

Westford Police Department
Select Board presentation for September 8, 2020

WPD prior to forum:

- Westford Police Department became an Accredited Agency in 2005 through the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission
 - The Massachusetts Police Accreditation Program offers an accreditation process for police agencies across the Commonwealth. Like other accreditation programs, the process consists of two major components: (1) the establishment of a body of professional standards for police agencies to meet, and (2) a voluntary assessment process by which agencies can be publicly recognized for meeting those standards considered *best practices* for the profession.
 - The program involves a thorough examination of the agency *by the agency* to determine compliance with program standards. That internal review or *self-assessment* that is initiated by the agency's CEO is then followed by an *external, peer review* by Commission-appointed assessors. Assessors are typically Police Chiefs and Accreditation Managers who have been specially trained to conduct on-site assessments on behalf of the Commission.

- Participation in the program:
 - Provides a norm for an agency to judge its performance.
 - Provides a basis to correct deficiencies before they become a public problem.
 - Requires agencies to commit their policies and procedures to writing.
 - Promotes accountability among agency personnel.
 - Provides a means of independent evaluation of agency operations for quality assurance.
 - Enhances the reputation of the agency and promotes public confidence in the agency.
- The Westford Police Department was assessed for re-accreditation in February of 2020
- The WPD was awarded re-accreditation in June of 2020
- Captain Neal, the WPD accreditation manager, has performed numerous assessments of other Massachusetts Police Agencies and ensures WPD has the most up to date policies

- Selected policies and procedures are reviewed with all officers
 - 1.16 Handling the Mentally Ill
 - 4.12 Sexual Harassment (review the Town of Westford policy as well)
 - 4.25 Anti-Harassment
 - 4.10 Racial and Gender Profiling (Prohibition of bias based policing roll call training included)
 - 2.06 Bias Crimes
 - 4.14 Development of Discipline
- During training events, relevant case law and Policies & Procedures are reviewed

C.O.I.N. and Sequential Intercept Mapping Workshop

- A Sequential Intercept Mapping Workshop was conducted in December of 2019 that included all agencies participating in the Community Outreach Initiative Network (including Westford PD)
 - The workshop was facilitated by C.I.T. International, C.O.I.N. and N.A.M.I. Massachusetts to identify gaps in service
 - One recognized gap in service is the availability of 24/7 mental health response
 - As part of the solution in response to the gap in service, C.I.T. International and N.A.M.I. provide training to local law enforcement officers in Crisis Intervention Teams
 - The goal is to have each L.E. Agency at the meeting train 20% of their officers to be C.I.T. certified
 - Training had been expected to commence in the Spring of 2020, but was postponed due to COVID-19
 - Several WPD officers have Mental Health First Aid for First Responders training and more will receive the enhanced C.I.T. training when available

WPD actions taken since the Minneapolis Incident

- Posted relevant Policies and Procedures on the Town of Westford Police Department website including:
 - The WPD Mission Statement
 - P&P 1.01 Use of Force and Removal from Duty
 - P&P 1.03 Use of Force Reporting
 - P&P 4.10 Racial and Gender Profiling
 - P&P 1.30 Electronic Control Weapons Procedure
- WPD P&P 1.01 Use of Force and Removal from Duty was updated to more accurately reflect the training and practices of the WPD
 - More emphasis placed on De-escalation language
 - Duty to intervene clarified
 - Restrictions on chokeholds added to the policy to reflect the training provided in Massachusetts (no chokeholds are part of Defensive Tactics curriculum)
 - May only be used in a lethal situation

WPD actions taken since the Minneapolis Incident

- Requested the Driving Population Estimate from the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security & the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles
 - The driving population is calculated using a sophisticated model to predict how strongly the residential population and the population of surrounding communities influence the driving population for each community.
 - The first step in creating the DPE is estimating the degree to which surrounding cities contribute to the driving population of the target city. To create the pool of contributing cities for each target city in Massachusetts we began with the assumption that the driving population of a jurisdiction is primarily influenced by communities that fall within a 30 minute drive time perimeter.
 - The second step in calculating the DPE was determining the level at which each city in Massachusetts draws in drivers from surrounding communities. People travel to or pass through cities to shop, to go out to dinner or see entertainment, to go to work, or to take care of other business.
 - The driving population estimate is meant to provide the best possible estimation of the racial demographics of drivers in Massachusetts communities. It was designed using principles from transportation planning and economic literature.
- WPD is still waiting for the State to provide the requested data

WPD actions taken since the forum on July 7, 2020

- Created a new Policy and Procedure- 1.32 Suspicious Persons
 - Provides instruction to Public Safety Dispatch and a framework to consider when a request is received to respond to a call for service that may be racial/bias motivated

“When a dispatcher receives a call from a citizen concerning activity that is behavior based, a unit should be assigned to investigate. But should a caller merely report someone in their neighborhood who is unknown to them. The dispatcher should ask additional questions to discern whether the person’s behavior is suspicious. Where there is no suspicious behavior described, the dispatcher shall contact the shift commander by radio and advise him/her of the nature of the call. The Shift Commander has the authority to direct that no unit be assigned in those cases where the activity is not behavior-based.”

WPD actions taken since the forum on July 7, 2020

- Civilian Complaint Form posted on the WPD website
- Anonymous tip/complaint email and phone number provided and monitored
 - 978-399-2072 (sends the voice file via email to Detective Supervisor then distributed appropriately)
- Deputy Chief Mark Chambers participated in a Zoom meeting with members of the student organization Westford Coalition 4 Change
 - Moderated by the Faculty Advisor Jenny Kravitz
 - Question and answer session to address student concerns of racism in the criminal justice system and opportunities for the WPD to consider
- Followed up on some of the anonymous complaints to determine what improvements could be made in WPD response
 - Delivery driver who quit due to harassment was confirmed to have multiple motor vehicle stops for driving without a license (it is a crime to drive without a license). Continued to drive in Westford despite being advised it was illegal.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

WPD has received no new complaints since the forum.

WPD has not received any official complaints of Racial Profiling.

WPD has received no complaints of Excessive Force.

WPD has not had an Officer Involved Shooting since 1973.