

HAMPDEN POLICE DEPARTMENT

Well it was one year down on December 2, 2003. This past year seems to have flown by in record time. There was a lot of activity by the Hampden Police Department during 2003. Training has continued to be one of the goals I have sought to accomplish this year. In the past we relied on surrounding agencies to process crime scenes for our Department. I found that unacceptable and thus five officers have been trained in latent fingerprint recovery. Using our "Community Policing" grant money, we were able to send Sgt. Joseph Henry and Officer Michael Cooney to a three-day symposium at St. Anselms College in New Hampshire, where they attended the NECP2 (New England Community Policing) and worked on community policing initiatives that have been successful in the various communities throughout New England. One of the initiatives being put together is a Citizens Police Academy offered in February 2004.

Officer Carl Mazzaferro II and Sgt. Jeff Farnsworth trained for the R.A.D. woman instructor's course. They completed the first woman's class, which was held at Thornton Burgess Middle School in November with eight women from Town completing this course. This course provided the students with awareness, prevention, risk reduction and avoidance while progressing on to the basics of hands-on defense training. Officer Mazzaferro has also conducted a R.A.D. Kids program for children from Hampden at the Green Meadows School. These courses teach the student through a structured educational curriculum that includes realistic physical skills to escape attack or abduction.

The school resource officer program that the Hampden Police Department has been involved with for the past three years has addressed the lack of training that is needed for these officers. Grant funding through the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, in the amount of over \$4,400 allowed for Sgt. Jeff Farnsworth, Officers Scott Trombly, William Joy and Carl Mazzaferro II, to attend a five day program to train these officers in the areas of school resource officers. If this funding was not available this training may not have been accomplished. The training and knowledge they have received will continue to show its worth in the years to come. Officers Trombly and Mazzaferro work with the students and staff at Green Meadow School while Sgt. Farnsworth and Officer Joy work at Thornton Burgess School. Officer William Joy continues to conduct D.A.R.E. classes at the two schools in Town. As you may know, the State has eliminated funds for this program, but we have been successful in partially funding this program through donations and the Scantic Valley Y.M.C.A. We look forward to continuing to offer this training while the resources exist.

Through a Domestic Terrorism Grant from last December 2002 we have added an A.T.V. and trailer for the Police Department's use. Due to budget constraints we have not been able to fully use this vehicle to its full potential during this past year. We did use this vehicle to extricate an injured youth from

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an area inaccessible to motor vehicle traffic. We trained the following officers with a program offered by the Massachusetts Environmental Police Department. They are: Officers Scott Trombly, Todd Ely, John DiMaio, Sgts. Jeff Farnsworth and Joseph Henry. I anticipate training the rest of the department members in the safe operation of this vehicle and then putting it to use on sporadic patrols throughout the year to respond to complaints from residents of illegal operation of ATV's and snowmobiles throughout the Town. We have received new Smith & Wesson .45 handguns for our duty weapon and have trained the entire Department with this weapon. We continue to receive bicycle helmets for the school children in Hampden and will once again disperse these when the weather improves this spring.

Drugs continue to be a problem throughout the country and in our community as well. With this in mind we have provided Officers Scott Trombly and Tarwin Seega with an intensive two-week Drug Enforcement Agency training. These officers will be assigned to the various drug investigations. Mutual Aid continues to be necessity for our Department and we have received excellent responses from the Towns of East Longmeadow, Monson and Wilbraham. We, at times due to staffing concerns and also the seriousness of calls have had to request "mutual aid" from these neighboring communities. It is my hope to have adequate funding in place so that shift staffing will once again remain at a minimum of two officers per shift the same level the Town had in previous years.

Understandably this year has been a tough one with the lack of State supported funding and a weakened economy. The Police Department understands this and we too had to reduce our budget by 4%. As a result of a Federal Audit based on the Fair Labor Standard Act, our overtime costs have increased and we have taken the steps necessary to correct this. Again this involves wages and that is roughly 93% of my budget. So needless to say, more money will be needed to fully fund the Department's operating expenses than was originally budgeted for. We received confirmation that we were successful in garnering \$28,500 from the community-policing program so we can maintain existing community policing and school resource programs. We will continue to be diligent in seeking additional grant money to help provide safety and protection for the citizens of Hampden.

In July 2003 we said good-bye and Happy Retirement to Verna Caney a civilian dispatcher that worked here since 1996. Verna was presented a plaque at a small gathering at Town Hall and is currently enjoying her retirement and we wish her many more years to come. We also had civilian dispatcher Averil Church resign due to her full time job. Averil had worked as both a dispatcher and reserve police officer over the years. We have added two new civilian

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dispatchers during this year. Kayse Rosati and Amy West now split the shift that Ms. Caney had covered. We also have filled an 11 pm – 7 am shift with reserve officer Michael Lynch. New reserve officers continue to be added to the Department. This year we have added Stephen Hill and James McCoy, both of whom had been laid off from the Springfield Police Department during their recent budget crisis. We have also added John Turcotte, a former West Springfield Police reserve officer.

I would like to thank the regular members of the Hampden Police Department, the full time dispatchers and the reserve officers and part time dispatchers for the outstanding way they perform each and every day. Thanks to Dispatchers Racky Kenison, Laurie Ryder and Derek Anti for the work they perform gathering the facts for accurate dispatching of the calls along with filling shifts, extra details and the pistol permit process. A special note of appreciation to Kathy Zanetti for the unsung job she performs on a daily basis in riding shotgun on the budget and other matters for the Department. I would also like to thank the Hampden Fire Chief Peter Hatch and his Department members for the spirit of cooperation on public safety issues. Thanks to Dana Pixley from the Highway Department and his workers for the excellent job they perform. And thanks to the administrative office of the Board of Selectmen, Karen, Kelly, Beth and Pam for doing a great job and finally thanks to the Board of Selectmen.

Respectfully Submitted,

Douglas W. Mellis
Chief of Police