

Townsend Police Department 2020 Annual Report

The Townsend Police Department shall be committed in the preservation of peace and protection of life and property. Members of the Townsend Police Department must pledge a dedicated responsibility to the Law Enforcement Profession, further requiring that each member be attentive in the delivery of quality services. We further recognize our responsibility to maintain order while affording dignity and respect to every individual. Our objective will be to develop partnerships within the community in an effort to improve the overall quality of life for all that reside, work, or visit the Town of Townsend.

On behalf of the Townsend Police Department, it is my privilege to present the Department's 2020 Annual Report.

It is difficult to adequately describe the challenges of 2020 to the law enforcement profession. In addition to the difficulties posed by the global COVID-19 pandemic, citizens in towns and cities throughout the country have lost faith in their police departments due to a seemingly endless stream of controversial interactions with citizens. This has led to challenges to police legitimacy and an erosion of public support for the police from all walks of life. While we have not experienced the loss of public support many departments have, we understand that we must police in a manner consistent with the values of the community if we are to build on the level of support we have long enjoyed. To that end, the Townsend Police Department continues to work tirelessly to build and maintain trust within our community. We work with community groups, organizations, and leaders to build trust, legitimacy, and partnerships. Our on-going training, whether in de-escalation, defensive tactics, use of force decision making, or implicit bias is aimed at providing our officers the tools to protect you, the public, and themselves, in a competent and professional manner. We will continue our efforts to assess and critique our policies, training and procedures to ensure that they remain consistent with industry standards and community values.



We have embraced many of the recommendations made by President Obama's Task Force on 21st Century Policing which published its Final Report in May 2015. This task force was commissioned by the President in light of events that have strained relations and threaten police legitimacy. The final report of the task force advances six main topic areas or "pillars" that provide a foundation of sound policing practices that promote effective crime reduction while building public trust and strengthening community relations. Incorporating recommendations from the report into our policies and protocols

has been the focus of my work on the Community Policing Committee for the International Chiefs of Police Association. In furtherance of this effort, the department plans to formally re-enter the "self-assessment" phase of accreditation this year through the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission. Achieving accreditation/certification requires departments to develop a comprehensive and uniform set of written directives that promote the use of "best practices" in meeting their mission. These policies and procedures provide a solid foundation for making evidence-based decisions, limiting liability and risk exposure. Accreditation will strengthen our commitment to accountability and excellence within the organization and bring us in compliance with recently passed criminal justice reform. We are in the process of developing a timeline for this project and will do what we can to control costs by seeking alternative funding sources.



The department continues to take advantage of state and federal grants. In 2020, we received grants for traffic direction and control equipment, a civilian alert system (CodeRED), police bicycles, computers, and a radar message board. We also received funding for a fingerprint scanner, scheduling software, and were awarded the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Grant to purchase body worn cameras for our patrol staff. In addition, the department began partnering with Med-Project. Med-Project provides the department with a kiosk for unwanted and expired medication and disposes of these drugs with no cost to the department. These grants amount to over \$100,000 in financial assistance or approximately 6% of the department's operating budget. The police department will continue to seek opportunities for funding to enhance our abilities and reduce costs through increased quality control and oversight.

Despite more than 15,000 calls for service, the department received only 8 complaints against the department or its personnel in 2020. None of these complaints were sustained. These were the only internal investigations conducted by the department in 2020 (there were 6 in 2019). An overview of the department's complaint/commendation process can be found at our website. Complaints and commendations can be submitted there or forms to do so can be picked up at the police station and/or Town Clerk's Office.



On the personnel front, I was appointed Police Chief in January (interim with permanent appointment made in April) to replace Chief Richard Bailey who retired effective January 1st. The department also welcomed two new patrol officers: Officer Christopher Tucker and Officer Paul Theodoulou. These officers come to us with prior experience. Officer Tucker was hired in January after serving as a police officer with the Shirley Police Department. Officer Theodoulou was hired in September after serving for the Fitchburg Police Department for 5 years. Marcie Furlong was also hired in September to serve as the department's Administrative Assistant. Ms. Furlong has extensive experience in communications/dispatch having served with the Massachusetts State Police, Boxborough Police, and Tyngsborough Police Departments. A number of veteran officers were recognized for their efforts in 2020 as well. Lt. Mark

Giancotti was recognized for 25 years of service to the Town of Townsend and officers Jeffrey Giles and Michael Marchand were presented Life Saving Awards. In October, officers Giles and Marchand responded to a motor vehicle accident and encountered the motorist in full cardiac arrest. The quality and timely care provided by these officers saved the person's life and are a representation of the fine work done by the men and women of the Townsend Police Department on a daily basis.

Currently, the Townsend Police Department has a vibrant array of community policing programs designed to engage the citizenry in order to improve the delivery of efficient police services. You can find information about our programs, social media accounts, and about the community notification system the department employs to convey emergency and non-emergency information to residents on our website (townsendpd.org).

Our entire department remains committed to doing our best to maintain the high quality of life enjoyed in the Town of Townsend. I ask for your continued support as we move forward, and thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Chief of Police.

Respectfully submitted,

James P. Sartell, Chief of Police