



**ASSESSING THE NEEDS OF
SMALL-TOWN POLICE
DEPARTMENTS^{PP}
FINAL REPORT***

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ABSTRACT

This project focused on assessing the needs of a small-town Massachusetts police department in terms of internal stability, funding, partnerships with local political and community members, the media, and the amount and quality of recruit and in-service training. The manifest outcome of the assessment consisted of the development of an action plan to increase small-town agencies efficiency, effectiveness and accountability to aid the department and officers in combating and preventing crime.

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INTRODUCTION

This report represents a year long (August, 2003-August, 2004) needs assessment of a small-town Massachusetts police department hereafter referred to as “Seaside”—a pseudonym. The major areas of interest include internal stability, funding, partnerships with local political and community members, and the amount and quality of recruit and in-service training. The assessment resulted in a review of the major areas above, and the development of an action plan to increase this small-town agency’s efficiency, effectiveness and accountability to aid the department and officers in combating and preventing crime.

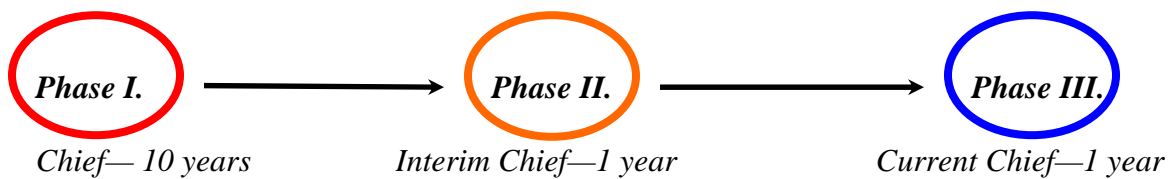
METHODS AND DATA

Several methods were employed to collect data for this assessment including interviews, several tours of the police department, and a self-administered questionnaire (**see Appendix A for the specific wording of all questions**). Personal, face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with police personnel and members of the media. Respondents read and signed an informed consent form and every effort was made to conduct each interview in private quarters to protect the respondents’ confidentiality; with the exception of the dispatchers, this was accomplished. As for the sworn police personnel, due to understaffing constraints and concerns about taking officers off of the road, in coordination with the Chief, scheduled ride-along interviews were conducted in August 2003 with 10 officers: 3 of the 6 sergeants and 7 of the 17 patrol officers. In addition, in-house interviews were conducted with the Chief, his administrative assistant and two full-time dispatchers. Initially, it was thought that both dispatcher interviews

could occur at their work desk for the same reasons the officers were interviewed while on patrol. This approach was possible for one of the dispatchers, save some interruptions and normal job tasks; the other interview was conducted outside of the department to further secure the privacy of the respondent. On average, interviews lasted 2.5 hours and in two cases, a continuation interview was requested—once by the officer and the other by the researcher—both averaged 1.5 hours. To gather information about how the department is viewed externally, three members of the local media were also interviewed. Local government officials were also contacted to participate in this assessment to no avail—their perspectives are therefore not represented in the present work.

The interviews revealed several overarching themes (i.e., funding issues, the degree of participative management; discrimination—general and gender-based; politics/nepotism; and, Community-Oriented Policing Services, or COPS). The qualitative data gleaned from the interviews was instrumental in developing a survey questionnaire that would yield complementary quantitative data. *The information contained within this report must be viewed carefully*; firstly, the data may best be viewed from the work context of the officers and other police personnel along a continuum that spans three distinct phases as depicted in the figure below.

Figure 1. “Seaside’s” Administrative Phases



Phase I represents the 10-year tenure of a Chief for which most officers described as a “miserable human being,” whose management skills erred on “favoritism” and “divide and conquer.” Phase II is the one year tenure of the interim Chief that took over after the Chief left the department under a no confidence vote by the police union. Having worked under the first Chief, this interim Chief’s approach was described as “hands-off,” in an attempt to “make up for the horrible treatment we received.” Finally, Phase III is the early tenure of the current Chief (hired April 1, 2003) whose management style seems to be in the middle of the previous chiefs; he “demands professionalism and is fair to everybody.” It is noteworthy that each administrative change required (and continues to require) all sworn personnel to adjust to a new management style. In other words, while they expressed relief that Phase I had concluded certain patterns of relations had been built up and carried over to the more laid back approach they experienced in Phase II. The majority of sworn personnel expressed uncertainty and apprehension about what Phase III might bring and how it might impact their lives. There is little doubt that change of any kind may be difficult and met with resistance. Indeed, there may also be a significant spillover effect linked to expectations of the newcomer that cannot reasonably be met.

Based on the results in Table 1, it appears that these administrative changes have had some disruptive effect on police employees, but not “across the board”—of all items considered, perceiving administrative changes as “very disruptive” to the department’s effectiveness (37.9%) and adverse effect on their career (37.9%) seems to be of most concern.

Table 1. Perceptions of Administrative Changes (n=29) †

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Level of Perceived Disruption</u> ^{P†}				P
	<u>Not/Little</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>New Hire/NA</u>	
<u>My Work</u>	11 (37.9)	7 (24.1)	8 (27.6)	3 (10.3)	
<u>Department's Effectiveness</u>	12 (41.4)	3 (10.3)	11 (37.9)	3 (10.3)	
<u>Department's Image</u>	13 (44.8)	6 (20.7)	7 (24.1)	3 (10.3)	
<u>My Career</u>	12 (41.4)	3 (10.3)	11 (37.9)	3 (10.3)	
<u>Decision to Remain with Department</u>	16 (55.2)	2 (6.9)	8 (27.6)	3 (10.3)	

†Listwise Deletion of Cases; ^{P†} Percentages in Parentheses

Secondly, it is important to note that individuals often treat perception as reality and thus act and react to what they believe to be true as well as to what is real in fact. Some officers expressed what appeared to be individualistic assessments of questions asked of them and elaborated further on their responses. However, a pattern of issues emerged that were universal across all police personnel and hence relevant to all interviewed. In this report then, what follows with any of the interviews conducted, whether they are recounts of officers' statements, those of administration, dispatchers or the media is perceptions of what the individuals believe and thus represents their reality. Therefore, this assessment intends to highlight a pattern of subjective impressions and themes that facilitate an action plan to identify areas of strength as well as those needing attention for the improvement of the "Seaside" Police Department.

GENERAL DEMOGRAPHICS

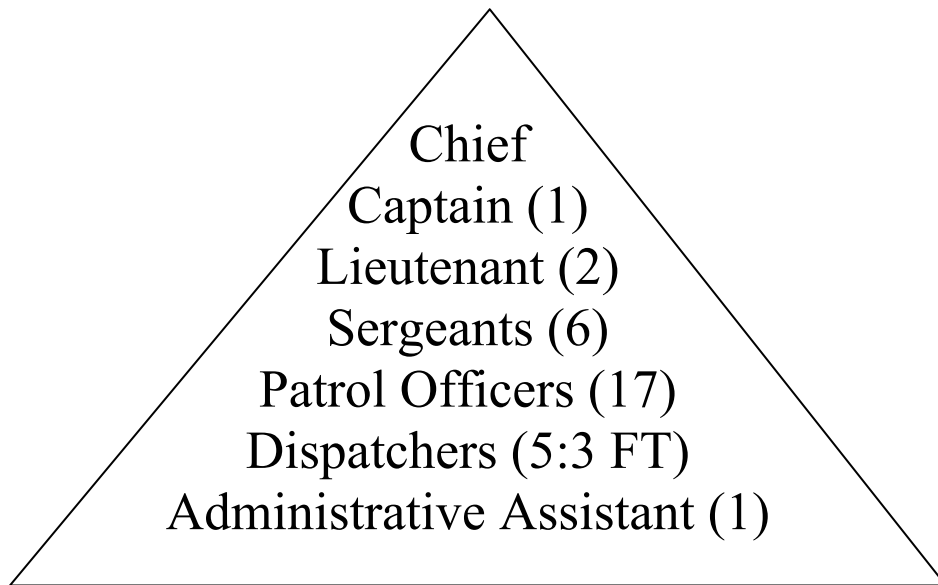
The town of “Seaside” is partitioned into four (4) sectors spanning approximately 22.12 square miles including a business district housing a large mall and shopping center. In addition, the town has easily accessible in/egress ramps from interstate I195 resulting in a continuous influx of transitory populations for which service must address both legitimate and illegitimate activities. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, “Seaside” police department serves a population of 15,901 citizens of which 9,181 are registered voters (57.73% of total populace). The majority of citizens are white, middle-upper class citizens.

At the initial meeting and first phrase of data collection, the organizational hierarchy consisted of one chief, one captain, two lieutenants, six sergeants, and 17 patrol officers—see Figure 2. As can be seen in Figure 3 this structure has dramatically changed; the Chief has lost much of his top administrative staff with no replacements afforded him but gained two patrol officers and is slated to obtain several other patrol positions by early August.

As stated above, this department has undergone three administrative changes within the previous 11 years. The newly appointed Chief began work April 1, 2003—at the outset of the assessment, he was in office for approximately 3.5 months. Prior to his taking the reigns of the department, a Captain within the department was appointed acting chief for one year. Before the Captain served in the interim as chief, the department had a Chief of 10 years (1991-2001) who ultimately departed under the pressure of a no-confidence vote by the police union. Change continued to be a constant feature in this department. At the outset of this assessment, the researcher was informed by the Chief

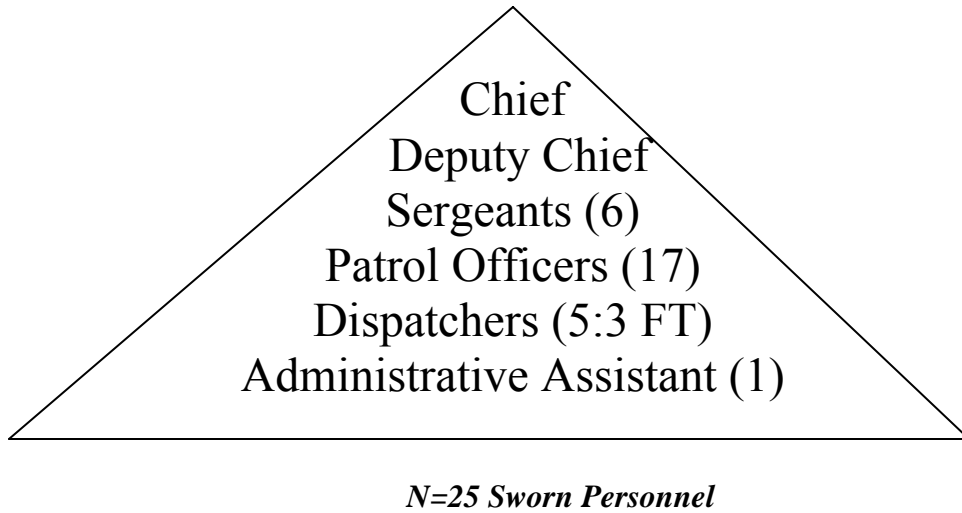
that his Captain would be retiring at the end of September and one of his two lieutenants had applied for a Chief's position in a nearby town and would likely be successful in obtaining the job.

Figure 2. *Initial "Seaside" Police Department Organizational Hierarchy*



N=27 Sworn Personnel

Figure 3. *Current “Seaside” Police Department Organizational Hierarchy*



According to the UCR (as of October 2001) the national average law enforcement rate is 2.5 full time (FT) officers per 1,000 residents. For a department of “Seaside’s” population group and geographic region/division, the rate is 2.2 officers for every 1,000 residents (FBI, 2002). Accordingly, “Seaside’s” rate should be 36 officers. As can be seen in Table 2 below, “Seaside” has yet to meet this rate. Although in the recent past, the department maintained a force of 34 FT sworn officers that number has diminished due to a lack of replacements by local government of officers that retired, transferred, or are not active due to sick leave.

In terms of individual demographics, *on average* employees were 40 years of age and had 14 years on the job. A large proportion of the employees were married or partnered (83%); 10% were divorced and 7% were single. This is overwhelmingly a self-identified white and male-dominated department (83%); there were few females (17%)

and no people of color working in this agency. Overall, employees in this department were well-educated—the vast majority of the sample had completed college degrees (i.e., A.S. B.S.; M.S. or higher) (79%) while 14% had some college, a technical degree (3.5%), or high school/G.E.D. (3.5%).

Table 2. UCR Police Employment Data for “Seaside,” MA*

<u>Year</u>	Sworn Personnel				Civilian Personnel			
	<i>Full Time</i>		<i>Part Time</i>		<i>Full Time</i>		<i>Part Time</i>	
	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
1991	26	0	22	7	1	1	0	0
1992	27	0	7	1	1	1	0	1
1993	27	0	15	1	3	2	0	0
1994	27	0	15	2	4	2	0	0
1995	27	0	20	0	6	3	0	0
1996	28	0	0	0	4	3	1	0
1997	28	0	10	3	3	3	0	0
1998	29	0	24	0	3	3	0	0
1999	30	0	15	1	2	3	1	0
2000	34	0	18	1	2	5	0	0
2001	34	0	19	1	2	5	21	5
2002	31	0	21	1	2	5	20	7
2003	29	0	20	1	2	4	28	9
2004	27	0	14	1	1	4	20	7

Note: Data in this table is gathered by the Crime Reporting Unit in its annual Police Employment Survey.

*Crime Reporting Unit, Massachusetts State Police <<http://db.state.ma.us/msp/select.asp>>; [Data in this table is derived from "Crime in the United States" an annual publication of the Federal Bureau of Investigation].

As can be seen in Table 3 below, this appears to be particularly problematic given the increasing problems with drug offenses, traffic violations and accidents (the town is surrounded by major traffic routes and in fact, one small area in the town was rated in 2002, as the most dangerous intersection in the United States (U.S.) by the U.S.

Department of Transportation statistics. Overwhelmingly, when asked to identify what the top three crime problems are in the area, respondents indicated larceny, vandalism and traffic incidents/accidents, respectively.

Table 3. UCR Crime Data for “Seaside,” MA

<u>Year</u>	<u>Months</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Violent</u>	<u>Property</u>	<u>Murder</u>	<u>Rape</u>	<u>Robbery</u>	<u>Agg</u>	<u>Assault</u>	<u>Burglary</u>	<u>Larceny</u>	<u>MVTheft</u>
1980	12	799	33	766	0	0	2	31	175	378	213	
1981	12	777	50	727	0	1	8	41	165	346	216	
1982	12	833	61	772	0	0	4	57	190	415	167	
1983	12	713	60	653	0	0	6	54	156	325	172	
1984	12	701	61	640	0	1	8	52	171	296	173	
1985	12	781	65	716	2	0	8	55	200	316	200	
1986	12	814	58	756	0	0	4	54	129	295	332	
1987	12	744	54	690	1	0	3	50	123	293	274	
1988	12	745	44	701	0	0	9	35	119	351	231	
1989	12	754	45	709	0	0	4	41	126	360	223	
1990	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1991	4	84	7	77	0	0	4	3	17	58	2	
1992	12	389	20	369	1	0	4	15	39	211	119	
1993	12	340	32	308	0	0	16	16	20	231	57	
1994	12	651	140	511	0	3	9	128	122	305	84	
1995	12	631	103	528	0	2	4	97	122	328	78	
1996	12	561	121	440	0	0	4	117	86	268	86	
1997	12	500	158	342	0	2	4	152	86	211	45	
1998	12	577	135	442	0	2	5	128	126	258	58	
1999	12	490	115	375	0	0	8	107	96	243	36	
2000	12	398	95	303	0	4	2	89	49	218	36	
2001	12	376	87	287	0	2	3	116	68	234	34	
2002	12	416	132	343	0	1	4	56	76	245	31	
2003	12	463	145	380	0	11	6	61	87	255	29	

Crime Reporting Unit, Massachusetts State Police < <http://db.state.ma.us/msp/select.asp>>; [Data in this table is derived from "Crime in the United States" an annual publication of the Federal Bureau of Investigation]; Note: "Months" indicates the number of months of data received by the CRU & Information provided by the “Seaside” Police Department.

DOMINANT EMERGENT ISSUES

The interviews resulted in several dominant issues including: funding, the degree of participative management; discrimination—general and gender-based; politics/nepotism; and, community-oriented policing services (COPS). *It is imperative to note that each of the issues discussed have serious potential liability implications that must be addressed in a timely fashion—such liability certainly can impact the economics of the town as any civil case does. Just as importantly, the effects extend to the department, officers, and the 9,181 registered voters (57.73% of the total “Seaside” population) views of the police department—views that are often long-lasting and extremely difficult to reverse without a purposeful, committed and joint effort.*

POLICE-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Policing has undergone a major reformation in the last 15 years. In an attempt to combine the view of the work as a vocation with professionalization, much effort has been expended on defining a universal model of policing—most notably, community-oriented policing services (COPS)—that would fuse the police and the community regardless of location, size, demographics, political and socio-economic circumstances. It is widely recognized that the implementation of COPS varies depending upon the department and community. However, to frame thinking about COPS, four applicable dimensions have been developed: philosophical, strategic, tactical and organizational (Cordner, 2000). Under this model, the *most defining* feature of COPS is that police must focus more on solving concrete community problems in a proactive manner and less on the end products of the job such as “numbers of arrests, changes in crime rates, volume of

recovered property, numbers of citations issued, and a rapid response to calls” (Gaines, Worrall, Southerland, & Angell, 2003, p.81).

All police personnel were asked three open-ended questions that dealt with the police department’s interaction with the community. The first question tapped the extent to which the police department is involved in any of the dimensions indicative of COPS. The second examined the degree of perceived support of the community and thirdly, whether the community is aware of departmental and officers’ concerns (i.e., funding, physical condition of the department). In this section, these three issues will be dealt with successively. It was clear from the outset of the interviews that all responses throughout would be contextual, that is, prefaced by the past as compared to the present.

The view of the vast majority of respondents is encapsulated in one respondent’s response concerning the existence, type and level of *COPS*. He stated, “If asked we do...I have to, well, we do reactive policing.” This sentiment was elaborated upon by another respondent who stated:

“[A] little bit—more reactive than proactive; when asked we certainly will do stuff. People are not coming on this job to do service; they want their chance to work details. There’s no real interest in doing this work. The kids today don’t see it [service] as an inherent necessity to their job. Then want to turn around and ask the public for funding—their [the public’s] only contact with police is negative versus the Fire Department.”

Another respondent explained that this organization:

“...was never a COP department. We would not before because the hierarchy would not encourage citizens’ ideas. Right now, relations are a lot stronger because the new Chief is among them and he projects an image of professionalism—I think it’s filtering to patrol.”

A more detailed picture of the existence and degree of the various philosophical dimensions of COPS may be seen in Table 4 below. Overall, of the five citizen-related items, a large percentage of employees *strongly agreed* that there is an emphasis on enhancing lives, while the other four items resulted in a greater proportion of *strongly disagree* responses. An examination of the five police-related items reveals a one-third split across all three categories regarding the encouragement of discretion; continued education seems to be encouraged within this department as about 40% of the employees *strongly agreed* or *somewhat agreed* (7.1%) with this item, but a large proportion *strongly disagreed* (54%) that this was the case. Overwhelmingly, the other three items (i.e., officer input, college education rewarded, seniority recognized more) resulted in a *strongly disagree* perspective. Only the last item, “seniority recognized more,” is consistent with a COPS framework as opportunities for advancement, training and the like are to be based on merit, rather than the number of years on has spent on the job.

Table 4. Community-Oriented Policing Services~Philosophical Dimension (n=28)[†]

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Somewhat Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
<u>Citizen Input</u>	12 (42.8)	11 (39.3)	5 (17.9)
<u>Quality of Life</u>	16 (57.1)	10 (35.6)	2 (7.1)
<u>Encourages Discretion</u>	10 (35.6)	9 (32.1)	9 (32.1)
<u>Citizens As Stakeholders</u>	12 (42.8)	8 (28.6)	8 (28.6)
<u>Enhance Lives</u>	8 (28.6)	9 (32.1)	11 (39.3)
<u>Initiate Solutions</u>	11 (39.3)	9 (32.1)	8 (28.6)
<u>Officer Input</u>	18 (64.3)	6 (21.4)	4 (14.3)
<u>Continued Education</u>	15 (53.6)	2 (7.1)	11 (39.3)
<u>College Education</u>			
<u>Rewarded</u>	14 (50.0)	7 (25.0)	7 (25.0)
<u>Seniority Recognized More</u>	14 (50.0)	7 (25.0)	7 (25.0)

[†]Listwise Deletion of Cases; ^P Percentages in Parentheses

As may be seen in Table 5 below, respondents indicated that the police and community *have* coordinated on a number of different projects to promote safety and crime awareness/prevention. These programs while deemed important, have not involved the police department on a regular basis. However, the level and type of the department’s participation seems to be noticeably changing under the new Chief who takes the time to model such behavior by regularly reading to special needs children at the nearby elementary school.

Table 5. Identified Community-Police Projects

»Bike Rodeos for Kids with Toys R Us	»Elderly Affairs
» D.A.R.E.	»Educate Bartenders
»Blue-Cross/Blue Shield	»Child ID Kits/Fingerprints, Hair
»Check Point	Sample with Wal-Mart &
»High School P.R.	Fire Department
»Citizens Police Academy	»School Resource Officer (SRO)

Many of the respondents believe the public wants to work more closely with the police especially now because the department does:

“[G]et quite a bit of response from the public, especially parents and there is participation on the website. The government’s Highway Safety Bureau has an officer’s name on their website. In the past, we had a cross-walk sting—we made some awareness; slow down and care about the public. In truth, it is hard to go out and do anything proactive but we would like to do more, like community outreach programs—check point but we have no manpower or funding. We will even receive training for this stuff and we will be excited, but never have a chance to use it. For example, Blue-Cross/Blue Shield asked for a safety checkpoint but the department cannot coordinate this, we don’t have enough personnel or funding.”

Perhaps what is even more interesting is that many of the officers and most of the non-sworn personnel were *unaware* of the activities that the department and individual officers were involved in. One respondent stated, “[T]o my knowledge no but I know that guys are open to more COPS.” Furthermore, officers’ attitudes toward the public are less than positive and indicate a lack of confidence in the public’s willingness to work with police. One respondent communicated what several others concurred, that is, the “[C]ommunity sees us as a necessary evil, we are the first called, last considered.” He then provided the following example:

“Say if there’s a major water leak at 2 o’clock in the morning—they don’t call the water company, they call us and we call the water company. We are the only public service to be open 24-7-365 days of the year.” However, he stated that police-community relations have “recently picked up from being virtually 0 to 1 or 2.”

Overall, the respondents’ impressions are to some degree indicative of a closed system and reactive approach to policing that is counter to the benefits of COPS (Gaines, et. al, 2003, p.80-82). When combined with the lack of participative management encouraged by the former chief, the circle of involvement and interoperability of the police-community relations continuum becomes smaller rendering it inoperable and non-communicative. In short, police don’t talk much to the community about doing things and the community does not invite police to participate in events.

Community support under any circumstance is extremely important to a police department. The vulnerable nature of officers in this department, particularly because it is a small-town agency, makes support from the community vital. There is little doubt that officers’ morale and motivational commitment to combat and prevent crime—while

improving the quality of life among all residents—is intimately tied to the familiarity they share with the public. Overwhelmingly, respondents believed that the public supports them. The perceived support, however, seems to be ambivalent, occupation specific, and exists on a more individual as opposed to an organizational level.

Respondents cited **five domain reasons for perceived public non-support including:**

- 1.) Public’s distrust of city government
- 2.) Past Chief’s poor decision-making
- 3.) Townspeople are “swamp Yankees”
- 4.) Officer’s poor attitudes
- 5.) Nature of the job

One respondent’s comments sum this up well:

“I think the public is supportive of the department as a whole; they like their police department, our efforts but townspeople are very distrustful of government. Have not done enough to stand up for us. The police department needs to be a priority in our community as opposed to a necessary evil. As a resident of “Seaside”, some financial problems impact me all the way around. Some guys only have to deal with the police department aspect.”

Concurring, another respondent explained:

“Yes and no. In the day-to-day they are pretty supportive when you show up at door when they call. No because of the financial aspect; the public won’t give money for a new building and equipment....was a time when we got three new cruisers. After three years cars would rotate out. These cars are already over 100,000 miles and have not rotated out. There needs to be an increases in money if they want a professional police force.”

In addition, another respondent reported that simply the nature of most interactions officers' have with citizens make it exceedingly more difficult for them to garner support as compared to other town employees. One respondent stated:

“They like the firefighters because they are not arresting them. But this is not a problem generally...I have a good rapport with citizens, especially with the youth—my style is to talk with them asking them instead of telling them to do something—like ordering them from the car or away from an area at a distance versus over the intercom—people don't like that [using the intercom].”

The references to the volunteer firefighters was continually attributed to the Chief of the past (i.e., 10 year tenure) who opted to avoid joining with the fire department to create a public safety facility that would house both the police department and the fire department. One respondent provided the following analysis:

“Everywhere I go I hear comments about the facility—citizens and selectmen don't actually know about...they can't until you have to work and exist under it. In the past, there was talk of a new building but the previous Chief wanted to own the building and not share it with the fire department slated to be a 'Public Safety' facility. The building has been built, the fire department is in it but we're here. “

Every respondent believed that this circumstance *SEVERELY HARMED* and continues to hamper their:

- 1.) relations with the community**
- 2.) ability to ask for and obtain additional funds for a new facility, equipment**
- 3.) quest to obtain necessary up-to-date mandatory and specialized training**
- 4.) additional staff to help the department progress into the modern era of COPS.**

As can be gleaned from the respondents' comments thus far, the public does not appear to be willing to offer the type of support officers need to effectively do their jobs. In fact, the majority of respondents indicated the public maintains a mentality of frugal spending when it comes to the department. "'Seaside' is an old swamp Yankee town—townspeople that have had to make it with what they had; tight with money/thrifty. Not much of the public comes to town meetings."

As can be seen above, other respondents suggest that the problem with their under funded department is NOT necessarily the public's thrifty nature, but rather their lack of trust in the management of their tax dollars.

"It is highly political here and no funding. As a whole, yeh, they are [supportive]...people don't trust the local government. They [government officials] talk with a forked tongue. For every reserve officer that works, the town has to pay one full-time officer. We had some great reserves but they eventually left because the town not putting them on."

Another respondent concurs stating, "Yes I do but not financially but it may not be purposeful because the town is not funded appropriately and we are not getting the piece of the pie we should be getting."

This department does appear to be of a relatively low priority in the community despite the effectiveness of the department. However, this effectiveness creates a situation of potential, and among some officers, actual resentment. That is, because the department/officers ARE effective in their daily operations, they continually worry that their efforts reduce the message that they ARE IN NEED. Many of the respondents commented on this as I followed up on some of the more basic questions. One respondent in particular stated that they are "...professional on calls (e.g., accidents; sudden deaths;

domestics) and good response time” and create an omnipresence. Omnipresence refers to the perception that the police are everywhere—they exert high visibility, respond to calls well and are effective in doing their jobs. One officer discussed omnipresence in this way:

“Yes, we have it, but it seems to be counterproductive for our department; we are effective but there’s a lack of recognition/acknowledgement. The public definitely thinks there are enough guys here to serve them because our response time is good, never have too much going on (e.g., being tied up), on serious (calls) or matters (e.g., accident). At the same time, we are able to call/clear a call off that may not be serious like taking a car broken report...and got to the more serious call and back up another officer.”

One member of the department’s administration provided similar accolades for the officers:

“We are operating under a somewhat controlled chaos. The department took such a hit financially and staffing; we are operating on a reactive level. I don’t believe reactive policing is professional. Police departments should be proactive. It would be ideal when we are proactive—when officers do respond, I am inspired by their behavior and attitudes: pride, courage, cohesiveness [e.g., at a traffic accident]. The majority of the personnel do their job even under these conditions [physical environment, few cars, understaffing]—I’m impressed with their cohesiveness, their professionalism. I’ve been proud of what I see—there have been a number of ‘hot situations.’ I do get dismayed that there is an underlying mistrust in this organization. I am as up front with them as I can be. And will only promote the best people that do the job.”

Interestingly, when asked if the *public* is *aware* of their concerns, respondents largely agreed that the public was NOT aware and cited three main reasons of unawareness. They include:

- 1.) lack of intimate knowledge of the physical work environment, understaffing, and past treatment,
- 2.) lack of participation in town government, and
- 3.) lack of understanding of demands of police work.

Only one respondent stated that:

“[T]hey’re aware and don’t care—we are a necessary evil. We have a good police department. Because we are efficient, do a good job—we have good response—we get by and do a good job with what we have. Two years in a row, no cruisers replaced!”

Conversely, the vast majority of respondents tended to agree that the:

“[P]ublic is not aware of our situation; for example, they don’t know about our septic tank backups and lack of repair—this building is terrible. They are not fully aware that they are being protected by two men—in case of an accident on the other side of town 15 minutes away we won’t make it to them. We have had to go outside or in the garage for roll call. If a prisoner is then being booked in between roll call and all else there is a total lack of privacy. Proposition 2.5 creates a barrier to tax increases. The selectmen are not aware either if they are, they’re being tight-lipped about it. It has been like this for the past 10 years—today for example there’s 1 sergeant and three guys on patrol. On average, there are three warm bodies out there.”

Likewise another respondent indicated that this is a chronic problem to which, unfortunately, many personnel have simply [mal] adapted to in their everyday lives:

“Absolutely not! We have less guys now than we did in the 70’s. This department is always run with reserves. Townspeople are not aware of physical conditions. Also not aware that at midnight few guys are out there. They’re justifying manpower by bodies—not efficient or effective!. They have not been made aware—but this gets to be the problem—we don’t want to let the criminal type know and tell townspeople. I don’t know, we might want to use the open house method to make the public aware of our work conditions. I’m concerned about the burnout syndrome.”

If the perception that the public is in fact unaware of these conditions is correct, this is clearly a disservice to the tax paying members of the community for whom the police department and town government works for in an effort to maintain safety. Without

question this is an *EXTREMELY DANGEROUS* situation for any police department, town, and member of the public. The frame of mind that something will not happen flies in the face of Murphy's Law; waiting for something bad to happen without preparation insures that it will. The square mileage of the town itself combined with the high volume of traffic and accidents, understaffing, lack of adequate equipment and over reliance on largely untrained and inexperienced reserve officers assures that liability will be forthcoming along with the deleterious effects it has on the public's confidence in the police. Moreover, continual use of such practices sends a message to the officers that nobody really cares.

It is apparent, however, that when so motivated the public can be made aware and respond to the department/officers' concerns but this is not a cooperative and continual effort as one respondent attests:

“They have not been made aware enough—but not told enough. We had a special town meeting—in the 11th hour, provided flyers, crime statistics, call volume, etc. to persuade townspeople we can't endure budget cuts any more.”

Another respondent added:

“No, the public is not aware in a broad sense—like in the paper; guys worry that they may be viewed as a bitcher and moaner—have a good government job with good benefits. No ongoing attempt to get it out to the masses or press. It's difficult to explain the department conditions unless you're either living it day-to-day. I cannot get across fully the meaning of what the problem is. Anytime the department appeared in the paper, I would hear out on the street ‘what a bunch of cry babies.’ I'm not sure how to increase awareness.”

On numerous occasions, respondents cited *officers' attitudes* as a major impediment to community support. In short, officers apparently vent their frustrations about their work conditions, feelings about management and their future to the public in a

manner that is believed to be unbecoming of the profession and likely to perpetuate non-support from the public. As one respondent put it:

“Because I get out into the community, I heard a lot of information about the organization said by officers to the public—this was not professional—the community does not need to hear this—they want us to be there, do our job and leave. They don’t need to be complaining to the public, things we talk about here should stay here. People don’t want the bureaucratic foundation we have to lay down long term to get us where we want to be.”

Still yet, another respondent proffered that:

“The community does not have confidence in the way the town has been run either in the operation of community and how it was operated. It is up to us to gain the public’s confidence. We’re the people that are going to exhibit the steadiness and the public will believe it, I’m not naïve—I believe it!! There is a fine line between professionally advising people versus whining—I sprinkle it on them. I inform them and then advise them of our [status]—the need for cars is a good example.”

Creating public awareness is a delicate process that can take on many forms. Perhaps the most auspicious being a delicate balance of information dissemination with a professional deliverance. This apparently has been somewhat problematic in this department for which much can be attributed to officers’ individual approaches and to the treatment they had received from previous leadership (i.e., Chief of 10 years). The fact of the matter is, this is a new phase for this police department and for the community to which they serve. Several recommendations for constructing a plan to deal with the issues covered above are detailed below.

***POLICE-COMMUNITY RELATIONS
ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS:***

- 1.) A mechanism for allowing the public to communicate with the police that DOES NOT involve the routine complaints (against officers or other citizens) must be developed.
- 2.) Conduct a follow-up to this assessment by surveying the public on the pertinent issues that need to be addressed. One area that needs to be examined is whether the public is aware and concerned about the needs of their police department. One way to attempt to bridge the gap in the public's perceptions versus reality is to gather data based on their perceptions and juxtapose them with factual departmental information. Finally, the information gathered should be publicly disseminated in a variety of venues and forms and made available to inquiries.
- 3.) Several officers stated that they had ideas they thought would be community-oriented and useful to the safety of the public but were rebutted by the former Chief (10 year tenure). These programs included traffic safety, Internet crimes awareness as well as drug awareness. Given the change at the Chief position and his participative style of leadership, officers' ideas should be generated, classified and discussed to develop a feasibility analysis of such programs. It is imperative, however, that such COPS program ideas be SHARED with those external to the department, specifically the voting members of the public and the local government.
- 4.) The Chief's efforts to promote positive and progressive relations between the department and the community should be strongly supported by officers, all non-sworn personnel and local government officials.
- 5.) Internally speaking, it appears that officers wish to be more proactive in their approach to policing but are hampered by understaffing and salient negativity engendered from the previous Chief's (10 year) treatment of them and attitude toward to the public. It is clear that a joint effort will be needed and the officers themselves bear much of the responsibility in improving their relations with the public given that **THEY ARE THE DEPARTMENT'S AMBASSADORS AS THEY ARE SEEN BY THE PUBLIC ON A MORE FREQUENT BASIS—THEY ARE INDEED THE FACE OF THE DEPARTMENT.**

Although COPS is a philosophy that can take on various practical approaches, the most basic effort is interpersonal, professional behavior that generates and encourages citizens to want to approach and work with the police—that is, the public must view the

police not as a “necessary evil” but rather, a valuable institutional asset integral to the viability of the community. The highest level of COPS might best be viewed as a progression from reactive to proactive to coactive policing whereby COACTIVITY refers to programs initiated reciprocally by police and the public, in short, a fully open system that is economically and professionally supported by the police, the public and the town government.

INTERNAL DEPARTMENTAL ISSUES: PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICES

The traditional police hierarchy is characterized by a top-down approach to management that consists of administration making all decisions—in a paramilitary fashion—while those at the bottom of the hierarchy mindlessly follow orders (Gaines, et. al., 2003). A strict adherence to this form of management is considered archaic thinking and practices by modern standards and clearly contrary to COPS. Unfortunately, “Seaside” was apparently run in this manner as officers discussed departmental leadership and accountability over the past 12 years of their careers and lives with unmitigated passion, resentment and relative lack of hope for the future. When asked a general question about the leadership within the department, whether such leadership was shared and participation encouraged, invariably, officers naturally made *past/present comparisons*. Their comparisons, however, excluded the interim Chief’s brief stint in that position and focused on Phase III, their current Chief as compared to the Chief they endured in Phase I. Hence, references in this document to the “previous chief” will refer to Phase I of the department’s history.

Chief Ratings

Respondents were asked to rate the previous and present Chief on a number of items using a scale that ranged from (0=*Low* to 10=*High*); this scale was recoded to reflect a 3-point measurement such that: (1=Low, 2=Some, 3=High). Since several respondents were either recently hired, they appropriately omitted a “*past*” assessment; other respondents believed that such questions were not applicable to them and therefore did not respond. A clear pattern emerges in Table 6 presented below based on these police employees’ perceptions—under the new Chief’s leadership, as compared to that of the former Chief, the department has exceedingly improved on *the most important and fundamental* structural, administrative, and organizational dimensions of any police agency—it is notably more stable, organized, professional, effective, and efficient.

A similar pattern emerges upon examination of the interpersonal and participatory levels among police personnel—comparatively speaking, morale has increased, there is a deeper feeling of pride in the department as well as mutual respect, fairness, optimism/hope for the future, sense of job security, and encouragement to participate.

A closer look at the data suggests, however, that there are several areas that *currently* are in need of attention. A relatively large proportion of police personnel provided “low” ratings for the current Chief in the area of “Departmental Fairness” (37.9%); and, a little over 30% provided the same rating for “Morale” and Departmental Organization.” The context of these ratings, as well as the relatively more positive ones reviewed may be found in the interview statements included within this assessment. The implications of all ratings are also provided in the form of “recommendations.”

Table 6. Chief Ratings~Past/Present (n=29) †

Variables	Past				Present			
	<u>Low</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>New Hire/NA</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>New Hire/NA</u>
<u>Morale</u>	21 (72.4)	3 (10.3)	0 (0.0)	5 (17.2)	9 (31.0)	11 (37.9)	9 (31.0)	0 (0.0)
<u>Department Stability</u>	11 (37.9)	9 (31.0)	5 (17.2)	4 (13.8)	5 (17.2)	11 (37.9)	13 (44.8)	0 (0.0)
<u>Department Organization</u>	13 (44.8)	8 (27.6)	4 (13.8)	4 (13.8)	9 (31.0)	8 (27.6)	12 (41.4)	0 (0.0)
<u>Department Pride</u>	16 (55.2)	5 (17.2)	4 (13.8)	4 (13.8)	5 (17.2)	7 (24.1)	17 (58.6)	0 (0.0)
<u>Professionalism</u>	15 (51.7)	7 (24.1)	3 (10.3)	4 (13.8)	2 (6.9)	8 (27.6)	19 (65.5)	0 (0.0)
<u>Mutual Respect</u>	20 (69.0)	3 (10.3)	2 (6.9)	4 (13.8)	7 (24.1)	8 (27.6)	14 (48.3)	0 (0.0)
<u>Department Effectiveness</u>	8 (27.6)	9 (31.0)	8 (27.6)	4 (13.8)	3 (10.3)	6 (20.7)	20 (69.0)	0 (0.0)
<u>Department Efficiency</u>	8 (27.6)	11 (37.9)	6 (20.7)	4 (13.8)	3 (10.3)	8 (27.6)	18 (62.1)	0 (0.0)
<u>Department Fairness</u>	18 (62.1)	4 (13.8)	3 (10.3)	4 (13.8)	11 (37.9)	4 (13.8)	14 (48.3)	0 (0.0)
<u>Optimism/Hope for the Future</u>	17 (58.6)	3 (10.3)	5 (17.2)	4 (13.8)	7 (24.1)	8 (27.6)	14 (48.3)	0 (0.0)
<u>Own Sense of Job Security</u>	6 (20.7)	5 (17.2)	14 (48.3)	4 (13.8)	1 (3.4)	5 (17.2)	23 (79.3)	0 (0.0)
<u>Encourage Participation</u>	17 (58.6)	3 (10.3)	5 (17.2)	4 (13.8)	7 (24.1)	5 (17.2)	17 (58.6)	0 (0.0)

†Listwise Deletion of Cases; ^Pr Percentages in Parentheses

The respondents' elaborated descriptions of their *former work existence* consisted of similar statements dealing largely with lack of participative management, favoritism, disrespect and lack of accountability within the department. The statements to follow are representative of the comments from all police personnel respondents:

“[Previous Chief] was a miserable human being to work for. He never appreciated the work officers did. He only started sending officers to schools after the Union took a vote of no confidence in him. He would and did pit the police department against the fire department just as he pit officer against officer. Unless you were in the clique, you didn't get credit for anything—I saw officers get commendations for normal activities such as CPR versus catching armed robbers. He wanted to be supreme ruler with everything. Our former Chief pit one shift against another. He would not have allowed this assessment. Only he and the secretary know the budget and what goes out to the public. He didn't want things going in there, such as crimes. The place just kind of crumbled with the vote of no confidence—no morale—the inmates were running the asylum. But, I don't regret taking the vote of no confidence—it was best for the department and individuals.”

By all accounts the treatment officers received during the 10 year tenure of the previous Chief during Phase I of the history of the department was obstreperous with apparently lasting effects. And Phase II faired no better as the interim chief with all good intentions:

“would avoid being stern with officers because of the treatment they received from the first Chief. Allowed them to be too free—to go at their own pace. His objective was to heal or recuperate. It's a pretty easy job [policing]— it can be stressful at times but all they have to do is do their job. You go work in the real world and try to get some of the benees [benefits] they get—they got it made.”

All but one respondent stated “I enjoy coming to work again. I don’t have to worry about the man behind the door anymore.” Another expressed the following sentiments about the *current Chief*:

“On a daily basis, I communicate with the Chief. He doesn’t have to do this and it is sometimes informal. He informs us of his intentions—there is definitely a better line of communication. From what I’ve seen so far, if you do your job he’s not afraid to give you credit, put in a letter of commendation but he wants you to do your job. He answered calls and backed up officers, directed traffic on Route 6 and gave credit to officers. Morale went up significantly when he first arrived but then backed off a bit (but guys are still doing their job) because everyone expected sudden change—too much too soon and when it didn’t they went down and back to old attitudes and routines slightly, slipping but know the standard is new. The public has bought into this before—[former Chief] wanted to perpetuate the view of a safe community. New Chief has said he would inform them [Board of Selectmen] and the Union about understaffing. It’s not just the guy at the top that has to change to change the organization—the Indians at the bottom have to change.”

Participative Management

The notion of shared leadership was broached with each of the police personnel interviewees by asking about the type and degree of participative management officers had experienced during their day-to-day work in the department. To this, one respondent emphatically said:

“In the past, no, one Boss and that was it—for some reason the [former Chief] liked me and he didn’t like a whole lot of people. But even if he liked you, you couldn’t trust it you had to be careful or he could turn on you. Now, the new Chief respects our decision-making; demands and requires independence and our discretion. He has not been here long enough for me to make a solid decision on him.”

Another respondent concurred relating that the:

“[Previous Chief] was a micro-manager and wanted to handle all problems. Only a selected few got to do anything. If he or his ‘golden boys’ didn’t do it or didn’t come up with the idea, then it didn’t get done or the idea was not a good one. This spiraled down morale—officers didn’t want to do anything.”

Still yet, another respondent said of the former Chief that he was a:

“Dictator, control freak. But he was technology wise—he brought us forward but not to manage—function/decision-making. If we bought or needed light bulbs or some minor fixings he had to have a say in it. Delegation did not happen much...he only delegated the schedule to [a lieutenant] and [the administrative assistant] did the budget and all else. Hell, I don’t know what he did!”

All respondents stated that the new Chief’s reputation preceded him; all of the officers indicated that they knew him, knew of him and/or heard of the work he had done while Chief at another department located within the state of Rhode Island. They conveyed that they heard he was “big on professionalism and pretty strict.” In addition, they stated that he “was into the community policing” paradigm and planned on practicing this during his tenure. The respondents, however, seemed tentatively hopeful about the new Chief. None were willing to provide the Chief a high rating instead, many respondents took the position that, “[H]e’s only been here a few months let’s see what he does after a while.” Another agreed indicating that judgment about whether the new Chief would be up to the job was:

“Difficult to say because he has not gotten his feet wet. How do you go shopping with no money in the pocket; personable, neat appearance, young and aggressive. Things will be different in one sure way, there will be more respect for the Chief; officers may give more of themselves because they want to work for him. He makes us look good.”

The respondents' seemed to be of the mind that the new Chief is going to have to demonstrate and prove himself to them as a leader much the opposite than what they had experienced over the past 10 years with the full-time, former Chief.

With this cautionary position in mind, however, when asked about the new Chief's willingness to share leadership and support participative management, the respondents provided the Chief relatively high ratings. In sharp contrast to the previous Chief, the new Chief has asked officers to get involved in helping him run the department on several different levels—from soliciting their ideas, posting informational memos, asking officers that are certified traffic accident reconstructionists to help update the departments policies on accidents, and encouraging more positive relations between the Union and administration. Additionally, the Chief asked officers and non-sworn personnel (administrative assistant and dispatcher) to aid the researcher with this assessment. In particular, the researcher made several requests for which the Chief enlisted assistance from several members of the department. Most notably, the researcher had the following experiences:

- »A copy of a “Values Statement” was provided that had been developed recently at the request of the Chief by three officers. A copy was provided to the researcher and three enlarged, framed copies were easily observable within the police department.
- »A year's worth of crime data (paper copies) was provided: an incumbent officer provided the data within two weeks of request and further offered to explain the information at the researcher's request.
- »A diagram of the police department (see Appendix B): the researcher saw a dated and rough copy of an emergency plan diagram of the downstairs area and asked if a copy could be made and one done for the upper quarters. The Chief asked an officer to provide a diagram; it is clear that the officers were eager to help,

provide information and did so in a timely fashion. In consultation with the Chief and based on his initiative, the officer took measurements of the entire department and provided the researcher a to-scale drawing of the department.

»Asked the administrative assistant to collect and provide news articles about the department for the assessment.

Perhaps more poignant, many lamented the job of the new Chief, some saying, “I feel bad for the guy...he doesn’t have any money but he’s trying to do something.” Another officer expressed, “Hey, he’s a good guy, I’ve heard good things about him, they’ve stood up since he’s been here but he doesn’t have any money to really do anything so in the eyes of some of these guys he’s going to fail.”

Interpersonal Relations

According to Adams’ (1963) motivational theory—which has been tested and received support in numerous studies—*perceived* fairness or equity is just as important as actual equity:

Evidence suggests that equity is not merely a matter of getting ‘a fair day’s pay for a fair day’s work,’ nor is inequity simply a matter of being underpaid. The fairness of an exchange between employee and employer is not usually perceived by the former purely and simply as an economic matter. There is an element of relative justice involved that supervenes economics and underlies perceptions of equity or inequity (1963:422).

By relative justice, what is meant is an employee’s perceived productivity weighed against the rewards accrued to him/her as compared to other employees. The respondents in this department provided a wealth of information that suggests they were entrenched in a day-to-day work environment that exuded unfairness.

Favoritism

The apparent mentality of the former Chief as described by the respondents carried over to the interpersonal relations he maintained within the department on a day-to-day basis. Perhaps the most frequent complaint was that of blatant favoritism. As with his decision to “pass” on the public safety building because he simply didn’t like the idea or had poor relations with the fire Chief, officers faced the same fate. The respondents expressed a noticeably high degree of *discrimination* within the department. The vast majority of respondents qualified their assessment by stating that such discriminatory practices were common under the previous long-term Chief’s tenure. There was a consensus that the former Chief’s favoritism affected the distribution of assignments; this was much less a problem with promotions according to respondents because the union guidelines and test/standard made it difficult to select someone over a more qualified applicant/test-taker. However, the respondents did convey that the Chief would manipulate the list of “promotable” candidates by either making no selection or cutting the selection short and waiting until the test came up again for promotion in the hope that “his guy, or his boy” would score higher and reach the top of the list.

Throughout the interviews respondents made it clear that the former Chief was largely responsible for the current attitudinal climate (e.g., low morale), physical conditions and poor public relations. More specifically, the former Chief had:

“[A] lot of money, but no people skills; he was not fair and was abusive in public. If he had something to say to you, he wouldn’t ask you to come into his office and shut the door to talk, he would do it right there, in front of everybody publicly. He was vindictive. I hated coming in here, now I enjoy coming to work again.”

Another officer made similar observations about the former Chief and when asked “Can you tell me was there anything good you can say about him?” He stated, “[W]ell, he was an expert at budgeting, that’s how we got the computers in the cars but of course, he had money to work with too.”

Gender Discrimination

Gender disparity was also pointed out but was attributed not only to the previous Chief—the present Chief is believed to be contributing to the continuation of such practices. This view was held by the majority of the females and many of the males in the department. The males noted that the females are “unappreciated in the department and came in trying to be a cop.” There is a belief that there is a purposeful effort to avoid providing the females—who have been employed in the department the longest, as dispatchers—equal opportunity to work as patrol officers by creating a new process to select full time officers. According to one respondent,

“Up ‘til 1990, nearly every officer was a full time dispatcher before they became full time patrol. Usually, in the past, a person starts as reserve, work reserve dispatch, a job opening comes up, full time dispatcher then takes that job. Then guys would come up from full time dispatch ranks to take any full time patrol officer opening. Now, they’re selecting directly from the reserve pool.”

And the majority of the female respondents were in support of that view and indeed relayed that it has been common practice recently and in the past for females to be passed over for jobs even though they have gone through the reserve officer system. In fact they report, they actually end up training recruits that go on to full-time officer status—the very position they vied for within the department for many years. During the

time of this assessment, there were 5 females (17%) and 24 males (83%) employed in the department. The UCR personnel data displayed in Table 2 certainly supports that females are largely underrepresented in this department and have been over time. However, interviews with officers and administration suggest several reasons for this outcome: 1.) few qualified women apply, 2.) those that do often drop out of the training and/or serve poorly (e.g., receive weak evaluations reports that are largely non-comparative, subjective/informal), and 3.) there have been notable problems with females that have been hired, especially full-time (e.g., brought forth a civil lawsuit; another found to be engaged in criminal conduct with a accomplice male partner). More probing and detail on this issue are forthcoming.

Several respondents also felt that their opportunities to earn money, enhance their careers through access to training were also compromised under the former Chief.

“Everything was based on favoritism including assignments, training, and details. He could budget though and he had more money than this new Chief to work with. He had no administrative skills. Mostly politically decision-making—he would interrupt officers’ work to demean them.”

White Shirts

Perceived inequity was also linked to the type of shirts officers wear on the job—patrol officers wear blue shirts while line shift supervisors wear white shirts well known in policing to be reserved for upper management. Well over half of the respondents considered this to be an important, divisive issue within the department. **On its face, such a complaint appears petty and without merit.** Upon closer examination however, their description of the underlying meaning of the shirts suggest this is an issue that

should be examined more carefully. Respondents attributed the different colored shirts to the previous Chief's desire to maintain a work climate of suspicion and resentment.

According to one respondent the use of the different shirts:

“...have had a bad effect on morale—it creates distance. The old Chief's idea was to ‘divide and conquer.’ It's the Chief's discretion to get rid of them; they are symbolic and changes in the uniform, style, and attitude would be symbolic of something—he [current Chief] just doesn't have the money for it. They just create a false division between officers.”

One respondent conveyed what many others also stated about the shirts:

“Likely not going to change from the past, but has been a short time and can't see him [new Chief] doing anything unless budgeting and staffing issues are alleviated. For example, there's a two-tiered system between subordinates and administration...people are already aligning themselves.”

Another respondent elaborated on the symbolic nature of the shirts in this manner:

“In general when someone becomes management he doesn't have to go out on the street anymore and yet tells patrol to do reports out on the street—to not come into the station; from a tactical standpoint, you're typing and next you look up and someone is standing at the window. They just overstep and forget what it was like. Like their white shirts; they symbolically elevated everyone from sergeant up. Tactically, I see this as problem because when they are out on the street, if someone wants to go after the police he's the most identifiable ‘top-guy.’ This comes from when command staff was just the Chief and sergeants; they were the top management under that structure but not now. But they keep them because since that was the way it was always done they continue to do it that way. This is a problem because it elevates them (e.g., sergeants) beyond their station. In other departments there are supervisors of course but they also work; they answer calls and are out on the streets. In terms of rank, they're not too far from us but the white shirt elevates them in their own mind and creates distance.”

Respondents seem to be discussing a desire to have a “seamless” working environment given the actual nature of the current structure of their department.

Accountability

It is also clear from the interviews that much of the behavior discussed was unchecked in Phase I and Phase II of the department’s history. In contrast, officers are now in Phase III under a new system for which accountability is linked—by the new Chief—to professionalism. The extent to which they can fully appreciate this transition is tenuous and may for some time strain relations between administration and officers until this system is learned, adopted, and consistently practiced.

“There was selective discipline in the past. Let me give you an example, one officer assaulted another with witnesses and because he was a favorite of [former Chief], nothing really happened to him—favoritism determined discipline. If a favorite officer blatantly screwed up it was covered up—especially if he was liked by the [former Chief]. In the past, he [former Chief] would tell the Captain to ‘look into that.’ Complaints against officers went like this—the [former Chief] would rip his throat out before hearing anything. If investigated, and you cleared the officer, he would find something to punish him anyway—he would berate officers in front of officers, supervisors in front of his officers. We had evaluations for a short time; they were monthly and only did two (years ’93 & ’94) but officers felt they were not fair because they didn’t take into account all areas of officers’ work especially the shifts they worked and the demands of each.”

There is also evidence that evaluation and training were not taken very seriously and/or enforced in this department during Phase I of the department’s history. As one respondent stated:

“Some officers get frustrated with being an FTO and were given the discretion to quit it and that was [with previous Chief] the status quo. Let me give you an example, an officer is put on bike, goes to training, receives equipment, does it a

while and loses interest—he he would just tell the [previous] Chief ‘I don’t want to do it anymore’—command said ‘Okay.’”

Immediately upon the new Chief taking the position, officers were introduced to a new system. They were informed that they along with everyone in the department would be held responsible for doing their jobs, behavior toward one another as well as treatment toward citizens. According to one respondent, no such climate existed previously. He stated, “[W]hen I came here, there was no internal affairs policy; we implemented that for both internal and external complaints.” Another respondent provided further insight into the new regime:

“The new Chief investigates and gets involved—he comes out at night ; listens to all parties involved—officers, supervisors, citizens and citizens’ complaints, and officers’ complaints. Now we’re going to have a formal system of documenting behaviors—he has involved officers and supervisors to examine citizens’ complaints as well as officers’ complaints.”

Concerns, however, were expressed about the new Chief’s position on and system of accountability as they relate to citizen complaints. One respondent related that the Chief seemed to take citizen complaints about officers’ alleged unprofessionalism as “absolute truth”; according to this respondent, “[T]here’s no validity to the complaint, no proof of what the citizen said happened, but the Chief is doing an investigation.” That is, that based upon a citizen complaint [about an officer] the Chief has a policy to authorize mid-management to launch an official internal investigation with the Chief directly involved in scrutinizing the details of investigation. From the officers’ perspective, the Chief was willing to put more weight on the citizens’ “side” of the story than the officers (or, any officer). The officer stated that the Chief conveyed that he [the Chief] insists on

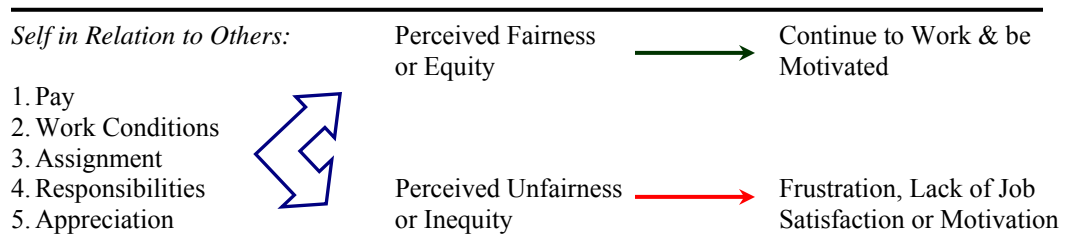
professionalism at all times and thus an investigation into the matter will take place. Other officers also conveyed similar concerns about the new Chief based on their observations of their peer(s). In short, the officers appeared to fear that the new Chief's system of accountability or discipline, particularly for handling complaints against officers is too harsh.

The current Chief's approach certainly appears to be very different from that taken by the former Chief who, by all accounts, "Did nothing when citizens complained or officers were found to be doing things they shouldn't do." One respondent gave the example of an officer not showing up for work twice, providing undocumented excuses and expecting acceptance. The former Chief "simply ignored the incident." The same is true when one officer threw a hot cup of coffee in another officer's face—in front of other officers.

"Yes, rules and regulations—there is accountability here now that [new Chief] is here; look at the sick log and compare [new Chief] time here to past years. Now, (on this shift) we are in tip-top shape. Two things happened when [new Chief] came: (a.) nobody sleeps on shift anymore—before the new Chief, guys would drive around for ½ hour and sleep, and (b.) [the current Deputy Chief] has the same philosophy."

As the respondents' comments above suggest recognizing the consequences of perceived unfairness is an important step. As is consistent with Adams' theory of motivation, when employees *perceive* inequitable treatment, they will certainly compensate. The diagram below lays out how this might manifest:

Figure 4. Application of Adams' Theory



Adapted from Gaines, Worrall, Southerland & Angell. (2003). *Police Administration*, 2nd Edition. Boston: McGraw Hill, p. 237.

The interviews indicate that officers routinely compensate not because they are incompetent at their profession, but because they perceived inequitable treatment with little recourse to correct the problems. In policing, this could translate into any number of potential situations; such situations have been a reality within this department. They include:

- Chronic Absenteeism
- Low Morale
- Stress
- Hopelessness
- Apathy
- Negative Attitudes
- Sedentary while on the Job
- Sleeping on the Job
- Lack of Collegiality
- Disrespect

Having pointed out that perceived inequity might influence officers' comportment toward doing their jobs, it is equally imperative to acknowledge the extent to which officers' contribute to their own job satisfaction, motivation and morale. For example, it was reported that in this new phase or era of policing the Chief has begun

implementing a pattern of basic professionalism to “project an image to the public of a sharp department” that values itself including:

- *Polished boots and metal
- *Personal grooming
- *Using codes to call in
- *Getting out of car with their hats on
- *Getting out of the car more
- *Rolling down the window on patrol
- *Memorizing calls to call in

Although these activities seem basic to any police organization, they were obviously of less import in past phases of this department’s history—officers and other police personnel also share responsibility in ensuring that they are actually and perceived to be professional. In the interviews, it was rare that respondents attributed adverse behaviors to themselves and therefore offered minimal information about how they might improve their behavior and the conditions under which they work. As one respondent explained:

“If you talk to some officers, they’ll say the only changes made are that we have to wear our hats—it was a miracle that no one got laid off given budget problems. Some guys are taking a wait and see attitude, officers will say he (new Chief) hasn’t done anything and this is just not fair to him (new Chief)—they [officers] expect too much. We were such a depressed department for so long, you can’t blame people for still being bitter—there is such low morale here.”

However, the questionnaire tapped police personnel’s views of the type and extent of their contributions to the department on a number of levels. As may be seen in Table 7 below, respondents were asked to rate their level of contribution in the past as well as the present on scale from 0=“Low Contribution” to 10=“High Contribution.” This scale was later recoded to reflect a 3-point measurement whereby: 1=“Low”; 2=“Some”; 3=“High.

Table 7. Self-Assessed Personal Contributions~Past/Present (n=29) †

<u>Variables</u>	Past				<u>New Hire/NA</u>	Present			
	<u>Low</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>High</u>			<u>Low</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>New Hire/NA</u>
<u>Morale</u>	9 (31.0)	3 (10.3)	13 (44.8)	4 (13.8)		6 (20.7)	8 (27.6)	15 (51.7)	0 (0.0)
<u>Department Stability</u>	7 (24.1)	9 (31.0)	9 (31.0)	4 (13.8)		3 (10.3)	11 (37.9)	15 (51.7)	0 (0.0)
<u>Department Organization</u>	7 (24.1)	12 (41.4)	6 (20.7)	4 (13.8)		6 (20.7)	10 (34.5)	13 (44.8)	0 (0.0)
<u>Department Pride</u>	5 (17.2)	7 (24.1)	13 (44.8)	4 (13.8)		5 (17.2)	6 (20.7)	18 (62.1)	0 (0.0)
<u>Professionalism</u>	4 (13.8)	5 (17.2)	16 (55.2)	4 (13.8)		0 (0.0)	5 (17.2)	24 (82.8)	0 (0.0)
<u>Mutual Respect</u>	7 (24.1)	6 (20.7)	12 (41.4)	4 (13.8)		7 (24.1)	5 (17.2)	17 (58.6)	0 (0.0)
<u>Department Effectiveness</u>	4 (13.8)	9 (31.0)	12 (41.4)	4 (13.8)		4 (13.8)	8 (27.6)	17 (58.6)	0 (0.0)
<u>Department Support</u>	5 (17.2)	5 (17.2)	15 (51.7)	4 (13.8)		4 (13.8)	3 (10.3)	22 (75.9)	0 (0.0)
<u>Department Efficiency</u>	5 (17.2)	5 (17.2)	15 (51.7)	4 (13.8)		4 (13.8)	7 (24.1)	18 (62.1)	0 (0.0)
<u>Department Fairness</u>	9 (31.0)	7 (24.1)	9 (31.0)	4 (13.8)		7 (24.1)	6 (20.7)	16 (55.2)	0 (0.0)
<u>Optimism/Hope for the Future</u>	8 (27.6)	4 (13.8)	13 (44.8)	4 (13.8)		7 (24.1)	5 (17.2)	17 (58.6)	0 (0.0)
<u>Positive Public Self-Image</u>	1 (3.4)	3 (10.3)	21 (72.4)	4 (13.8)		0 (0.0)	4 (13.8)	25 (86.2)	0 (0.0)
<u>Positive Public Department-Image</u>	4 (13.8)	3 (10.3)	18 (62.1)	4 (13.8)		1 (3.4)	5 (17.2)	23 (79.3)	0 (0.0)

†Listwise Deletion of Cases; † Percentages in Parentheses

Police employees' ratings of their personal contributions, as displayed in Table 7 above, suggest under this new Chief they have perhaps reconsidered their role and ability to contribute to this department, themselves, their colleagues, and the public. Focusing on the "High Contribution" category, comparing the past with the present, a clear pattern emerges—police employees indicated that they have stepped-up their efforts to contribute to the department on every item, with the exception of morale. It appears that their contributions to morale have remained virtually the same, regardless of leadership. However, when looking across all categories of morale, notable contributory efforts have been made by personnel. Importantly, the final three items deserve special mention: there appears to be a conscientious effort to contribute to what might be considered the more human relations aspects of police work more specifically, optimism/hope for the future; positive public self-image; and, positive public department image.

Although most students of criminal justice and some non-management police practitioners either assume or strongly believe that employee motivation, high productivity, commitment to the organization, and overall job satisfaction is a *sole function* of leadership, this position on the issue is highly erroneous (Gaines, et al., 2003). To take such a stance is to effectually state to administrators and colleagues alike, "I *dare you* to try motivating me! It is *your* responsibility to motivate me—to make me see the positive aspects of my job, to improve things, to be professional and to fully appreciate the value in it." Indeed, this perspective is in the exact opposite direction of a progressive police force that relies on *self*-motivated employees working *with* a leadership that facilitates autonomy, and promotes shared responsibility that engenders participative management in a professionalized framework.

The Culture of Shift Work

Personnel working each shift is nearly perfectly correlated to the age and/or tenure of the officer—a seniority system that reflects the following: the 8a-4p shift worked by veteran incumbent officers (older and more job experienced); 4p-12a shift worked by junior incumbent officers (middle-aged/job experienced); and the 12a-8a shift worked by newer/younger officers including part-time reserve officers (least job experienced). Although this structure is not at all unusual in most police departments, respondents provided information to suggest that there are certain perceived inequities that make this arrangement troublesome to them.

More specifically, the respondents pointed out that the supervisors of each shift vary significantly in terms of their standards and expectations and this is noticed by officers of all shifts. For example,

“As a general rule you type your reports on the laptop; the 4-12 shift supervisor is strict on this. Also, the 4-12 shift supervisors demand that all reports be completed but this is not universal across shifts—officers notice this because there is a board that can be looked at by all officers telling whether their reports have been completed or not and they do look. The report board can tell you who got reports in and whether there are errors or incompleteness in reports.”

In addition, many of the officers stated that the “day shift is lax”; that it is not unusual for officers to “hang around in the department much more than other shifts”; and they are “not proactive; but not uniformly enforced across shifts.” One respondent attempted to explain the variation in perceived supervision by providing names for each shift as well as delineating the unique responsibilities of each as follows:

- 1.) *8a-4p: "Watch-Dog"*: More proactive due to being relatively less busy, deals largely with shoplifters at the mall and in business district, also traffic and radar.
- 2.) *4p-12a: "Response"*: Much busier; deals largely with house parties, domestics.
- 3.) *12a-8a: "Security"*: Relatively least busy; check buildings, cleaning up any drunks and domestics.

Still another complaint by officers was that "some guys don't respect job experience, seniority ya know?...you see it in the contract we have now, the way they try to dress like Robocop and their attitudes." Several recommendations are made to address the issues presented and discussed in this section.

Stress: Global & Specific

It is fitting at this juncture to deal more directly with the issue of stress. The police personnel respondents that participated in this assessment were asked to rate their level of stress on an 11 point scale ranging from 0="Low Strain/Stress" to 10 "High Strain/Stress". This scale was recoded to reflect a 3-point measurement whereby 1="Low Strain/Stress"; 2="Medium Strain/Stress"; 3="High Strain/Stress." Additionally, stress was tapped on both globally and more specifically. The results of the self-rated global items are displayed in Table 8 below. Employees were asked to rate their level of stress in four distinct environments—work, family, friends, and community.

Table 8. Global Environmental Stressors ($n=29$)[†]

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Self-Rated Stress Level</u> ^{P[†]}		
	<u>Low</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>High</u>
Work	7 (24.1)	7 (24.1)	15 (51.7)
Family	18 (62.1)	7 (24.1)	4 (13.8)
Friends	22 (75.9)	4 (13.8)	3 (10.3)
Community	27 (93.1)	2 (6.9)	0 (0.0)

[†]Listwise Deletion of Cases; ^{P[†]} Percentages in Parentheses

Even a cursory review of the results of the global stress ratings clearly indicates that of all environments considered, stress stemming from work emerged as the most prominent stressor followed by family, friends and the community—the environment least stressful to respondents.

To delve more deeply into the sources of employees stress specific situational/circumstantial items were posed, using the aforementioned 11-point scale, and were averaged. The mean rankings displayed in Table 9 indicate that many work-related conditions and situations ranked highest among all others considered. The physical condition of the work environment had the highest average stress ranking along with several other organization-related situations including: internal departmental politics and lack of department resources. Also ranking relatively high were stressors displaying respondents' compassion toward the public (i.e., giving a death notification; witnessing child abuse) and concerns the impact of the job has on their own family. Internal departmental issues (i.e., inadequate reward/recognition; reserve officer system; department's leadership; quality of immediate supervisor; discrimination) also emerged as dominant stressors.

Table 9. Rank-Ordered Means for All Stress Variables ($n=29$)[†]

Variable	Mean[*]	S.D.
Physical Condition of the Department	8.28	2.96
Internal Departmental Politics	7.52	3.02
Lack of Department Resources	6.86	3.02
External Political Influence	6.69	3.29
Amount of Training	6.28	3.52
Giving a Death Notification	5.48	3.87
Witnessing Child Abuse	5.45	3.26
Inadequate Reward or Recognition	5.24	3.83
Reserve Officer System	5.10	3.80
Department's Leadership	4.97	3.80
The Impact of the Job on My Family	4.86	3.03
Quality of Immediate Supervisor	4.69	4.12
Discrimination	4.24	4.28
Work Schedule	4.21	3.48
Inadequate Information	3.93	3.44
Problems in the Community	3.66	2.65
My Assignment	3.45	3.32
Pulling Over/Arresting or Citing Someone You Know (Relative)	3.28	3.42
Time/Distance for Back Up to Arrive	3.17	3.09
Pulling Over/Arresting or Citing Someone You Know (Friend)	3.14	3.25
Experiencing Violence	3.10	3.04
Increased Emphasis on Computer Use	2.97	3.28
Availability of Firearms among the Public	2.93	2.82
Coming into Conflict with a Well-Known Community Member	2.83	2.84
Testifying in Court	2.79	2.96
Amount of Paper Work	2.69	2.77
Dealing with the Public	2.48	2.79
Public Contacting While Off Duty	2.24	2.47
Criticisms of My Writing	1.34	2.37

[†]Listwise Deletion of Cases; ^{*} Based on 0-10 Point Scale

INTERNAL DEPARTMENTAL ISSUES

ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1.) Given the changes in the administration, it is incumbent upon all officers and other police personnel to work hard to decrease their negative expectancies. Negative attitudes act as a blocking and protective mechanism to necessary change. In addition, such negativity perpetuates, reproducing itself as the past is used to gauge the present and future. Similar to personal relationships, when one brings “baggage” from a previous relationship into the present one, the new relationship is essentially sabotaged. They no longer have to “worry about the man behind the door.” This is a different man, a different era and a different challenge largely opposite—by their own assessments—to what they had experienced in the past.
- 2.) Although much effort can and should be expended to provide police personnel with developmental leadership skills and dealing with change, funding often hampers a consistent, comprehensive effort in this department. It is clear that most if not all police personnel are aware that the new Chief’s ability to address their concerns is contingent upon funding. Notwithstanding, the new Chief has demonstrated his commitment to bring some training and participative management to the department; he has sought ways to conduct several in-house training opportunities, as well as augment funding by writing and receiving external funding. These efforts are indicative of a progressive movement by the Chief and suggest much promise for this department until funding is provided by the department’s host town. It is necessary that each member of the department make an individual commitment to think and behave/work in a manner that is reasonable given their circumstances as they work toward bringing the department in compliance with their expectations and those of similar sized departments.
- 3.) Evaluations of police personnel performance lack formality. Although any evaluative instrument can be manipulated, the informality that engenders the past and present evaluation of performance is woefully inadequate. Performance appraisals are imperative to any occupation—this is the one method whereby police personnel can receive formal feedback of strengths and weaknesses; identify personnel’s understanding of departmental policies and procedures; help determine shifts in personnel assignments; serve as one dimension of promotions and raises; alleviate claims of perceived favoritism and politics while also identifying and addressing actual inequities. The new Chief has begun to develop a system of internal accountability and has designated an officer as an Internal Affairs officer. A concerted (in a participative management style) effort should be made to create a structure and process that includes: a form for evaluation that addresses the job tasks of each job classification of police personnel, and an opportunity for the evaluatee to review and appeal the appraisal if necessary. Finally, evaluations should also be audited on a periodic basis.
- 4.) Creating a seamless working environment is a challenging endeavor in the field of policing and may not be desirable where a hierarchical structure is deemed imperative

to officer and public safety—in short, someone *has* to be in charge and she/he must be identifiable. Many of the respondents, however, felt the use of blue/white shirts created a false barrier between them and their immediate supervisors. It is unclear whether their concerns are also based in false impression. Aside from the fact that new uniforms may not be financially feasible for the department at this time, there appears to be a deeper issue that those wearing the white shirts either don't deserve them as they have not earned them and/or use them in a way that is over-authoritarian. This is an issue that the administration and officers must discuss.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH TOWN GOVERNMENT

Political influence abounds in many social institutions—policing is unexceptional. The vast majority of respondents vehemently felt that the town council did not fully understand their situation. In short, the following statements seem to reflect apathetic members of the police department that worry a great deal about their place in the town.

“They got to be more supportive socially, emotionally and financially of this organization—they have to speak out for the professional needs of this organization for the community. Even if that means stating unpopular things such as a tax increase or it may cost you more...our [new] Chief says he is willing to compromise and does so publicly.”

“They have to realize we are behind the 8 ball when it comes to facilities, training and manpower, that they have to work on a reduced budget. They have to find ways to fund the police department more—we need our past budget brought back and then some...few patrol officers are actively working and we're going to be over budget on overtime again.”

Several respondents felt that the town managers were well aware of their issues but simply refused to acknowledge their needs.

“It doesn't matter what we say—they're old swamp Yankees—they have the attitude of pay what you have to pay and not a penny more and get away with

what you can—they are getting police services for almost nothing and getting good service with few personnel. They want something for nothing.”

“We’ve made them more aware of problem; through conversations and through the media they are fully aware of the problems. There is no accountability in Town Hall. This town is in receivership with the State due to such mismanagement of funds that the State wants to come in and balance the budget. What’s ironic is they will probably have to reduce the budget further to balance it—we’ll get screwed again.”

Respondents also indicated that hiring is also highly political because the town managers are the “appointing authority.” There is little doubt that in this particular police department, the nature of the small-town environment likely plays a profound role in how hiring occurs and who actually gets hired—in short, the presence and role of nepotism appears to be especially relevant in the hiring process. Interestingly, every respondent interviewed, save two, mentioned this fact, “You have to know somebody to get in here.” The officers in this department were hired using a part-time reservists system. In order to get on this list, it is reported that “being connected” or familiar with someone important in the community is extremely helpful. Many officers suggested that this is problematic because they are not getting quality officers but rather those “that know somebody but don’t know shit.” This too may be related to the gender discrimination described by several members of this department; it could be that females are less able to secure an inroad to the department as compared to their male counterparts such that they are not less qualified for the job but rather their networking is less than that of the males. Additionally, this department is inhabited by many people that are consanguine related either as brother-in-laws, husband, wife or brother. Nearly every respondent interviewed noted the issue of nepotism. Many discussed the difficulty of being able to criticize the

work ethic of their colleagues when other working family members were around or even attempting to evaluate their performance, calling them into work to cover a shift or “bothering” them more generally for fear of upsetting not only one person, but likely two, three or four within the work environment. Interestingly, nepotism was casually described to be a fact of small-town life if not a natural feature of the police department.

As one respondent discussed:

“It doesn’t personally affect me or my work but it does impact the morale of officers; no one wants to call a guy’s wife in because it may upset him, or call in a brother or brother-in-law.”

One respondent seems hopeful that political influence can be reduced beginning with the leader of the police department:

“Stories about department in the media do not bother the Selectmen and Town Administrator one way or the other. Town council is about politics. We are viewed as a necessary evil. [Police] administrator will have to shape views; administrator has to stand up to people—honestly present issues to the people.”

The current Chief is doing just that; he consistently attends the town meetings held on Tuesdays [alternate during summer] whether or not he is scheduled to speak before them. The town meetings are also televised increasing the Chief’s visibility and providing a wider medium for the department’s concerns to be heard. The Chief also provides the town managers with monthly and annual written correspondence. A review of such correspondence reveals that the new Chief is vigilant in keeping the town managers aware of the department’s needs. More specifically, that of:

- need for mandatory and in-service training as well as specialized training opportunities
- understaffing, and
- the abhorrent physical environment.

Town managers are clearly making strides as several patrol officer positions, a replacement mechanic position, and a Deputy Chief position has recently been approved. These efforts should continue as the funding underlies all of these major issues and is often cited as a major barrier to increasing positive and progressive police-community relations and as was seen earlier in this report, lack of funding is related to other significant aspects of the work of policing.

***PARTNERSHIPS WITH TOWN GOVERNMENT
ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS:***

- 1.) Town managers must be willing to take the lead in revealing to the public the concerns and desperate situation their police department attempts to operate daily in the interest of public safety. In so doing, a coordinated effort should be directed to ***developing a STRATEGIC PLAN*** for this department which addresses the issues fleshed out in this needs assessment. The structure of the strategic plan should follow a basic form of detailing: a.) identified areas of concern, b.) strategies or goals and objectives for addressing those concerns, and c.) an agreed upon timeline for the completion of goals and objectives.
- 2.) Town managers must be willing to justify this renewed attention and commitment to the police department by disclosing information to the tax-paying and voting members of the public who have a direct interest in improving the police department.
- 3.) All police personnel must pay attention to the town meetings to increase their awareness and understanding of town functions, the department's role in the town, and the realities of the town's budgetary parameters.
- 4.) Two-way communication must be maintained and increased between town managers and the police department. As the administrator of the police department, the Chief most frequently communicates (in person and writing) with town government. However, all police personnel must get involved on any level possible to facilitate a

common understanding with their Chief and town managers—in short, ensuring that all parties are “on the same page.”

TRAINING AND STAFFING

Training

Training was considered by every interviewee to be an extremely important feature of the department, but one that is virtually a non-funded area of this police department. Without fail, it was discovered that the department and officers lack a training program at all levels and in substantive areas/skills: recruit and in-service training in criminal law and procedure, firearms (the only area for which accommodations are made—more on this forthcoming), community policing; traffic law and safety (an extremely relevant area to this department in particular) and the like. Using what he terms “creative” management, during his short time at “Seaside” Police Department, the Chief has been able to provide his officers with the following training:

- In-house Video Training on various topics
- Shooting Trailer
- Firearms Qualification/Training
- Firearms Law Instruction/Firearms Permits
- Suicide Prevention Class/Certification
- Training Key Handouts from the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP)
- Physical Abilities Test
- OCAT (Pepper Spray) Re-Certification Training and Testing
- TTY Machine (for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing)
- Drug Investigation School
- School Resource Officer School
- Rape Investigator School
- Dispatcher Update School
- D.A.R.E. Officers Annual Training Conference

In Massachusetts, General Law Chapter 41, Section 96B,, “requires that every full-time municipal police officer attend a prescribed course of study approved by the Massachusetts Criminal Justice Training Council (MCJTC) for in-service training” (www.mass.gov/mptc). Reserved officers are also required to attend developmental training. The areas of training include: Veteran Patrol, Officer Annual Professional Development, Supervisor Annual Professional Development, Detective Annual Professional Development, Chief/Command Annual Professional Development, Reserve/Intermittent Officer Annual Professional Development, Weapon and Ammunition for Range Qualification (www.mass.gov/mptc). The department has encountered much difficulty ensuring that every officer is in fact certified; interviews also indicate that the department has operated without annual certification. The new Chief has committed himself to making certain this does not occur during his tenure. As a result, firearms certification has been supplemented by bringing the training to the officers through the use the MCJTC approved Plymouth County Sheriff’s Department shooting trailer in which officers can, under varying conditions and circumstances, enhance their shooting acuity. The Chief was able to get this trailer at no cost to the department.

Professionally sanctioned in-service or “refresher” training courses are also lacking in the department. However, the new Chief has “instituted a roll call training procedure in which officers are required to watch training videos on various police topics” to improve their understanding and use of proper tactics and procedures. Additionally, the Chief provides articles (i.e., training keys) published by the IACP intended to keep officers updated on various police topics. It is noteworthy that much of the current training in the department is available to only a few officers at a time, for a

limited time, prone to skip a few years (i.e., non-continuous), non-comprehensive, and a result of the new Chief using his innovation and sound reputation to provide officers with some training they would otherwise not get while incurring little cost to the department and town's budget. Owing to some degree from the previous administration, this administration has been successful in securing external funding largely from grants secured from the state (i.e., Governor's Highway Safety Bureau) and federal governments (i.e., D.A.R.E.; COPS; SRO programs, upgrade in computer technology).

Although the Chief should be commended for his efforts, his work should not be construed to suggest the department is doing just fine as it is; to the contrary, the department is "operating in crisis" the best it can but needs much assistance. While funding continues to plague this department, it is important to recognize that even if the department had the funds to send all officers for the training they desperately need to be at par with departments of their size and crime rates, they would likely be unable to send them. That is, *because training is inextricably linked to staffing*, there would have to be enough officers and staff to "cover" the shifts so that they and their comrades could go to training. The link between training and staffing is evident in one respondent's statement below which demonstrates the impact understaffing has on training. He reports that the department:

"Can't find anyone to work details and they're at \$31.00 per/hr. We give 'em away to [neighboring department] and the Sheriff's Department. Somebody's going to be punished every time someone calls in...young guys are going to be deprived of days off 'cause they're going to be called first. There needs to be a cushion to relieve stress and burnout."

The department clearly is in a precarious position—the Chief can send officers and staff off to training using the limited funds available thereby increasing officers' knowledge

and skills and in so doing, create a dangerous environment in “Seaside” whereby officers not going to training are highly disgruntled because they cannot take their scheduled days off from work or afford to get sick.

Understaffing

As stated earlier, according to the UCR (as of October 2001) the national average law enforcement rate is 2.5 full time officers per 1,000 residents. For a department of “Seaside’s” population group and geographic region/division, the rate is 2.2 officers for every 1,000 residents—accordingly “Seaside’s” rate should be 36 officers. The reserve officer system is currently being utilized to supplement for departmental understaffing. It appears that there is and has been an *over reliance* on this system and that it is fraught with significant libelous dangers. Firstly, reserve officers do not undergo the same amount and type of comprehensive training full-time officers undergo. Additionally, many respondents indicated that at least in the past, it was common practice for reserve officers to be “by themselves in a car on their own—given guns, keys and actually patrolling.” In short, it was revealed the there was little field training of these novice part-timers despite the fact that at least three full-time officers were certified Field Training Officers (FTO’s). Even when put on with an FTO the training received varied widely, and was informal with no written feedback for evaluative purposes. There was consensus that reservists:

“[They] have minimal formal training—they get two nights a week for 11-12 weeks/20 hours—then they put them on with an FTO. They should be used to cover sick days; vacation time; days off. In my opinion, there are two types of reservists; you have your young kids that really want to be cops full-time and those who do it as a hobby for extra money.”

Although the reserve officer system was initially intended as a stepping stone to become a full-time officer, it appears that they are used more often than not as quasi-full time (or adjunct) patrol officers. One respondent reported that:

“In fact ratio wise, they have been used way too much; right now we have a reserve to full time officer ratio of 50/50—we have two patrol/two reserve. There are only two guys out there while shooting training is going on.”

Another respondent echoes a concern of potential liability that is implied in the statements above and one that many respondents have also mentioned in different contexts, that is:

“What if a reserve was involved in shooting? Town council did not reflect; they’re using them the same way but after the [1998] shooting, the city did not provide money for night firing. In fact, 2/3’s of officers work night shift. However, in the shooting trailer—we are able to turn out the lights and even have a simulation with car lights. The Sheriff’s department is donating the shooting trailer, not the city.”

These concerns are very real and should not be ignored, however, no respondent indicated that the reserve officer system should be eliminated, but rather used more wisely. Indeed, one respondent felt the system was helpful. He stated:

“I believe in it because it gives administration and officers a look at candidates in the work condition—it’s a great way to evaluate personnel and for them to gain experience. But it inhibits administration because you have to choose from an active reserve list so it becomes very closed.”

Other respondents have suggested that their understaffing problems are also related to the fact that the work environment is “absolutely horrible” and “non-functional for a police department” so much so that “people who work here don’t want to work in here and new people cannot believe they would have to work here...some of them quit.”

The **dispatcher’s work area is another “exploited area of this department.”** As is depicted in Appendix B, upon entering the front entrance of the department, a security door prevents free movement into the upper floor that leads into the dispatch and common area. A glass window with a slot to exchange documents is utilized to handle all public inquires. Once inside the security door, the dispatcher’s work area is in the upstairs area of the department enclosed behind a high desk top where the space also includes a bathroom and a common work area for sergeants. The sergeants work at four computer stations adjacent and diagonal to the dispatcher’s desk. The dispatchers are responsible for controlling the people entering and leaving the department. A review of the dispatcher’s responsibilities in these tight quarters reveals the following list:

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| ΔAdministrative Tasks | ΔHandle Walk-Ins at Window |
| ΔGeneral Inquiries | ΔHandle Eight Phone Lines (911/Police Radio) |
| ΔBuzz-In Door | ΔMonitor Prisoners on Mounted Video Screen |
| ΔDirect/Forward Calls | ΔRun Databases to Address Issues |
| ΔEnter Officers Citations | ΔTrain Part-Time Dispatchers |

Although the ability to multi-task is essential in any job, ***continuity in the dispatchers work is virtually non-existent.*** Several of the respondents indicated that because dispatchers are required to handle all of these tasks—often at the same time—they experience unusual and persistent consequences. It seems intuitive to recognize the types and levels of stress that police officers experience, particularly during dangerous

encounters, and also in their daily work. The acknowledgement of stress among dispatchers, however, is given scant attention—the stressors, however, are different than their counterparts, but are very real as is indicated by the list of tasks above and the consequences cited below. Many of the respondents (including those that do not work dispatch) mentioned the following “injustices” experienced by “Seaside” dispatchers.

- No 10-15 minute break every hour of work as is federally mandated.
- Difficulty using the bathroom without someone there to cover the desk.
- Having to pull officers off the street to use the bathroom or take medication.
- Increased levels of frustration and stress.
- Perceptions of being rude and apathetic.

The lack of respect for the work of dispatching was also cited as a major problem within this department. More specifically, respondents indicated that dispatch is called for many non-job related matters such as finding a number to a local restaurant; the calls have come from the street, and even from a police personnel member’s home. Additionally, police personnel seem comfortable handing administrative tasks over to dispatch for which they can easily do themselves such as filing their police reports in folders pre-labeled by dispatchers. Several respondents relayed the sentiments of one respondent’s feelings:

“That is one hard job, I wouldn’t want to do it. The attitude is ‘Anyone can do that job’ but I would like to see them try. Dispatch is not considered a profession like police officers; like anybody can come off the street and do this job. A common term used here to describe dispatchers is a ‘warm body.’ They don’t care who’s there so long as someone is there. The quality of the person is less important to them so long as she/he can answer the phone and deal with the radio. The part time dispatcher is not sent off to training, they get on-the-job training through the full time dispatcher. This is very disorganized too...it’s just schedule a time and come in.”

Another respondent provided further evidence of a general lack of respect, understanding, and collegiality relaying that calls are forwarded to police personnel within the department and often go unanswered “even though they are right there in the department. Then they want to get angry when they don’t get their call or someone sees them around the department and I have already said, ‘They’re not picking up, they must not be here.’ I cannot control that, that’s not my error—what can I do about that? Yet I have to be professional; that’s not professional, or courteous.”

In a police department financially situated as “Seaside” is, it is reasonable to expect all police personnel to “pull their weight” and then some. Indeed many of the patrol officers and members of the administration have additional duties outside of patrol or their direct supervisory duties (e.g., gun permits, SRO, media liaison, elderly affairs) however, based upon the list above, dispatchers are doing at least three to four jobs including the one that involves their job description.

***TRAINING AND STAFFING
ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS:***

- 1.) Opportunities for officers, dispatchers and other police personnel to receive training in any area of policing are readily available in New England and beyond. However, opportunity without means is a fruitless endeavor. Officers have expressed that there is a need for basic in-service and specialized training to address the needs of the community. In addition, increased training would bring the department into modern policing. Training should be a **major aspect of a strategic plan** which would include reasonable and multi-faceted avenues to secure funding from within and outside of the town. Continued successes at receiving grant awards from the state and federal governments and requests to town managers are promising efforts. The department should also consider fundraising and seeking volunteer services from higher educational institutions, technical schools and police academies to augment training opportunities.

- 2.) The dispatchers in this department are overburdened with work. Hiring an administrative assistant and another full time dispatcher should be a high priority in “Seaside” given that dispatch is the nerve-center of any policing agency.
- 3.) As with the dispatchers, understaffing at the officer position directly impacts training. More officers, particularly, full-time personnel must be hired to accommodate time off for training.

PHYSICAL WORK ENVIRONMENT

The police department was erected in 1970 as depicted in the graphic of external and internal structure of the building (see Appendix B). The building has not changed since that time. Respondents attributed this to the turbulent political climate set or at least contributed to and apparently maintained by the former Chief who had an opportunity to accept a proposal to establish a public safety building that would house the police department as well as the volunteer fire department—the former Chief declined. The respondents conveyed he did so due to his need to be in control—in short, the Chief would have to share the 911 call system and frequency with the fire department. In addition lack of privacy, potential for danger, and adverse effects on the physical, mental and emotional health of all who worked and entered the department have been cited consistently as problematic. **Moreover, it is unsettling to report that there was a clear sense that police personnel were “use to” the environment—in short, their perceptions of self worth were reflective of the work environment—embattled, worn, spent, and in need of rebuilding.** Three distinct issues emerged from the interviews regarding the work environment: lack of privacy, danger, and the dispatcher’s and supervisors’ work area.

Lack of Privacy

The nature of policing and the types of cases the department deals with requires private space to effectively and efficiently conduct the work. One respondent indicated how helpless, ashamed, and embarrassed he was that he was forced to call a woman into the department whose mother had died at home. He didn't want her to go home and find her mother therefore he called her into the department. Because he could not find any private space in the department to give her this heartbreaking news, he was forced to ask her to talk with him out in the parking lot as he tried to console her. This incident is commonplace in this department; as evidenced by the information contained in Table 10, these conditions result in a great deal of disruption on a number of different levels.

Table 10. Physical Condition of Department~Privacy ($n=29$)[†]

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Level of Assessed Disruption</u> ^{Pf}			
	<u>Not/Little</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>New Hire/NA</u>
<u>Personal Privacy</u>	4 (13.8)	4 (13.8)	20 (69.0)	1 (3.4)
<u>Privacy with Suspects</u>	2 (6.9)	1 (3.4)	25 (86.2)	1 (3.4)
<u>Privacy with Witnesses</u>	2 (6.9)	1 (3.4)	25 (86.2)	1 (3.4)
<u>Privacy with Victims</u>	1 (3.4)	3 (10.3)	24 (82.8)	1 (3.4)
<u>Supervision</u>	10 (34.5)	4 (13.8)	14 (48.3)	1 (3.4)

[†]Listwise Deletion of Cases; ^{Pf} Percentages in Parentheses

The lack of privacy and its disruptive effects span not only death notifications, but also roll call, discipline, and effective supervision. As one respondent reported put is quite directly:

“The building is not adequate—space is a major problem and so is parking, there’s nowhere to go.”

It is just as clear from Table 10 above that the disruptive impact of limited space on this department extends also to the inability of police personnel to maintain the integrity necessary to encourage the reporting of crime as an informant, or victims of crime such as rape and robbery are overheard and interrupted. The interrogation of suspects is also largely undermined due to a lack of privacy; common police interrogation tactics that generally yield promising results cannot be performed in a physical structure like that of “Seaside.” There are also serious problems with the Chief sharing the same small, cramped office, desk-to-desk with his administrative assistant. Indeed, as one respondent reported, “There’s some things that I don’t need to hear. You’re constantly feeling you’re being watched all the time...a lot of confidential information is overheard. There are times when I am asked to leave so some officers or somebody from the public could talk to the Chief. I have to wait outside sometimes for a long time and can’t get my work done.”

Danger

The space constraints were also cited as creating a dangerous work environment by every respondent. As Table 11 highlights, many expressed concerns that the common space in the downstairs area was particularly dangerous as it is used as an eating, working (e.g., use of computers, report writing, video viewing), roll call and booking area. The extent to which any of these activities can occur however, are contingent upon the use of the area by any of the other activities. In other words, if an arrestee is being booked then it is not an eating area. If an officer or other member of the department was eating in the area he/she would have to move to accommodate the relatively “more important” activity the area is to be used.

Table 11. Physical Condition of Department~Danger ($n=29$)[†]

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Level of Assessed Disruption</u> ^{P†}			
	<u>Not/Little</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>New Hire/NA</u>
<u>Danger in Dealing with Suspects</u>	3 (10.3)	4 (13.8)	21 (72.4)	1 (3.4)
<u>Physical Health (hygiene)</u>	5 (17.2)	1 (3.4)	22 (75.9)	1 (3.4)
<u>Booking Suspects</u>	2 (6.9)	1 (3.4)	25 (86.2)	1 (3.4)
<u>Jailing Suspects</u>	2 (6.9)	4 (13.8)	22 (75.9)	1 (3.4)

[†]Listwise Deletion of Cases; ^{P†} Percentages in Parentheses

Indeed, one respondent described the day-to-day work environment as “controlled chaos”; this description seems reasonable when thinking about the actual work of police however, the reference is to the unpredictable life *within* the department. That police personnel must eat in the same area and use the same table and desks with suspects that may for example be bleeding, spitting, urinating or physically aggressive causes them great concern. As one respondent put it:

“The physical environment is very unhealthy; some guy you just arrested or released might have been drunk, or with AIDS, etc.”

Another respondent provided further information on the matter stating:

“The air quality is not that great; I get a lot of sinus infections here—there’s low air quality, the air has never been tested.”

While surely not every respondent deals directly with the public, the potential for harm extends to all working in the environment. Several non-sworn police personnel expressed the concern that one respondent felt below:

“I shouldn’t be anywhere near prisoners anyway; supposin’ they snap out during booking or something; I could get hurt. At times I get worried about my safety—most arrests are made between 4’oclock and midnight but sometimes it will happen when I’m here. Sometimes I will go to the water cooler and can’t get a drink because they’re out there...it’s the same thing with the refrigerator; they could have a disease, they’re touching what you’re touching.”

A member of the media also touched upon having problems with the physical environment much the same way as the police personnel who must endure these environs daily:

“I have talked with some officers—appointed as liaisons and have been in the detective’s office. It is hard to find a place to sit down and have a confidential conversation with them or some victim. For example, if there was another reporter there it is hard to talk, it seems crowded and cramped. Could you imagine a victim telling a story of what happened? I wouldn’t feel comfortable doing that!”

Another respondent concurred expressing much concern about the very narrow surroundings in the lower level:

“At anytime one of these guys [arrestees] can go off; we are so close to them leading them down this hallway [to the holding cells] that if they got crazy there’s not a whole lot we could do if they tried to take us out or something. There will be a helluva fight back here if that happens, and it has happened.”

Much has been reported on the lower level of the department as that area resulted in the most discussion however, the upper level also garnered attention on this subject.

Dispatcher’s and Supervisors Work Area

As is depicted in Appendix B, upon entering the front entrance of the department, a security door prevents free movement into the upper floor that leads into the dispatch

and common area. A glass window with a slot to exchange documents is utilized to handle all public inquires. Once inside the security door, the dispatcher's work area is in the upstairs area of the department enclosed behind a high desk top where the space also includes a bathroom and a common work area for sergeants. The sergeants work at four computer stations adjacent and diagonal to the dispatcher's desk. There is an office for the one detective on the force also on this floor that leads to a staircase where the lower level of the department can be accessed.

This work area is completely insufficient for policing. In the time that the researcher spent at the department conducting interviews, visiting the Chief and dropping off or receiving correspondence, the experience might best be described as being in an extremely narrow walkway filled with people that you are constantly apologizing to for bumping into, interrupting and focusing hard not to be actually nor perceived to be eavesdropping on their conversations. The police personnel at "Seaside" must exist like this daily while simultaneously being professional, understanding, effective and efficient in their respective jobs. The importance of personal space while within social space cannot be overstated but will not be belabored any further given the descriptions above. The new Chief has taken action to attempt to address some of the space issues. In his correspondence to the town administrator, he indicated that the contents of one of two storage spaces were emptied with the assistance of two citizens that "owed community service hours." The Chief should be commended for his efforts. Moreover, what is imperative is the recognition that this facility is not only outdated, but non-functional for the demands and responsibilities of modern policing.

Radio Frequency

All respondents described this as a “problem” mainly because this department shares the frequency with a neighboring police department. Respondents described a traffic jam on the radio that reduces their ability to be effective and efficient—particularly in emergency and/or other fast-paced situations—in receiving calls, responding to dispatcher’s or other officers’ inquiries, providing general information concerning their whereabouts or intentions. Currently, while all 911 calls come directly to the police department, any non-police matter is directed, by the police dispatcher, to the appropriate entity (i.e., the police dispatcher contacts the fire department dispatcher if the call is medical or fire in nature). Nevertheless, the police department goes on nearly every medically-related call; officers estimated their involvement (presence at minimal and participation at maximum) at 90% of such calls. A separate frequency is in order.

PHYSICAL WORK ENVIRONMENT

ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1.) Given the potential civil liability endemic in a work environment that is both outdated and dangerous unequivocally indicates that “Seaside’s” physical work environment deserves serious attention in a **well-developed strategic plan**. The cost of addressing the physical environment would very likely be less than the toll the environment takes on those who work there day-in-and-day-out and the public that must interact with the police in that environment.
- 2.) The traffic jam on the radio is another area that must be addressed. The town should seriously look into creating a separate frequency for “Seaside.”

MEDIA RELATIONS

All respondents indicated that there are fairly amicable relations between the police department and the news media. Several members of the news media were interviewed in the same manner as the police personnel. As is often the complaint about the media in covering stories that involve the police department, many of the non-media respondents indicated that reporters tend to sensationalize the stories and report some information inaccurately to increase drama and readership. A glaring example is the 1998 nighttime shooting involving three “Seaside” officers resulting in a criminal trial and civil lawsuit. This situation was cited by both police respondents as well as members of the media as point of contention.

“The shooting is the most recent big thing that happened here in ‘Seaside.’ The other was the media reports of the vote of no confidence. After that, we were being perceived as whiners in front of the Board of Selectmen.”

In an effort to tap to what extent the media was perceived as a disruptive force on both a micro and macro level, police personnel were asked to rate the media’s impact on their life and work on the same 11-point scale that was recoded to a 3-point measurement as described earlier. As can be see in Table 12 below, it appears that overall, the media exerts “no/little disruption” on employees’ work, decisions, career, or the department. However, a notable proportion of employees believed the media was “very” disruptive to their work, the department’s effectiveness, and the department’s image. For those that

“somewhat” believed the media was disruptive, this sentiment spanned nearly every item with the exception of “my career”.

Table 12. Perceptions of Media Coverage (n=29) †

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Level of Perceived Disruption</u> ^{P†}				P
	<u>Not/Little</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>New Hire/NA</u>	
<u>My Work</u>	18 (62.1)	5 (17.2)	4 (13.8)	2 (6.9)	
<u>Department’s Effectiveness</u>	19 (65.5)	4 (13.8)	4 (13.8)	2 (6.9)	
<u>Department’s Image</u>	18 (62.1)	6 (20.7)	3 (10.3)	2 (6.9)	
<u>My Career</u>	23 (79.3)	2 (6.9)	2 (6.9)	2 (6.9)	
<u>Decision to Remain with Department</u>	21 (72.4)	6 (20.7)	0 (0.0)	2 (6.9)	

†Listwise Deletion of Cases; ^{P†} Percentages in Parentheses

Further elucidating these findings during an interview, one police respondent indicated that there are consequences to the way that the department is reported upon. Interestingly, several respondents conveyed similar views feeling that news reports are more of a hindrance to the town than to the department:

“Hurts more with townspeople than local government because they have direct access to police and more information. “John Q. Public” is not knowledgeable; he doesn’t know about lighting conditions or actual circumstances like officer training.”

One police respondent agreed stating:

“Because of lawsuits, the media has not hindered it; the department looks good, but the town looks bad. Selectmen keep the media busy—loves reporting on this, it’s a circus.”

In the past, it has been reported by respondents that the previous Chief sought to maintain neutral and/or negative relations with the media. One non-police personnel interview substantiated this belief saying:

“We were not high profile—this was purposeful on [the former Chief’s] part. Sometimes we gave information to media and it wouldn’t show up or it would be opposite to what was said during the interview—they [the media] twisted or made to fit what they wanted to portray.”

Another respondent agreed revealing that:

“Citizens are not getting news details about the types and frequency of criminal acts—every citizen thinks there is nothing going on in this town. For example, the 16 year old addicted to heroin—hey, we have a drug problem. There is not an overall order from the [new] Chief but from the sergeants that order us to do this. The department has never used the media to our advantage—anytime the media calls, we are to tell them nothing is going on—of course this depends on the sergeant.”

This does not appear to be the case with the current Chief. According to one respondent, the new Chief has been out in the media, forthcoming with information and was quick to assign a police liaison to consult with the media, provide a personal interview, present the new Values Statement and consistently provide press releases. One respondent stated that the former administration did not take a strong, supportive position with the media; he [former Chief] wouldn’t back officers up.” Another respondent stated, “I cannot say the media is a hindrance. The department [currently] has been forthright with the media. The media has accurately represented the department. Past situations and issues did not show up in the paper.” On the other hand, the [new Chief] took the opposite position. He is “vocal in the media and does all outlets in all kinds of areas like Boston and [town].”

While the police personnel respondents generally feel that their relationship with the media is reciprocal, members of the media believe more could be done to accommodate more efficient and accurate dissemination of information. Most notably, access and space were found to be major barriers; more specifically they noted the following:

“Provide a computer print out of daily blotter—right now getting it weekly—the community or media should be able to know who has been arrested, in cells, etc. Have someone else to help the media, not the dispatcher who is concentrated on multiple tasks; she’s jockeying the radio, phones and has to watch the camera and has had to prioritize...I would prefer they hire someone with experience.”

Another member of the media reiterated this view:

“Get another dispatcher, just in case an inquiry is made, I can get some answers. The one dispatcher there at ‘Seaside’ when I show up is trying to do 6 to 7 things in addition to answering the radio. There needs to be someone other than the dispatcher that answers ‘business calls’ too and can attend to questions. It’s not just us, I’m standing there and some poor guy comes in there too and he’s just standing there too and the dispatcher is doing all she can.”

The ability to conduct confidential interviews or interrogations (especially those dealing with sensitive information) has also been cited as a serious barrier to providing the public information by members of the media. This issue cannot be overstated given the close ties and familiarity well known in small towns. All media interviewees echoed the following sentiments made by one reporter about the physical environment in which the police are housed:

“I have talked with some officers—appointed as liaisons and have been in the detective’s office. It is hard to find a place to sit down and have a confidential conversation with them or some victim. For example, if there was another reporter there it is hard to talk, it seems crowded and cramped. Could you imagine a victim telling a story of what happened? I wouldn’t feel comfortable doing that!”

As was detailed earlier, concerns about the physical environment were expressed by police personnel in a very similar fashion. Their accounts however, are more salient, detailed and speak to **potential danger, actual lack of confidentiality and foreseeability of potential liability.**

One respondent intimated that the media focuses largely on news stories that reflect poorly on the department; such stories tend to focus on the ‘bad that happens and not the good. There needs to be a more standard policy of getting ‘good things’ officers do, as initiated by the department, out to the public.” A review of newspaper stories on the department published over the past year by three different venues overall strongly indicate that far more reports involve the routine activities of officers that also highlight their areas of specialty (e.g., traffic accident reconstruction), service to the community and the department. The articles point up the successes of the police department in many areas like securing grants—one story focused on the new COPS cruiser purchased as a result of a federal grant. Still other stories are informative to the public whether they are introducing them to the new Chief, his views of the laws (e.g., need for a safe haven statute), descriptions and dispositions of “newsworthy” local crime, or focusing on high profile—and perhaps salacious—incidents such as the shooting and resultant trial that occurred involving several “Seaside” police officers and the non-confidence Union vote

of the previous Chief (10 year tenure). The coverage of this department appears to be broad and relatively even, however, complaints from police personnel that the media will “spin” a story to the point of distortion is an ongoing matter that will need to be addressed.

Poor police-media relations have been found to increase officer stress stemming from general aspects of the work (Scott, 2004; Brooks & Piquero, 1998; International Association of Chiefs of Police, 1990) and perceived and actual dangerous features of job (Scott, 2004). Although the police and the news media are often viewed as foes, and might actually have this relationship at times, “the police and the media, to a great extent, depend on each other” (Gaines, et al., 2003, p.65). Police often rely on the media to help them gather information on criminal cases under investigation, garner support from the public for cases solved, and recognize law enforcement crime-prevention efforts (Gaines, et al., 2003). As for the media, reporters get the benefit of “the story,” usually a high-profile one that will increase readership/viewers (Gaines, et al., 2003). Several recommendations are made to increase positive police-community relations.

MEDIA RELATIONS

ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1.) *In recognizing the interoperability of the police and media, the police administrator should continue to investigate strategies to create workable relations with the media. The Chief has made significant strides by appointing a media liaison, making himself available to the media and disseminating press releases.* It appears that areas in need of further attention are the timeliness of information, and the format in which it is shared.
- 2.) **It is vitally important to recognize that the police department should not rely solely on the media to shape the public’s impression of the department, but rather, the department should take the initiative in shaping its own image. A**

more standard policy of getting ‘good things’ officers do, as initiated by the department, out to the public should be examined. Appointing or requesting volunteers (a particular individual or group) to coordinate an organized effort is in order. One method for accomplishing this goal is to keep a detailed record and description of the types of service, heroic efforts and general accomplishments (completion of a training course/school/certification) of all police personnel to be published at a designated time period in a variety of venues (i.e., local paper, Internet site, schools). Another method might be to feature a member of the police personnel per week, month and/or year whereby police personnel vote on this or the public is introduced to officers using the suggestion above to make nominations stating reasons for their selection. A concomitant award and public accolades should follow. Finally, another method used in other departments is to make trading cards (similar to that used in sports) with the police personnel members’ photo on one side and their work vitals on the back. Officers indicated that they had such cards in the past—this idea should be brought back and updated annually to reflect police personnel’s achievements. All of these recommendations fit just as well under the police-community relations section and should be examined in that vein to accomplish goals and objectives in that area.

- 3.) The department should also continually update it’s website to include information that is relevant to the public and that which features all police personnel accomplishments, crime watches, crime rates and prevention efforts. Although the media may not be asking about such information, keeping record of this information, condensing it into an easy-to-read format, disseminating and referring the media to it may increase their attention to these activities and realities.
- 4.) The Chief might also introduce or increase all police personnel to training in the area of media relations when funds become available. There may be opportunities to begin to create quasi-training more directly (although somewhat unorthodox) by opening a two-way dialogue to facilitate introductions of “who’s who,” and an understanding of all parties concerns. An invitation to have members of the media introduce police personnel to their concerns, objectives and needs in a more informal, non-adversarial setting would likewise provide police personnel a chance to discuss their respective concerns, objectives and needs. It would be important to carefully plan such a meeting to be certain that conversation is at the very least, semi-structured (productive) with an agenda that represents the best interest of all parties.

CONCLUSIONARY REMARKS

“Seaside” police department has taken an important first step in investigating its department’s strengths and areas in need of improvement. The next logical and practical step for this department is to develop a strategic plan that is comprehensive, feasible, and

details a timeline toward achieving stated goals and objectives. The strategic plan should represent a partnership between the police department, town managers, community and the media. In order to reach this vital second step, the obvious disconnects should be carefully scrutinized and repaired—professionalism, a strong work ethic, veracity and a deep sense of duty must prevail. In my interviews, review of documents, and analysis of all materials reveals that all members of this department, the media, and town managers are up to the task. The community too appears to welcome any positive attention afforded them; they seem ripe for this new era of progressive policing introduced by the Chief of this department. However, efforts will need to be made to better assess the community's: a.) attitudes toward the police, b.) their willingness—as stakeholders in the department—to aid this police agency, and c.) an identification of their needs that go beyond answering their calls for help (i.e., improving their quality of life through dealing with disorders and advancing their knowledge and participation in crime prevention).

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APPENDIX A

ASSESSMENT SURVEY

Please note that the questionnaires will be kept in a *locked filing cabinet* for three years where only the principal investigator has access. The data will be analyzed and **reported only in summary** so that **your responses are anonymous**; this means that they cannot be identified by anyone. To aid with anonymity, please **DO NOT include any identifying information** on the questionnaire such as, your name, social security number, department location and the like.

PART I.

We would like to know a little bit of information about you. Please recall that these responses are voluntary and your identity will not be linked to your responses.

1. In the space provided, please write in *your age*: _____
2. What is the highest level of **education** you have *completed*? Please *circle the letter* that corresponds to your completed education:
 0. High School (or, G.E.D. equivalent)
 1. Some College (less than 2 years)
 2. Technical Degree (technical school)
 3. Associate's Degree (non-technical school)
 4. Bachelor's Degree
 5. Master's Degree or Higher
3. In the space provided, please write in the *number of years* you have been *on the job*?
_____.
4. Please write in your *current official job classification* in the space provided:
_____.
5. Please put a check (✓) in the box that corresponds to your sex:
 - a. Female []
 - b. Male []
6. Please put a *check (✓) in the box* that corresponds to your current intimate relationship status.
 0. Married []
 1. Partnership (same-sex) []
 2. Partnership (opposite-sex) []
 3. Divorced []
 4. Separated []
 5. Engaged []
 6. Single []
 7. Widowed []

PART II.

1. Using the scale: 0=“Not Disruptive” to 10=“Very Disruptive,” please circle the number that best describes the level of disruption *media coverage* of the Department is given the situations described below.

	<i>Not Disruptive</i>					<i>Very Disruptive</i>					
Your Work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
The Department’s Effectiveness	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
The Department’s Image.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Your Career.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Your Decision to Remain with this Department	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

2. Using the scale: 0=“Not Disruptive” to 10=“Very Disruptive,” please circle the number that best describes the level of disruption *changes in the Department’s top administration* (Chief, Captain) have on the situations described below.

	Not Disruptive					Very Disruptive					
Your Work.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
The Department’s Effectiveness	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
The Department’s Image.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Your Career.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Your Decision to Remain with this Department	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

3. Please rate **YOUR PERSONAL CONTRIBUTION** to each of the following items in terms of both the *PAST* and *PRESENT* on scale from 0=“Low” to 10=“High.”

	<u>PAST</u>					<u>PRESENT</u>					
	<u>Low</u>		<u>High</u>			<u>Low</u>		<u>High</u>			
<u>My Contribution to:</u>											
Morale.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Departmental Stability.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Departmental Organization	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Departmental Pride.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Professionalism.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mutual Respect.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Departmental Effectiveness	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Providing Support to Department. . .	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Departmental Efficiency.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Departmental Fairness	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Optimism/Hope for the Future.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Providing Support to Department. . .	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Maintaining Positive Public Image. . .	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
of Self											
Maintaining Positive Public Image. .	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
of Department											

3. Please rate each of the following items in terms of both the *PAST* (i.e., Chief “A”) and *PRESENT* (i.e., Chief “B”) on scale from 0=“Low” to 10=“High.”

	<u>PAST</u>										<u>PRESENT</u>											
	<u>Low</u>					<u>High</u>					<u>Low</u>					<u>High</u>						
Morale.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Departmental Stability.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Departmental Organization	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Departmental Pride.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Professionalism.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mutual Respect.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Departmental Effectiveness	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Departmental Efficiency.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Departmental Fairness	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Optimism/Hope for the Future.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Own sense of Job Security.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Encouragement to Participate	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

PART III.

1. Using the scale: 0=“Not Disruptive” to 10=“Very Disruptive,” please circle the number that best describes the level of disruption the physical condition of the department has on your daily life and work.

	<i>Not Disruptive</i>										<i>Very Disruptive</i>											
Personal Privacy	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Privacy with Suspects	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Privacy with Witnesses	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Danger in Dealing with Suspects.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Privacy with Victims	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Physical Health (hygiene).....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Supervision	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Booking Suspects.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Jailing Suspects.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

PART IV.

1. How would you *rate your current level of strain or stress* in the environments detailed below? Using the following scale: 0=“Low Strain/Stress” to 10=“High Strain/Stress” for *each* environment, please circle the number that best describes your feelings.

	<u>Low Strain/Stress</u>					<u>High Strain/Stress</u>					
	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Family	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Community You Live ..	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Friends	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

2. Which of the following areas are currently sources of stress for you in the work environment?
Please respond to each circumstance. Circle the number that best describes the level of your strain/stress on a scale from 0=“low strain/stress” to 10=“high strain/stress.”

<u>Possible Sources of Strain/Stress</u>	<u>Strain/Stress</u>										
	<u>Low</u>										<u>High</u>
a. Inadequate Reward or Recognition	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
b. Discrimination.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
c. Quality of Immediate Supervisor	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
d. Public Contacting While Off-Duty	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
e. Availability of Firearms among Public	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
f. Internal Departmental Politics	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
g. External Political Influence	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
h. Criticisms of My Writing	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
k. Lack of Department Resources	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
l. Increased Emphasis on Computer Use.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
m. Inadequate Information	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
n. Physical Condition of the Department.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
o. The Impact of the Job on My Family	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
p. The Department’s Leadership	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
q. Problems in the Community	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
r. Giving a Death Notification	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
s. My Assignment.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
t. Experiencing Violence	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
u. Witnessing Child Abuse	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
v. Testifying in Court	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
w. Work Schedule	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
x. Amount of Paper Work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
y. Dealing with the Public	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
z. Coming into Conflict with a Well - Known Community Member	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
aa. Time/Distance for Back-Up to Arrive.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
bb. Pulling Over/Arresting or Citing Someone You Know (Relative).	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
cc. Pulling Over/Arresting or Citing Someone You Know (Friend)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
dd. The Reserve Officer System.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
ee. Amount of Training Received	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

PART V.

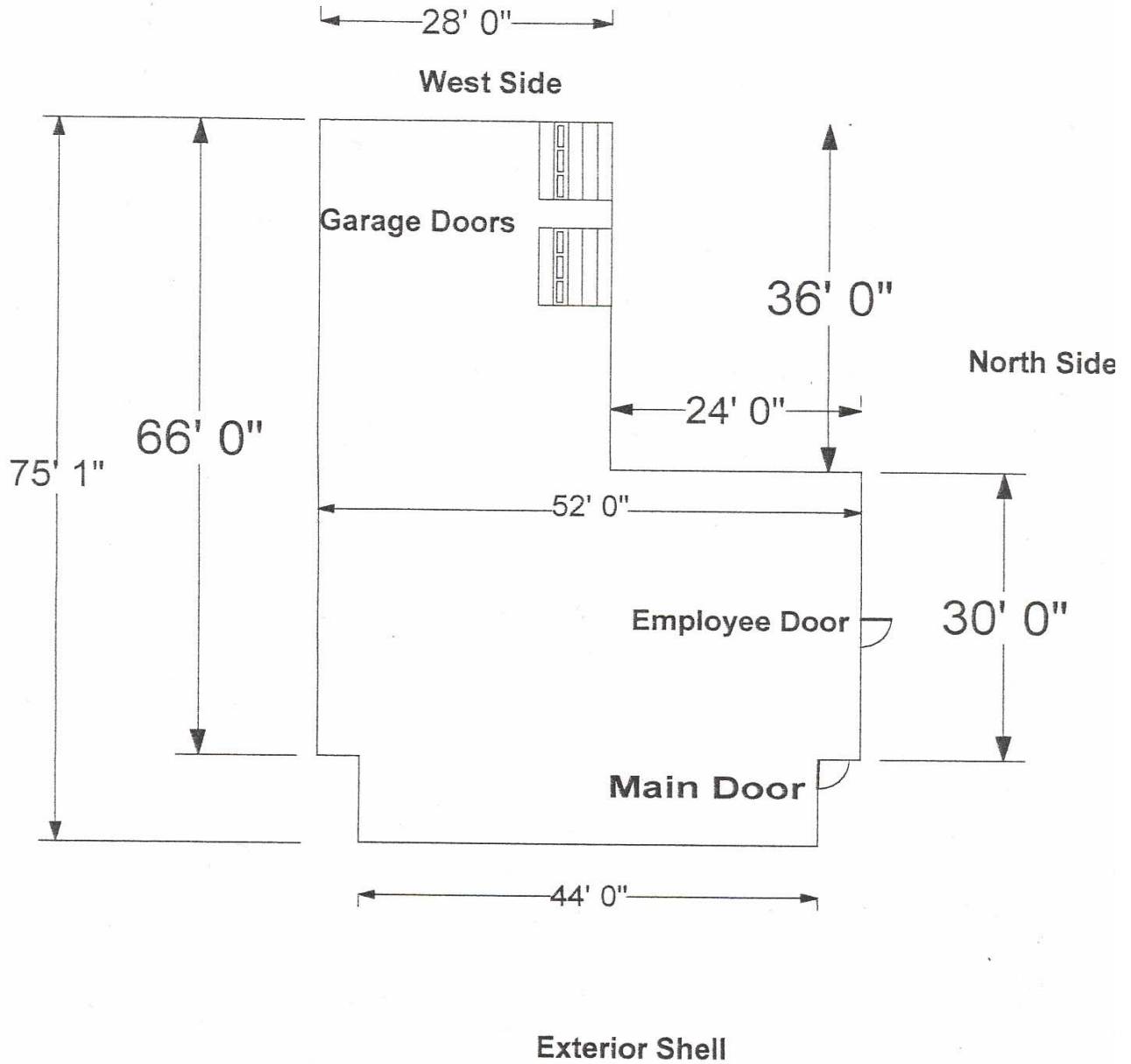
For each of the statements below, please darken in the circle that *best* corresponds to your view/knowledge of each within the past year using a scale from **0=Strongly Disagree to 10=Strongly Agree.**

- | | Strongly
Disagree | _____ | Strongly
Agree |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Citizens routinely have input in aiding my department (e.g., set community agenda/priorities/identifying problems) .. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. We focus <i>less</i> on law enforcement and <i>more</i> on improving the quality of life among citizens (e.g. social services, order maintenance, reducing fear of crime) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. Police officers discretionary decision-making is encouraged within my department | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. In my department, we view citizens as stakeholders in the community and in the department | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. We are encouraged to enhance the lives of the most socially and physically “vulnerable” citizens with our community (e.g., juveniles, elderly, minorities, disabled) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. In my department, officers are encouraged to aid citizens in initiating solutions to many of their own problems | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7. Officer input is encouraged when it comes to making important changes to the department (programs, organizational structure) ... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8. My department encourages continued education (makes accommodation /offers incentives) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 9. College-educated officers are satisfactorily rewarded by the Department | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 10. Seniority should be recognized more than a college education | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!!

APPENDIX B

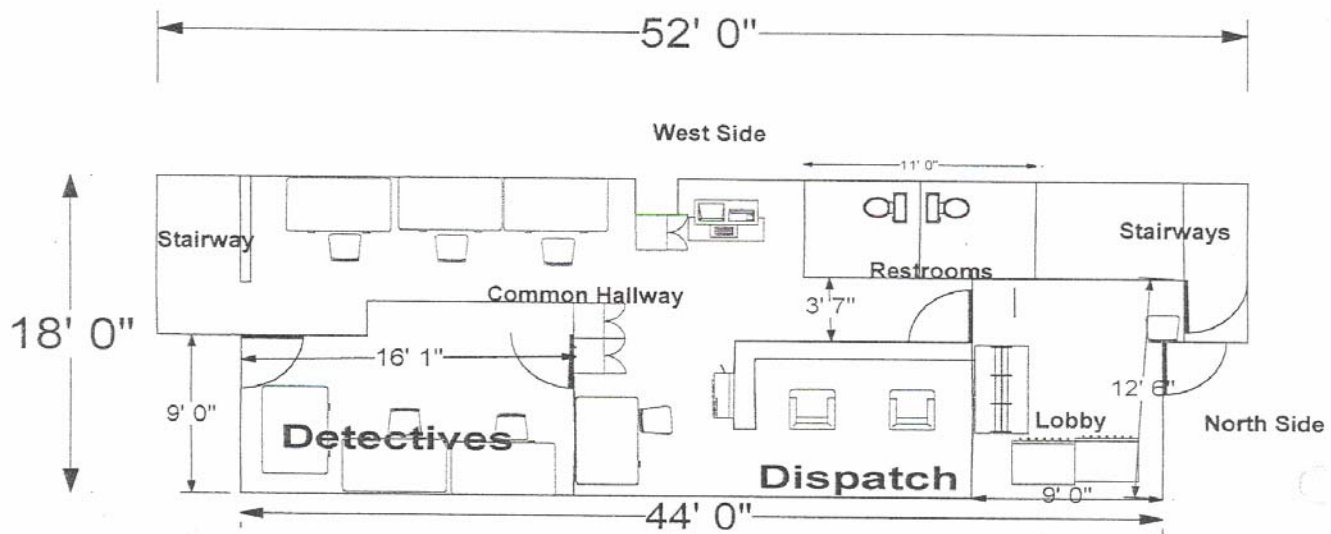
DIAGRAM OF "SEASIDE'S" PHYSICAL STRUCTURE



Dimensions are approximated within 2 ft. (+/-)

APPENDIX B (Continued)

DIAGRAM OF "SEASIDE'S" PHYSICAL STRUCTURE

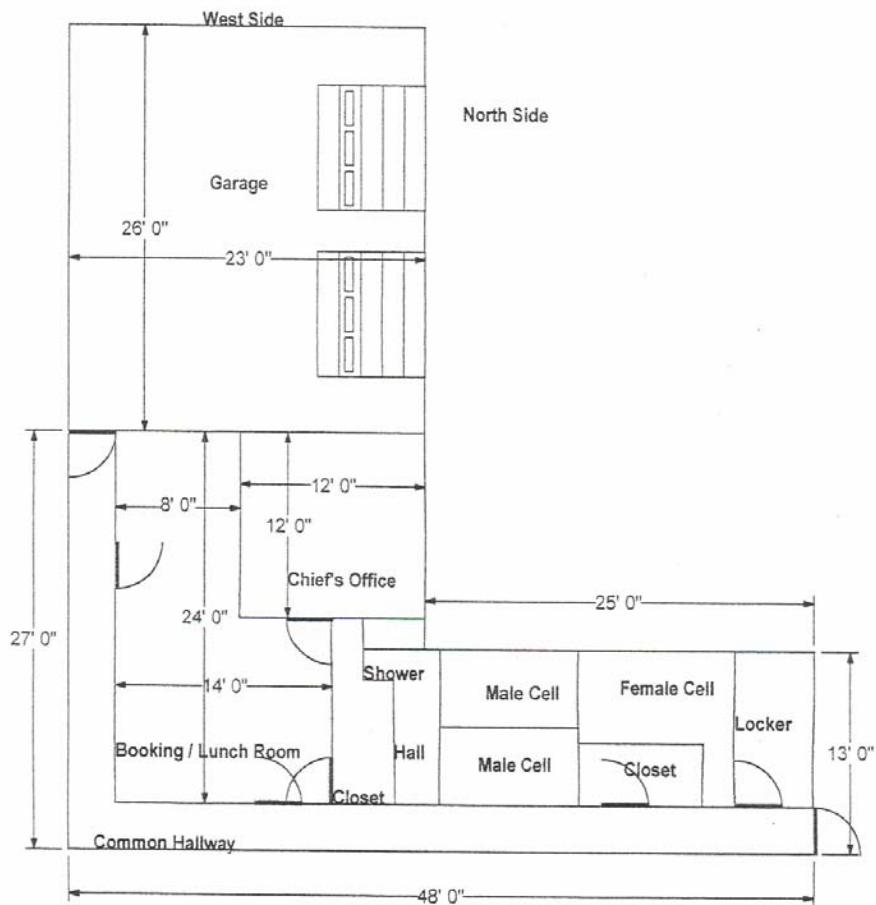


Top Level

Dimensions are approximated within 2 ft (+/-)

APPENDIX B (Continued)

DIAGRAM OF "SEASIDE'S" PHYSICAL STRUCTURE

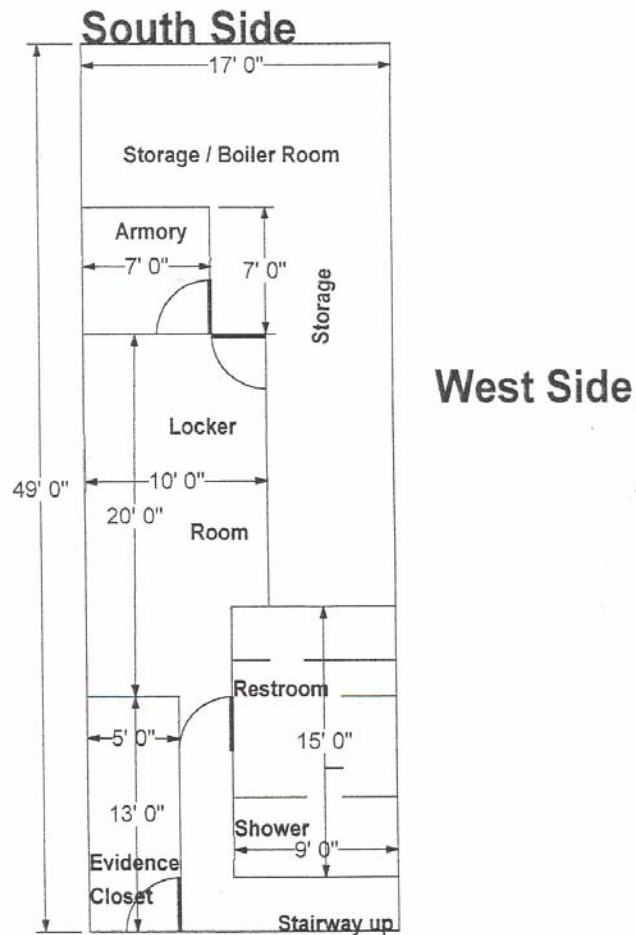


Middle Level

Dimensions are approximated within 2 ft. (+/-)

APPENDIX B (Continued)

DIAGRAM OF "SEASIDE'S" PHYSICAL STRUCTURE



Sub Level

Dimensions are approximated within 2 ft (+/-)