

Municipal Police Training Committee
Full Committee Monthly Meeting Minutes
MPTC Headquarters, Randolph, MA
January 21, 2025

Call to Order

On January 21, 2025, at 10:11 a.m., Chief James Hicks called the monthly meeting of the Municipal Police Training Committee to order at 42 Thomas Patten Drive, Randolph, MA. Advance notice of the meeting was posted in compliance with the open meeting laws. A quorum of the fifteen-member Committee was present. The meeting was recorded and broadcast over Microsoft Teams.

Attendees: Voting Members

Chief James Hicks	Present
Deputy Chief Christine Amendola	Present
Sergeant Detective Eddy Chrispin	Present
Chief Edward Conley	Present
Sheriff Kevin Coppinger	Present
Superintendent Lanita Cullinane	Present
Sheriff Christopher Donelan	Present
Chief Jennifer Gundersen	Present
AAG Stacey Pichardo	Present
Secretary Terrence Reidy	Present
Superintendent Richard Sullivan	Present
Chief Brian Clark	Absent
Major Jon Provost	Absent
Detective Jennifer Sattler	Absent

EOPSS/MPTC Staff

Undersecretary Gina Kwon, Atty. John Melander, Interim Executive Director Jeff Farnsworth, Atty. James O'Brien, Atty. Gina Masotta, Atty. Andrea Nardone, Kathleen Berry, Lisa Caputo, Denise Flagg, Aiesha Grenier, James Gribaudo, Tanya Hardiman, Tori Koch, Denise Mellon, Brian Merrick, Deborah Crafts, and Jen Sears.

Guests

Matt Giancola, Michael Baker, Bruce Stebbins, Nurys Camargo, and Chief Jack Vanasse.

Announcements

Chief Hicks welcomed Superintendent Lanita Cullinane back to the Committee. She played an integral role on the Committee when she was here previously, and we look forward to working with her again.

Review/Approval of Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Sheriff Donelan and seconded by Superintendent Sullivan to approve the minutes of the December 18, 2024, meeting. A vote was taken, and the motion passed with three abstentions (Superintendent Cullinane, Deputy Chief Amendola, and Atty. Pichardo).

Police Standards and Training

Temporary Waivers

There were no temporary waiver requests on the January agenda.

Out-of-State Exemptions

There were four out-of-state exemption requests on the January agenda:

James Dawson	Burlington PD
Adam Ganz	Westwood PD
Donald Rhodes	Hinsdale PD
Joshua Aguero	Southcoast Health PD

At its meeting last week, the Standards Subcommittee reviewed and made a favorable recommendation to approve all four exemption requests.

A motion was made by Sheriff Copping and seconded by Chief Gundersen to approve the out-of-state exemption requests for James Dawson, Adam Ganz, Donald Rhodes, and Joshua Aguero. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

Bridge Academy Exemptions

A Bridge exemption request for Officer numbered 646 on the January Bridge Academy A-H Class List was reviewed and recommended by the Standards Subcommittee. Coursework was completed and payroll has been verified.

A motion was made by Sheriff Donelan and seconded by Chief Gundersen to approve the Bridge exemption request for Officer numbered 646 on the January Bridge Academy A-H Class List. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

There were no Bridge exemption requests for the I-P Class List this month.

A Bridge exemption request for Officer numbered 345 on the January Bridge Academy Q-Z Class List was reviewed and recommended by the Standards Subcommittee. Coursework was completed and payroll has been verified.

A motion was made by Sheriff Donelan and seconded by Chief Gundersen to approve the Bridge exemption request for Officer numbered 345 on the January Bridge Academy Q-Z Class List. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

Disciplinary Dismissal Appeals

A hearing was held on December 18, 2024, for former student officer Joshua Almestica, who was dismissed from the Plymouth Academy. A decision from the Subcommittee is pending. A hearing for former student officer Jermaine Lewis, who was dismissed from the Boylston Academy, was also scheduled for December 18, 2024, but he withdrew his appeal before the hearing.

Instructor Certification Revocation Appeals

Six appeal hearings were held on December 17, 2024, for MPTC instructors whose certifications were revoked. Hearings were held on January 15, 2025, for four more former instructors whose certifications were revoked. Decisions from the Subcommittee on all ten appeals are pending. We anticipate at least another eight instructor certification revocation appeal hearings stemming from MPTC staff's review of instructors who appear on POST's disciplinary list.

Executive Director's Report

Budget. Interim Executive Director Jeff Farnsworth discussed the budget and said there are no issues to report at this time. The Fiscal team is working diligently to keep us moving forward and on track.

Recruit Training Update. MPTC Chief of Training Andrea Nardone presented an update on recruit academies, including academy start dates, graduation dates, separations and departures, and demographics.

In-Service and Specialized Training. Chief of Training Nardone presented an update on In-Service and Specialized training.

Bridge Academy. Chief of Training Nardone reported that Bridge continues to wind down and the most recent numbers are included in the Committee's meeting materials today. She reminded the Committee that we don't un-enroll officers from Bridge until they have submitted their 2,400 hours and obtained an exemption, and most of the officers still enrolled are just working to complete their hours.

ASHER. Interim Executive Director Farnsworth presented an update on the ASHER program and the classes that are in session and scheduled. He said multiple classes are running each week, and classes are filling quickly. He noted that an Active Shooter Incident Management (ASIM) class, which is a command-level class, was posted in Acadis last week.

Secretary Reidy praised the collaboration between DFS and law enforcement that has made ASHER such a success.

Staffing. Chief of Training Nardone introduced new members of MPTC staff to the Committee, including Deb Crafts who recently joined us as Veteran Officer Division Manager, Tori Koch who started in December as our Paralegal, and Luther Joseney who will join us next week as Curriculum Division Manager.

New Business

Greenfield Community College. Chief Jack Vanasse from Greenfield Community College (GCC) presented a proposal to the Committee for a new police academy at GCC. He started by noting that police reform has been particularly hard on the smaller departments in Western Mass, many of which relied heavily on part-time officers who have since retired. He heard about the success of QCC's academy and wanted to do something similar at GCC. He polled the chiefs in Franklin County and received positive feedback. Chief Vanasse reported that there is \$300,000 earmarked in the budget to fund this potential new academy. GCC would like to begin running the academy in September of 2025, based on a recommendation from QCC to align the academy with the academic school year. He said he believes they would have instructor coverage for all academy classes based on the number of certified instructors in their area, and they would aim for a class size of 35 to 40 made up of both department-appointed and department-sponsored student officers.

Secretary Reidy stressed there is a lot that goes into running an academy and sustainability is important. He suggested that GCC meet with Cambridge/NECC. He recalled that when they sought authorization to run an academy, their presentation was much more detailed.

Chief Hicks also voiced significant concerns, including whether we have the capacity to oversee another academy, whether an academy at GCC would be able to continue after the initial class, and where the funding would come from after the \$300,000. He said he would like to hear from members of GCC about whether they are committed to this new academy and funding it.

Chief Gundersen talked about the struggles of departments in Western Mass and said there certainly is a need for an academy in the area, but she acknowledged the issues with financial feasibility. Chief Hicks said he does not doubt there is a need, but he has concerns about whether it would be a success based on a one-time earmark and what may be a lack of full appreciation for what it takes to run an academy. He asked to see a more detailed presentation and more commitment from GCC before the Committee considers this further.

Sheriff Donelan noted that academy needs in Western Mass can be difficult to predict, and people may not be willing to commit to a nights-and-weekends academy schedule to be a part-time officer. But he speculated that this probably isn't something we can know until a class actually runs in the area. He suggested that it may be helpful for Chief Vanasse to also have a conversation with Holyoke Academy Director Michele Lyons.

MPTC 0222 Legislative Report. Chief-of-Staff/General Counsel O'Brien told the Committee that MPTC is required to produce certain reports to the legislature each year. The 0222 account is the retained revenue account in which all tuition fees collected by MPTC are deposited. The 0222 Legislative Report is about what we're doing with the \$3,200 in tuition we collect from every student officer who attends an MPTC-operated academy. The report covers FY24 and the first half of FY25. What the legislature is looking for in this report is how much it costs to train a student officer. Historically, the MPTC has only looked at instructor costs expended to run an Academy, but this report includes much more detail on the out-of-pocket costs for MPTC to run an academy and train a student officer. Expenses can fluctuate greatly depending on how many student officers are in an academy class, but the actual cost of training a student officer is over \$10,000, as reflected on page 7 of the report. Since we're only permitted to collect \$3,200 in tuition for each student officer, the bottom line is that the tuition fee only covers about one-third of the cost of training a student officer.

Secretary Reidy noted that this is a problem that communities and the state are going to have to come to grips with. Chief Gundersen asked whether we are anticipating an increase in the tuition charged to departments, and the Secretary said yes. There was further discussion about the cost of police training and the impact of police reform thereon.

Old Business

POST/Police Reform. Chief Hicks reported that there are no POST/Police Reform updates this month.

Working Groups. Chief of Training Nardone reported that there are no updates on working groups this month.

Cannabis Control Commission – Social Consumption. Acting Chair/Commissioner Bruce Stebbins, Commissioner Nurys Camargo, Deputy General Counsel Michael Baker, and Director of Government Affairs & Policy Matt Giancola from the Cannabis Control Commission (CCC) presented their draft regulations for social cannabis consumption. The CCC is accepting informal comments on the regulations until January 23, 2025, and they welcome any feedback from the Committee. While this does not leave a lot of time for police chiefs to digest the regulations, there will be an opportunity for them to offer formal comment during the promulgation period. The CCC expects there will be a public hearing on the regulations sometime in March. Feedback can be submitted from now until then.

The CCC has created three new licenses for social consumption, including:

1. Supplemental consumption establishment – license that allows existing cannabis retailers to have a space for social consumption. Retailers must go through the licensing process again to obtain a supplemental license.
2. Hospitality – license that allows independent existing businesses (i.e., a movie theatre) to have a night or event with cannabis.
3. Organizer – temporary license for a one-time event, such as a festival, which can be no more than 5 days.

Cities and towns must vote to allow social consumption by ordinance, or voters could put a question on the ballot. Either way, communities must opt in for social consumption to be allowed. No alcohol will be permitted at social consumption sites.

Superintendent Cullinane asked whether the CCC has spoken to other jurisdictions that allow social consumption, and Commissioner Stebbins named several states they have been in contact with. There was also discussion about how to train police officers for social consumption. Chief of Training Nardone noted that, once the regulations are promulgated, we could potentially make social consumption part of in-service training and use the 2-hour video slot.

MPTC Regulations (550 CMR 3.00) – Revised/Updated. EOPSS Deputy General Counsel John Melander reported that a virtual public hearing has been scheduled for March 7, 2025, 10 a.m. to noon, regarding revisions to 550 CMR 3.00. Notices will go out. The revisions will also be open to written comments.

OSA Audit of MPTC. MPTC Chief-of-Staff/General Counsel Jim O'Brien told the Committee that OSA's audit of MPTC is complete and the final report has been released. A copy is at Tab 7 in today's meeting materials. The focus of the audit was on police reform and whether MPTC has adopted the legislative training mandates. Page 1 of the audit report has the following 3-bullets reflecting that the primary objectives of the audit were to determine:

1. Whether MPTC developed and implemented the trainings required by Chapter 69 of the Acts of 2018 (also known as the Criminal Justice Reform Act) and Chapter 253 of the Acts of 2020 (also known as the Police Reform Law), which are codified in Sections 116 A–D and G–K of Chapter 6 of the General Laws;
2. Whether MPTC ensured that all MPTC-operated and MPTC-authorized training academies delivered a standardized training curriculum as required by Section 4(f)(1) of Chapter 6E of the General Laws; and
3. Whether MPTC processed permanent exemptions to, and temporary waivers of, training requirements.

The audit findings can be found on page 11. Objective #2 is the only objective where the OSA's conclusion was "no." There were two reasons why: (a) during the time period covered by the audit, some academies were not delivering the training mandated in our curriculum and (b) some training was not being delivered by MPTC-certified instructors. Chief of Training Nardone explained that with respect to missing pieces of curriculum, some of it was just a reporting issue in the way that academy directors were filling out after-action reports, and that issue has been corrected. With respect to non-certified instructors, Chief of Training Nardone said that many of those instructors took all the classes and necessary steps to become properly certified but then just didn't take the final step of applying for certification. We have taken steps to correct this issue too, including by creating the position of Standards and Delivery Division Manager to oversee the instructor certification process.

Secretary Reidy expressed frustration that OSA's audit report made no mention of the steps taken by MPTC to correct the above-identified issues. Sheriff Donelan also expressed frustration that the audit focused on a time period that included COVID impacting the training that was and wasn't provided, and there is no mention of that in OSA's report either. Chief Hicks said he too was disappointed that OSA's focus was on a very challenging time, and there is nothing in their report about what has been done to remedy any of the identified issues.

Chief-of-Staff/General Counsel O'Brien thanked MPTC staff for all the time and effort put into working with OSA on the audit, especially CFO Denise Mellon, Chief of Training Nardone, and Assistant Legal Counsel Denise Flagg.

Next Meeting

The next Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 19, 2025.

Additional Announcements

Secretary Reidy thanked Interim Executive Director Farnsworth for filling in over the last few months and keeping us on a steady path during this time of transition.

Secretary Reidy also announced that today is Sheriff Donelan's last Committee meeting, as he is retiring at the end of the month. He thanked Sheriff Donelan for everything he's done for the Committee, especially during a complicated and challenging time, and wished him well in the future. Chief Hicks also thanked Sheriff Donelan for his professionalism and said the impact he has had here will be felt for a long time. Sheriff Donelan thanked everyone for the incredible opportunity and experience of being on the Committee. He recalled how police reform brought the Sheriffs back to the Committee. He expressed gratitude to Chief Hicks for including both him and Sheriff Coppinger in the work the Committee has been doing over the past few years, and for putting him on the Executive Director Search Committee.

Adjournment

At 12:30 p.m., a motion was made by Sheriff Coppinger and seconded by Sheriff Donelan to adjourn the meeting. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.