

Municipal Police Training Committee
Full Committee Monthly Meeting Minutes
MPTC Holyoke
May 20, 2026

Call to Order

On May 20, 2026, at 10:39 a.m., Chief James Hicks called the monthly meeting of the Municipal Police Training Committee to order at MPTC Holyoke, 600 Kelly Way, Holyoke, MA. Advance notice of the meeting was posted in compliance with the open meeting laws. A quorum of the 15-member Committee was present. The meeting was recorded and broadcast over Microsoft Teams.

Attendees: Voting Members

Chief James Hicks (Chair)	Present
Secretary Gina Kwon	Present
Deputy Chief Christine Amendola	Present
Sheriff Tom Bowler	Present
Chief Brian Clark	Present
Sheriff Kevin Coppinger	Present
Chief Ryan Couture	Present
Major Jody Greene	Present
Chief Jennifer Gundersen	Present
AAG Mary Nguyen	Present
Detective Jennifer Sattler	Present
Chief James Sartell	Present
Sergeant Detective Eddy Chrispin	Absent
Deputy Superintendent John Flynn	Absent
Superintendent Richard Sullivan	Absent

EOPSS/MPTC Staff

Rick Rathbun, Amy Fanikos, John Melander, Andrea Nardone, Gina Masotta, Jim O'Brien, Michele Lyons, Jay Gribaudo, and Tanya Hardiman.

Guests

Somerville PD Chief Shumeane Benford, Dante DiFronzo, Attorney Joseph Padolsky, and Scott Greb.

Review/Approval of Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Chief Gundersen and seconded by Chief Clark to approve the minutes for the Committee meeting on April 22, 2026. A vote was taken, and the motion passed with four abstentions (Major Green, Deputy Chief Amendola, Sheriff Bowler, and Chief Sartell).

Announcement

Chief Hicks reintroduced and welcomed Townsend PD Chief James Sartell to the Committee and noted that he was officially sworn in as a voting member today.

Police Standards and Training

Temporary Waivers

There were no temporary waiver requests on the May agenda.

Out-of-State Exemptions

There was one out-of-state exemption request on the May agenda.

Shane Smith

Belmont PD

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

A motion was made by Sheriff Coppinger and seconded by Chief Sartell to approve the out-of-state exemption request for Shane Smith. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

Bridge Academy Exemptions

Bridge exemption requests for Officers numbered 667 and 668 on the May 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 Detective Sattler and seconded by Chief Clark to approve the Bridge exemption requests for Officers numbered 667 and 668 on the May Bridge Academy A-H Class List. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

Bridge exemption requests for Officers numbered 448 and 449 on the May 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 Deputy Chief Amendola and seconded by Chief Couture to approve the Bridge exemption requests for Officers numbered 448 and 449 on the May Bridge Academy I-P Class List. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

Bridge exemption requests for Officers numbered 360 through 362 on the May Q-Z 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 Detective Sattler and seconded by Chief Sartell to approve the Bridge exemption requests for Officers numbered 360 through 362 on the May Bridge Academy Q-Z Class List. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

MPTC Deputy General Counsel Masotta also noted that Officer numbered 357 on the April Q-Z Class List presented to the full Committee last month was inadvertently left off the list presented to the Subcommittee. While Officer numbered 357 was therefore not reviewed/approved by the Subcommittee last month, the full Committee approved the Bridge exemption. No further action is required by the Committee.

Interruption-in-Service, 5+ Years

MPTC staff is seeking guidance as to whether Somerville PD Officer Dante DiFronzo has had an interruption-in-service of more than 5 years. The matter was before the Subcommittee in April. Officer DiFronzo graduated from the Boston Police Academy in June 2009. From then until September 2016, he worked as a full-time police officer for Somerville PD. At the end of September 2016, he was placed on paid administrative leave pending an investigation into his misconduct with a confidential informant. He was terminated in May 2018. The matter went to arbitration, and in June 2021 the arbitrator issued a decision requiring that he be reinstated. Somerville PD placed him back on paid administrative leave and extensive litigation ensued. Officer DiFronzo remained on leave until March 2026. During that time, he completed mandatory in-service training. Recently, Somerville PD and Officer DiFronzo separately reached out to MPTC and inquired about what training he was required to complete before returning to work. MPTC staff advised that because he had not performed police duties and functions in almost 10 years, 550 CMR 3.04(3) requires that he complete another full-time academy before returning to work. Officer DiFronzo's position is that he has not had an interruption-in-service of more than 5 years and the only gap in service the Committee should consider is from May 2018, when he was terminated, through June 2021, when he should have been reinstated per the arbitrator's decision. At the April meeting, the Subcommittee voted 3 to 2 that Officer DiFronzo has had an interruption-in-service of more than 5 years but has made a showing pursuant to 550 CMR 3.04(3) that he has been involved in the police profession to a level and degree that reasonably assures he has stayed abreast of legal, ethical, and professional issues relevant to municipal policing in Massachusetts. The Subcommittee's vote also required Officer DiFronzo to successfully complete the core competency exam before performing police duties and functions and an appropriate FTO program developed by Somerville PD, to include daily observation reports reviewed and approved by Somerville PD command staff.

At Chief Hicks' request, Sheriff Coppinger summarized the discussion at the Subcommittee's April meeting and said that he made his decision based on the CMR. Chief Gundersen told the Committee that she was one of the dissenting votes. She said that the rule has always been that if an officer has had an interruption-in-service of more than five years, the officer must go back to an academy regardless of the reason for the interruption. In her view, the onus is on the City of Somerville to retrain their employee, just like when an officer returns from leave because of an injury.

Officer DiFronzo and his attorney, Joe Padolsky, were present at today's Committee meeting. They submitted a letter (with attachments) outlining their position, a copy of which is contained in today's meeting book. Attorney Padolsky summarized their position and spoke about the 1998 case of *Police Commissioner of Boston v. Gows* cited in the letter submitted to the Committee.

Somerville PD Chief Shumeane Benford was also present at today's meeting and said he was there to support the process and advocate for whatever training is appropriate to return Officer DiFronzo to full-duty status. He emphasized that Somerville PD was looking for a path forward.

Deputy General Counsel Masotta relayed to the Committee that she and MPTC General Counsel Jim O'Brien met with POST to discuss this matter. POST conditionally certified Officer DiFronzo but made it clear that he is required to complete any re-training required by the MPTC. General Counsel O'Brien also discussed his involvement in re-drafting the CMRs and noted that the intent was to measure interruptions-in-service beginning when an officer completes their last patrol shift and ending when they work their next patrol shift.

There was extensive discussion about whether completing in-service training is enough to ensure "...that the officer has been involved in the police profession to a level and degree that reasonably assures that they have stayed abreast of legal, ethical, and professional issues relevant to municipal policing in Massachusetts..." as contemplated by the CMR. Chief Benford noted that the in-service training completed by Officer DiFronzo while he was on administrative leave over the past several years included not just on-line in-service training but also in-person firearms and CPR training. Attorney Padolsky also said that Officer DiFronzo testified in court on one occasion in 2018 during his administrative leave, which he argued is clearly a police duty/function.

A motion was made by Chief Gundersen and seconded by Secretary Kwon that Officer DiFronzo has had an interruption-in-service of more than five years. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Sheriff Coppinger and seconded by Chief Clark that Officer DiFronzo has made a showing pursuant to 550 CMR 3.04(3) that he has been involved in the police profession to a level and degree that reasonably assures he has stayed abreast of legal, ethical, and professional issues relevant to municipal policing in Massachusetts and he must successfully complete the core competency exam before performing police duties and functions and thereafter an appropriate FTO program developed by Somerville PD, to include daily observation reports reviewed and approved by Somerville PD command staff. A vote was taken, and the motion passed with two oppositions (AAG Nguyen and Chief Gundersen).

Update on Student Officer Disciplinary Dismissal Appeals

A hearing was held on April 29, 2026, for former Student Officer Baltazar Gonzalez, who was dismissed from the Springfield Police Academy. A decision is pending.

Update on Instructor Certification Revocation Appeals

A hearing was held for former MPTC Instructor Daniel Rose of Boston PD (now Brandeis PD) on March 30, 2026. Hearings were held for former MPTC instructors Kyle Kidger of the Essex County Sheriff's Department and Timothy Van Nostrand of Somerville PD on April 29, 2026. Decisions are pending. Today's agenda also reflects pending appeals by four MPTC instructors whose certifications have been revoked, including Hannah Greene of Orleans PD, Christopher Bartolomei of Falmouth PD, Armando Feliciano of Barnstable PD, and Bryan Derochea of Mashpee PD. A hearing has been scheduled for them on June 24, 2026.

Since the last meeting, the Standards Subcommittee issued a decision on one instructor revocation appeal hearing. Sheriff Coppinger provided a summary of the facts and reported the Subcommittee's decision as follows:

Detective Jeffrey Dean, Hopedale Police Department – Detective Dean’s MPTC instructor certifications were revoked on February 6, 2026, based on disciplinary violations sustained by Mendon PD in 2017 and appearing on POST’s published disciplinary list. During a hearing on March 30, 2026, Detective Dean told the Subcommittee that he disputes the violations sustained by his former department. After the hearing, the Subcommittee found that Detective Dean’s avenue for disputing the information in POST’s database is not through the MPTC’s instructor revocation appeal process but rather through the Mendon PD and/or POST and held that, if the underlying record changes, he may re-initiate this appeal.

Executive Director’s Report

Agency Operations Update. MPTC Executive Director Rick Rathbun reported that we received notification recently that the EVOC track at Joint Base Cape Cod will not be accessible after June 1, 2026. MPTC staff are currently discussing this issue and looking for solutions.

FY26 Budget Update. Executive Director Rathbun reported that all spending and expenditures remain within established constraints and allocated budget amounts for FY2026. The Fiscal team is working on closing out FY26.

Facilities. Executive Director Rathbun reported that there are no new updates.

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 there are 93 officers in the Bridge Academy A-H Class who need to complete their 2,400 hours and apply for an exemption. There are 60 officers in the I-P Class and 48 officers in the Q-Z class in the same position. 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 in May the team conducted a CRASE training for the U.S. Dept. of State and held the first AIM trainings in Milford.

Executive Director Rathbun acknowledged and thanked Tanya Hardiman, Jay Gribaudo, and Holyoke Academy Director Michele Lyons for preparing for and hosting the meeting today. He also acknowledged the student officers from the Holyoke, Lynnfield, NECC, Haverhill, and MBTA Academies who attended Trooper Kevin Trainor’s funeral. He told the Committee that training schedules were modified to accommodate their attendance, and he believes it was important for the student officers to be there.

Open Discussion for Items Not Requiring Votes

Secretary Kwon told the Committee that IACP’s assessment report on the State Police Academy was released today. Governor Healey asked for the assessment after Trooper Delgado’s death. It began last year, and the report issued today is 120 pages long, contains over 100 recommendations, and contemplates a five-year implementation plan. Major Greene said he views the assessment as

an opportunity for MSP to improve. He looks forward to hiring for the new civilian positions at MSP's academy recommended in the report, including a Director of Training and Curriculum, PT manager, physician's assistant, and possibly a strength training coach. Major Greene said he has received positive feedback from current academy staff, and he believes changes will be easier to implement given the strong support from Colonel Noble. Secretary Kwon noted that there will be overlap and consultation with MPTC. Chief Hicks inquired about the start date for the next RTT. Secretary Kwon said the next class will be delayed so MSP can begin implementing some of the recommendations in the IACP report.

Old Business

Model Use of Force Policy. MPTC General Counsel Jim O'Brien reminded the Committee that the new model use of force policy was approved by the Committee and the POST Commission. We are beginning to roll it out. MPTC and POST are holding regional training sessions for command staff and policy makers in Randolph, Marlborough, and Holyoke in June. Training on the new model policy will also be incorporated into the TY27 de-escalation and use of force in-service training.

Working Groups. MPTC Deputy Executive Director Amy Fanikos advised the Committee that the Campus Police Training Programs Working Group is on pause until the fall. The Sheriff's Training Programs Working Group will be meeting again in June or July. In the meantime, Hannah Gianfriddo is working with Melissa Metzke on curriculum review. The Fitness Working Group is researching apps for law enforcement officers that may have potential to be used in our curriculum. The Academy Consolidation Working Group met this week and expects to have an update and possible proposals at the Committee's June or July meeting.

Medical Examination Requirements for Academy Entrance. Chief Hicks informed the Committee that the working group has not yet met, and they are waiting for information from IACP.

New/Updated MPTC Policies. Executive Director Rathbun reported that the agency's telework policy has been implemented after review and input from staff.

General Counsel O'Brien informed the Committee that MPTC staff recently drafted a policy for school resource officer training for the first time and we are now seeking the Committee's approval. A copy of the draft policy is in the Committee's meeting book today. It was vetted with experienced SRO officers and POST. The policy sets forth the training required for officers to (a) obtain initial SRO certification from POST and (b) maintain that certification through annual in-service training. Before obtaining an SRO certification from POST, an SRO candidate will be required to complete a 40-hour NASRO Basic SRO Course. To maintain SRO certification, SROs must complete annual in-service training established by the MPTC. There will be an online option for the in-service training to make it more accessible. General Counsel O'Brien noted that the draft SRO training standards do not require the SMEs who teach topics included in annual SRO in-service to become MPTC-certified instructors because SRO training is highly specialized and we typically rely on civilian and academic instructors.

A motion was made by Chief Gundersen and seconded by Chief Clark to approve the *MPTC Training Standards for School Resource Officers* as presented. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

New Business

None.

Next Meeting

The next Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 17, 2026, in Marlborough.

Adjournment

At 12:48 p.m., a motion was made by Chief Sartell and seconded by Secretary Kwon to adjourn the meeting. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.