

Police Department - FY 25

Assumed Outcomes:

- Effective and transparent Police service to the community
- Meaningful internal and external communication
- Efficient and effective delivery of Tiers 1,2, and 3 levels of service
- Effective and timely response to calls for service and needs of the community
- Honesty, integrity, caring, compassion, and transparency by all members of the department
- Meaningful internal and external working relations with partner agencies
- Efficient foundation/general inquiries for all Town operations / departments
- Proactive community policing

Mandates:

- Annual statutorily mandated training
- Bi-annual Range qualification
- Annual complete policy & procedure review and sign off
- Annual Use of force, Taser, Bolo-wrap
- Annual Academy reporting
- Giglio reporting to the Ag's Office
- Mandatory reporting for specific crimes (DA, AG, DHHS)
- Sex Offender Registry
- Fingerprinting
- National Incident Based Reporting System (Formerly Uniform Crime Reporting System)
- Annual Safety and OSHA required training

Current Methods:

- 24- hour police coverage 24/7/365 service
- Mobile, foot, and watercraft patrols
- Officer response to all reported crimes or incidents
- Investigation of all matters reported
- Special event coverage
- Police Private details
- Proactive and reactive patrol
- Community policing
- Drug take back and disposal
- Background investigations
- Good Morning Camden Program
- Sand for Seniors
- Traffic Studies
- Quality of Life Issues

Current Resources

Personnel:

- 1 Chief - 35 years of service; 4 and 3 schedule
- 1 Lieutenant – 34 years of service; 4 and 3 schedule
- 2 Patrol Sergeants - 1 Sgt 20 years of service and 1 Sgt with 10 years of service; 4 and 4 schedule
- 1 Detective Sergeant - 25 years of service; 4 and 3 schedule
- 6 Patrol Officer - (2 Vacancies); 2 officers with 6 years of service; 2 probationary officers with MCJA dates of January 2024; 4 and 4 schedule
- Parking Enforcement Officer - 1 year of service; 5 and 2 schedule
- Administrative Assistant - 16 years of service; 5 and 2 schedule

Areas of Discussion:

2023 has been a very challenging year for recruiting and retaining police officers. This is a national issue and Camden has not been spared. The department has seen numerous resignations due to extremely competitive job offers by agencies attempting to fill their ranks. Our Camden Officers are being recruited daily. Officers have been offered positions for up to \$12.00 per hour more than their current salary, take home cruisers, year for year service credits for vacation and benefits, 36-hour work week paid for 40, desired positions (Administrators, Detectives, School Resources Officers,) and 15K to 20K sign on bonuses paid out over two years, and combinations of all mentioned. The department is currently a year and five months into its current collective bargaining contract. When the contract was signed Camden was in mid-range for area department pay. Within about six months to a year Camden had become the lowest paid in the area due to huge increases by other agencies.

Due to the high amount of turnover and facing the possibility of losing two to four more senior staff members it was necessary to make a significant pay adjustment to officers' wages. It was recommended to the Select Board that the department members, (excluding the Police Chief), receive an immediate \$6.00 per hour adjustment. This was accomplished by a pledge I made that we would hold off filling one vacant position until April of 2024 and not filling a second vacant position through budget year 2025. The funds from those allotted positions would be used to cover the increase in pay. I also agreed that I would hold off on replacing a cruiser for budget year 2025. I would however request \$30,000 be placed in a cruiser reserve account. A major technology upgrade that would replace cruiser cameras, Tasers, and add body worn cameras will also be deferred. The cost for the technology upgrade is approximately \$36,000.00 per year over 5 years for a total of \$180,000.00.

In FYI 2025 I am also looking at combining one patrol and the parking enforcement position together. This combination of the two positions, or "Hybrid" would have a full-time certified officer doing both patrol and parking management. Other duties for the positions would be animal control, facility maintenance, and Emergency Medical Technician. This officer would work daytime foot and ticket patrol and manage paid parking from May 1st- November 1st each year. The officer would then work a 10 PM- 6 AM shift M-F Nov 1st – May 1st . The Officer would continue to manage all parking related issues during this time as well. My suggestion is that this position be funded from paid parking revenues.

The department is currently partnering with the Rockland Police department in our first year contracting with Volunteers of America, (VOA), to supply a Community Response Officer to

both municipalities. The Community Response Officer works with Police, General Assistance, Town Manager, and partner agencies to assist with mental health, quality of life, unhoused, veterans, etc. The Community Resource Officer also works on assisting those in need with getting proper services. The partnership has been a huge success so far. We are now able to have that go between professional to assist our community members in their times of need. We are now serving the populations at a level we have not been able to provide previously. We are in hopes that the Town of Rockport will join us as we enter our second year. This will better serve a larger area population with their needs and reduce the cost to our municipalities. VOA is also looking at grant funding to help offset the cost of the program. Even without grant funding this position is too valuable of a tool not to fund.

Areas of Concern:

Recruitment and retention will continue to be problematic. The cost of purchasing a house or renting an apartment in this area is far out of the reach of most officers wishing to work here. We have had to make some major adjustments to keep the staff we have. We have adjusted within current budgets to accomplish this. We are looking at combining two positions within the department and adding more responsibilities and adjustments for ALL staff to accomplish the needs of the department. We are pushing our cruisers out for additional years of service and deferring technology upgrades to try and keep the budget from exploding.

Next fall we will once again begin Union negotiations for a new collective bargaining agreement. As of this writing, I can tell you the hourly rates and extremely high offers to officers are still being received daily.

I believe the steps we have taken will help keep officers here in Camden for the time being. The pool of candidates once seen does not exist any longer. I don't expect this to subside anytime soon. We may at some point need to look at what service levels the community expects.