safety's Uniform Crime Report (UCR) Division.

The Offenses of murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson are used to establish an index in the Uniform Crime Reporting Program. They measure trends and distribution of crime in the United States and more significantly, within the geographic regions of contributing states such as Maine. These crimes are counted by law enforcement agencies as they become known and are reported on a monthly basis. These “index offenses” were selected as a measuring device because as a group, they represent the most common crime problems. They are all serious crimes either by their very nature or due to the volume and frequency with which they occur. We feel that using the data compiled by UCR is a useful tool for this report. **Note:** These are only 8 crimes out of several hundred crimes that a police department may investigate annually and are in no way inclusive of the services a police department provides.

Crime Analysis - Findings:

A review of the statistical data indicates that the Belfast Police Department is a moderately active community regarding demand for police services. It appears the City of Belfast does an excellent job in reporting its crime statistics for the purposes of UCR.

Crime Statistics for Belfast Police Department:

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Population	6680	6685	6644	6765	6720	n/a
Crime Rate	33.83	19.45	15.05	14.63	6.10	n/a
Murder / manslaughter	0	0	0	0	0	n/a
Rape	4	2	0	1	0	n/a
Robbery	0	0	0	0	0	n/a
Aggravated Assault	4	8	3	4	3	n/a
Burglary	59	25	30	31	8	n/a
Larceny / Theft	147	88	64	58	27	n/a
Motor Vehicle Theft	12	6	3	5	3	n/a
Arson	0	1	0	0	0	n/a
Total Index Crimes	226	130	100	99	41	n/a
Clearance Rate	30.1	21.5	19.0	26.3	31.7	n/a
Sworn Officers	15	15	15	16	15	n/a
Officers Per 1000	2.2	2.2	2.6	2.5	2.4	n/a

For the purposes of this review, we looked at the UCR data submitted by the police department for the calendar years 2015-2019. This information was gathered from <https://www.maine.gov/dps/msp/about/maine-crime>. Statistics show that the crime rate dropped consistently from 2012 to 2016 and started to increase in 2017. 2019 is the most recent year for which crime data has been published.

Note: Effective in 2021, there is a federal mandate that all law enforcement agencies must start reporting crime data to the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). The Belfast Police Department currently reports to NIBRS. As such, they are early adopters of this reporting system in Maine. It is important to note that the table above includes only UCR reportable crimes; Belfast PD investigates thousands of other non UCR related complaints which are described in the Patrol Services section of this report.

Crime Analysis - Recommendations:

The crime analysis data must be shared with officers, most importantly the sergeants. The sharing of crime data and current crime trends are important for efficient and effective law enforcement and crime prevention.

While there are many factors involved in a successful clearance rate, a careful and continual analysis of crimes committed can provide useful information and have a positive impact.

Record Keeping and Information Technology

The ability to compile, retrieve, analyze and manipulate information is invaluable to a police department. Information storage and retrieval is paramount to a department being able to set short and long-term goals, assess its effectiveness and provide a professional level of service.

There is a direct relationship between a department's efficiency and the quality of its records and record keeping procedures. Every police administrator is called upon to make decisions relating to the distribution of his/her work force, the expenditure of funds for one purpose or another and the revision of plans of operations in response to changing crime conditions. Much of the information necessary to arrive at sound decisions may be gleaned from administrative records or reports that give a picture of present conditions and problems faced by the department.

In addition to paper records, police departments everywhere rely heavily on information technology (the use of computers and telecommunications systems for storing, retrieving, and sending information) to perform their jobs. The hardware, software and policies and procedures relative to their use are crucial to ensure the security of sensitive information where it is entered, stored, and transmitted beyond the department's walls. Malicious penetration of these systems for the theft of information or to hold the municipality's information for ransom can cripple operations, result in huge monetary loss to the City, professionally embarrass the organization, and expose those whose records are compromised to identity theft.

Record Keeping and Information Technology – Findings:

Belfast PD uses a record management system called Spillman Flex to enter, store and access all police records. This database is also used by and interfaces with the Waldo County Sheriff's Department and the Waldo Regional Communications Center. A full-time Records Clerk maintains the department's records. The Deputy Police Chief and Sergeants ensure that case reports (documentation of crimes and arrests) are complete prior to their transmission to court for prosecution or storage for later reference. Paper records are kept in locked file cabinets.

A 2020 audit of the Belfast Police Department's security of Criminal Justice Information by the Maine State Police's Access Integrity Unit showed that the department was in compliance with all required training, physical and virtual access security, and procedures.

At the time of our review the department was transitioning to a new Information Technology support company, Com Doctor. Com Doctor is utilized by other City Departments and during our interviews with Chief Lincoln he was looking forward to this change which will integrate the Police Department with the rest of the city for IT support. The department also relies on in-house Information Technology support, provided by Chief Lincoln. During interviews with the Review Panel, several department members told us Chief Lincoln has improved technology by creating storage and associated folders for body camera footage and electronic access to policies and procedures. A common complaint the panel heard was the lack of access to e-mail outside of the Police Department Building.

The department's computer server and other related network hardware is in the buildings storage room, some of it is on the floor.



Several staff members expressed frustration with the inability to access their BPD email outside of the Belfast PD facility. PD Administration relies on e-mail for a variety of communications with staff.

Record Keeping and Information Technology - Recommendations:

The Panel makes no recommendations regarding record keeping - best practices appear to be met and maintained.

Regarding Information Technology, the Review Panel understands that the City of Belfast contracts with an outside vendor for Information Technology support. This is becoming much more common for small municipalities, and in many cases, these vendors provide IT support to police departments as well. We recommend that so long as the City's vendor can assure the City Manager and Police Chief that they are properly background checked and trained for access to the department's CJIS (Criminal Justice Information Systems) records, the department accept this support.

An IT provider should be able to ensure security of systems to penetration, and plan for regular upgrades and replacement of security software and computer hardware. To the extent it is possible, the vendor should work to ensure that Chief Lincoln or his qualified designee provide support to their work and act as a liaison with them. It is important that the liaison to the IT provider have strong interest in technology and the ability to "speak their language," so long as this involvement does not detract from their primary role within the agency.

The panel recommends that as the Police Department works with its new Information Technology provider, they explore improved housing and locations for their network infrastructure that will help ensure hardware is not damaged by being bumped, kicked or flooded.

The panel recommends that the Chief or his designee work with the departments IT provider to ensure remote access for staff email. Email should be available on the cruiser MDT's, Officers mobile devices and should work in sync with the in house desktop email to avoid replicating work and confusion.

Department Communications

Ensuring effective communications within a police department is one of the most critical – and can be one of the most difficult – tasks for an administrator. The sheer volume of incoming information, the multiple avenues available for transmission, a 24-hour work cycle, and the distinct work groups within the agency (administration, supervisory, line officers, sworn staff, civilians) all add up to one thing – the unarguable fact that we spend most of our time communicating. The stakes are high, because inefficient communications can lead to vital information being missed, to rumors and inaccurate information flourishing and to blind spots where information does not find its way.

As if these factors were not enough, we must keep in mind that frequently, the information

we communicate up, down, and sideways in a police agency can have serious safety and legal implications if the messages are not properly sent, received and acknowledged.

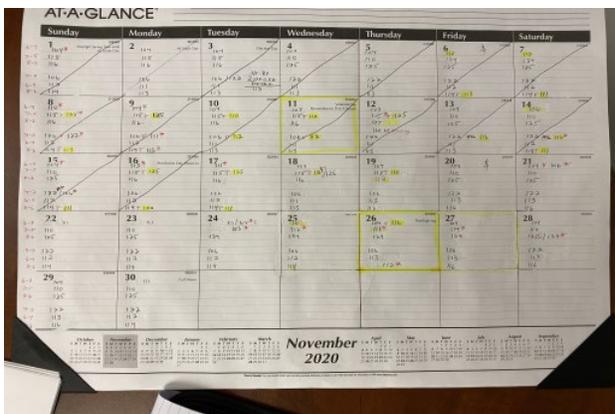
Department Communications - Findings:

Department members identified the following routes for internal department communication: email (heavily used), Spillman Flex (the record management system), memos posted on a common bulletin board, word-of mouth, and through direct communication during meetings.

Prior to the COVID pandemic Chief Lincoln planned for departmental meetings to be held bi-annually and for supervisory meetings monthly. Agendas for each meeting are distributed to attending staff prior to the meeting and staff requests for agenda items are added. The COVID pandemic has interrupted this schedule; we have reviewed the separate agendas for Department and Sergeants meetings for 2/11/20. Supervisors complete shift summaries, which are forwarded to the Chief and Deputy Chief for review.

Several staff members reported that communications relating to changes in the work schedule are ineffective. The Belfast PD work schedule is hand written on a desk calendar that is kept in the patrol room. When changes are made to the schedule, such as overtime vacancies, reassignment of an Officer’s “float” shift, or signing up for overtime, they feel that the administration expects them to notice it on the calendar. We learned that some Officers were unaware of being assigned to a shift until the last minute because of this perceived systematic deficiency.

Photo of Belfast PD work schedule –



Department Communications - Recommendations:

During our short exposure to the women and men of the Belfast Police Department, we found every one of them to be engaged, dedicated and desirous of working to ensure their agency functions as well as possible. To this end, an upgrade to department communications must be prioritized. The foundations of this upgrade can be laid by following the suggestions below:

Department meetings should continue as previously scheduled when it's safe to resume them. PD administration can consider the inclusion of a training component to these meetings so that the time together can be used even more efficiently. These meetings will continue to open the lines of communication and will allow the Chief to clearly express and operationalize the department's mission, goals, and objectives.

The administration should work to find a functional and centrally located, electronic scheduling system, which documents and facilitates management of established work schedules. This system should incorporate a leave request / approval component, a component to ensure timely, fair, equitable, transparent system for overtime sign up and "float" shift assignment that complies with existing labor contracts. Work schedules should be published for several months, up to a year, in advance to allow staff to plan their personal lives around their work schedules. The schedule should reflect all of the agencies planned activities for each day, including training events, outside details, court attendances, etc..

All official communication should be transmitted using the smallest number of routes possible to reduce blind spots. In the digital age and in a 24/7 operation, the use of email will never cease, but to the extent it can be minimized, it should. A weekly newsletter or use of an electronic roll call or bulletin board for non-time- sensitive information could help with this goal. Another way to achieve this is to transition to a digital platform for the shift summaries, allowing all agency members to view and ideally, contribute to them.

DISPATCH

The communications center is the hub of the police department, and in order to remain efficient both in productivity and officer safety it must be able to accomplish routine tasks with ease. Most importantly, dispatchers must communicate with on-duty police officials and the public in a professional, informative, calm, and understanding manner.

Dispatch - Findings:

The Waldo Regional Communications Center (WRCC) has provided dispatch services for Belfast PD since June, 2001 and they dispatch Belfast's police, fire channels and EMS services. WRCC dispatches for a total of five law enforcement agencies and 32 fire and EMS (Emergency Medical Services) agencies. Belfast PD has their own radio transmitter for their private "tact" frequency.

WRCC generates Calls for Service for law enforcement complaints. Officers are responsible for verifying information and making sure all information is complete. The department's MDT's (Mobile Data Terminals, or cruiser computers) have recently been replaced through a County Emergency Management Agency grant, which has improved the communications between

dispatch and officers in their cruisers.

WRCC staff indicated, and Chief Lincoln and WRCC Director Owen Smith have confirmed, that there are certain places in Belfast where police portable radios cannot communicate with dispatch. Attempts to fill these voids with in car repeaters were unsuccessful. The WRCC is planning to implement simulcasting their transmissions from 5 towers at the same time, as well as deploying voting receivers; these expensive efforts are commendable and should improve radio communications as whole, including portable coverage.

In the past, when new Officers at Belfast PD were being trained, a part of their training involved going to WRCC and learning about how the center operates. These interactions lead to Officers meeting the Dispatchers and forming the foundation for professional relationships. WRCC staff reports that Belfast PD Officers have not been coming to the WRCC in recent years as part of their training.

Belfast PD is the only 24/7 law enforcement agency in Waldo County. The dispatchers at WRCC rely on the assistance from Belfast PD during late night and early morning hours for emergencies needing immediate attention, sometimes outside of Belfast.

We learned that there are times when Belfast PD Officers are working at the Belfast Police Station, it can be challenging for WRCC Dispatchers to communicate with them on the radio. When WRCC Dispatchers are relaying information about calls for service, they often first talk with a Belfast PD Supervisor and are then directed to dispatch the call to a particular Officer, requiring the Dispatcher to repeat the information twice.

Dispatch - Recommendations:

Chief Lincoln is a former employee of the Waldo County Sheriff's Department and as a result, he enjoys a good professional relationship with Owen Smith, the WRCC Director. Consideration should be given for another person being assigned as the liaison with the WRCC so there can be a clear line of communication between the two departments to meet each other's needs. Chief Lincoln, in a mentoring roll, should work with the new liaison and the WRCC's representative to find solutions to the communications issues of dispatchers having difficulty communicating with Belfast PD Officers while in the station, and dispatchers needing to repeat information when Supervisors are screening calls for assignment.

We recommend that Belfast PD incorporate WRCC familiarization into their Field Training Program to ensure new Officers visit the WRCC, become familiar with its operation and meet the dispatchers there.

PATROL SERVICES

Patrol is the backbone of any police agency. Every other law enforcement function (administration, records, etc.) exist to support patrol and the work they do every day, all day. The defining characteristic of an American law enforcement agency is its ability to dispatch an officer to a scene to stop a crime, mediate a dispute, take a report, or one of the other nearly infinite tasks expected of them. Many years ago – when law enforcement officers were still routinely referred to as “policemen,” radio broadcaster Paul Harvey partially described the police officer as “such a diplomat that he can settle differences between individuals so each will think he won. He must make instant decisions which would require months for a lawyer to make. He must be first to an accident and infallible with his diagnosis. He must be able to start breathing, stop bleeding, tie splints and, above all, be sure the victim goes home without a limp. Or expect to be sued.” With great appreciation for Mr. Harvey’s observations, and with great respect for all the brave, dedicated women in modern law enforcement (Belfast has 1 female officer), we note that the description wasn’t far off. We expect a great deal from our brave Patrol Officers, and therefore a thorough examination of their working conditions is entirely justified.

Workload

Workload for the Patrol Division can be a difficult metric to define. Optimally, officers would devote nearly 100% of their work time to a productive pursuit: handling calls, stopping cars, completing reports, etc. One of those productive pursuits, however, is often referred to as “proactive patrol” and refers to the officer’s travel throughout his or her patrol sector, on the lookout for crime, motor vehicle infractions, or situations requiring the attention of other municipal departments such as Fire, Public Works, etc. Proactive patrol is a difficult activity to measure.

Many of our law enforcement endeavors do result in the generation of a record of the activity, however.

Workload – Findings:

Belfast PD generates approximately 7400 calls for service annually. This number includes all calls requiring police response. Each of these calls requires documentation at some level.

The 7400 Calls for Service included in 2020:

<u>Nature of Call</u>	<u>Total Calls Received</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
911 Disconnect	286	3.89
911 Misdial	137	1.86
911 Open Line	60	0.82

Nature of Call	Total Calls Received	% of Total
Abandoned Vehicle	33	0.45
Agency Assistance	164	2.23
Alarm	167	2.27
Alcohol Offense	4	0.05
ALS/Paramedic Assist	40	0.54
Animal Problem - Law Assigned	297	4.04
Assault	43	0.59
Off road motorized vehicle	3	0.04
Background Check	3	0.04
Insufficient Funds Check	19	0.26
Be On Lookout	8	0.11
Burglary	34	0.46
Business Check	1	0.01
Accident Car Deer	44	0.60
Child Abuse or Neglect	5	0.07
Child Custody	25	0.34
Civil Complaint	83	1.13
Computer Crimes	4	0.05
Council Notice	17	0.23
Counterfeit Money	4	0.05
Criminal Mischief	65	0.88
Criminal Trespass	61	0.83
Detail Accident Reconstruction	4	0.05
Detail Bail Check	9	0.12
Detail Bike Patrol	42	0.57
K-9 Detail	26	0.35
Miscellaneous Detail	131	1.78
Detail Parade	2	0.03
Detail Probl Check	3	0.04
Detail Radar	1131	15.40
Detail School	12	0.16
Detail Traffic	25	0.34
Disorderly Conduct	34	0.46
Disturbance	211	2.87
Domestic Disturbance	91	1.24
Controlled Substance Problem	40	0.54
Electronic Monitoring	1	0.01
Escort	19	0.26
Explosion	2	0.03
Fire Alarm	2	0.03
Fireworks	8	0.11
Foot Patrol	38	0.52
Forgery	1	0.01
Found Property	153	2.08

Nature of Call	Total Calls Received	% of Total
Fraud	26	0.35
Friendly Caller	10	0.14
Fuel Drive Off	4	0.05
Harassment	122	1.66
House Check	33	0.45
Identity Theft	5	0.07
Indecent Exposure	7	0.10
Information Report	349	4.75
Intoxicated Person	53	0.72
Juvenile Problem	61	0.83
Kidnapping	1	0.01
Late Report of PD 10-55	60	0.82
List Assist	21	0.29
Litter, Pollut, Public Health	16	0.22
Loitering	15	0.20
Lost Property	140	1.91
Medical Emergency	6	0.08
Medical Emergency EMD	162	2.21
Mental Medical	39	0.53
Message Delivery	8	0.11
Missing Person	12	0.16
Motor Vehicle Theft	4	0.05
Motorist Assist	47	0.64
Motor Vehicle Complaint	320	4.36
Noise Complaint	56	0.76
Odor	1	0.01
Officer Complaint	9	0.12
Operation Game Thief	4	0.05
OUI Alcohol	2	0.03
Paperwork Service	13	0.18
Parking Enforcement	144	1.96
Delinquent Parking Fines	35	0.48
Parking Problem	15	0.20
Traffic Accident with Damage	178	2.42
Petroleum Spill	1	0.01
Traffic Accident with Injurie	51	0.69
Pornography	2	0.03
Probation Violation	2	0.03
Property Watch	8	0.11
Prowler	5	0.07
Public Assist	272	3.70
Rape	4	0.05
Recovered Stolen Property	1	0.01
Reported Death	4	0.05

Nature of Call	Total Calls Received	% of Total
Robbery	1	0.01
Runaway Juvenile	6	0.08
IRS Scam and similar	16	0.22
Search Warrant	3	0.04
Service PO	56	0.76
Sex Offender Violation	8	0.11
Sex Offense	9	0.12
Speed Complaint	24	0.33
Structure Fire	9	0.12
Suspicious Person, Circumstnc	250	3.40
Suspicious Pkg/Explosives	1	0.01
Sweetser Incident	139	1.89
Theft	157	2.14
Threatening	50	0.68
Traffic Hazard	65	0.88
Traffic Violation	122	1.66
Traffic Stop	1	0.01
Prisoner Transport	3	0.04
Unsecure Premises	17	0.23
Utility Problem	19	0.26
Vagrancy	9	0.12
Vehicle Off the Road	28	0.38
Vehicle/Equipment Fire	3	0.04
Vehicle Fire	1	0.01
VIN Verification	9	0.12
Violation Conditional Release	13	0.18
Violation Protection Order	25	0.34
Wanted Person	44	0.60
Water Rescue	1	0.01
Weapon Offense	2	0.03
Welfare Check	296	4.03
Wildfire	1	0.01
Wildlife Problem or Complaint	38	0.52

In addition to investigating the complaints listed here, Belfast PD Officers conducted approximately 1,542 traffic stops during 2020. The number of traffic stops was significantly fewer last year compared to the prior four years, likely due to the COVID pandemic.

Calls for service appear relatively low for a community of nearly 6,700 residents and approximately 34 square miles of land but are likely affected by the COVID pandemic in the past year.

Traffic complaints are generally a high priority complaint for communities of this size. Enforcement is indicative of both self-initiated contacts by the officers and directives from

command. Monthly productivity reports highlighting officers' activity is one way to identify those who are productive and those who are not – Belfast does not generate such a report.

The average officer works 17 shifts a month, with 12 officers working in the streets including four patrol supervisors, the average vehicles stopped per officer each shift is .73.

Patrol activities are tracked through the Spillman system. Almost all calls coming into the WRCC dispatch center will generate a call for service. Traffic stops do not generally generate a call for service unless there is an accompanying criminal complaint. If an Officer has a self-initiated CFS they will usually call the dispatch center to start a call for service number or have a supervisor start one for them.

Patrol Officers serve as Animal Control Officers as there is no dedicated ACO. During our visit to BPD we observed a very unhappy cat being temporarily housed in the patrol room. It was quite disruptive for all working in the building.

Belfast PD has one Officer assigned to the Maine Drug Enforcement Agency, this arrangement has been in place for many years. There is a formal contract in place between Belfast PD and MDEA which governs the relationship and related expenses.

Workload - Recommendations:

To assist with ensuring the Belfast PD is delivering the level of services needed by the community, we recommend the Patrol Sgt.'s conduct shift briefings which are responsive to the communities needs and include eliciting information from the Patrol Officers and other Supervisors about their current observations and activities within the community. Additionally, the information gathered from these meetings can be communicated to the Administration and during the same meetings, information from the Administration can be delivered to the Patrol Officers. An augmentation to this process can be development of a digital roll call, in which all agency staff will participate. The goal of this recommendation is to ensure the Patrol Sergeants are regularly meeting with Officers and Administrators to ensure effective two-way communications within the agency, and that the Sergeants are exchanging information with one another to ensure the needs of the community are being addressed.

We recommend that BPD Supervisors work with Patrol Officers to identify specific areas of interest each Officer has relating to specialty assignments. Providing the specialty interests serve the needs of the agency and community, training goals should be connected to these areas of interest as well as the goals of the administration. When the agency is at full complement, specialty assignments can be developed for Officers which will help keep the job interesting for individuals as well as meeting the needs of the community. Many agencies periodically rotate these specialty assignments as a way of improving job satisfaction and morale. Some specialty examples are Domestic Violence Investigator, Accident Reconstructionist, K9 Officer, Field Training Officer, Critical Incident Stress Management / Peer Support Team member, Polygraph Examiner, Drug Recognition Expert, Evidence Technicians,

MCJA Instructor, Intoxilyzer site coordinator, Boat Operator, Harbormaster duties, Animal Control duties and many others.

Implementation of monthly or quarterly standardized productivity reports highlighting officer's activities. Integrate the information in the reports with recommendations in the Supervision section of this report.

Consider utilization of a dedicated Animal Control Officer and create a private space outside of Officer's work areas for animals to be kept while in the custody of the Police Department.

Staffing and Deployment

It is imperative that a department ensures their officers are deployed in a way that is not only fair and complies with any collective bargaining agreement, but in a way that also provides adequate coverage for the City. Police officers understand when they are hired that by virtue of their profession, they will be required at times to work nights, weekends, and holidays. The very best of us not only tolerate these demanding schedules, we pride ourselves in our role as guardians who watch over our City while those under our care sleep, recreate, and celebrate. For these reasons, administrators should always keep employee wellness in mind when creating a schedule but should not schedule work around personal preference. The municipality's needs come first.

Staffing and Deployment – Findings:

The Police Department maintains 24-hour coverage of a community of 6,679 citizens. Patrol coverage is as follows:

Provides coverage with one patrol officer every hour of the week and most hours during the day are staffed with multiple officers including Chief and Deputy Chief. Patrol officer work four 10-hour days in a 7-day period. There are 4 part-time police officers that augment patrol when needed.

The SRO is required to work an 8-hour day Monday through Friday when school is in session. During the summer when school is not in session he or she will augment patrol duties where needed.

Supervisory Coverage: Sergeants provide supervisory coverage for patrol officers and when not available the Chief and Deputy Chief will provide supervisory coverage.

A newly created position of Corporal was created that fall under the supervision of patrol sergeant, but also acts as patrol supervisor in the absence of patrol sergeant.

The detective is responsible for investigations and falls under the direction of the detective sergeant.

There are 2 parking enforcement officers that conduct downtown parking enforcement duties.

The schedule appears to cover operational needs of the department and community. Based on the professional experience of Review Panel members, we believe that staffing deployment for BPD is appropriate.

2019 Comparative Police Staffing and Crime Rate Data

Police Department	Sworn Officers	Population	Officers per 1000	Crime Rate	Total Index Crimes	Clearance Rate
Belfast	15	6679	2.2	15.02	132	28
Lisbon	12	8820	1.4	14.29	126	32.5
Presque Isle	17	9016	1.9	25.07	226	48.7
Freeport	14	8520	1.6	18.66	159	57.9
Yarmouth	13	8594	1.5	7.8	67	23.9
Brewer	18	9048	2.0	29.84	270	61.6
Old Orchard Beach	22	8842	2.5	20.36	180	17.8

According to published UCR reports, the ratio of Officers per 1000 averages 1.9 for urban jurisdictions and 1.4 for rural jurisdictions. Currently the Belfast Police Department has 15 full-time sworn officers. The current officer per 1000 population is 2.2.

Caution should be exercised in using rates for comparative purposes, since a wide variety of factors dictate the number of employees necessary for various law enforcement agencies. The term “full-time sworn” officer does not mean that these personnel are performing regular police enforcement duties in investigations, patrol and deterrent practices. The need for regulatory duties, correction duties, administrative duties and assigned special duties affects the number of personnel available for regular law enforcement duties. Comparing agencies should not be done without considering the “in-house” duties and responsibilities of the agencies involved.

Staffing and Deployment – Recommendations:

We recommend that the department – now and as an occasional practice moving forward - conduct a deep-dive into the distribution of calls for service across days of the week to determine if modifications to current schedules are appropriate to enhance coverage during busier times of the day and days of the week.

Supervision

The Patrol Sergeant occupies a special place in law enforcement lore, in movies and on television – and with good reason. For hundreds of years, our profession’s front-line

supervisors have played the role of mother hen, parent, disciplinarian, trainer, clerk, and stalwart back-up. For administrators, having faith in the Patrol Sergeants to reliably execute the properly defined and communicated direction of the Chief is invaluable. As risk managers, a Sergeant's number one duty is to, without fail, maintain knowledge of the department's policies and procedures and ensure that the officers in his or her care religiously follow them. Without strong, committed middle managers to facilitate consistent communication up and down the chain-of-command, the chain is weak and bound to break.

Supervision – Findings:

The Patrol Division has three (3) Patrol Sergeants and one (1) Deputy Chief overseeing operations. The schedule reflects command coverage all seven days with some variation, but there is a commitment from command to have coverage between 7:00AM and 2:00AM. The Chief Deputy and Chief maintain on call duties, providing availability to a Supervisor during times when the Sergeants are not on duty.

During interviews of the patrol force, the Panel heard from several officers who felt that the Supervisors and Administration, at times, were inconsistent in their application of department policy. Several felt that preferential treatment is given by the administration to certain "favorites."

During our interviews, we learned that some administrative records at BPD are lacking historical record of the agencies personnel related activities from prior administrations. This lack of documentation can make it difficult to make informed decisions relating to training, promotional decisions, and discipline.

Several Officers complained that there is little administrative acknowledgement of a job well done. Examples cited involved 4 recent successful NARCAN administrations and incidents when Officers rendered lifesaving emergency medical assistance to a female with a severed arm.

Supervision – Recommendations:

A system for tracking supervisory actions, positive and negative, will help ensure consistency and fairness. For example, if a Sergeant observes an Officer performing exceptionally or deals with a negative officer performance issue, it should be recorded. Other Supervisors and Administrators can consult the system to learn what the other Supervisors have noted, and informed decisions can be made whether the matter should be handled at a higher level through a formal recognition of good performance or alternatively, with the progressive steps of discipline. The same system could be used to ensure that if one employee received department discipline for a particular behavior, any other employee is treated the same. It's possible for this system to be integrated with the shift summaries, schedule functions

discussed elsewhere in this report.

The Maine Chiefs of Police Association's Maine Law Enforcement Accreditation Program (MLEAP) represents a compilation of what Maine law enforcement professionals believe are the basic business practices needed to address the most critical tasks of law enforcement in our state. The standards were developed to ensure appropriate protection of citizen's rights, to improve the safety of public safety employees, and ensure the operational and professional integrity of a law enforcement entity. The standards of MLEAP will serve as an excellent tool for the Supervisors at Belfast PD and enhance their ability to remain consistent. We recommend that Belfast PD become familiar with MLEAP and use it as a guide as they work toward participation and becoming an accredited agency through MLEAP.

Training will be addressed in a following section of this report, but members of the leadership team should engage in occasional and ongoing professional development. Supervisory and leadership training is not a "one and done" affair. We can all become stagnant or complacent, and networking with other supervisors can help recharge our batteries and our enthusiasm to recognize great performance and immediately confront poor behavior. The Maine State Police annually host an excellent IACP leadership program at the Maine Criminal Justice Academy named Leadership in Police Organizations (LPO). Belfast PD would be well served to enroll qualified Officers in future classes.

The department facility will also be addressed in a following section of this report; however, a plan should be formulated so that both Sergeants have private workspace, near the patrol room.

Arrests: Processing and Transport

Regardless of how diplomatic an officer is, or how patient or kind, on occasion an individual's behavior results in the need for that person to be physically arrested. The act of arresting a person results in our physically removing that person from their location, detaining them against their will, searching them, and restricting their free movement. This law enforcement function, with good reason, carries a tremendous amount of liability along with it. Arrests should be made judiciously, but without hesitation when necessary.

Arrests: Processing and Transport – Findings:

When Officers of the Belfast Police Department effect custodial arrests, they transport in custody individuals to the Waldo County Corrections Facility. Booking, photographs, fingerprinting and bail all take place there.

Arrests: Processing and Transport – Recommendations:

The committee makes no recommendations as it appears best practices are followed.

Use of Force

We teach new recruits that “law enforcement is under a microscope.” They learn early on what this means: that our every move is watched, scrutinized, and judged. Nowhere is this more accurate than the rare instances when officers must use physical force against a fellow citizen. While finalizing this report, we note that in scores of cities across America, riots and protests have occurred at great cost to lives and property. The spark that ignited this inferno was an apparently illegal use of force by law enforcement. The stakes have never been higher.

Law enforcement officers are empowered by statute to use non-deadly force in the defense of themselves or a third person against non-deadly force or to affect the arrest of a criminal suspect. Officers are empowered to use deadly force in defense of themselves or a third person against deadly force, or to effect the arrest of a person when the person has committed a crime involving deadly force and is likely to endanger human life unless apprehended without delay. Luckily, the vast majority of police officers serve their entire career without being required to use deadly force.

A great deal of department resources are focused on the procurement, maintenance and training for proficiency in the tools used to deliver force: pain compliance tools like pepper spray and impact weapons, neuro-muscular incapacitation weapons like electronic control devices (frequently referred to as TASERS) and when all else fails, firearms.

Use of Force reports are instrumental to all agencies in identifying trends.

Use of Force – Findings:

BPD has a policy for the Situational Use of Force, as well as other related policies. Situational Use of Force is a statutorily mandated policy and therefore, the Board of Trustees of the Maine Criminal Justice Academy have established nine individual minimum standards which must be contained in each law enforcement agency’s policy. A review of Belfast’s policy revealed that it is properly updated and contains the minimum standards.

Any officer who uses physical force is required to complete a use of force report which is separate from other reports. All use of force reports are maintained in the Deputy Chief’s Office and were reviewed by the panel. All forms appeared to be filled out correctly and appeared to be within reason for the agency of their size and crime volume. Belfast PD does not do an annual use of force report.

Use of Force – Recommendations:

We recommend that the Administration conduct an annual review of use of force and prepare a report detailing the review. The focus of the review and report should be to identify any trends in the use of force by agency personnel, training needs, equipment needs or policy revisions. MLEAP discusses this recommendation in further detail in standard 6.10.

School Resource Officer

According to the US Department of Justice, School Resource Officers (SROs) are sworn law enforcement officers responsible for safety and crime prevention in schools. A local department typically employs SROs who work closely with a school's administrators in an effort to create a safer environment. The responsibilities of SROs are similar to regular police officers in that they have the ability to make arrests, respond to calls for service, and document incidents that occur within their jurisdiction. Beyond law enforcement, SROs also serve as educators, emergency managers, and informal counselors. While an SRO's primary responsibility is law enforcement, whenever possible, SROs should strive to employ non-punitive techniques when interacting with students. Arrests should be used only as a last resort under specified circumstances.

School Resource Officers are instrumental in serving the needs of the students, staff, physical security, threat assessment, mentoring and representing the department in a positive light. These officers should be vetted and selected from the highest standards within the organization.

School Resource Officer – Findings:

As part of community relations, members of the Review Panel interviewed key members of the Belfast School system to gauge the relationship between the school and BPD. Strong relationships of mutual trust between police and the schools they serve are critical to maintaining a safe school environment for all faculty, staff, and students. Given the rise in school violence over the last three decades, trust, social interaction, collaboration, and cooperation are required between the police and school officials to ensure safe school campuses.

The Troy Howard Middle School (grades 6-8) and Belfast Area High School Principals and the Superintendent of Belfast Area High School (grades 9-12) were interviewed to illicit their opinions and perspectives from an administrative level regarding the relationship between BPD and the Belfast school system. Both the Principals and the Superintendent recognized that the current pandemic and the fact that Chief Lincoln has only been in his position for several months, has resulted in somewhat limited contact and conversations between school administrators and police. They had high praise for Chief Lincoln and the School Resource

Officer (SRO) efforts to stay connected with school administrative officials, faculty, and students during this challenging time.

All school administrators interviewed felt positive regarding the relationship they have with police. They are confident they can rely on the police and are encouraged they will be able to build on the relationship as they move forward while navigating the pandemic challenges we are facing.

The SRO works in schools outside of Belfast and we are unaware of any agreements to ensure the SRO has law enforcement authority in those situations.

The SRO is not able to connect to the BPD records management system from the school buildings. A former electronic program used to log the SRO's activities reached end of life and has not been replaced.

School Resource Officer – Recommendations:

General perception of the SRO program is very positive. The school is receptive and encouraging of efforts to expand the program and work hand-in-hand with the Police Department. Efforts to establish a stronger line of communication would only fill the voids and enhance this impressive program.

We recommend that Chief Lincoln continue efforts to develop a Memorandum of Understanding with the Superintendent of Schools to provide clear guidance and understanding relating to the funding, functionality and accountability of the SRO Program. Panel members are available to provide examples / templates.

We recommend the SRO be provided with private and secure office space in the school buildings the SRO routinely works in. This office should provide IT functionality so the Officer can securely connect with BPD's records management and other relevant BPD systems as well as appropriate electronic school data / video systems as agreed upon by the Chief and Superintendent of Schools. Due to the sensitive nature of secure law enforcement computer systems it is important that this office be easily locked when the Officer leaves the space, which can sometimes happen quickly and unexpectedly.

The panel also recommends that BPD develop an integrated solution for the SRO's activities to be logged on, creating a platform which monthly and annual SRO reports could be produced from.

As recommended elsewhere in this report, Mutual Aid or other similar agreements should be developed to ensure the SRO has liability protection and proper authority when working outside the City of Belfast.

INVESTIGATIONS

The Belfast Police Department's response to crime and its success in investigating criminal activity is critical in judging the agency's ability to respond to community demands.

Additionally, the professional pride that comes with successfully investigating and suppressing crime is invaluable to everyone affiliated with the law enforcement agency.

The investigation of serious crimes often requires the acquisition of special training. Complex investigations can take long periods of time – often measured in months – to complete. The mobile nature of our society means that in many cases, crimes stretch beyond the boundaries of one law enforcement agency's jurisdiction. Victims, witnesses, and suspects often live beyond City lines and investigators must travel to interview them. Serious criminal investigations generally require a single point of contact. Federal agents, sexual assault advocates, and children forensic interviewers need to know and to form relationships with investigators. For these reasons, when feasible, the delegation of criminal investigations to a Detective (or detectives) makes sense.

Investigation – Findings:

Belfast PD has one individual assigned to the position of Detective. The detective is responsible for investigating all serious crimes and less serious cases that may require significant follow-up. The Detective is responsible for the department's evidence management function. Through our interviews with staff, it became clear that Detective Cook is a well-respected member of the department who is seen as an unofficial leader. Detective Cook appeared to be a knowledgeable, mature and professional investigator.

The department is outfitted with multiple interview rooms which are properly wired for audio and visual recording. There is an ample evidence storage area, which will be discussed later in this report.

The department has a number of policies that address topics relevant to investigations, including but not limited to:

1. Preliminary Investigations
2. Property and Evidence Control
3. Death Investigation
4. Burglary Investigations
5. Interrogation
6. Informants
7. Sexual Assault Investigations
8. Sex Offender Notification

Investigations – Recommendations:

The Review Panel did not find any policy or other guidance specifying which cases will generally be handled by the Detective, and when the Detective should be notified if a serious crime occurs during his non-work hours. If such guidance does not exist, its inclusion in an existing general order should be considered.

Property and Evidence Management



A department's professionalism could well be measured by how closely its handling of property and evidence meets industry best practices. The care and preservation of physical property – whether it is evidence in a criminal proceeding or not – is a department function which if not executed properly, could expose the department to civil liability, to lost prosecution, and to professional embarrassment. It is easy for a defense attorney to successfully attack shoddy chain-of-custody and evidence storage integrity issues in a criminal case. In addition, some

items which are routinely stored by police departments, if not handled properly, can degrade and result in mold which can result in serious health conditions.

Property and Evidence Management – Findings:

The Belfast Police Department is equipped with a traditional hand written evidence system. It appears there may be a need for more storage for evidence and property in the future but the vault currently serves the purposes of the department. Property or evidence is currently taken by the officers and brought to the storage room in the middle of the building. They fill out a written piece of paper to log the evidence and make a note of what they did with the item in their narrative of their report. Detective Sergeant Cook comes by later and moves the evidence into the back area of the vault where each officer has their own shelf. Items are stored based on who takes the items in. Detective Sergeant Cook is responsible for entering the evidence room, removing items from temporary storage, and placing them on permanent storage shelves. With this system, officers are able to package seized evidence or property and in the common area behind the locked door. The property is accessible to any individual who has access to the exterior of the evidence room. So long as access to this room is properly restricted, a strong and court-defensible chain-of-custody is established. As documented above, the Department has policies in place to guide officers in this area.

Property and Evidence Management – Recommendations:

There are currently three people who have access to the permanent evidence room, which is

described as the bank vault (the Chief, the Deputy Chief and Detective Sergeant Cook). Access should be further restricted to no more than two people and the Chief of Police should not have access.

All sworn officers should have access to the initial holding and preparation area of the evidence room but there should be temporary storage lockers purchased to enhance restrictions once the evidence is initially secured. There should be a separate secured location in the evidence room where firearms, illegal drugs and currency should be stored separately in their own secured containers.

Detective Sergeant Cook and the secondary person assigned to the evidence/property locker should attend formal training on how to manage an evidence room. Other than the Sallyport that doubles as storage area, the department does not have an inside location to store larger pieces of evidence like vehicles. If a vehicle is taken as evidence, it is stored at the tow company's storage area. There should be a separate location available to temporarily secure larger items of evidence in door.

The evidence/property module in the department's records management system should be further utilized to track each piece of property and evidence rather than relying on hand written receipts and carbon copies. Spillman does have a module that can be used by the department to enhance efficiency and security.

As noted in other areas of this report, MLEAP can be used as a guide for evidence/property room best practices. Chapter 12 of the current MLEAP program manual discusses property and evidence management.

FACILITIES

The Police Department is a multi-use facility, two story brick structure. Built in the early to mid 60's, the Police Department renovated and moved into the downstairs of the building in 2000. The upstairs of the building is leased to the US Coast Guard and Maine Department of Corrections, Probation and Parole. Each floor of the building has approximately 5,800 square feet. There is controlled access limiting unauthorized movement to sensitive areas in most parts of the police department.

The building lobby is quaint and welcoming to the public. A receptionist and/or Parking Enforcement staff member monitors the entrance Monday through Friday from 8AM until 4PM and there is a phone next to the window connecting the public to the Regional Dispatch Center. During times when the lobby window is not staffed, Officers can view people coming into the lobby via the in house camera system; additionally there is a doorbell for people to ring to announce their presence. When Officers are in the station during non-business hours, they go out to greet people coming in for service. The signage and instructions are adequate, guiding the public to assistance after business operating hours. The lobby display is prudent with information for residents needing guidance managing various issues.

The building appearance from the outside is well-maintained and representative of a historic downtown building that was not originally constructed to be used as a police department.

Facilities - Findings:

During our inspection of the interior of the building we made the following observations:

There is no bathroom in the lobby - If the public requires access to a bathroom, they are escorted into the secure area of the PD to use the booking room bathroom.

The firearm cleaning room has no eye wash station, proper ventilation or adequate space. Not enough area is provided to clean and properly secure a weapon. There is a firearm clearing (bullet containment) system, allowing the officers to unload their weapon in this populated area. While this mitigates the risk of an accidental discharge unloading a weapon without the clearing system, there should be an organized space with an armory designated for firearms safety.

The panel observed a bullet hole in a desk in the patrol room. BPD staff members explained that it was created some time ago by an accidental discharge while a weapon was being cleaned in the firearms cleaning room. We were told the bullet travelled through a wall and across the interior patrol room prior to penetrating the desk. There is another bullet hole in a floor tile next to this same desk. Again staff described it being created by an accidental discharge by a Police Officer.

Photo of bullet hole in desktop

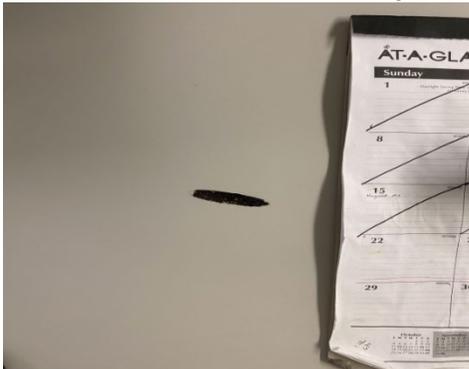


Photo of bullet hole in floor in patrol room



Photo of firearm cleaning room:



The panel did observe interior and exterior cameras capturing common areas. Command staff other than the Chief, Deputy Chief and Detective Sergeant all share a common area with the patrol officers.

The Panel noted the men's locker room is located towards the back of the building but it is not secured by a door. Anyone can walk into the locker room at any time without announcement. Ammunition, which is also stored in the same open space as the men's locker room, should be secured in a separate room and labeled accordingly as a fire and explosive hazard.

2 pictures of the locker room are below:



The evidence room and processing area is well organized, neat and within the structural and secure standards of a progressive police department. The storage area is adequate for the current size department and case load and the only deficiencies have been noted already under the policy section and evidence section.

1 picture of the evidence storage area below:



Officers generally felt that the department's sally port (garage bay) is too small and therefore is not used when bringing an arrestee into the building. It is more used as a storage facility but

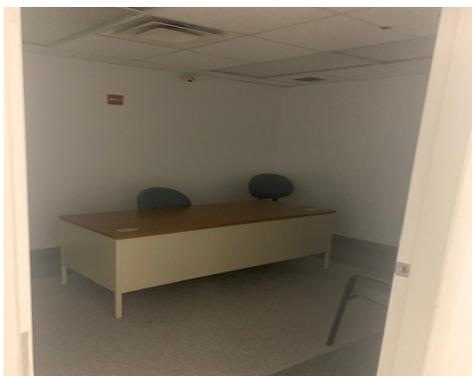
they do store a vehicle in the garage during the winter so it can be used at a moment's notice. Staff reports that the secure entry door into the secured areas within the police department can be accessed by pushing a button to open the door. Employees are simply told to keep the sally port door closed in order to maintain a secured facility. The entire set-up for the purpose of a sally port is inadequate.

3 pictures of sally port storage area are below:



The department does not do any booking for prisoners at their headquarters so all photographs and fingerprints are done at the jail a few miles away. The one interview/interrogation room appears to be adequate in the way that it is set-up, however, it is the only one they have and appears to be more for interrogations. If there are multiple people that need to be interviewed or juveniles need to be separated, they will be taken to another office or the break room to be interviewed. There appears to be a need for a second "soft" interview room in order to provide an option other than interrogations.

2 pictures of the interview room and break room are below:



The limited sally port space along with the limited police and personal vehicle parking has caused discord with staff. Several employees revealed frustration that they are forced to park their emergency vehicles in such a small location causing cruiser crashes at times. The staff is

forced to find parking spaces nearby around the city sometimes parking in spaces in violation of parking ordinances subjecting them to tickets.

2 pictures of the building and available parking for the PD are below:



The Police Department's bathrooms, adjacent to the locker rooms and adjacent to the Chief's Office, are open to anyone visiting the police department. The largest concern is that the only bathroom with a shower has been converted to serve the dual purpose of a female locker room. This results in cross traffic between male and female officers who may be showering before or after their shift, removing or putting on their gun belts to use the bathroom, and civilian employees of the town. This is highly unusual for a police department and deprives officers of a feeling of safety and security as they are preparing themselves to begin their shift. This is a safety concern in a mixed-use area.

3 pictures of the female locker room/bathroom room are below:



The Panel noted that the department's "patrol room," used by officers and supervisors to complete reports, is one large room. This leads to officers taking their breaks and engaging in idle conversation while other officers are attempting to complete workflow documentation. Some reported that it is difficult for a supervisor to have a one on one conversation with a staff member in this room and are forced to find a separate room.

2 pictures of the patrol room:



The police facility lacks a training room or common place for the majority of employees to meet when as needed. During department trainings they are forced to pull chairs around the patrol room and sit as a group without tables to write on. There has been some discussion about converting a spare office for that purpose. They can use the MDEA Office as a training room by removing a wall but the panel questions if that will still give the department adequate space for a training room.

1 picture of the MDEA Room



Facilities – Recommendations:

The least costly effort for maximum impact is surely in the re-organization of existing spaces, reviewing workflows, staff movement. There is not adequate space to enhance productivity, encourage organizational standards and plan for future challenges. The Panel suggest that one possible way to check many of the boxes for improvement would be for the police department to occupy some, if not all, of the second floor of the building in order to provide with adequate space.

With limited space in the gun cleaning room, an ultrasonic cleaning system and more table space could improve the cleaning process while enhancing safety standards. The bullet holes in the patrol room desk and floor tile should be repaired.

Keeping supervisory staff within or near each other is crucial to maintain communication and pass-on of department information. However, not having a separate space for the patrol sergeants can be counterproductive on certain personnel matters. Perhaps a reallocation of the Deputy Chiefs Office to the patrol sergeants could solve this issue or a complete re-evaluation of space and flow if the department can expand to the second floor. While the current space is being occupied, the department could purchase a partition for the patrol room to organize this space and provide more privacy to officers while they are completing their work.

A clean and organized interior with pictures, a visible mission statement, and / or motivational messaging provides an easy and low-cost opportunity for management to improve morale, continually connect with staff and communicate the mission of the department.

The locker rooms for both male and female staff could be properly laid out and secured with the occupation of the second floor of the building. With the expansion and occupation of the second floor, the department could mitigate its parking risks with an additional parking area. This would provide the department with a second form of egress for the police cars while providing staff with enough space to park their personal vehicles while at work. There could also be an ordinance passed to allow for only police parking in certain areas around the facility. This would not mitigate the safety risks to the staff since the parking is not secured but it would certainly provide more options for parking.

Expansion to the top floor of the building could provide adequate storage for the animal control and other items that are currently being stored in the sally port. This would provide a secure space for a vehicle to park without the fear of striking one of the objects that are being stored in this location. Most importantly and whether the department decides to expand or not, the unsecured door needs to be fixed immediately. This is a major safety issue that must be corrected.

The lack of more than one interview room could be adjusted by converting the "MDEA Office" into a second interview room. This would suffice but would only take away even more space from the department that it does not already have. Again, expansion to the second floor would certainly provide adequate space. The server room is in a sensitive area for the department and should be cleared of all clutter and flammable material.

There is no opportunity to reallocate space in the common, locker room and ammunition storage area with the existing space the department has to work with. The only opportunity to improve this situation would be to occupy more space on the second floor.

Belfast PD would be well served to utilize the services of a licensed architect or credentialed professional building space planner to assist them with developing a plan for the best uses of available spaces to address the needs of the agency and community. If the administration

chooses to use this type of service, we recommend they work with someone experienced in working with Public Safety functions.

EQUIPMENT

The patrol division is the most important component of any police agency, and the equipment that the agency provides to the officers is indicative of the municipality’s commitment and is vital to the officers’ ability to perform their jobs. Today’s police cruisers are instruments of technology which contain advanced weapon systems, cameras, radar units and mobile computers, providing maximum safety for the officers. These vehicles and the equipment maintained within them are one of the first indicators of a professional workforce that the public observes every day. Cruisers are mobile billboards, acting as recruitment tools. They are essential in maintaining morale for the officers, as they must feel confident with current technology and trends compared with other local law enforcement agencies and national standards. And they must be comfortable!

Although it may appear that law enforcement equipment has a relatively short useful life, it is important to remember that much of the equipment is often used in a difficult or even hostile environment. Additionally, multiple officers during a workweek use much of the equipment. Regardless, the City must consider those capital items which support their officers as emergency equipment that must be replaced or repaired on schedule.

In addition to cruisers and the myriad of technology and equipment mounted within, a typical department’s equipment also includes station computers, firearms, less-lethal (pepper spray, TASER, batons), body worn cameras and more.

Equipment - Findings:

Presently, the Belfast Police Department has eight (8) vehicles in their inventory.

YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	MILEAGE	ASSIGNMENT
2014	Ford	Explorer	120,000	Chief
2016	Ford	Explorer	86,000	Deputy Chief
2018	Ford	Explorer	62,000	Patrol
2017	Ford	Explorer	74,000	Patrol
2020	Ford	Explorer	22,000	Patrol
2020	Ford	Explorer	16,000	Patrol
2016	Ford	Explorer	84,000	K-9
2014	Chevrolet	Impala	70,000	Detective

The Police Department appears to have an adequate inventory of cruisers for the size of the department, most of which are within suggested lifespan. Vehicle replacement is an annual discussion during budgeting rather than being accomplished through a formal Capital Improvement Plan.

Patrol Rifles: Each of the three primary cruisers used for patrol are outfitted with a patrol rifle, located next to the driver with quick and easy access. The weapon system appeared new, containing the latest in magazine capacity and optics.

Mobile Data Terminals (cruiser computers): In interviews with multiple members of BPD, we heard that until recently, the department's MDTs (Mobile Data Terminals, or in-car computers) had been either problematic or nonexistent. A recent purchase of three refurbished MDT's and new mounts and associated docks in the cruisers has made things much better. There are three MDT's which are shared by all Officers; the computers are taken in and out of the cruisers routinely.

Tasers: The panel learned that Belfast PD has four Electronic Control Weapons (Tasers) which Officers share. At the time of our review, a senior officer had lent his ECW holster to a new officer so the new officer could have one and the senior officer was working without an ECW as a result.

Body worn cameras: The panel learned that Belfast PD's Officers are routinely using body cameras and that the majority of Officers and the Chief strongly support their use. A prior attempt at funding a formal body camera program was unsuccessful due to funding issues. As a result, several Officers used portions of their uniform allowance to purchase body cameras. One Officer received an upgraded model from what the others purchased, as a gift from his family, and is using it while on duty. Officers upload their body camera videos to individual folders on a server maintained by the Police Department and the use of body cameras and data storage and sharing is governed by departmental policy 2-3.

In car cameras: The panel learned through interviews with staff that at one time the department utilized Watchguard Video in cruiser cameras. The in car cameras aged and were not replaced. At the time of our review there was one cruiser left with Watchguard camera, staff reports it does not work well and is not utilized. We learned that some inexpensive in car cameras were purchased which initially inadvertently recorded conversations inside the cruisers without staff's knowledge. Some Officers described the cameras as "bus cameras". The administration was quick to correct the issue by disabling the audio recording and the cameras now only capture video.

During our interviews, the panel learned that several Officers are using personal mobile devices to take photographs and video relating to cases while on duty and including them with investigative files.

Cruiser Equipment: The vehicles appear to be carrying all prudent equipment required for front-line officers to perform various duties.

Cruiser Set-up: We learned during our review that Belfast PD hires a professional up fitting company to install their cruiser equipment. This is best practice and we recommend it continue.

Pictures of cruisers are below:



Radios: Portable radios (the units that officers wear on their belts) and mobile radios (the larger, more powerful units that are installed in cruisers) are modern and in good working order. It appears each officer is assigned their own portable radio. Reception in the downtown area is varying. Geographic elements, interference from modern electronic devices and networks dampen radio reception and we learned that at times, portable radio coverage is problematic in Belfast, this can create safety concerns for Officers and the citizens they serve.

Body Armor: Officers are issued body armor as part of their uniform and a replacement cycle is in place to ensure the body armor is in good condition. Several Officers expressed interest in utilizing external body armor solutions as part of their daily uniform. At the time of our review, one officer was wearing an external carrier on a trial basis as authorized by the Chief. Administrators can be reluctant to authorize them because some members of the public view that uniform style as militaristic.

Tourniquets: Several officers expressed interest in having the department issue individual tourniquets as part of their equipment. This is becoming standard in many departments. We heard of a successful tourniquet application on an injured person by the Belfast Police Department. The Chief informed us that Officers are authorized to purchase them with their uniform allowance, subject to his approval of make and model to ensure consistency.

Equipment – Recommendations:

We recommend continuing the practice of regular purchase and replacement of cruisers as they reach the end of their law enforcement service life, and that the City attempt to avoid postponing this critical infrastructure investment. Development of a CIP which incorporates the entire PD fleet, with appropriate replacement recommendations, would likely help to flatten budget requests over the long term and ensure fleet remains in good condition.

Storage compartments in the rear area of the cruiser would assist in maintaining organization, allowing for quicker access to gear, and minimize damage to the equipment. These storage units can be costly but are a good investment and are transferable when the cruiser is replaced.

The panel recommends that the City and its Police Department develop a plan to fund and equip each cruiser with a Mobile Data Terminal as well as plan for timely replacements of them. Mobile Data Terminals are becoming standard equipment in all police cruisers in Maine where wireless connectivity is available. MDT's offer continuous connectivity to the agencies records management system, to the Waldo County Communications Center and voiceless communications with dispatchers and other officers utilizing the system. MDT's can provide officers field access to the agencies Policies and Procedures which are often intended to guide Officers as they investigate and respond to a variety of incidents and calls for service.

The panel recommends that if the Belfast Police Department continues to utilize body cameras, the City and its Police Department develop a plan to fund and equip each Officer with a department funded body camera as well as develop a reasonable and funded replacement schedule for them. The body cameras should be of the same make and model and consideration should be given to ease of integration with any in car cameras if they are to be utilized by the agency. The system should have a robust "back end" to automate the labeling, sorting, case connecting, and ease the retrieval of the videos.

The use of personally owned cell phones and other mobile devices is a common topic of discussion, and at times, controversial in law enforcement. Individual privacy concerns for staff members and agency control and oversight of work related data are often areas of concern. Some agencies now prohibit the use of personal devices for work related activities and require Officers to utilize departmentally owned equipment while on duty. The panel recommends that the Belfast PD Administration work together with the Officers, Supervisors and Staff of the BPD to develop clear written guidance for these activities.

We recommend that the officers of Belfast PD be issued appropriate tourniquets as part of their standard issue equipment. The current practice of using a uniform allowance to purchase them leaves the use of tourniquets optional. By ensuring that each officer has one as part of their standard equipment issue, the department will help ensure life saving measures can be taken when needed.

Body Armor is an essential part of a law enforcement officer's uniform. We recommend that the administration of BPD work to develop a way to communicate with and educate the community about the critical importance of body armor as well as the health concerns and potential workers compensation concerns related to wearing it. We are aware of reference materials which may assist with these efforts and are available to assist. One agency worked with a local newspaper which published informative articles as a way to educate the community. Many Officers in Maine wear external body armor solutions and find that it relieves back, hip and leg pain and that their community members are comfortable with the look of their uniforms. There are many products available and some are sure to be acceptable by the informed citizens of Belfast. By incorporating this effort with other community relation efforts discussed in our report, we believe the Officers, Administration and Community can develop an acceptable solution for all as they learn about each other. We also recommend BPD consider consulting with the Maine Municipal Association to explore grant funding opportunities for external carriers, other agencies have found success with funding here. The Falmouth Police Department can be a resource for this recommendation as they successfully adapted exterior vests with the aid of community education and grant funding components.

We noticed a trend of Officers being asked to use their uniform allowances to purchase necessary equipment. We believe Chief Lincoln is trying hard to support the Officers requests for equipment but lacks budgetary funding to fulfill the request. We believe that the Officers and Administrators are mutually frustrated with this situation. If BPD is unable to obtain dedicated budgetary funding for this equipment, we recommend consideration be given to increasing the uniform allowance to accommodate these purchases.

PERSONNEL

Recruitment / Selection / Retention

The activities undertaken by an agency to encourage applicants for open positions, and how one or more of those applicants are then chosen to receive job offers, is likely to vary little from one Maine department to the next. Once employees are hired, the ways in which they are retained likely fall into fairly predictable categories as well.

Small agencies typically have difficulty in committing many assets toward recruitment due to the infrequency of hiring – as an example, large agencies are always hiring, so it makes sense to stand-up a recruiting unit, invest in recruiting materials and media, and pay for targeted advertising.

When an agency advertises for an open position, they are faced with a choice of how to conduct the hiring process. Traditionally, departments “opened” the process for applications for a period of time and when that time expired, they would review the applications, select those that were qualified, and begin with testing, interviews, etc. The current trend of minimal applicants, however, requires more aggressive hiring. This can be achieved by screening each application for an open position as soon as it is received so that a qualified applicant can immediately be contacted and put through the hiring process. Once an individual is made a conditional job offer, the process everywhere in Maine is fairly standard: a thorough background investigation, psychological exam, polygraph examination, and physical examination (or in the case of an individual with prior law enforcement, review of those documents from their former employer) are all important steps.

Finally, retention in most law enforcement agencies can be summarized as follows: employees who feel that they are paid well, provided with reasonable opportunities for professional development through training and specialization, equipped with adequate gear to safely do their jobs, and are valued and treated well by their employer are much more likely to stay put. When an officer resigns, an exit interview may provide insight into whether there are any internal conditions which contributed to their decision to move along. Turnover is not always an indication of an unhealthy organization; Maine officers are fairly portable due to a transferrable retirement plan, and today’s workforce is generally much more mobile than that of 20 years ago.

Recruitment / Selection / Retention – Findings:

Belfast has hired a number of employees in the past few years. The new employees appear to be a good mixture of officers with prior law enforcement experience, and those who are new to the profession. All agencies are experiencing lower numbers of applicants and difficulty in recruiting and hiring qualified candidates. BPD is no exception, finding applicants to fill their ranks is likely a combination of several factors including the desirable location of a coastal City, competitive wages, benefits that include health insurance and retirement.

Belfast PD's general hiring practices – advertising for openings on a variety of media platforms, police publications, MCJA, and with area colleges is standard practice in Maine. Chief Lincoln indicates that his department participates in job fairs and other events that may help recruitment.

It is apparent that BPD understands the need for more aggressive hiring practices. Chief Lincoln said that given the resources and opportunities within the department it is imperative that he present his department in the most favorable light when recruiting officers in the 21st century environment. He realizes the policing profession may be facing the most fundamental challenges to the profession with the recent civil unrest across the country and the efforts to defund, defame and replace law enforcement officers. Like most police chiefs, Chief Lincoln realizes the current sentiments against police across the country is a major consideration why potentially good candidates are not applying for law enforcement jobs.

Recruitment / Selection / Retention – Recommendations:

If possible, the department's continued involvement in high-school and collegiate job fairs should be encouraged. These venues provide an opportunity to cultivate applicants for open positions, but also allow BPD to make connections with potential future applicants.

While there are a number of factors why an agency may not utilize an evidence-based entry-level police officer written exams, especially for small agencies when hiring one officer, they should be considered for continuity of the hiring process and ensure a candidate has the level of knowledge needed for the job. They are especially important when hiring an applicant with no prior LE experience.

The Review Panel recommends that an exit interview be conducted with officers leaving the agency to determine if there are any internal conditions that are contributing to turnovers.

Promotions

Due to the pyramid shape of the traditional law enforcement organization, promotional opportunities may be uncommon and, statistically, most police officers never achieve rank. Due to the huge amount of liability that front line supervisors, seconds-in-command and chiefs are required to minimize and manage, these processes are hugely important and may be among the most momentous decisions made by a unit of government.

Promotions – Findings:

The Agreement Between City of Belfast and The Belfast Police Association / Maine Association of Police also known as "the contract," prescribes a process which allows the Chief to select an employee for promotion from a list. The list is required to be generated "based on personal evaluations which the Chief shall submit to a promotional Board as needed, on seniority or upon competitive promotional examination or on both at the discretion of the Board."

We learned that a recent Sergeant promotional process resulted in an Officer being promoted who is not certified as full time law enforcement in Maine. This Sergeant previously worked in another state as a full time law enforcement officer. Belfast PD's administration is working with the Maine Criminal Justice Academy to learn what will be required for the Sergeant to obtain full time certification in Maine. Several of the Officers we spoke with expressed lack of confidence with this Sergeant's abilities to provide them with effective guidance due to his inexperience in Maine. The Officers we spoke with told us of multiple occasions when they had to correct this Sergeants guidance in the field because of his unfamiliarity with Maine law. Several Officers feel this Sergeant was promoted over other in house candidates who were better qualified.

While the review team was at Belfast PD conducting interviews, a Patrol Officer was promoted to Corporal during an evening City Council meeting. The promotion surprised the review team and we were told by some officers that they learned of the promotion by reading it on the City Council Agenda that day, it was a surprise to them as well. It is our understanding that in the days following the promotion, staff filed a complaint and BPD administration responded and is working to resolve the issue.

Promotions – Recommendations:

The contract language defining the promotional process is confusing and should be examined. Conventional promotional processes range from those requiring a written test, essay test, oral board, personnel evaluation review, and psychological exams to assessment centers which require candidates to complete a series of tasks which test their readiness to lead, manage, supervise, train, encourage and discipline the department's police officers.

We recommend that the issue with Sergeant who is not certified as a full time LEO in Maine be resolved quickly. Belfast PD should require this Sergeant to obtain full time certification in Maine by a date certain, in the near future. If certification is not obtained, another more qualified Officer should be considered for this position. This situation may be viewed as what Gordon Graham, a respected public safety liability attorney and trainer, calls "a problem lying in wait". This situation is directly impacting agency morale and the Patrol Officers confidence in their Supervisors and Administration and needs to be resolved.

Whether the Department is required to utilize a promotional board or simply selects individuals to serve on a panel when necessary, it is important that the panel be carefully selected and that it is comprised of individuals with successful experience in police supervision and with members who represent the community.

Morale

Many years ago, an article was published which described a survey given to a large number of

police officers, including those in large and dangerous cities. The article asked officers what caused them the most stress at work; it allowed them to pick from among stressors such as being violently attacked, report writing, shift work, etc... Surprisingly, the majority of officers who responded reported that it was internal stress caused by perceived organizational unfairness which caused them the most stress. Keep in mind that police work is a fairly dangerous job – if employees would rather be out on the street arresting a violent felon than dealing with interoffice rumor and drama, we can agree that morale in the workplace is an important and challenging dynamic.

Morale is also a fickle thing. One toxic group member can have an outsized effect on morale. Pay is frequently considered a top contributor to high morale, and recent studies have suggested that this may be true. They also suggest that study respondents generally need to receive \$100,000 or greater per year before the majority report that their pay creates job satisfaction. Lastly, we have to remember that regardless of pay, benefits and work environment, some employees are simply harder to keep happy than others.

Morale – Findings:

During times of leadership transitions, new Chief's tend to focus on "hot spots" such as developing accurate personnel records and up to date policy manuals to ensure the agency is operating in compliance with regulatory requirements for law enforcement agencies in Maine.

During these times of transition, tenured staff members, who have grown used to the way things used to be done, can become cynical and hold onto vendettas from events in the past. This leads to contradictory agendas between the union members, supervisory staff and new administration. It is important for all the members of Belfast PD to recognize that this may be occurring at some level and that that they need to work together to become a unified team working toward the future with the same mission and goals.

When Officers lose perspective on ethical standards and the standards of the profession, they are vulnerable to cynicism. Cynicism is contagious and young officers who are exposed to cynical veteran officers are challenged to retain a constructive approach to their work. Thoughtful leadership and supervision, based on current professional standards, can be extremely useful to help heal agency internal culture. Cynicism can be prevented by focusing on commitment to wellness, ideals of honesty, fairness, justice, courage, integrity, loyalty and compassion.

Police Officers, Supervisors and Administrators have an enormous influence in how the community perceives them and their agency. To community members, individual officers, regardless of their rank, are the department. Community members may very well judge the organization by any one member's actions. During interviews with community members and Belfast PD staff, we heard numerous times that Chief Lincoln inherited a divided PD that hasn't enjoyed good internal function for some time, and that he was making progress improving things.

Morale – Recommendations:

Chief Lincoln, the supervisory staff and patrol officers are encouraged to work together to become a team with a unified vision and approach to law enforcement. As discussed elsewhere in this report, we recommend that the Belfast Police Department become familiar with MLEAP.

Police Chiefs cannot simply assign the tasks involved with accreditation to someone in the organization, nor can they do it all alone, everyone must work together. Participation in MLEAP is all-inclusive and can facilitate culture change within an agency by providing a focus on a new way of doing business based on professional standards. It can enhance morale by providing a blueprint for the agency to focus on as they work together to provide professional services to their community and its visitors. Development of a Program Manager within Belfast PD and perhaps some MLEAP assessors to support the program will cause Officers to interact and share information with staff from other agencies with similar professional values.

Officer wellness, stress management and critical incident procession are all important components of a managing a law enforcement agency. We recommend that Belfast PD train officers in this area and that those officers work with other peer support groups within the Maine law enforcement community. Resources for developing a good peer support system are the Maine State Police’s Member Assistance Team or the review panel members.

MLEAP program and standards manuals are available, free of charge, on the Maine Chiefs of Police Associations web site, located here; <http://mainechiefs.com/mleap> . Further information on MLEAP may be obtained from the Review Committee Chair or from Chief Shawn O’ Leary (Ret.), at Dirigo Safety LLC in Auburn, who serves as MLEAP’s Program Manager.

Many of the recommendations in other sections of this report are made with consideration toward improving morale.

Labor Relations / Collective Bargaining

Labor relations refers to the relationship between department and City management and the union, if one exists. Collective bargaining is the process by which two parties (the City and the union) reach an agreement over numerous facets of the employee / employer relationship including pay, benefits, and processes such as the investigation of complaints and discipline.

It is vital to have good chemistry between union representatives (frequently referred to as shop stewards) and City administration. Frequently, a simple dialogue and willingness to understand each other’s concerns and desires can help avoid grievances, confrontation and mistrust.

Labor Relations / Collective Bargaining – Findings:

The officers and supervisors (Sergeants) of Belfast PD are represented by the Belfast Police

Association/Maine Association of Police, which is a large national police union.

The current union contract is a one-year contract from July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021.

The contract appears fairly standard and includes pay raises, vacations, sick leave, hours of work, other standard rules, procedures and practices found in most police contracts.

The review panel spoke with the union shop steward and he described the relationship between management (Chief Lincoln) and the union as very adversarial. He indicated there is a lot of conflict in the labor/management relationship and he does not trust Chief Lincoln. He indicated that the adversarial relationship preceded Chief Lincoln and has continued under his administration.

The shop steward said there is very little positive communications between the Chief and the union. He indicated that meetings with the Chief seldom resolves issues or has had positive outcomes. The shop steward indicated that there was a vote of no confidence taken by the union when Chief Lincoln was appointed as Police Chief. He feels that the mistrust between the union and management goes back years, and has continued under Chief Lincoln.

Labor Relations / Collective Bargaining – Recommendations:

We recommend that the shop steward, the Chief and the City Manager remain in close and collegial communication to foster a better working relationship between management and the union. Efforts should focus on working conditions and any concerns being raised to the shop steward by members of the bargaining unit. It may be beneficial to schedule occasional meetings between the union and the City so that any simmering issues can be discussed and addressed before they reach boiling point.

In future collective bargaining meetings, it is crucial that the Chief do several things. He should conduct a thorough review of the existing contract and then meet with the City Manager to propose any changes to the contract which would enhance the City's ability to efficiently and effectively administer the department. He should conduct a comparative analysis of the pay, benefits and other notable sections of other benchmark departments so that the City Manager can know what to expect the union to request, and whether those requests are reasonable. This is especially important since the City manager has only been in the position for several months. The Chief should participate in all collective bargaining meetings. During those meetings, conversation will ensue regarding proposed contract language that, when operationalized, will affect his ability to run the PD.

These meetings can and should be a balancing act for the Chief – in matters of pay and benefits, his/her involvement should be minimal because any Chief will both desire competitive wages for his/her people, and understand the City's need to be conservative with taxpayer money. In matters of management, he should be assertive and advocate for the City's management rights. The key to a successful working relationship between management and union is open communications and mutual trust and respect for each other.

Internal Affairs

The internal affairs function refers to the process by which the department investigates complaints or information otherwise received which, if true, would constitute a violation of a department policy, state or federal law. The objective, fair, and prompt investigation of complaints is absolutely necessary to keep the community's trust that misconduct by the City's police officers will be addressed.

Because investigations into employee misconduct bump up against employee rights as defined by contract and labor law, it is imperative that the person conducting these investigations is properly trained to do so and possesses the temperament to both aggressively root out wrongdoing, and simultaneously convince officers that he/she cares about them individually and the preservation of the department's untarnished reputation as well.

Internal Affairs – Findings:

The union contract, Article 12 outlines the process for discipline, discharge and disputes but does not cover the internal investigation process of how an investigation is conducted. It does define the different discipline which can be imposed on an employee and explains that the City can discipline any employee for just cause. The contract also defines the process for members to grieve a decision by the City.

The Belfast Police Department's Policy, Complaints Against Police Employees 1.11, does outline the process of an internal investigation for investigating police misconduct. Complaints against department officers will be handled through the chain of command that allows supervisors to handle complaints such as, delivery of law enforcement services or improper attitudes and behaviors. The policy also allows the Chief to ask an outside agency to investigate a complaint when he deems appropriate.

The determination of whether or not an internal investigation is officially opened will be determined by the Chief. The policy states, The Chief may consider, but is not limited to the following issues in determining if an incident warrants an official IA investigation.

- a. Situations when a supervisor insists.
- b. Situations when citizens insist.
- c. Repeated patterns if performance deficiencies.
- d. Alleged criminal conduct.
- e. Serious complaints.

The Policy appears to closely follow the model policy provided by the Maine Chiefs of Police Association, which contains mandatory minimum policy standards set forth by the Maine Criminal Justice Academy. The guidelines outlined in the policy should provide officers with

sufficient knowledge of how the internal affairs investigations are conducted and under what circumstances.

Chief Lincoln is the only member of the agency with training related to conducting internal affairs investigations.

Internal Affairs – Recommendations:

Because of the high stakes involved in these matters, it is crucial that those conducting IA investigations and those responsible for reviewing investigative findings and administering discipline (the Chief) have training in the proper procedure for handling them. This is also a skill that can become stale, so occasionally refreshing this training is important. We recommend internal affairs / officer misconduct investigation training for the Deputy Chief and Sergeants of Belfast PD.

Although the lack of any internal investigations can be interpreted as a good sign – and it probably is – administrators should keep in mind that when an IA can be conducted based on department documents and law, it should be. When an administration has a credible allegation of misconduct and does not follow the proper steps to investigate, employees and the public can lose faith in the process and worry that good order and discipline is not being maintained within the agency.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Policies and Procedures manual is the single most important guide for every member of the police department, from the rookie trainee up to and including the Chief of Police. There is no set of written documents as important to the orderly operation and administration of a law enforcement organization.

It is very important for the policy manual to be organized in a clear and logical fashion, so that users can find what they are looking for. Users should also find it a reasonable task to read through the manual and remember what is in it. No employee should ever be in doubt about what is expected of him or her in terms of job expectations or performance as prescribed.

The Policies and Procedures manual must be thought of by all employees as a current and real working document and resource that is in constant use, not just when an employee is being considered for discipline. This means it should be regularly reviewed so that outdated information, policies, and procedures are either updated or removed. The best manual is one that is so clear and complete that no one is ever surprised about their responsibilities and duties.

In Maine, there are 12 policies which police departments are required to have by law. For

those policies, minimum policy standards are developed by the Maine Criminal Justice Academy. The Maine Chiefs of Police Association then uses those minimum standards to craft model policies for departments to use if they so choose. Departments are not required to use the model policies, but they must ensure that they have policies containing the minimum standards.

In addition to the model policies, the Maine Chiefs of Police Association also produces numerous other model policies, most of which are adopted in some form by police departments in the state.

Policies and Procedures – Findings:

The Belfast Police Department has 34 active policies. The policies appear to have all been recently reviewed, and some have been recently updated. The active policies can be found on a common drive and accessed using department's computer system. There are no hard copy binders of the policies at the police department and if needed, one would have to be printed off and retained by the officers. The panel did not find or learn of any printed copies of the policy manual in the patrol work areas.

There is also one binder filled with hard copy policies that were in place under Chief McFadden's command over the years while he was the Chief. This single binder is almost 300 pages long and has a mixture of current and outdated policies. Chief Lincoln explained that the department no longer follows this old policy manual (the manual was never distributed to the officers by the former Chief) and uses the aforementioned policy manual on the shared drive that he has put together. Chief Lincoln has never rescinded the old policy manual and recognizes there should be a formal rescinding to avoid confusion.

The Review Panel inspected each of the mandatory policies, with the exception of an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV, or drone) policy which Belfast PD does not have. This policy is only required by law for agencies with a drone program – Belfast has none. For each reviewed policy, we checked the document against a random selection of several minimum standards. All were found to be properly updated. This is good, and indicates that the department administration is staying on top of the required updates. It is also good because the Chief is required to certify to the Academy each year that his / her policies have been updated to include any changes to the minimum standards.

There are at least two policies (Deadly Force Incident Procedures and Professional Conduct and Responsibility) that appear to be duplicates. This will undoubtedly lead to confusion, and there are multiple other subject areas covering low-frequency and high-liability tasks with multiple policies.

The policy manual organization is confusing. Generally, the low-frequency / high-liability policies are grouped together for ease of location and reference. BPD's policy manual has what appears to be four sections with the first three represented as 1-3 with subsections and the last being 6 with subsections.

BPD administration encourages officer involvement in the policy process, in the form of reviewing the policy after it has been put out by the administration. They have ten days to make recommendations and agree or disagree with the policy. The patrol union and city attorney are also heavily involved and given a copy of any proposed policy for their review.

During our interviews, we learned that reliance on the agencies policies and procedures to guide officers in their daily activities is likely a relatively new concept for the agency, introduced by Chief Lincoln. While there were policies and procedures in the past, they were not widely distributed nor promoted by the prior administration. Some Officers we met with erroneously said that the Union Contract was the policy and procedure manual we were asking about.

The panel learned that Belfast PD Officers respond to emergencies in other communities when the need arises. Belfast PD does not have any agreements in place to define and guide these activities.

Policy and Procedure – Recommendations:

In regards to the Policy Manual:

Consider standardizing the policy header with fields for the date the policy was put into place and/or the date it was last updated, and the next review date. All policies should be on a review schedule with high-liability policies being reviewed more frequently. Categories should be created in the manual for ease in locating a particular policy.

Consider thoroughly reviewing the policy manual to ensure there is only one version of each policy. This will simplify the process for officers when they want to research policy as they handle an ongoing issue.

Make sure the old policy manual is rescinded so there is no confusion by staff who might have copies of the old policy manual that they are following.

If the policy manual is only available via computer, the department must ensure that they can be accessed by staff when they are away from the building in the field. Some staff indicated that the policies could be reviewed via the police MDT while others did not know where to access the policy manual. The policy manual should be accessible to every employee at all times and they should know exactly where to find the policy manual at all times. Contingencies should be made for at least a few up to date hard copy manuals in case the officers are ever without power or access to a computer.

Several members of the department indicated that the policy review period and adoption takes an extremely long time due to the fact that the policies are reviewed by so many entities. It is important to remember that unless a law enforcement agency is creating their own policy and as long as the policy is copied from an accredited law enforcement agency, it is

not necessary for the policy to be vetted by an attorney. This, however, may be a policy of the Belfast Police Department that cannot be circumvented.

Hiring of Overtime is one policy recommendation strongly recommended by the Panel Members. There have been some misunderstandings around the hiring of overtime specifically around overtime that is to be filled on an emergency basis as opposed to overtime assigned for non-emergencies. A policy in effect that is accepted by both the administration and the union should alleviate misunderstandings.

BPD should adopt a model policy that provides guidance on the use of Narcan. It was brought to the panel's attention that this life-saving agent is used by the department with talk of incidents where officers have been involved with successful deployments that have saved lives.

In addition, BPD should adopt an awards and recognition policy. Law enforcement officers, by nature of their jobs, are more apt to be involved with acts of heroism and life saving more so than other professions. It is important these acts be celebrated by the administration and staff.

The panel noted a lack of uniformity with cameras (in cruiser and body). It is optional to wear a body camera and the officers can purchase a camera with their clothing allowance if they choose. This type of program needs to be more universal and consistent. The only successful body camera program is one that has a policy that guides the officer on when and how to use the cameras along with providing the same cameras and software to all members for equality.

We recommend that Belfast PD pursue development of mutual aid or other similar types of agreements to define and guide responses outside of the City of Belfast and to ensure other agencies are able to assist during emergencies in Belfast.

As suggested elsewhere in this report, Belfast PD can follow established MLEAP standards relating to policy content and review schedules to maintain recommended practices.

TRAINING

The importance of a robust training program cannot be overstated. A well-trained police officer not only benefits himself or herself, but other fellow officers, their organization and the community they serve.

Although small departments may not have SWAT teams or K-9 units, they must be able to provide basic services to the community.

Society expects the police to know all civil, criminal, and motor vehicle laws, to obtain confessions, fingerprints, and DNA. They also expect the police to be in excellent physical

shape, be proficient with firearms, drive with due regard and apprehend all criminals without injury. Most of society knows this is a myth. However, wise police administrators know that well trained police officers do in fact catch criminals, obtain confessions, collect fingerprints, DNA, and other relevant crime scene evidence. They are also able to drive defensively, know the appropriate criminal codes, and answer all calls for service.

These calls for service may be as minor as a barking dog complaint or as serious as a person with a gun. The police must respond to each call professionally and demonstrate their ability to investigate the complaint and reach a final conclusion.

State statutes mandate that all law enforcement officers, either full or part-time, have annual mandatory training. This training includes 20 hours of mandatory topics selected by the Academy, and 10 hours of elective training (approved by the Chief) per year. In 2020, the mandatory topics include 2 hours each in: Firearms qualification, new law and case law updates, Situational Use of Force, Wellness of Law Enforcement Officers, and Law Enforcement Approach to Substance Abuse.

In addition to the provision of training to meet mandatory minimums, departments use training to correct performance deficiencies, to enhance department capabilities, or to provide professional development. For purposes of this report, professional development refers to training that prepares officers to serve an enhanced role in the department. These roles could include an instructor certification so that the officer can teach critical skills to his/her teammates and other area officers. It might include a special skill needed at the PD, such as Civil Rights Officer training, so the department has personnel prepared to respond to and investigate hate crimes. It might also include training that is provided to prepare an interested employee for a future opportunity (promotion to Sergeant, assignment to Detective, etc.).

Training - Findings:

During interviews, training was described as abundant at BPD. Officers can apply for any training that they would like to attend and are seldom denied. In general, officers indicated that the department is proactive in offering training to officers in order to cultivate in-house instructor talent. Belfast PD has a policy which guides basic training, training specific to newly acquired positions, and how training is requested and approved.

We heard from several officers who told us that although training is plentiful, it does not appear targeted to satisfy a specific strategic training plan, but rather that particular training topics are simply selected by individual officers. We were provided an example of some very expensive training no longer being utilized when a certified Drug Recognition Expert did not maintain certification requirements as he became interested in other areas of law enforcement. This officer still works at Belfast PD and Chief Lincoln told us they are working on a plan to regain his certification as a DRE.

BPD has 1 Firearms Instructor, 5 Field Training Officers, 1 Taser Instructor and 1 Use of Force instructor.

The required annual mandatory trainings are accessed by officers through an online training platform. This platform and one other like it are used by at least half of the agencies in the state for mandatory training. BPD recently tracks their mandatory training records on a spreadsheet.

Training - Recommendations:

The Panel recommends that department administration form a simple strategic plan for training, in order to help focus the training that is offered to employees. The plan should work to satisfy the mandatory training, satisfy the other safety training (blood borne pathogens, fire extinguisher, etc.), help develop instructor capacity, develop future leaders and meet department priorities. As an example, due to identified concern with drugged driving because of marijuana legalization, some departments are working toward 100% of the department being trained in Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement.

The Deputy Chief or another Supervisor should be assigned as the department's training coordinator, with responsibility to develop the annual plan, assign mandatory and elective training, maintain training records, and ensure that training is generally supplied fairly and evenly, and benefits the department's goals and objectives. Training is discussed in MLEAP, chapter 3.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Panel members feel confident that each significant issue brought to our attention has been addressed in this report and that this document, when considered in its entirety, provides a comprehensive, fair and independent assessment of the Belfast Police Department. Because of the number of interviews conducted, not every concern raised is specifically addressed in this report – we considered the significance of the concern, the frequency with which it was raised by interviewees, and how the information we gathered dovetailed with our personal observations on site.

We were pleased to find that in general, department operations are in compliance with state law. The facility and the department's equipment is in generally good shape, though we make recommendations for improving both.

Of the concerns we have delineated for you in this report, we recommend you initially focus on the following areas:

1. The Sergeant not certified as a full time law enforcement officer in Maine should be addressed immediately.

2. The need to improve the nature of relationship between the administration and the bargaining unit leadership is apparent. Members of the agency rely on this relationship to guide and lead them when issues arise. During our interviews we encountered staff members who felt torn between their desire to help the new administration build the agency for the future, because they feared the union leadership would frown upon them for doing so. We believe existing tensions may be getting influenced by events from the past, which are now resolved. Former employees involved in those events are no longer employed by BPD but may be influencing younger Officers. Our suggestions are intended to assist the administration and bargaining unit leadership with looking to the future rather than the past, and to build their own functional relationships.
3. Become familiar with the MLEAP program and adapt practices which adhere to the standards outlined, particularly as recommended throughout our report.
4. The need to engage more frequently with the Belfast community, Department Heads, and with community partners.

The women and men who make up Belfast PD were intelligent, invested in making their department better, and they appear to be well regarded in the community. In short, none of the issues that we uncovered and documented in this report are beyond the ability of the leadership of the agency and the City to repair. We believe they will find the line officers ready and eager to assist them in these areas.

The panel believes it is important to note that we conducted this evaluation during the COVID 19 pandemic and during a time of civil unrest, at times creating mistrust of law enforcement in our nation. These are extraordinary and extreme circumstances for law enforcement officers who are working in this environment. Precautions to prevent community spread of the disease have curtailed law enforcement options, shift assignments and generally scaled back police department operations. Results of the precautions include limited personal contact between law enforcement officers and citizens, limited community engagement and a negative impact on officer morale. Just by going to work and doing their jobs, Officers subject themselves to public scrutiny, disease exposure and constant worry about bringing disease into their homes where families, children and support systems reside. Additionally, the media and citizen based groups have created increased scrutiny and, at times, mistrust of law enforcement. This leads to additional and significant stress for law enforcement officers, their families and the members of the communities we serve. The concepts discussed in this paragraph can combine to negatively impact community perceptions, internal PD relationships and overall Officer wellness. We urge readers of this report to be mindful of these considerations and join us in hoping many of the circumstances soon pass causing relationships to improve.

This Review Panel has made its recommendations based on our collective law enforcement, supervisory and leadership experience. We believe these recommendations to be reasonable and consistent with best practices. We repeatedly and thoroughly reviewed our findings to ensure accuracy and fairness. We hope you find that our work product is useful to you as you chart a course for the future of the Belfast Police Department, which we believe to be bright.