

POLICE DEPARTMENT

To the Citizens and Taxpayers of Newton,

First of all, I want to apologize for the length of this report. But I feel that it's important to explain the reasoning behind my budget request, and the police department's operational and fiscal relationship with the community and the average residential taxpayer. As with any other relationship, whether it be spousal, parental, business, political or public service provider, from time to time we all need to do a re-assessment and think just what our relationships mean to us, and how much of an investment we are willing to make.

Over the last several years, the police department's activity has gone through the roof to the extent that it's been difficult to maintain an excellent service quality. Because of our full-time staffing level of five (5) officers, proactive criminal and narcotic investigations are impossible. The department can only react to what we get called to do, and little more. For example, most high profile, proactive narcotic investigations, like the ones currently being conducted in Kingston, are not done in Newton. We have one (1) officer per shift to answer calls and do follow-ups, and we have no part-time or full-time criminal investigator. The last full-time officer position was added in 1996 (10 yrs. ago), which brought the department to its current staffing level of five (5) full-time officers.

Since 1996, the town's population has increased from 3,888 to 4,494. This represents a 16% increase of 606 residents. The amount of taxable properties has also increased from 1,536 to 1,854. This represents a 21% increase of 318 properties. These figures were taken from annual Town Reports for the dates indicated.

Everything breaks down to percentages and averages. If the Town's population and property tax base has increased 16% and 21%, so has the police department's activity. And, these figures do not take into consideration statute changes and the subsequent increase in accountability and workload requirements brought on by social demands.

When I first came to Newton I wasn't exactly sure what the community was like. I was retiring on a full police pension from Massachusetts, but I still had a passion for the job and I thought that a smaller department in a nice little community would be a good way to ease myself out. My brother-in-law lives in South Hampton and works at General Electric with a couple of people who live in Newton. Curious, he asked them what they thought I would be getting into in Newton. They answered, "I don't know, probably an occasional skunk or two in the road."

Well, I've come to love the Town of Newton, but it's been a little more than just a few skunks in the road. I'd like to share with the Town some of the experiences I've had over the past four (4) years:

(1) The two (2) times we had to take a middle-aged male out of his residence on South Main Street. He had aluminum foil rolled up and sticking out of his ears and he said he was getting interference from the radio he had plugged in, sitting in the kitchen sink, with more aluminum foil extended from the antenna and out the kitchen window.

(2) Corporal Jewett on routine patrol observed a man who was passed-out behind the wheel of a vehicle parked at a bus stop on South Main St. Vomit had coagulated on the driver's door. Corporal Jewett found the man wearing a black t-shirt with large white letters stating "POLICE." The man was also wearing a full police duty belt which included a 9mm pistol, and a pump shotgun was slung across the back seat of the car.

(3) The 9-1-1 call Corporal Jewett received from a woman on New Boston Road for a Restraining Order Violation. The woman woke up and found her estranged boyfriend in her kitchen drinking beer from her refrigerator. When Corporal Jewett arrived, the man fled out the back door and into the woods. With the assistance of Plaistow's K-9, Corporal Jewett apprehended the man approximately 500' from the house. The man had a 9mm pistol stuffed in his belt and he had recently been discharged from the Marine Corps with an undesirable discharge.

(4) A heroin overdose death investigation of a young woman on Highland Street that culminated in an arrest for manslaughter.

(5) An officer on patrol on the midnight shift who stopped a vehicle for erratic operation and ended up assisting in delivering a baby.

(6) Seeing Corporal Jewett and the Town of Newton featured on the Dr. Phil Show for Corporal Jewett's assistance in apprehending a runaway teenager.

(7) A woman who was beat up by her boyfriend at a residence on South Main Street. The woman was able to escape and run to a neighbor's house to call 9-1-1. The male perpetrator is still in jail. Another notable domestic situation occurred on Peaslee Crossing Road when a boyfriend head-butted his girlfriend and threw her off his motorcycle. The boyfriend dragged her back to his house where he continued to beat her, breaking her jaw and cracking her eye-socket. I understand that he was recently released from jail.

(8) The time we had to call out SWAT for an armed male in an apartment building who told witnesses that he would shoot the police if they came in his apartment.

(9) The time that Corporal Jewett and I had to do an involuntary evaluation admissions (IEA) for a resident who stated that he wished he had come out of his house with his gun so that the police would have shot him. He smelled of gasoline and he stated that he had thought of lighting himself on fire.

(10) Who would have thought that a tractor-trailer load of marijuana would be driven across the Mexican border destined for a commercial storage unit in Newton, NH.

(11) And, who would have thought that 25 pounds of marijuana and \$50,000 in cash would be seized from a house on Thornell Road.

(12) And then there's the little old guy living on Peaslee Crossing Road who threw a chair through the sliding glass door of his prior residence to get at his estranged wife. Officers found duck tape, rope, two (2) sets of chains with locks, a Taiser, a map, a note pad and two (2) quart bottles of Jack Daniels in the trunk of his car which was parked just down the street on Zoe Lane.

(13) And the complaints of what was perceived to be inappropriate conduct from a door-to-door salesman. The department's investigation revealed that the salesman had legally changed his name, but under current sex offender laws he was required to register as a sex offender.

(14) And the sixteen (16) year old girl, who had a sexual engagement with a non-registered, convicted sex offender at a residence on South Main Street. The victim declined to prosecute because she was embarrassed.

(15) During the past month, the department, along with DCYF, took into state custody a two (2) month old infant on South Main Street who was born addicted to cocaine. The mother, who had been arrested two (2) weeks before by Corporal Jewett, is currently in a vegetative state and is not expected to recover from an overdose, and the father tested positive for cocaine the day before.

(16) And then we get the almost routine incidents like the fatal accident on South Main Street, a pursuit and near fatal accident on North Main Street, three (3) separate reported attempted abductions that were investigated and found to be falsely reported, a teacher who resigned after writing inappropriate e-mails to students, two (2) suicides, the DWI's, other lower profile domestics, motor vehicle accidents, and all the other things the police attend to on a daily basis.

While we're at it, we should probably throw in a couple of incidents that occurred just prior to my tenure: a school administrator that was arrested and admitted to a heroin addiction, and the infamous arrest and confiscation of thirty-two (32) fighting dogs, drugs, and nearly \$ 300,000 in US Currency.

It's pertinent to note that most of this police work was done with an allotted complement of five (5) full-time officers, but because of personnel turnovers, it was very often done with less.

A front-page article in the Sunday Eagle Tribune on December 3, 2006 showed that the Town of Newton employs the lowest ratio of full-time officers at 1.1 for every 1,000 residents. FBI statistics revealed that New England towns average 2.5 officers for every resident. Even if we think those numbers are a little extreme, if we use Kingston's 1.4 officers for every 1,000 residents, the Town of Newton would have seven (7) full-time officers.

The proposed budget recommends an increased usage of Part-Time Officers instead of employing more expensive full-time officers, thereby saving the taxpayers the costs associated with additional benefits. The police budget, as presented, represents a total cost of approximately:

- \$341 to the average residential taxpayer with a home assessment of \$ 300,000
- \$456 to the average residential taxpayer with a home assessment of \$ 400,000 and,

- \$570 to the average residential taxpayer with a home assessment of \$ 500,000.
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I think most people would jump at the opportunity to pay a private contractor the above prices annually for :

- Someone to watch their homes during the day while they are at work,
- Someone to greet and watch over their kids during the day while they are at school,
- Someone to patrol their streets nearly 24 hours a day,
- Someone to be at their home within minutes if they felt their personal safety was threatened, and
- Someone to answer any complaint they might have, 24 hours a day when they don't know who else to call.

I believe the proposed budget is a responsible one in that it balances the requirements of the police department with needs of the Town.

Again, I apologize for the length of this report and if you're still awake, I hope you found it informative. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions, comments, or suggestions concerning this budget request or this report and/or the operation and service ability of the Newton Police Department.

2006 POLICE DEPARTMENT STATISTICS

ARRESTS:

Aggravated Assault	1
All Other Larceny	1
All Other Offenses	19
Bad Checks	1
Destruction/Damage/Vandalism	4
Disorderly Conduct	3
Driving Under the Influence	15
Drug/Narcotic Violations	5
Drunkenness	19
False Pretenses/Swindle/Co	1
Intimidation	2
Liquor Law Violations	2
Runaway	2
Shoplifting	1
Simple Assault	7
Traffic, Town By-Law Offenses	95
TOTAL ARRESTS	178

CALLS FOR SERVICE:

911 Hang-up/Abandoned Call	66
Motor Vehicle, Abandoned	5
Administrative, Other	1,173
Alarm	122
Alcohol Related	7
Animal Complaint	295
Assault	8
Assist Fire Department	69
Assist Motorist	36
Assist Officer	54
Assist Other Agency	113
Assist Rescue	139
Bad Check	11
Bomb Scare	1
Burglary	11
Business Check	2,670
Civil Dispute-Domestic Related	7
Civil Problem	38
Civil Standby	37
Court	23
Criminal Mischief	45
Criminal Threatening	9
Criminal Trespass	6
Cruiser Maintenance	559
Death, Unattended	3
Despondent Person	2
Directed Patrol	2,093
Disturbance	24
Domestic Disturbance	41
Domestic Related	47
Drug-Related	7
Dumping, Illegal	9
Emotionally Distressed Person	1
Escort/Transport	10
Field Interview	16
Fight/Brawl	3
Fingerprint Non-Criminal	16
Fireworks Complaint	5
Follow-up	671
Forgery	1
Fraud	6
Harassment, Other	7
Harassment, Phone	17
Juvenile Problem	61

Lockout, Motor Vehicle	7
Lockout, Residential	4
Mental Incompetent	7
Message Delivery	13
Missing Person	14
Motor Vehicle Accident	58
Motor Vehicle, Other	101
Motor Vehicle, Speed/Reckless	150
Motor Vehicle Stop	1,594
Motor Vehicle Theft	4
Mutual Aid	119
Neighbor Dispute	6
Noise Complaint	51
Non-Criminal	40
Nuclear Plant Issues	4
OHRV Complaint	11
OHRV Maintenance	15
OHRV Patrol	33
Park & Walk	3
Parking Complaint	86
Police Complaint	3
Police Information	256
Property Damage, Unknown Cause	23
Property, Lost	19
Property, Recovered	19
Public Assist	74
Reported Hazard	63
Report Writing	254
Robbery	2
School Crosswalk	108
Serve Paperwork	361
Serve Warrant	31
Sex Offender Registration	6
Sex Offenses	3
Shoplifting	1
Smoke/Fire Investigation	8
Suspicious Circumstance	86
Suspicious Vehicle	84
Suicide	4
Suicide, Attempted	4
Suicide, Threatened	5
Theft	32
Traffic Hazard	85
Tree Down/Wires Down	22
Truancy Check	14
Underage Drinking Patrol	1

Use of Force	2
Unsecured Building	6
Vacation Watch	432
VIN Verification	60
Weapon Related	6
Well-Being Check	39
TOTAL CALLS FOR SERVICE	12,977

Respectfully submitted,
Lawrence E. Streeter
Chief of Police