

Municipal Police Training Committee
Monthly Meeting Minutes
December 20, 2023

Call to Order

On December 20, 2023, at 10:10 a.m., Chief James Hicks called the monthly meeting of the Municipal Police Training Committee to order. 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
Chief Brian Clark	Present
Chief Edward Conley	Present
Sheriff Kevin Coppinger	Present
Superintendent Lanita Cullinane	Present
Sheriff Christopher Donelan	Present
Chief Thomas Gammel	Present
Chief Jennifer Gundersen	Present
Chief Kelly Nee	Present
Major Jon Provost	Present
Secretary Terrence Reidy	Present

EOPSS/MPTC Staff

Executive Director Robert Ferullo, Undersecretary Gina Kwon, Atty. John Melander, Atty. James O'Brien, Atty. Andrea Nardone, Jay Gribaudo, Tanya Hardiman, Lara Thomas, Atty. Gina Masotta, Atty. Denise Flagg, Denise Mellon, Lisa Caputo, Kristen Lydon, Kathleen Berry, Felisha Arnold, Elsie Sanon, Eric Lederman, Charmagne Pearson, and Cassandra Cahill.

Guests

Officer Jason Bettencourt, Officer Brian Willard, and Chief Richard Fuller, Jr.

Review/Approval of Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Sheriff Donelan to approve the minutes of the November 15, 2023 meeting. The motion was seconded by Chief Clark, and a vote was taken. The motion passed with three abstentions (Chief Nee, Superintendent Cullinane, and Secretary Reidy).

Police Standards and Training

Temporary Waivers

There were no temporary waiver requests on the December agenda.

Out-of-State Exemptions

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

Jason A. Bettencourt	Peabody PD
David E. Hammack	Shirley PD
Peter D. Violette	Groton PD
Thomas P. Greeley	Weymouth PD

At its September 27, 2023 meeting, the Committee voted to approve the FLETC Uniform Police Training Program attended by Jason Bettencourt as the equivalent of a full-time MPTC Police Academy. At its meeting this morning, the Standards Subcommittee reviewed and made a favorable recommendation to approve Officer Bettencourt's request for an out-of-state exemption.

A motion was made by Sheriff Coppinger and seconded by Secretary Reidy to approve the out-of-state exemption for Jason Bettencourt. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

Both Peter Violette and Thomas Greeley received out-of-state exemptions many years ago but neither they nor the MPTC have written confirmation of those exemptions. At today's meeting, MPTC staff asked the Committee to reconfirm their exemptions for POST certification purposes. Each attended a reserve/intermittent academy here in Massachusetts and then attended a fulltime out-of-state police academy.

Officer Violette graduated in 1992 from a New Hampshire Recruit Academy and then went on to work as a fulltime patrol officer for the Rindge, NH Police Department until 1995. In May 1995, the Ashburnham, MA Police Department applied for an out-of-state exemption for Officer Violette. MPTC files reflect that there was a Police Standards meeting on June 27, 1995 to consider the request. Officer Violette then went on to work as a fulltime officer for Ashburnham PD until 1996, for Shirley PD from 1996 to 2019, and for Groton PD from 2019 to the present. The Standards Subcommittee reviewed and made a favorable recommendation to reconfirm Officer Violette's out-of-state exemption.

During the discussion about Officer Violette, there was some confusion that led to David Hammack erroneously being included in the motion regarding Officer Violette. As reflected below, that error was subsequently corrected by a series of motions and votes. The initial motion, made in error, was as follows:

A motion was made by Sheriff Coppinger and seconded by Chief Gammel to reconfirm the out-of-state exemptions for David Hammack and Peter Violette. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

Once it became clear that David Hammack should not have been included in the above motion, the following corrective motions were made:

A motion was made by Chief Nee and seconded by Sheriff Donelan to reconsider the motion to reconfirm out-of-state exemptions for David Hammack and Peter Violette. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Chief Gammel and seconded by Chief Clark to withdraw David Hammack from the motion. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Chief Nee and seconded by Chief Clark to reconfirm the out-of-state exemption for Peter Violette. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

Thomas Greeley graduated from a CJTC Reserve/Intermittent Training Program in Plymouth, MA in 1988 and then went on to graduate from the Metropolitan (D.C.) Police Department Training Academy in 1992. He worked as fulltime police officer for the Metropolitan PD in Washington D.C. until 1993. In June 1993, the Hingham, MA Police Department applied for an out-of-state exemption for Officer Greeley. MPTC files reflect that CJTC staff made an affirmative recommendation to approve the exemption. Officer Greeley then went on to work for Hingham PD from 1993 to 2000 and for Weymouth PD from 2000 to the present. The Standards Subcommittee reviewed and made a favorable recommendation to reconfirm Officer Greeley's out-of-state exemption.

A motion was made by Sheriff Coppinger and seconded by Chief Gammel to reconfirm the out-of-state exemption for Thomas Greeley. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

David Hammack graduated from a 616-hour Georgia Basic Law Enforcement Training Academy in November 2006. He went on to work as a fulltime police officer and senior accident reconstruction investigator with the Gwinnett County Police Department in Lawrenceville, GA until 2012. He then transferred to Vermont, where he completed a 173.95-hour fulltime waiver program and worked as a police officer for the West Dover, VT Police Department from September 2012 to 2015. Thereafter, he went back and forth between working as an accident investigator for Delta Airlines and a police officer in West Dover. Since 2019, he has been working continuously for Delta. He will hit a 5-year interruption in service on January 4, 2024. Shirley PD wants to hire him and is seeking an out-of-state exemption. The Standards Subcommittee reviewed and made a favorable recommendation to grant David Hammack's request for an out-of-state exemption, contingent upon him completing the last 5 years of in-service training before reaching the 5-year interruption in service mark.

A motion was made by Sheriff Coppinger and seconded by Sheriff Donelan to grant an out-of-state exemption to David Hammack contingent upon his completion of the last 5 years of in-service training before he reaches a 5-year interruption in service on January 4, 2024. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

The Standards Subcommittee was also presented with information regarding Joseph R. Bellino (Suffolk University Police Department) at its meeting this morning. MPTC Chief-of-Staff/General Counsel Jim O'Brien explained that he does not view Lieutenant Bellino's situation as one that requires an out-of-state exemption because he graduated from the 9th MA SSPO Police Academy in 2000. Thereafter, he worked as a police officer for Suffolk University PD for 3 years. He then moved to New Hampshire, attended a New Hampshire police academy, and has been working there as a fulltime police officer for the last 20 years. Lieutenant Bellino is now seeking to return to Massachusetts and Suffolk University PD. The question for the Subcommittee was whether he was

required to do anything before returning to service here. The Subcommittee decided by vote that Lieutenant Bellino must pass the core competency exam and complete all three components of First Responder (First Aid) in-service training. No vote was required from the full Committee.

Bridge Academy Exemptions

A Bridge exemption request for Officer numbered 628 on the December A-H List was reviewed and recommended by the Standards Subcommittee. Coursework was completed and payroll has been verified.

A motion was made by Sheriff Coppinger to approve the Bridge exemption request for Officer numbered 628 on the Bridge Academy December A-H list. The motion was seconded by Chief Clark, and a vote was taken. The motion passed unanimously.

Bridge exemption requests for Officers numbered 415-416 on the December I-P List were reviewed and recommended by the Standards Subcommittee. Coursework was completed and payroll has been verified.

A motion was made by Sheriff Coppinger to approve the Bridge exemption requests for Officer numbered 415-416 on the Bridge Academy December I-P list. The motion was seconded by Chief Gammel, and a vote was taken. The motion passed unanimously.

Bridge exemption requests for Officers numbered 124 through 158 on the December Q-Z List were reviewed and recommended by the Standards Subcommittee. Coursework was completed and payroll has been verified.

A motion was made by Sheriff Coppinger to approve the Bridge exemption requests for Officers numbered 124 through 158 on the Bridge Academy December Q-Z list. The motion was seconded by Chief Gundersen, and a vote was taken. The motion passed unanimously.

Bridge Hours

At its last meeting, the Standards Subcommittee considered whether hours worked by Officer Brian Willard as a special police officer for Weymouth PD should be credited for Bridge Academy purposes. Officer Willard is currently assigned to Weymouth PD's Natural Resource Division as a Natural Resource Officer under the command of the Special Operations Division. One of his duties as a Natural Resource Officer is Animal Control. After hearing from Weymouth PD Chief Richard Fuller regarding Officer Willard's duties and responsibilities, the Subcommittee voted unanimously at its November 15, 2023 meeting to recommend to the full Committee that Officer Willard's work hours be credited. The matter is before the full Committee today.

Sheriff Coppinger summarized the Subcommittee's discussion about this matter last month. Weymouth PD Chief Fuller provided the Subcommittee with information about Officer Willard's job duties and responsibilities. Chief Fuller indicated that Officer Willard wears a full uniform, body camera, and duty belt with a firearm every day. He drives a marked cruiser, makes arrests, responds to service calls, has an office at Weymouth PD, and falls under the command of Weymouth PD. Based on that information, the Subcommittee voted to approve Officer Willard's hours for Bridge.

Chief Fuller and Officer Willard were present at today's Committee meeting to provide information and answer questions. Chief Fuller provided Officer Willard's call logs and explained that he primarily patrols parks. He also noted that Weymouth has special legislation regarding animal control and natural resource officers, which gives them the power to make arrests and perform all other police duties. Chief Hicks voiced his concerns that Officer Willard's job duties consist primarily of the type of animal control work that the Committee has not approved in the past. Chief Hicks said that when he reviewed the call logs provided by Weymouth PD, he saw that Officer Willard was only the primary officer on animal-related calls. Chief Hicks said he looks to see whether an officer is making arrests as the primary officer, testifying in court, etc., and he does not see that Officer Willard is doing those things. There was extensive discussion about Officer Willard's job duties, and other Committee members shared Chief Hicks' concerns.

Ultimately, the Committee requested more information from Chief Fuller and Officer Willard, including Officer Willard's full resumé, details about the work done by Officer Willard in his role as a natural resource officer for Weymouth PD, and call logs from his time with Holbrook PD.

Disciplinary Hearings Update

Since the November meeting, a decision was issued on Hakim John's appeal of his dismissal from the Randolph Academy. Sheriff Coppinger was not present for that hearing but provided a summary of the facts and reported that the Subcommittee members who attended upheld the Class I violation (*Conduct, Unbecoming*) but overturned the dismissal. Mr. John is eligible to enroll in another academy class, but the Class I violation will be part of his disciplinary record.

Hearings for the appeals filed by Matthew Donaldson, William Corbett, and David Bosini, all of whom were dismissed from the Holyoke Academy in connection with test integrity, still need to be scheduled.

Executive Director's Report

Hiring. MPTC Chief of Staff/General Counsel Jim O'Brien updated the Committee on recent hiring and job postings at the MPTC.

Recruit Academy Update. Chief of Training Andrea Nardone shared updates on the recruit academies.

Academy Start Dates. Chief of Training Nardone presented the upcoming Academy start dates.

Academy Demographics. Chief of Training Nardone reported on Academy Demographics.

Bridge Academy Update. Deputy Chief of Training Lara Thomas presented an update on the Bridge Academy. She thanked the Committee for approving the enrollment deadline for the Q-Z class and noted that enrollment has been slow.

Specialized Training was presented by Chief of Training Nardone.

In-Service Update. Curriculum Manager Denise Flagg discussed the results of the officer survey regarding TY25 in-service topics. She indicated that she hopes to have a proposal for TY25 in-

service topics for the Committee to review and vote on at next month's meeting. Chief Hicks asked MPTC staff to get the proposal to Committee members as soon as possible so they have time to review it in advance of the next meeting. Secretary Reidy said we should continue to focus on civil rights and hate crimes because he believes those issues are going to remain prevalent, especially on college campuses. Superintendent Cullinane said she believes mass gatherings also remain an important topic and is something that Boston PD deals with on a regular basis.

Asher. John Mazza presented an update on the ASHER program, including recently held and upcoming train-the-trainer classes for AAIR and Level 1. Secretary Reidy emphasized the importance of the ASHER program.

Budget. Executive Director Ferullo advised that we continue to practice fiscal conservatism. We are hopeful that we will be able to do some specialized training classes in the future and will focus on statutorily required trainings first.

Facilities. Executive Director Ferullo updated the Committee on our facilities. Milford is being furnished and we hope to begin specialized training there in or around January. Construction is underway in Falmouth. The RFR for Central Mass came out yesterday and will be open until January 11th. We are looking toward construction in late spring or early summer of next year with a 12-month buildout.

Old Business

POST/Police Reform. Chief Hicks said that he recently had a conversation with POST's Executive Director, Enrique Zuniga, who indicated that department certifications are going to be POST's priority going into the new year.

Working Groups. Chief Hicks said we are going to be looking at revising our CMRs and a small working group will be created to work through some of these issues. The goal of the working group will be to come up with a draft of revisions for review and approval by the Committee. There will be more information on this soon.

Chief Hicks also said he would like an update from the Sheriffs Working Group in January.

Open Discussion for Items Not Requiring Votes

Sheriff Donelan would like to see PAT requirements addressed in a future agenda. He has begun the process of sending new deputy sheriff candidates to full-time police academies and he wonders whether the PAT requirements are necessary since Sheriff Departments have their own physical requirements. It creates an issue for him because the candidates he puts through academies are unionized employees (unlike police recruits) and the PAT results in a significant overtime cost. Chief Hicks said that when the PAT was implemented, there were no other tests in place. Now that we have the physical fitness test, it may be time to have this discussion again.

New Business

Annual Firearm and First Responder Training Standards – Revised/Updated. Atty. Nardone presented drafts of the revised Firearms and First Responder Training Standards. She explained that

the revisions/updates made to the Firearms Training Standards were intended to clarify the existing standards, not change them. She noted that there is still a question about unarmed departments and whether they must complete the skills training. There was extensive discussion about this issue and concern about what happens when officers transfer between departments. There was consensus among the Committee members that **all** POST-certified officers should be required to do both the firearm qualification training and firearm skills training.

Atty. Nardone said that MPTC is also working on the annual First Responder Training Standards. We are not asking for a vote yet on the draft in the Committee's packet today; it was included in the packet so that we can start discussing it at the January meeting. As with firearms, revisions/updates made to the First Responder standards are intended only to clarify the existing standards. Atty. Nardone inquired whether the Committee members feel that we should be requiring instructors to be MPTC-certified. She noted that many departments rely on EMTs and firefighters for training. There was consensus among the Committee members that it is not necessary to require instructors to be MPTC-certified since the standard is set by the American Red Cross.

Annual Election of MPTC Chair. Executive Director Ferullo requested nominations for the role of MPTC Chair. Secretary Reidy thanked Chief Hicks for his work and accomplishments thus far as the Chair and praised his demeanor, communication skills, and ability to balance his full-time job as a police chief with this role. Secretary Reidy said he could not think of anyone better suited to run this Committee.

A motion was made by Secretary Reidy and seconded by Chief Gundersen to nominate Chief Hicks for the role of MPTC Chair. Chief Hicks accepted the nomination, and a vote was taken. The motion passed unanimously.

Chief Hicks thanked Secretary Reidy and the Committee members for their vote of confidence. He said he is proud to lead this Committee and stressed that we should all take pride in what we are accomplishing for police training and standards in Massachusetts.

Chief Hicks also noted that this would be the last day for Superintendent Cullinane as a Committee member. Chief Hicks and Secretary Reidy thanked her for all the work and time she has put in during her tenure. Superintendent Cullinane said it has been a pleasure and an honor to serve on the Committee and thanked the Committee members for the opportunity. Though she is saddened to be leaving the Committee, she will continue as an instructor and police training will remain a passion for her.

Next Meeting

The next Committee meeting is scheduled for January 17, 2024 at 10:00 am in Randolph.

Adjournment

At 12:35 p.m., there was a motion by Sheriff Donelan and seconded by Chief Nee to adjourn the meeting. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.