

Municipal Police Training Committee
Full Committee Monthly Meeting Minutes
MPTC Randolph, MA
February 18, 2026

Call to Order

On February 18, 2026, at 10:07 a.m., Chief James Hicks called the monthly meeting of the Municipal Police Training Committee to order at MPTC Randolph, 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 (Chair)	Present
EOPSS Secretary Gina Kwon	Present
Chief Jennifer Gundersen	Present
Sergeant Detective Eddy Chrispin	Present
Superintendent Richard Sullivan	Present
Chief Brian Clark	Present
Chief Ryan Couture	Present
Deputy Superintendent John Flynn	Present
Major Jody Greene	Present
AAG Mary H. Nguyen	Present
Sheriff Tom Bowler	Absent
Sheriff Kevin Coppinger	Absent
Detective Jennifer Sattler	Absent
Deputy Chief Christine Amendola	Absent

EOPSS/MPTC Staff

Rick Rathbun, Amy Fanikos, Andrea Nardone, Gina Masotta, Tori Koch, Denise Mellon, Jen Sears, Lisa Caputo, Kristen Lydon, Kelsey Whelihan, Chuck DiChiara, Denise Flagg, Deb Crafts, Tanya Hardiman, Jay Gribaudo, Ryan Mingo, Felisha Arnold, Elsie Sanon, and Patrick Rogalin.

Guests

Chief William Beaudry (Brimfield PD), Officer William Penkala, and Attorney Mark O'Brien.

Review/Approval of Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Chief Couture and seconded by Chief Clark to approve the minutes for the Committee meeting on January 21, 2026. A vote was taken, and the motion passed with one abstention (Superintendent Sullivan).

Police Standards and Training

Temporary Waivers

There were no temporary waiver requests on the February agenda.

Out-of-State Exemptions

There were four out-of-state exemption requests on the February agenda.

Ryan Butler	Chelmsford PD
Marianna Klochan	Norwood PD
Ross Sudar	Rutland PD
Jarrid Witherspoon	Bellingham PD

MPTC Deputy General Counsel Gina Masotta said that a summary of each officer's training and experience is contained in today's meeting book and reported that, at its meeting earlier this morning, the Standards Subcommittee reviewed and made a favorable recommendation to approve the out-of-state exemption requests for the four above-named officers.

A motion was made by Chief Couture and seconded by Chief Clark to approve the out-of-state exemption requests for Ryan Butler, Marianna Klochan, Ross Sudar, and Jarrid Witherspoon. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

Bridge Academy Exemptions

Bridge exemption requests for Officers numbered 661 and 662 on the February A-H Class List were reviewed and recommended for approval by the Standards Subcommittee. Coursework was completed and payroll has been verified.

A motion was made by Major Greene and seconded by Deputy Superintendent Flynn to approve the Bridge exemption requests for Officers numbered 661 and 662 on the February A-H Class List. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

A Bridge exemption request for Officer numbered 444 on the February Bridge Academy I-P Class List was reviewed and recommended for approval by the Standards Subcommittee. Coursework was completed and payroll has been verified. Deputy General Counsel Masotta noted that a Bridge exemption request for Officer numbered 445, William Penkala, is also on the February I-P class list, but Chief Hicks asked that the Committee hold off on considering the request for Officer Penkala because he is on today's agenda for discussion of a potential interruption-in-service issue.

A motion was made by Chief Clark and seconded by Major Greene to approve the Bridge exemption request for Officer numbered 444 on the February Bridge Academy I-P Class List. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

A Bridge exemption request for Officer numbered 356 on the February Bridge Academy Q-Z Class List was reviewed and recommended for approval by the Standards Subcommittee. Coursework was completed and payroll has been verified. Deputy General Counsel Masotta noted that a Bridge exemption request for Officer numbered 355, Jonathan Hart-Shuman, is also on the February Q-Z class list and reminded the Committee members that Officer Hart-Shuman was on the January agenda with a potential interruption-in-service issue. At the January meeting, the interruption-in-

service issue was tabled to give Officer Hart-Shuman an opportunity to get more information regarding his work as a Boston PD Special Police Officer for Longwood Security. Officer Hart-Shuman advised MPTC staff that he needed more time to obtain the information and requested to appear at the Committee's March meeting.

A motion was made by Chief Clark and seconded by Major Greene to approve the Bridge exemption request for Officer numbered 356 on the February Bridge Academy Q-Z Class List. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

Interruption-in-Service, 5+ Years

MPTC staff are seeking guidance from the Committee as to whether Brimfield PD Officer William Penkala has had an interruption-in-service of more than 5 years. Deputy General Counsel Masotta advised that the matter was before the Standards Subcommittee at its December 2025 meeting and again at its January 2026 meeting. At the December meeting, the Subcommittee learned that Officer Penkala graduated from a reserve-intermittent training program in 1998. He worked as a part-time officer for the West Springfield PD from April 1999 to November 2014 and for Springfield College PD from January 2007 to April 2008. In November 2015, he began working as a part-time officer for Hadley PD. Hadley PD's records show that his last patrol shift was in March 2016, though he did not officially resign until August 2016. He joined the Hampden County Sheriff's Office in December 2020 but did not begin working shifts until May 2021, which is more than 5 years after his last shift for Hadley PD. Moreover, records from the Hampden County Sheriff's Office show that all shifts he worked from May 2021 to September 2022 were details, which have historically not been counted toward the 2,400 hours required for a Bridge exemption. Officer Penkala was enrolled in the Bridge Academy through Hampden and subsequently completed his coursework. He was hired by Brimfield PD, and Chief Beaudry recently submitted a request for a Bridge exemption. MPTC staff discovered the potential interruption-in-service when reviewing the payroll records submitted with the Bridge exemption request. After discussion at the December meeting, the Subcommittee tabled the matter to give Officer Penkala an opportunity to provide additional information about his work history, specifically what he was doing for the Hampden County Sheriff's Office from December 2020 to May 2021.

At the January Subcommittee meeting, Officer Penkala's attorney, Mark O'Brien, informed the Subcommittee that Officer Penkala was employed full-time by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as a Security Installation Law Enforcement Officer at Barnes Air Force Base in Westfield, MA from March 2018 to October 2018. He provided a job description and elaborated on the duties of the position, which he said included running people through CJIS, interviewing witnesses, wearing a uniform and duty belt, conducting *Terry* stops, searching and processing prisoners, making arrests for felony offenses, and conducting traffic stops. There was consensus among the Subcommittee members present at the January meeting that Officer Penkala's work at Barnes AFB qualified as law enforcement duties, and they voted unanimously that he had not had an interruption-in-service of more than 5 years.

At today's Committee meeting, Chief Gundersen spoke about the discussions the Subcommittee had at its December and January meetings and their position that Officer Penkala's work at Barnes AFB consisted of law enforcement duties and functions and therefore reset the clock for purposes of an interruption-in-service.

Chief Hicks said he is familiar with the position reportedly held by Officer Penkala at Barnes AFB and agrees that it constitutes law enforcement duties, but he noted that it does not appear on Officer Penkala's resume and asked for confirmation of his employment there. Attorney Mark O'Brien

spoke on behalf of Officer Penkala and explained that a letter from Officer Penkala's supervisor at Barnes AFB was included in paperwork submitted to the Committee today. Secretary Kwon noted that information posted to the CTHRU website reflects that Officer Penkala was paid by the air force base through October 2018, but she and Chief Hicks expressed their desire to have something more official from the Commonwealth verifying Officer Penkala's employment. No action was taken today on the request for a Bridge exemption for Officer Penkala. Chief Hicks said Officer Penkala does not need to appear at next month's meeting if the Committee receives documentation verifying his employment at Barnes AFB in 2018.

A motion was made by Chief Gundersen and seconded by Chief Clark that if the Committee receives documentation from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts verifying Officer Penkala's employment at Barnes Air Force Base during the relevant time period in 2018, then Officer Penkala has not had a break-in-service of more than 5 years. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

Update on Student Officer Disciplinary Dismissal Appeals

Today's agenda reflects one pending appeal by former Student Officer (SO) Jhiriq Tyler, who was dismissed from the NECC Academy. A hearing needs to be scheduled for his appeal.

Since the last meeting, the Standards Subcommittee issued a decision on the appeal by former SO Burke Cushman of his dismissal from the Randolph Academy. A hearing was held on December 8, 2025. Chief Gundersen provided a summary of the facts and reported that Subcommittee members in attendance voted unanimously to overturn a Class I *Dishonesty* violation against SO Cushman and make him eligible forthwith for re-enrollment in a subsequent MPTC operated police academy, subject to employment and compliance with all MPTC enrollment requirements.

Chief Hicks asked about the reasoning behind the decision. He asked whether it was based on a finding by the Subcommittee that SO Cushman was not in fact untruthful or that his dismissal was inconsistent with the treatment of another student officer in the same academy class. Deputy Superintendent Flynn said he recalled testimony by SO Cushman about conflicting orders from staff instructors and said that factored into his decision. Sergeant Detective Chrispin discussed various circumstances that may factor into why a student officer is untruthful and said he believes those circumstances should be considered in each case.

Update on Instructor Certification Revocation Appeals

There are pending appeals by seven MPTC instructors whose certifications have been revoked, including: Hannah Greene of Orleans PD; Christopher Bartolomei of Falmouth PD; Armando Feliciano of Barnstable PD; Bryan Derochea of Mashpee PD; Thomas Feraco of Worcester PD; Kyle Kidger of the Essex County Sheriff's Department; and Daniel Rose of Brandeis University PD. Their hearing dates have not yet been scheduled.

Executive Director's Report

FY26 Budget Update. MPTC Executive Director Rick Rathbun reported that all spending and expenditures remain within established constraints and allocated budget amounts for FY2026.

Facilities. Executive Director Rathbun provided an update regarding the Marlborough range. Range manager Patrick Rogalin continues to work on keeping the beta testing on track for April. Surveys will also be sent to departments to ascertain the needs of departments to train at the range.

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. Current statistics for in-service and specialized training, broken down by academy and total number of training hours, are included in the Committee's meeting book today.

Bridge Academy. Chief of Training Nardone reported that the Bridge Academy A-H Class has 102 officers who need to complete their 2,400 hours and apply for an exemption. The I-P Class has 64 officers in the same position. The Q-Z class has 52 officers who need to complete their hours and apply for an exemption and 1 officer who is on a leave of absence. Updated numbers are included in today's meeting book.

ASHER. Chief of Training Nardone updated the Committee on the ASHER program in John Mazza's absence. She advised that detailed information, including on the number of officers trained and upcoming classes, is in the Committee's meeting book today.

Open Discussion for Items Not Requiring Votes

Chief Gundersen asked about the timeline for deciding whether Big E hours will be counted for Bridge exemption purposes. Chief Hicks provided some background on the creation of the Bridge Academy training program and explained that the 2,400-hour requirement was intended to be a way for part-time officers to make up for having less classroom training with on-the-job training. At the time, a decision was made that traffic details would not be counted toward the 2,400 hours because many departments have officers who only work traffic details and do not perform any other police work. As Bridge winds down, MPTC staff and the Committee continue to get questions about whether other types of details, such as working inside the grounds of the Big E and at other large-scale venues (like Gillette and the Topsfield Fair), will be counted. The question turns largely on how we define law enforcement duties. We have to consider whether our definition will coincide with POST's definition. And the issue is further complicated by the unique function and authority of deputy sheriffs.

Chief Gundersen talked about the role of constables and certain deputy sheriffs and said she has always pushed back against any arguments that property seizure, evictions, and utility search warrants are police functions.

There was consensus among the Committee members present that we should be distinguishing between different types of details and that some details – like working inside the Big E – constitute law enforcement work, while others – like directing traffic – do not. There was also consensus that the onus should be on departments and chiefs to demonstrate whether hours worked by their officers consisted of law enforcement work.

Secretary Kwon suggested that MPTC staff could come up with a list of factors that the Subcommittee has historically considered when deciding what qualifies as law enforcement work. The Committee could review and approve the list, and then the list could be provided to chiefs with instructions that it is on them to prove that the hours they submit for Bridge exemption purposes are law enforcement work. Chief Hicks said that MPTC staff could also flag for the Committee issues and complicating factors they have consistently seen when it comes to making these determinations.

He said the list of factors that MPTC staff comes up with should be reviewed first by the Subcommittee and then by the Committee.

There was discussion about whether it creates inconsistency for the MPTC to say that certain details do not count as law enforcement work for Bridge exemption purposes, while POST requires that officers be certified in order to work details. Secretary Kwon emphasized that we are looking at these hours for the sole purpose of deciding whether an officer's on-the-job experience makes up for less classroom training and that is different than what POST is doing.

Old Business

Working Groups. Chief of Training Nardone informed the Committee that the Campus Police Training Programs Working Group and the Fitness Working Group continue to meet regularly.

POST Police Reform Updates. MPTC Assistant Legal Counsel Denise Flagg provided an update on the Use of Force model policy. She reminded the Committee members that police reform required POST and MPTC to develop Use of Force regulations and provide departments with a model Use of Force policy. Over the last several months, a working group comprised of staff from EOPSS, POST, and MPTC met for over 20 hours on multiple dates to draft and edit a model policy. The draft policy complies with legal standards and aligns with the Use of Force regulations, accreditation standards, and POST's LEA certification standards. The Committee and the POST Commission must agree on the policy, and both must vote to approve it. A copy of the draft policy is in the meeting book today, and the working group is asking that the Committee review it and provide feedback to Attorney Flagg by Monday, March 2, 2026, at 5 p.m. The working group will meet again after March 2nd to review feedback and make any necessary edits to the policy. They expect to have a final draft for the March Committee meeting and will ask the Committee to vote to approve it.

Deputy Superintendent Flynn asked for clarification on implementation once the model policy is approved and who decides whether a department is in compliance. Chief Hicks explained that once the model policy is approved, departments must ensure that they have Use of Force policies in place which are consistent with the model policy and POST will decide how that is monitored, but we don't know yet what that process will look like.

POST LEA Certification Standards. EOPSS Attorney Ryan Mingo summarized for the Committee the feedback he received regarding POST's draft of the *Internal Affairs and Officer Complaint Investigation Procedures* standard. He said he will be presenting this feedback to POST at the next POST meeting and will update the Committee once he receives POST's revisions.

Medical Examination Requirements for Academy Entrance. Chief Hicks informed the Committee that a letter was sent to departments last week informing them that HRD's medical standards will be used for the medical exam required for entrance into an academy. Since then, HRD has expressed concern about their medical standards being used for non-civil service officers. Chief Hicks said he will be putting together a working group to review the issue and compare HRD's standards to MSP's standards. Chief Hicks asked that Major Greene be a part of the working group and said he will be looking for other volunteers.

New/Updated MPTC Policies. Executive Director Rathbun updated the Committee regarding onboarding of PowerDMS. He advised that the software will go live on February 19, 2026. Training will be provided for MPTC staff, and all Committee members will receive usernames and accounts.

TY26 In-Service Training Update. MPTC Deputy Executive Director Amy Fanikos informed the Committee that all TY26 online in-service training courses have now been published in Acadis. Because of the delays encountered this year, MPTC staff are conducting an internal review and will be working on improvements for TY27.

ROC Tuition. Executive Director Rathbun reminded the Committee that the issue of late payment of ROC tuition by departments was discussed at a previous meeting. MPTC staff have been talking about ways to address the problem without adversely impacting student officers and are cognizant of the fact that sometimes payment is outside the department's direct control. Executive Director Rathbun asked for the Committee's feedback on MPTC requiring either payment or a purchase order by orientation and what to do when neither is received and a department does not communicate with MPTC about it. There was consensus among the Committee members that it's reasonable to require payment or a purchase order for orientation. Superintendent Sullivan said he would be opposed to separating a student officer from the academy when payment or a purchase order is not received on time because he believes it's unfair to penalize them. Chief Gundersen suggested that additional invoicing to departments might also be helpful. She said tuition invoices typically come in an email that includes multiple attachments relating to academy enrollment, and it can be easy to miss the invoice. She said sending the invoices separately with a deadline for payment would be helpful.

New Business

Bridge Academy Final Deadline. Chief of Training Andrea Nardone presented a draft policy for the final Bridge Academy deadline. Officers have until December 31, 2026, to complete 2,400 hours of law enforcement work. MPTC staff is proposing a deadline of January 8, 2027, for departments to submit documentation of those hours. After January 8, 2027, MPTC staff would provide a list of officers to POST who submitted documentation of their hours and ask that they be conditionally certified until their hours have been verified and the Committee has issued them a Bridge exemption. MPTC staff would also provide POST a list of officers who failed to submit their hours by January 8, 2027, and recommend that they be decertified. Chief Hicks asked if we could use January 15, 2027, as the deadline for submission of hours to give departments additional time to process a biweekly payroll. Chief of Training Nardone said she expects to have a final draft of the policy at the next meeting and will ask the Committee for a vote of approval.

Matters not known at the time of posting that legally come before the Committee.

None.

Next Meeting

The next Committee meeting is currently scheduled for Wednesday, March 18, 2026, in Randolph.

Adjournment

At 12:35 p.m., a motion was made by Chief Gundersen and seconded by Chief Clark to adjourn the meeting. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.