

Municipal Police Training Committee
Full Committee Monthly Meeting Minutes
MPTC Headquarters, Randolph, MA
February 19, 2025

Call to Order

On February 19, 2025, at 10:02 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 Brian Clark	Present
Sheriff Kevin Coppinger	Present
Chief Ryan Couture	Present
Superintendent Lanita Cullinane	Present
AAG Stacey Pichardo	Present
Major Jon Provost	Present
Secretary Terrence Reidy	Present
Detective Jennifer Sattler	Present
Sheriff Christopher Donelan	Absent
Chief Edward Conley	Absent
Chief Jennifer Gundersen	Absent
Superintendent Richard Sullivan	Absent

EOPSS/MPTC Staff

Undersecretary Gina Kwon, Atty. John Melander, Executive Director Rick Rathbun, Deputy Executive Director Amy Fanikos, Atty. Gina Masotta, Atty. Andrea Nardone, Felisha Arnold, Yola Cabrillana, Cassandra Cahill, Lisa Caputo, Deborah Crafts, Denise Flagg, James Gribaudo, Tanya Hardiman, Lisa Kaynakian, Tori Koch, Eric Lederman, Kristen Lydon, John Mazza, Denise Mellon, Brian Merrick, Elsie Sanon, Aeisha Grenier, Steven Cromack, Jen Sears, and Steve Wong.

Guests

Daniel Dolan and Kevin Riley.

Announcements

Chief Hicks welcomed Chief Ryan Couture of Hubbardston PD to his first Committee meeting as a voting member. He was sworn in yesterday and will be representing the Central Massachusetts Chiefs of Police. We look forward to him becoming an important member of the Committee.

Chief Hicks also welcomed MPTC's new Executive Director, Rick Rathbun, and Deputy Executive Director, Amy Fanikos, and asked that they introduce themselves. Executive Director Rathbun spoke about his background with the Warwick, RI Police Department and MPAC, and he thanked the Governor's Office, Secretary Reidy and EOPSS, and MPTC staff for the opportunity. Deputy Executive Director Fanikos likewise thanked everyone for the opportunity. Secretary Reidy welcomed them both to their new positions and thanked the members of the Search Committee for their work in selecting them.

Chief Hicks also announced that Sheriff Donelan, who recently retired, has taken a position as the MPTC's new academy director in East Falmouth.

Review/Approval of Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Sheriff Coppinger and seconded by AAG Pichardo to approve the minutes of the January 21, 2025, meeting. A vote was taken, and the motion passed with two abstentions (Major Provost and Chief Clark).

Police Standards and Training

Temporary Waivers

There were no temporary waiver requests on the February agenda.

Out-of-State Exemptions

There were five out-of-state exemption requests on the February agenda:

Jonathan Imperial	Truro PD
Justin Bettencourt	Massport
Kevin Riley	UMass Lowell
Thomas Calouro	Sutton PD
Neftaly Lopez	Brandeis University

At its meeting earlier this morning, the Standards Subcommittee reviewed and made a favorable recommendation to approve all five exemption requests.

A motion was made by Sheriff Coppinger and seconded by Chief Couture to approve the out-of-state exemption requests for Jonathan Imperial, Justin Bettencourt, Kevin Riley, Thomas Calouro, and Neftaly Lopez. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

Bridge Academy Exemptions

There were no Bridge exemption requests for the A-H or Q-Z class lists this month.

Bridge exemption requests for Officers numbered 432 and 433 on the February Bridge Academy I-P Class List were reviewed and recommended by the Standards Subcommittee. Coursework was completed and payroll has been verified.

A motion was made by AAG Pichardo and seconded by Deputy Chief Amendola to approve the Bridge exemption requests for Officers numbered 432 and 433 on the February Bridge Academy I-P Class List. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

Update on Disciplinary Dismissal Appeals

Since the last meeting, the Standards Subcommittee issued a decision on the appeal by former student officer (SO) Joshua Almestica of his dismissal from the Plymouth Academy. A hearing on his appeal was held on December 18, 2024. Sheriff Coppinger provided a summary of the facts and reported that the Subcommittee members in attendance unanimously sustained a Class I violation for *Plagiarism* against SO Almestica, upheld his dismissal from the academy, and upheld his one-year period of ineligibility from enrollment in a future MPTC operated/authorized police academy.

Update on Instructor Certification Revocation Appeals

Since the last meeting, the Standards Subcommittee also issued decisions on eight instructor certification revocation appeal hearings. Sheriff Coppinger and Chief Clark provided a summary of the facts and reported the Subcommittee's decision on each appeal as follows:

1. *Sergeant Edmond Bussiere, Littleton PD* – Sgt. Bussiere's MPTC instructor certifications were revoked on November 22, 2024, based on disciplinary violations sustained by Littleton PD in 2018 and 2021. After a hearing on December 17, 2024, the Subcommittee found that Sergeant Bussiere failed to establish by clear and convincing evidence that the revocation of his instructor certifications was an abuse of the MPTC's discretion, or was arbitrary and capricious, or was not otherwise in accordance with the law, and permanently revoked his MPTC instructor certifications.
2. *Sergeant Freddie O'Neal, Brewster PD* – Sgt. O'Neal's MPTC instructor certifications were revoked on November 22, 2024, based on a disciplinary violation sustained by Brewster PD in 2014. After a hearing on December 17, 2024, the Subcommittee found that Sergeant O'Neal failed to establish by clear and convincing evidence that the revocation of his certifications was an abuse of the MPTC's discretion, or was arbitrary and capricious, or was not otherwise in accordance with the law, and permanently revoked his MPTC instructor certifications.
3. *Officer Otis Harewood, Boston PD* – Officer Harewood's MPTC instructor certifications were revoked on December 4, 2024, based on a disciplinary violation sustained by Boston PD in 2000. After a hearing on January 15, 2025, the Subcommittee found that the MPTC acted in good faith when revoking Officer Harewood's instructor certifications based on the information they had. However, the Subcommittee also found that Officer Harewood established that: (a) the allegations against him were over 20 years old; (b) there were material mitigating circumstances; and (c) he has since demonstrated a high level of

professionalism, character, and integrity. The Subcommittee ordered MPTC staff to immediately reinstate Officer Harewood's instructor certifications.

4. *Officer John Stone, Granville PD* – Officer Stone's MPTC instructor certifications were revoked on December 4, 2024, based on disciplinary violations sustained by Agawam PD in 2017 and 2018. After a hearing on January 15, 2025, the Subcommittee found that Officer Stone failed to establish by clear and convincing evidence that the revocation of his instructor certifications was an abuse of the MPTC's discretion, or was arbitrary and capricious, or was not otherwise in accordance with the law, and permanently revoked his MPTC instructor certifications.
5. *Sergeant Robert Curran, North Attleboro PD* – Sgt. Curran's MPTC instructor certifications were revoked on November 22, 2024, based on disciplinary violations sustained by North Attleboro PD in 2008, 2012, and 2017. After a hearing on December 17, 2024, the Subcommittee found that Sgt. Curran failed to establish by clear and convincing evidence that the revocation of his instructor certifications was an abuse of the MPTC's discretion, or was arbitrary and capricious, or was not otherwise in accordance with the law, and permanently revoked his MPTC instructor certifications.
6. *Sergeant Raymond Anair, Winchendon PD* – Sgt. Anair's MPTC instructor certifications were revoked on November 22, 2024, based on a disciplinary violation sustained by Winchendon PD in 2019. After a hearing on December 17, 2024, the Subcommittee found that Sgt. Anair failed to establish by clear and convincing evidence that the revocation of his instructor certifications was an abuse of the MPTC's discretion, or was arbitrary and capricious, or was not otherwise in accordance with the law, and permanently revoked his MPTC instructor certifications.
7. *Sergeant Cory Taylor, Belmont PD* – Sgt. Taylor's MPTC instructor certifications were revoked on November 22, 2024, based on a disciplinary violation sustained by Belmont PD in 2001. After a hearing on December 17, 2024, the Subcommittee found that Sgt. Taylor failed to establish by clear and convincing evidence that the revocation of his instructor certifications was an abuse of the MPTC's discretion, or was arbitrary and capricious, or was not otherwise in accordance with the law, and permanently revoked his MPTC instructor certifications.
8. *Officer Matthew Ritvo-Cabezas, West Newbury PD/Essex County Sheriff's Dept.* – Officer Ritvo-Cabeza's MPTC instructor certifications were revoked on November 22, 2024, based on disciplinary violations sustained by West Newbury PD in 2022. After a hearing on December 17, 2024, the Subcommittee found that Officer Ritvo-Cabezas failed to establish by clear and convincing evidence that the revocation of his instructor certifications was an abuse of the MPTC's discretion, or was arbitrary and capricious, or was not otherwise in accordance with the law. However, the Subcommittee also found that the circumstances did not warrant permanent revocation of his instructor certifications, but rather a one-year suspension of those certifications beginning November 22, 2024 and ending November 21, 2025.

Chief of Training Andrea Nardone explained the manner in which she and other MPTC staff have been requesting and reviewing disciplinary records for any MPTC-certified instructors who appear on the POST disciplinary list and the criteria being used to evaluate whether they are in compliance with the MPTC's *Certified Instructor Code of Conduct*. She noted that she is suspending the instructor certifications of any instructor who refuses to provide the MPTC with the requested disciplinary records. She also provided the Committee with a summary of the number of instructors whose certifications have been revoked or suspended thus far, the number of instructors whose

certifications were not suspended or revoked after review of their disciplinary records, and other related statistics.

Chief Hicks asked how long the officers who were suspended for failing to provide records will remain suspended before their certifications are revoked. Chief of Training Nardone said that she is working through all the instructors who appear on POST's disciplinary list and then will revisit any instructors who were suspended for failure to provide records.

Executive Director's Report

FY25 Budget. Executive Director Rathbun informed the Committee that agency spending is within all allocated budget amounts, as confirmed by both an internal review by MPTC's fiscal team and OSA's recent audit of the MPTC.

Facilities. Chief Operating Officer Kristen Lydon reported that the East Falmouth facility is up and running, and construction work on the Marlborough facility remains on schedule for an anticipated opening in September 2025.

Recruit Training Update. Chief of Training Andrea Nardone presented an update on recruit academies, including academy start dates, graduation dates, separations and departures, and demographics. Based on the current demographics, Chief of Training Nardone is discussing adding ESL tutors to the academies.

In-Service and Specialized Training. Chief of Training Nardone presented an update on in-service and specialized training and noted that current statistics, 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 continues to wind down and the numbers remain the same. We are awaiting confirmation of work hours for 117 officers in the Bridge Academy A-H Class, 77 officers in the I-P Class, and 63 officers in the Q-Z Class.

ASHER. ASHER Director John Mazza presented an update on the ASHER program and the classes that are in session and scheduled. To date, the emphasis has been on training MPTC-certified instructors so they can train others. We have now begun opening up trainings to officers who are not MPTC-certified instructors so that departments can train their own staff.

Executive Director Rathburn noted that he and Deputy Executive Director Fanikos recently attended the ASIM training, and he praised both the organization of the training and the inter-agency cooperation. Chief Hicks asked about the number of CRASE (Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events) classes being held and said he wants to be sure that communities are aware the training is available.

Open Discussion for Items Not Requiring Votes

None.

Old Business

POST/Police Reform & LEA Certification Standards. EOPSS Deputy General Counsel John Melander reported that he relayed to POST the Committee's feedback on the Use of Force and Code of Conduct Standards from the December meeting.

Chief Clark inquired about POST's recent communication about constables and their training. There was discussion about how there is some confusion as to whether department chiefs will be responsible for overseeing constables.

Attorney Melander also reported that a public hearing is scheduled for March 7, 2025, regarding the proposed updates to 550 CMR 3.00 and 550 CMR 6.00. He also noted that EOPSS, MPTC, DCJIS and MSP will be holding trainings on the new firearms bill over the next few weeks at various locations. Those trainings are open for registration in Acadis.

Working Groups. Chief of Training Nardone reported that the Campus Police Training Working Group and Sheriff's Training Working Group have not met recently, but she expects to schedule meetings soon now that Executive Director Rathbun and Deputy Executive Director Fanikos have begun to settle into their positions. The Fitness Working Group continues to roll out the pilot programs, and an update will be provided to the Committee in the summer.

New Business

Academy Capacity. Chief of Training Nardone proposed capping academy classes at 60 student officers in MPTC-operated academies. She explained that classes with more than 60 student officers can get unmanageable because our curriculum and our buildings are not designed for classes of that size. Scheduling for EVOC and the range can also be problematic for larger classes. Chief of Training Nardone said that standardization is critical, and the key to that is to ensure that every student officer is getting the support they need. She said we regularly monitor the needs of departments and do not anticipate that capping academy classes at 60 student officers would have any negative effect on departments or result in waiting lists. Chief of Training Nardone also noted that the number of student officers in an academy class affects the MPTC's operating costs and we need to be able to predict and rely upon a budget.

Chief Hicks acknowledged that class size has become an issue at some academies and said it's not just about how many student officers can fit in a classroom. It's about the learning environment too. He stressed that we have a responsibility to ensure standardization and that our curriculum is delivered effectively to all student officers. Sergeant Detective Chrispin also talked about the importance of student-instructor ratios.

A motion was made by Secretary Reidy and seconded by Chief Clark to approve a cap of no more than 60 student officers in MPTC-operated academy classes. A vote was taken, and the motion passed with one abstention (Sergeant Detective Chrispin).

ROC Scholarship Program Discussion. Executive Director Rathbun informed the Committee that the first ROC Scholarship candidate has been accepted and will begin the academy in March. This program has been an ongoing process, but we are moving forward as we continue to work on logistics. Bristol Community College (BCC) will be acting as the sponsoring agency for scholarship

students. MPTC staff are handling the review of applications. EOPSS and MPTC are working on a marketing campaign for the program. Executive Director Rathbun noted that this is a great opportunity for individuals who may not have had the chance to enroll in an academy otherwise.

Chief Hicks said he wants to make sure that all Committee members understand what the scholarship program entails. MPTC Legislative Director Brian Merrick gave an overview of the program. He explained that Senator Rodrigues and the Massachusetts Coalition of Police were trying to address recruitment and retention of municipal police officers. With funding via the ARPA legislation, they partnered with EOPSS and MPTC to create a funding mechanism for underrepresented or economically challenged individuals to get into academies. Candidates in the ROC scholarship program will not have to be sponsored by a department. All candidates will be sponsored by BCC until they are hired by a department. Even though the candidates will be sponsored by BCC, the program is not limited to any particular region of Massachusetts and is a statewide program. Additional information on the program and how to apply will be posted on MPTC's website.

Cadet Program in Partnership with HRD. Chief Hicks said that the new Civil Service guidelines include a provision for HRD to work with MPTC on a new statewide cadet program and establish what that program would look like. Chief Hicks asked Deputy Chief Amendola and Chief Couture to be part of a working group on the cadet program. An MPTC staff member will also be assigned, and the group will report back to the Committee.

Academy Consolidation Discussion. Chief Hicks reminded the Committee that Greenfield Community College was here last month requesting authorization to run a new academy. He reported that since then, at least one other private college has made a similar request. Chief Hicks discussed how the Police Reform Act includes language directing MPTC to study the benefits and costs of consolidating MPTC academies into a single full-time training facility. That language is included in the Committee's meeting book today at Tab 7. Chief Hicks said he doesn't believe we should be contemplating new academies when we have legislation directing us to consider consolidating our existing academies. He asked the Committee for a vote to put a moratorium on any new academies at this time and to create a working group to conduct the consolidation analysis required by police reform.

Sergeant Detective Chrispin asked whether existing academies have been running at full capacity. Deputy Executive Director Fanikos reported that MPTC-operated academies have generally been running at full capacity, but we have not had long waitlists. The larger authorized academies have not generally been running at full capacity. Secretary Reidy commented that we have seen a significant decrease in the last few years in the number of people seeking enrollment into academies, in part because of the difficulties with recruiting new police officers. He commended MPTC staff for making it regionally easier for people to get into academies but noted that we just are not seeing the type of numbers we saw in the past.

A motion was made by Superintendent Cullinane and seconded by Sergeant Detective Chrispin to approve a moratorium on any new academies until such time as the academy consolidation working group reports back to the Committee. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

The academy consolidation working group will consist of Chief Clark, Detective Sattler, Major Provost, and Undersecretary Kwon.

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 19, 2025, but Chief Hicks said he has a conflict with that date. He inquired about the availability of Committee members for alternate dates in March and said MPTC staff will reach out to the members by email regarding a new meeting date.

Adjournment

Chief Hicks reminded the Committee that we are looking to enter Executive Session following the open portion of today's meeting pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(3), which permits the Committee to meet in Executive Session "[t]o discuss strategy with respect to...litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the...litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares." Chief Hicks declared his belief that an open meeting would have a detrimental effect on the Committee's litigating position in the matter to be discussed.

At 11:48 a.m., a motion was made by Chief Couture and seconded by Sergeant Detective Chrispin to enter into Executive Session and not reconvene in open session. A roll call was taken:

Chief James Hicks	Yes
Deputy Chief Christine Amendola	Yes
Sergeant Detective Eddy Chrispin	Yes
Chief Brian Clark	Yes
Sheriff Kevin Coppinger	Yes
Chief Ryan Couture	Yes
Superintendent Lanita Cullinane	Yes
AAG Stacey Pichardo	Yes
Major Jon Provost	Yes
Secretary Terrence Reidy	Yes
Detective Jennifer Sattler	Yes

The motion passed unanimously, and the Committee went into Executive Session.