

Municipal Police Training Committee
Standards Subcommittee Meeting
MPTC Headquarters – Randolph
September 27, 2023

I. CALL TO ORDER

At 9:03 a.m. on September 27, 2023, an in-person meeting of the Standards Subcommittee was called to order at MPTC headquarters in Randolph, MA. Advance notice of the meeting was posted in compliance with the open meeting laws. A quorum of the seven-member Subcommittee was present.

Subcommittee Members Present

- Chair Kevin Coppinger
- Superintendent Nora Baston
- Superintendent Richard Sullivan
- Chief Jennifer Gundersen
- Chief Edward Conley

MPTC Staff Present

- Jim O'Brien
- Andrea Nardone
- Lara Thomas
- Felisha Arnold
- Denise Flagg
- Gina Masotta

II. APPROVAL OF SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES

A motion was made by Chief Gundersen and seconded by Chief Conley to approve the Standards Subcommittee minutes from the August 15, 2023 Meeting. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

III. POLICE WAIVERS AND OUT-OF-STATE EXEMPTIONS

Temporary Waivers

There were no temporary waivers on the September agenda.

Out-of-State Exemptions

There were five out-of-state exemptions on the September agenda.

1. Keith J. Walker

NECC PD

- Basic Training:
 - Graduated July 10, 1998 from the 511-hour 115th New Hampshire Police Academy.
- Work Experience as a Law Enforcement Officer: 25 years as a fulltime officer.
 - July 1998 – July 2023: New Hampshire State Trooper (rising to Lieutenant).
- In-Service/Specialized Training: Yes, in NH.
- Break in Service: No.
- CPR/First Responder Certified: Yes (5/6/23).
- MPTC Firearms Certified: Yes (5/23/23).
- MPTC Police Officer Core Competency Exam: Yes (86% on 8/19/23).

A motion was made by Chief Conley and seconded by Chief Gundersen to recommend to the full Committee that Lieutenant Keith J. Walker has the necessary training/experience to obtain an exemption from the requirement of completing a fulltime MPTC operated/authorized Police Academy. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

2. Alexandra N. Cebula

South Hadley PD

- Basic Training:
 - Graduated June 4, 2020 from the 930-hour 19-2 Anchorage, Alaska Basic Police Training Program.
- Work Experience as a Law Enforcement Officer: 2+ years as a fulltime officer.
 - June 2020 – June 2023: Fairbanks, AK Police Department (excluding maternity leave from January – May 2021, 2+ years of work experience).
- In-Service/Specialized Training: Yes, in AK.
- Break in Service: No.
- CPR/First Responder Certified: Yes (TY24 in-service 9/20/23).
- MPTC Firearms Certified: Yes (8/8/23).
- MPTC Police Officer Core Competency Exam: Yes (91% on 8/22/23).

A motion was made by Superintendent Baston and seconded by Superintendent Sullivan to recommend to the full Committee that Officer Alexandra N. Cebula has the necessary training/experience to obtain an exemption from the requirement of completing a fulltime MPTC operated/authorized Police Academy. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

3. Kevin E. O'Connell

Waltham PD

- Basic Training:
 - Graduated December 21, 1991 from a Northeast Regional Police Institute Reserve/Intermittent Training Program
 - Graduated October 22, 1992 from a CT Municipal Police Training Council Basic Police Recruit Training Course held at the CT Police Academy.
- Work Experience as a Law Enforcement Officer: 30+ years as a fulltime officer.
 - October 1992 – April 1993: Fulltime officer for West Hartford PD.
 - March 1993: Waltham PD applied for an out-of-state exemption.
 - April 1993 – present: Fulltime officer for Waltham PD (current rank Chief).
- In-Service/Specialized Training: Yes.
- Break in Service: No.
- CPR/First Responder Certified: Yes (TY23 in-service complete).
- MPTC Firearms Certified: Yes (TY23 in-service complete).

A motion was made by Superintendent Baston and seconded by Chief Conley to recommend to the full Committee that it reconfirm Chief Kevin E. O'Connell's exemption from the requirement of completing a fulltime MPTC operated/authorized Police Academy. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

4. Timothy R. Landers

Concord PD

- Basic Training:
 - Graduated November 28, 1989 from a MCJTC Reserve/Intermittent Training Program.
 - Graduated November 16, 1990 from a New Hampshire Recruit Academy for fulltime police officers.
- Work Experience as a Law Enforcement Officer: 30+ years as a fulltime officer.
 - November 1990 – April 1995: Fulltime patrol officer for Dover, NH PD.
 - April 1996 – June 1998: Fulltime patrol officer for Somersworth, NH PD.
 - July 1998: Concord, MA PD applied for an out-of-state exemption.
 - July 1998 – present: Fulltime officer for Concord PD (current rank Sergeant).
- In-Service/Specialized Training: Yes.
- Break in Service: No.
- CPR/First Responder Certified: Yes (TY23 in-service complete).
- MPTC Firearms Certified: Yes (TY23 in-service complete).

A motion was made by Superintendent Sullivan and seconded by Chief Conley to recommend to the full Committee that it reconfirm Sergeant Timothy R. Landers' exemption from the requirement of completing a fulltime MPTC operated/authorized Police Academy. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

5. Russell J. St. Pierre

Gardner PD

- Basic Training:
 - Graduated May 5, 1990 from a Northeast Regional Police Institute Reserve/Intermittent Training Program.
 - Graduated November 16, 1990 from a New Hampshire Recruit Academy for fulltime police officers.
- Work Experience as a Law Enforcement Officer: 30+ years as a fulltime officer.
 - November 1990 – March 2000: Fulltime patrol officer for Rindge, NH PD.
 - August 1999 – February 2006: Part-time and fulltime officer for Lunenburg, MA PD.
 - March 2000: Templeton, MA PD applied for an out-of-state exemption.
 - March 2000 – October 2005: Police officer for Templeton PD.
 - February 2006 – present: Fulltime officer for Gardner PD (current rank Sergeant).
- In-Service/Specialized Training: Yes.
- Break in Service: No.
- CPR/First Responder Certified: Yes (TY23 in-service complete).
- MPTC Firearms Certified: Yes (TY23 in-service complete).

A motion was made by Chief Conley and seconded by Superintendent Sullivan to recommend to the full Committee that it reconfirm Sergeant Russell J. St. Pierre's exemption from the requirement of completing a fulltime MPTC operated/authorized Police Academy. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

Out-of-State Exemption Advisories

The September agenda had one request by MPTC staff for guidance on an out-of-state exemption advisory.

1. Jason A. Bettencourt

Peabody PD

The Subcommittee was initially presented with the training and work experience of Officer Bettencourt at the August 15, 2023 Standards Subcommittee Meeting. At that meeting, the Subcommittee was advised that Officer Bettencourt graduated on August 30, 2017 from the 12-week, 524.5-hour Uniformed Police Training Program run by the Department of Homeland Security at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) in Glynco, GA. From August 2017 through the present, he has worked fulltime as a federal police officer at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, ME. The Subcommittee members in attendance discussed the Committee's history of not accepting any federal training as the equivalent of a fulltime MPTC Police Academy and whether that should be revisited. Accordingly, the Subcommittee requested additional information on the curriculum at the FLETC training program attended by Officer Bettencourt and how it compares to the curriculum at a fulltime MPTC Police Academy.

At today's meeting, MPTC Deputy Chief of Training Lara Thomas advised that she had reviewed the FLETC Uniformed Police Training Program curriculum and found it to be fairly comparable to that of a fulltime MPTC Police Academy, though the FLETC curriculum does not include

instruction on Massachusetts criminal law or specific domestic violence/sexual assault training. The Subcommittee members discussed that Officer Bettencourt could attend the criminal law portion of an MPTC operated academy.

Peabody PD Chief Griffin and Officer Bettencourt were present to answer any questions. Officer Bettencourt explained that the FLETC program he attended did not provide any instruction on state criminal law because everyone in attendance was from different jurisdictions. However, he was trained in state criminal law in Maine and has had a significant amount of additional instruction beyond the FLETC program. Chief Griffin said he reviewed the training completed by Officer Bettencourt and feels it is similar to that of a fulltime MPTC Police Academy. He also believes that the work Officer Bettencourt does as a federal police officer is comparable to local policing, as he responds to calls for service, makes arrests, conducts lower-level investigations, and assists with criminal prosecutions. There was extensive discussion among the Subcommittee members in attendance about how Officer Bettencourt's training compares to the MPTC basic recruit curriculum and how his work compares to that of a municipal police officer.

A motion was made by Chief Gundersen and seconded by Chief Conley to recommend to the full Committee that the FLETC Uniformed Police Training Program be considered the equivalent of a fulltime MPTC Police Academy. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

IV. BRIDGE HOURS/EXEMPTIONS

Bridge Hours

MPTC staff requested Subcommittee guidance on crediting/not crediting law enforcement work hours for two officers enrolled in the Bridge Training Program.

1. Michael Dagenais

Berkley/Freetown/BCC PD

After being presented with paperwork regarding Officer Dagenais at the August 15, 2023 Subcommittee Meeting, the Subcommittee was unable to make an assessment as to whether his work hours were patrol hours that should be counted. At today's meeting, Officer Dagenais was present, along with members of Berkley PD and BCC PD, to provide additional information and answer questions. They indicated that Officer Dagenais has worked over 3,000 desk hours for Berkley PD and 1,300 patrol hours for BCC PD. Berkley PD explained that their desk officer performs dispatch functions but also handles walk-ins and restraining orders and serves as a backup officer to the two officers on patrol on any given shift. BCC PD explained that Officer Dagenais carries a firearm and his duties include making arrests, patrolling campus on foot and in a cruiser, testifying in court, and serving warrants. His 1,300 hours with BCC PD do not include any details or dispatching. Berkley PD indicated that in the past MPTC has counted 50% of desk hours worked by officers in Officer Dagenais' position (i.e., wearing a duty belt, taking calls for service, etc.). MPTC staff sought guidance from the Subcommittee on whether the Berkley PD hours should be counted.

A motion was made by Superintendent Sullivan and seconded by Superintendent Baston to approve Officer Dagenais' 2,400 hours. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

2. Thomas Caron

Hampden Sheriff's Office

Thomas Caron is a Deputy Sheriff with the Hampden Sheriff's Office, which sponsored him for the Bridge Academy. However, the hours submitted by Deputy Sheriff Caron are all from Mercy Medical Center, where his title is Security Officer II. In that position, he is a sworn special police officer through the Springfield Police Department, which gives him the power to make arrests. According to documentation submitted to MPTC, his job duties at Mercy Medical Center include patrolling the hospital campus to deter criminal activity, conducting investigations, and responding to incidents involving armed or intoxicated patients and visitors. He has made one arrest there and does not carry a firearm. There was consensus among the Subcommittee members in attendance that the hours worked by Deputy Sheriff Caron at Mercy Medical Center were not akin to patrol hours and should not be counted.

A motion was made by Superintendent Sullivan and seconded by Chief Gundersen to not accept the hours worked by Deputy Sheriff Caron at Mercy Medical Center. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

Bridge Exemptions

The Standards Subcommittee considered Bridge exemption requests for Officers numbered 621 through 625 on the September Bridge Academy A-H Class List.

A motion was made by Superintendent Baston and seconded by Chief Conley to recommend to the full Committee that it approve Bridge exemption requests for Officers numbered 621 through 625 on the September Bridge Academy A-H Class List. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

The Standards Subcommittee considered Bridge exemption requests for Officers numbered 409 through 412 on the September Bridge Academy I-P Class List.

A motion was made by Superintendent Sullivan and seconded by Chief Conley to recommend to the full Committee that it approve Bridge exemption requests for Officers numbered 409 through 412 on the September Bridge Academy I-P Class List. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

The Standards Subcommittee considered Bridge exemption requests for Officers numbered 63 through 76 on the September Bridge Academy Q-Z Class List.

A motion was made by Chief Gundersen and seconded by Superintendent Baston to recommend to the full Committee that it approve Bridge exemption requests for Officers numbered 63 through 76 on the September Bridge Academy Q-Z Class List. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

V. OTHER MATTERS

Big E Hours

At its last two meetings, the Standards Subcommittee discussed whether hours worked by police officers at the Big E in West Springfield should be counted for Bridge purposes. MPTC staff frequently receive inquiries regarding Big E hours. Police departments have argued that there is a difference between working inside the Big E and working outside of it, and that hours worked inside the fairgrounds should be counted as patrol hours. There was extensive discussion among the Subcommittee members in attendance at the July 19, 2023 and August 15, 2023 meetings about how the Big E compares to other fairs and events in Massachusetts and how to be consistent on this issue. At its August 15, 2023 meeting, the Subcommittee meeting voted to include evaluation of Big E hours as an agenda item at the next meeting of the full Committee.

At today's meeting, Jim O'Brien advised that Chief Hicks wants MPTC staff to obtain additional information from Foxboro and Mansfield before any further discussion. Accordingly, Big E hours will not be on the agenda for discussion at today's full Committee meeting.

In-Service for I-P Officers who had Unknown/Unclear Certification Obligations

I-P officers are all up for POST certification. POST asks MPTC to verify their foundational training, TY22 in-service training, and TY23 in-service training. MPTC still must verify training for approximately 700-800 officers. There is a subset of officers within that group who have not completed TY22/TY23 in-service training. Some are working in positions where it may not have been clear that their names would be put up for POST certification and that they needed to do in-service training (i.e., Deputy Sheriffs, Harbormasters, Housing Authority Police, Humane Society SSPOs). MPTC staff sought guidance from the Subcommittee as to whether these officers must complete in-service training. No vote was taken, but there was consensus among the Subcommittee members in attendance that these officers must do both their TY22 and TY23 in-service training.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

At 10:00 a.m., a motion was made by Chief Conley and seconded by Superintendent Baston to adjourn the Standards Subcommittee meeting. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.