

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

Call to Order

On March 18, 2026, at 10:19 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
Deputy Chief Christine Amendola	Present
Sergeant Detective Eddy Chrispin	Present
Sheriff Kevin Coppinger	Present
Chief Ryan Couture	Present
Deputy Superintendent John Flynn	Present
Chief Jennifer Gundersen	Present
AAG Mary Nguyen	Present
Superintendent Richard Sullivan	Present
Sheriff Tom Bowler	Absent
Chief Brian Clark	Absent
Major Jody Greene	Absent
Detective Jennifer Sattler	Absent

EOPSS/MPTC Staff

Rick Rathbun, Amy Fanikos, Gina Masotta, Jim O'Brien, Tori Koch, Denise Mellon, Jen Sears, Lisa Caputo, Kelsey Whelihan, Chuck DiChiara, Denise Flagg, Deb Crafts, Jay Gribaudo, Felisha Arnold, Patrick Rogalin, Thomas Karns, Aiesha Grenier, and John Melander.

Guests

Officer William Penkala (Brimfield PD), Attorney Mark O'Brien, and Scott Greb.

Review/Approval of Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Chief Gundersen and seconded by Chief Couture to approve the minutes for the Committee meeting on February 18, 2026. A vote was taken, and the motion passed with two abstentions (Sheriff Coppinger and Deputy Chief Amendola).

Police Standards and Training

Temporary Waivers

There were no temporary waiver requests on the March agenda.

Out-of-State Exemptions

There were two out-of-state exemption requests on the March agenda.

Anthony Campbell	Harvard University
Sara Stelzer	Middleton PD

MPTC Deputy General Counsel Gina Masotta said that a summary of Anthony Campbell'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 request for him.

A motion was made by Sheriff Coppinger and seconded by Sergeant Detective Chrispin to approve the out-of-state exemption request for Anthony Campbell. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

Deputy General Counsel Masotta said that a summary of Sara Stelzer'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 request. However, the vote by the Subcommittee was three-to-one and there was extensive discussion regarding the exemption request for Officer Stelzer. Sheriff Coppinger explained that Superintendent Sullivan expressed concern that the FLETC Uniformed Police Training Program (UPTP) completed by Officer Stelzer consisted of significantly less hours than the MPTC's recruit officer course. Superintendent Sullivan also noted that some federal agencies, such as ICE, have been cutting back their training hours. Sheriff Coppinger reminded the Committee members that they voted to accept the FLETC UPTP as comparable to the MPTC's recruit officer course approximately three years ago, when an exemption candidate who graduated from the UPTP and worked as a federal officer at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard appeared before them. At the time, MPTC staff conducted a cross-check of the curricula for the UPTP and the MPTC's recruit officer course, and the Committee was satisfied that the UPTP was a comparable training program. The Committee also found that the job duties of federal police officers working for the Navy/DOD were akin to those of municipal police officers in Massachusetts. The Committee has since approved exemption requests for several officers with training and experience similar to that of Officer Stelzer. Deputy General Counsel Masotta noted that she did not ask Officer Stelzer or anyone from Middleton PD to attend today's meeting given that precedent. Sheriff Coppinger said he spoke with the Middleton PD Chief about Officer Stelzer's experience as a federal police officer and confirmed that her duties parallel the work of a municipal police officer.

Sergeant Detective Chrispin asked for additional information about the duties and functions of an officer working at a naval submarine base. Sheriff Coppinger and Deputy General Counsel Masotta said Middleton PD advised that Officer Stelzer wore a uniform, duty belt, firearm, and vest and her everyday work consisted of patrolling in a marked vehicle, responding to calls for service, making arrests when necessary, processing suspects for booking, and report writing. Deputy Chief Amendola said she is familiar with the position and knows that, if there are houses and businesses

on the base, federal police officers will respond to calls for domestics, shoplifting, and the like just as a municipal police officer would in their city or town.

Secretary Kwon and Chief Hicks said going forward it would be helpful if MPTC staff could make sure that the curriculum and the number of hours for training programs previously approved by the Committee have not significantly changed since they were approved.

A motion was made by Chief Couture and seconded by Sheriff Coppinger to approve the out-of-state exemption request for Sara Stelzer. A vote was taken, and the motion passed with one opposition (Superintendent Sullivan).

Bridge Academy Exemptions

Bridge exemption requests for Officers numbered 663, 664, and 665 on the March 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 Sheriff Coppinger and seconded by Chief Gundersen to approve the Bridge exemption requests for Officers numbered 663, 664, and 665 on the March Bridge Academy A-H Class List. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

Bridge exemption requests for Officers numbered 446 and 447 on the March I-P 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 Chief Gundersen and seconded by Chief Couture to approve the Bridge exemption requests for Officers numbered 446 and 447 on the March Bridge Academy I-P Class List. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

Deputy General Counsel Masotta noted that a Bridge exemption request for Officer numbered 445, William Penkala, is also on the March I-P class list. She reminded the Committee members that Officer Penkala previously appeared before them on a potential interruption-in-service issue, and he is on today's agenda for a continued discussion on that issue. The vote on his Bridge exemption request will be held for that discussion.

Deputy General Counsel Masotta also noted that a Bridge exemption request for Officer numbered 355, Jonathan Hart-Shuman, is on the March Bridge Academy Q-Z class list and reminded the Committee members that Officer Hart-Shuman appeared before the Committee at their January meeting with a potential interruption-in-service issue. The matter was tabled to give Officer Hart-Shuman an opportunity to obtain more information regarding his work as a Boston PD Special Police Officer for Longwood Security. Officer Hart-Shuman has requested to appear at the Committee's May meeting.

Interruption-in-Service, 5+ Years

At the February Committee meeting, MPTC staff sought guidance as to whether Brimfield PD Officer William Penkala has had an interruption-in-service of more than 5 years. The matter was before the Subcommittee in December and again in January. 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. 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 the Hampden Sheriff's Office 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. At the February meeting, the Committee learned that Officer Penkala also worked as a Security Installation Enforcement Specialist at the Barnes Air Force Base in 2018. Based on the information provided about Officer Penkala's job duties at Barnes Air Force Base, there was consensus among the Committee members present at the February meeting that it constituted law enforcement work and, therefore, he has not had an interruption-in-service of more than 5 years. But the Committee requested verification of his employment at Barnes Air Force Base and tabled the matter.

For today's meeting, Officer Penkala submitted a letter dated February 19, 2026, from the Commonwealth's Military Division verifying his employment as an Installation Security Officer from March 2018 to October 2018. Chief Hicks asked if any of the Committee members had concerns with the documentation provided. No one expressed any concerns.

A motion was made by Chief Gundersen and seconded by Sheriff Coppinger to approve the Bridge exemption request for Officer numbered 445, William Penkala, on the March Bridge Academy I-P Class List. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

Update on Student Officer Disciplinary Dismissal Appeals

Today's agenda reflects two pending appeals by former Student Officers Jhiriq Tyler and Baltazar Gonzalez, who were dismissed from the NECC Academy and Springfield Academy, respectively. Hearings need to be scheduled for their appeals.

Update on Instructor Certification Revocation Appeals

Today's agenda also reflects pending appeals by eight MPTC instructors whose certifications have been revoked. As of yesterday, hearings have been set for Monday, March 30, 2026, for three of those instructors. Hearings for the remaining five instructors still need to be 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. The MPTC is working with EOPSS in preparation for the Joint Ways & Means Public Safety hearing on March 24, 2026.

Facilities. Executive Director Rathbun provided an update regarding the Marlborough range. We are on schedule to begin an academy class in April. Surveys will be sent to departments to ascertain the needs of departments to train at the range.

Chief Hicks asked about the entry codes now required to enter MPTC buildings. Executive Director Rathbun reported that facility security had become a concern and a decision was made to implement door codes for access at all MPTC buildings.

Recruit Training Update. MPTC Deputy Executive Director Amy Fanikos presented an update on recruit academies, including academy start dates, graduation dates, separations and departures, and demographics.

In-Service and Specialized Training. Deputy Executive Director Fanikos 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. Deputy Executive Director Fanikos reported that there are 99 officers in the Bridge Academy A-H Class who need to complete their 2,400 hours and apply for an exemption. There are 63 officers in the I-P Class and 51 officers in the Q-Z class in the same position. Updated numbers are included in today's meeting book.

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

Old Business

Working Groups. MPTC Deputy Chief of Training Deb Crafts informed the Committee that the Campus Police Training Programs Working Group has been meeting monthly, including once since the last Committee meeting to discuss the model use of force policy. Deputy Executive Director Fanikos advised that the Fitness Working Group has been meeting monthly and last met on February 5, 2026. The group has been discussing alternatives to sprinting during the first four weeks of an academy due to an increase in injuries. Executive Director Rathbun reported that the Sheriff's Training Programs Working Group continues to move forward, and he has had conversations with Melissa Metzke to facilitate a comparison of the curriculum for the Correctional Officer Academy and the MPTC's Recruit Officer Course. He anticipates having a progress update in the next month or two. Deputy Executive Director Fanikos reported that the Academy Consolidation Working Group will reconvene and make recommendations to the Committee going forward.

POST/Police Reform Updates. MPTC General Counsel Jim O'Brien informed the Committee that they have reviewed all eight of the draft agency certification standards from POST. The only unfinished business is that EOPSS Attorney Ryan Mingo is awaiting a response from POST about revisions to the *Internal Affairs and Officer Complaint Investigation Procedures* based on feedback provided by the Committee.

Model Use of Force Policy. MPTC Assistant Legal Counsel Denise Flagg updated the Committee on the Model Use of Force Policy. She reminded the Committee that a working group comprised of staff from POST, EOPSS, and MPTC has spent more than 20 hours drafting a model policy over the last several months. The Committee and the POST Commission must agree on the Policy, and both must vote to approve it. At the last Committee meeting, Attorney Flagg presented the draft Model Policy and sought feedback by March 2, 2026. She reported that the working group received feedback from law enforcement agencies, civil liberties groups, and other stakeholders. All feedback was considered, and some changes were incorporated. Attorney Flagg summarized the revisions made to the draft Model Policy and noted that an updated copy is in today's meeting book. The working group is asking for a vote from the Committee today. Once the Policy has been approved by both the Committee and the POST Commission, regional and in-service training will be provided.

Chief Hicks talked about the duty to intervene and expressed concern that it is not clear whether state and municipal officers in Massachusetts have a duty to intervene when federal officers (such as ICE agents) use excessive force. Attorney Flagg reminded the Committee members that departments will be free to be more specific than the Model Policy when drafting their own policies.

A motion was made by Sergeant Detective Chrispin and seconded by Deputy Chief Amendola to approve the Model Use of Force Policy. A vote was taken and the motion passed with one abstention (Deputy Superintendent Flynn).

Assistant Legal Counsel Flagg and Statewide Defensive Tactics Coordinator Chuck DiChiara were acknowledged for their considerable time and effort on the Model Policy.

Medical Examination Requirements for Academy Entrance. Chief Hicks informed the Committee that he is putting together a working group to evaluate our medical standards for entry into an academy. HRD has expressed concerns about the use of their standards for officers from non-civil service departments. Major Greene and MPTC General Counsel Jim O'Brien will be part of the work group, and Chief Hicks will look to add one additional member.

Policy 5.03 – Bridge Academy Completion. Executive Director Rathbun reminded the Committee members that they received a draft policy on Bridge Academy completion deadlines at last month's meeting. MPTC staff is asking for a vote on the policy today. It requires officers to complete their 2,400 hours of law enforcement work by January 1, 2027, at 11:59 PM, and sponsoring agencies must submit documentation of those hours and a Bridge exemption request by January 15, 2027, at 11:59PM. It was pointed out that on page 3 of the policy, in Section VI(1)(B), the 11:59AM should be amended to 11:59PM.

Chief Gundersen asked if an officer must have a sponsoring agency in order to submit hours for Bridge and request an exemption. General Counsel O'Brien confirmed that a sponsoring agency is required.

A motion was made by Chief Gundersen and seconded by Chief Couture to approve MPTC Policy 5.03, Bridge Academy Completion, as amended. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

Policy 3.02 – Certified Instructor Acadis Account Eligibility. Executive Director Rathbun explained that a policy on certified instructor Acadis account eligibility was released before MPTC staff adopted its new policy format. There is an updated version of the policy in the new format in today's meeting book for the Committee's review and approval. The new version also clarifies who must be certified by the MPTC to instruct.

A motion was made by Chief Gundersen and seconded by Superintendent Sullivan to approve MPTC Policy 3.02, Certified Instructor Acadis Account Eligibility. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

Open Discussion for Items Not Requiring Votes

Executive Director Rathbun discussed that the statute governing the composition of the Committee provides for non-voting advisory members, including but not limited to a city or town administrator,

Superior Court clerk, member of CPCS, social worker, mental health clinician, and district attorney. With assistance from EOPSS, MPTC staff have been working to reach out to non-voting members and encourage them to participate in monthly meetings. Attorney Melander noted that the language in the statute is vague as to the role of non-voting members. The Committee and MPTC staff will have to determine what role these individuals will play. He suggested that non-voting members should be welcomed to attend and participate in meetings and made aware of what the Committee is working on. Secretary Kwon said she believes it will be helpful to the Committee to receive input from the non-voting members about their perspectives and how the Committee's decisions affect outside organizations.

Chief Hicks said the Committee will continue to discuss potential acceptance of detail hours towards Bridge. West Springfield PD is expected to be at the Subcommittee's meeting in May and the full Committee's meeting in June to discuss hours worked by officers at the Big E.

Next Meeting

The next Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 22, 2026, in Randolph. Chief Hicks noted that the May meeting will likely be held at the Holyoke Academy.

Adjournment

At 12:01 p.m., a motion was made by Sheriff Coppinger and seconded by Secretary Kwon to adjourn the meeting. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.