

**POLICE TASK FORCE**

**REPORT TO THE**

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

October 5, 2006

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## **Colchester Police Task Force Overview**

In May of 2003, the Board of Selectmen appointed an eight-member Police Task Force comprised of citizens, elected officials, and police commissioners, who were charged with studying and assessing police services in Town. The members of the Board of Selectmen realized that with the growth of the Town and the increasing demands placed on its police force, they needed to proactively plan for the future the Town's police department. Accordingly, the Police Task Force was given the following charge:

1. To assess the long-term policing needs of the Town of Colchester;
2. To consider options and alternatives to determine the most effective way to provide policing services to the residents of the Town of Colchester; and
3. To perform a cost-benefit analysis of the options and alternatives that may be available.

The Task Force met regularly for over three years, and this report represents a compilation of resources and recommendations gathered over that time.

### **WHERE ARE WE NOW ?**

Currently, the Town of Colchester participates in the State of Connecticut's Resident State Trooper Program. Under this program, one state police sergeant and one resident state trooper supervise and direct the members of our Town police force. Our police force is currently comprised of a force of municipal police officers, the state police sergeant and one resident state trooper.

Overall a 5-member police commission provides administrative and procedural oversight of the Town's police department. These police commissioners, together with the state troopers and our local Colchester police officers, all work collaboratively to protect the residents of our Town and provide the police services required. We also have available to us the resources of the State Police, which include its Criminal Investigation Unit, Emergency Services Unit, School Resource Officer program, and other specialized services.

The first priority of Colchester's police department is to provide quality police services that maximize public safety. In addition, the department's philosophy centers on the concept of "Community Policing." This is a philosophy that takes a proactive approach to crime so as to improve the quality of life in town. This is quite different from other policing efforts, which are usually reactive in nature. Community policing requires our police commissioners, our officers and our resident troopers work with the community to come up with solutions to local concerns. Some of our local initiatives include:

- 1 D.A.R.E (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) in the schools;
- 2 Child safety seat inspections;
- 2 Burglary prevention education;
- 3 Establishment of neighborhood watches; and
- 4 TRIAD programs to protect our senior citizens.

All of our policing efforts are in support of this community-based philosophy. And as our community grows and our needs change, our policing efforts will adapt accordingly. To give you a sense of how our efforts are currently focused, here is a table and illustrative chart of police statistics for Colchester for the year 2004:

## **WHAT ARE SOME OF THE OPTIONS ?**

As the Task Force began its work, members first discussed and brainstormed over what some options would be for the future of police services in Colchester. Based on the collective experience and knowledge of the Task Force members, three principal options were identified:

- (i) Establishing an independent Colchester Police Department and ending our participation in the Resident State Trooper program;
- (ii) Hiring additional police officers for our Town force and remaining in the Resident State Trooper program; or
- (iii) Expanding our involvement with the Resident State Trooper program by funding additional resident troopers to police our Town, rather than using local police officers.

## **THE TASK FORCE'S METHODOLOGY**

In order to assess the relative merits of the three identified options, the Task Force embarked on a comprehensive and extensive process to assess the current system of policing in Colchester and to review the systems and structures used in other towns of similar size to Colchester. The Task Force separately interviewed each member of the Colchester Police Force, asking similar questions of each in order to gauge officer satisfaction and to identify potential issues. Individual members of the force then embarked on field trips to neighboring towns and towns of similar size to Colchester, where they interviewed town officials and others involved in providing police services in each town. The Task Force sought expert opinions from various officials from the Connecticut State Police and the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association. Other resources used included local, state and federal crime statistics and on-line surveys.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We all know the statistics and we all know the quote -- "Colchester is one of the fastest growing towns in the State of Connecticut." That growth can be attributed to many things, but one of the most important factors, if not THE most important factor, is that Colchester is a great Town -- and the safety and security of its residents is of paramount concern.

The members of the Police Task Force applaud the efforts of our current police force and the work of all of those -- volunteers and staff alike -- who have brought our force to the level of skill and professionalism that it enjoys today. Nonetheless, change and growth are inevitable, and proper planning is key. The Task Force, through its study and review of the materials enclosed here, has identified four primary areas in which the Town should focus its efforts. In no particular order, these areas are as follows:

1. Strive to achieve "24/7" police coverage, while remaining within the Resident State Trooper Program

Currently, staffing limitations do not allow the Town to have round-the-clock, seven-day a-week local police coverage. Certainly police services are always available to Town residents, but at some hours those services are provided by the State Police -- not local officers. The Board of Selectmen, through its Police Commission, should work with the Board of Finance to fund a force of sufficient size to allow round-the-clock local coverage. Additionally, the Task Force, at this time, identified no compelling reason for moving the police force from the Resident State Trooper program and into an independent police department.

2. Continue to address issues of officer safety, equipping our officers with the best and most appropriate safety equipment and technologies. Laptops or Mobile Data Terminals allow access to governmental agencies and obtain information rapidly on motor vehicles, criminal history and outstanding warrants. That information may save an officer's life or the system may provide instant response from multiple agencies allowing a lost child to be found. The system for activating the Mobile Data Terminals is currently not in place. Another useful technology is the car video camera, which can be used to monitor police pursuits, provide photographic documentation and reduce litigation claims. In addition to the above technologies computer aided dispatch and a records management system are needed to store records and information specific to Colchester and also provide immediate access to that information.

3. Establish a Commission on the Formation of a Police Department

As noted above, at this time the Task Force identified no compelling reason to leave the Resident State Trooper program. Nonetheless, as the Town grows and the Town police force grows, a move toward an independent police department will be desirable. Interviews with police officers in Colchester and other surrounding towns in the Resident State Trooper Program indicated a strong desire to be part of an independent police department. The Colchester Police Commission also holds this position. With such an independent department, the Town will achieve maximum control over its police services and will be able to most efficiently address residents' needs. This move, though, is not a short-term endeavor. It requires preparation in areas such as records management, communications, prisoner holding facilities, personnel, rank structure, rules and regulations and collective bargaining. Additionally, a revision to the Town Charter is necessary. This Commission will take on the task, thereby allowing the Town to continue on a path toward an independent department.

4. Establish a Police Facilities Committee

As the police force grows, whether within the Resident State Trooper Program or independently, the need for expanded and updated facilities will become all the more apparent. Again, so as to proactively plan for these growing needs, the Town should establish a committee to define our long-term facilities needs. The size of the Town may soon warrant the construction of a Public Safety Complex to house police, fire and emergency medical services. Rather than waiting for our facilities to be strained to the point of crisis, the Town should begin to study its options for constructing a modern police / public safety facility.

## **Colchester Police Task Force**

### **Executive Summary- Trip Reports**

Various members of the Task Force visited eight surrounding towns to obtain information on their policing operations and set-up. Discussions were held with both elected officials and police supervision. The towns that were visited were Ledyard, Montville, Essex, Portland, Mansfield, Coventry, East Lyme and East Hampton. The Chief of Police of Redding was invited to a Task Force meeting and a "trip report" was also conducted with him at the meeting. Five of the towns visited are in the Resident State Trooper Program and four are municipal departments with their own chief.

Years ago the only police services available in small towns in Connecticut were provided by the State Police. As time went on the State Police formed the Resident State Trooper Program and assigned the town a trooper that lived in the town. The program has grown to what it is today. The towns the Task Force visited do not seem to have the same formula for why they continue in the Resident State Police Program or why they changed to a municipal department. It appears that each town weighs its own circumstances and factors in the desires of its people. In general though, the police personnel in the Resident State Trooper Program towns indicated a strong desire to be an officer in their own municipal department.

All the towns in the 14,000 to 19,000-population range we visited have between 10 and 22 full-time officers. These towns all have 24/7 police coverage and a rank structure. Colchester is the only town without either, although it is very close to putting a rank structure into effect.

In summary the elected officials and police supervision of the towns we visited indicated that effective policing requires:

1. Enough officers and/or troopers to provide the services required
2. A promotion/career ladder and good salaries and benefits for officers
3. Being cost conscious and cost effective.

## Trip Report to Ledyard (8/26/03)

Met with Ledyard Staff Sergeant/Executive Officer Dave Guiher.

Sgt. Guiher gave us the same background on the Ledyard Police Department as the mayor, Wes Johnson, did in a previous visit.

The Sgt. was proud that over the years Ledyard has only lost 2 officers. Both went to the State Police. He thinks part of the reason they are able to retain officers is because they are on a 5/3 schedule (5 days on, 3 days off, 40 hour work week). He feels there has been much less sick time since they went to the 5/3 schedule. The Ledyard officers take every case number. The State Police Sergeant acts as the Chief of Police.

Ledyard's Master Sgt. is responsible for the overall administrative duties and also supervises Animal Control, Dispatch, the budget, facilities and vehicles. The other 5 Ledyard sergeants have specific supervisory duties and patrol responsibilities. Accident Reconstructionists and K-9 officers also work patrol. The Youth Officer covers the High School and the School Resource Officer covers four elementary and one middle school and also teaches DARE.

Sgt. Guiher gave their budget as follows:

- \$1.4 million- Police
- \$350 thousand- Dispatch
- \$90 thousand- Animal Control

These amounts cover everything except gas for the vehicles.

The Police have 18 vehicles (10 cruisers). Each cruiser is assigned 2 officers (on different shifts). They take excellent care of the vehicles. They have purchased a 2003 Dodge Intrepid and a 2004 Dodge Durango. The younger officers asked for the change. The Dodge vehicles are considerably cheaper.

Sgt. Guiher thinks that most town people think they have their own Police Department and Chief. There are some town people that think it is too much money to go independent. He thinks that the cost for Ledyard to have their own department will be:

- the difference in salary between the present State Police Sgt. and a Chief of Police
- \$40 thousand to add on portable holding cells.

He feels they have everything else.

Sgt. Guiher also mentioned that Colchester could get police help (Mutual Help) from other towns for large events. Colchester would call the LEC to get the help. Colchester would not have to pay for the help. When Colchester is in a position (have enough officers) they can then reciprocate with other LEC towns. Also, if Colchester sends officers to a regional DUI spot check other towns will reciprocate. These DUI spot checks usually draw as many as 20 officers.

## Trip Report to Portland (10/15/03)

Met with Ed Kolinowski, the lame duck First Selectman, and Ron Milardo, Lieutenant in the Portland Police Department.

Some of the discussion was a rehash of our last meeting. Lt. Milardo gave similar Police Department background as Ed Kalinowski did at our first meeting. In addition the Lt. suggested that we visit or talk to the following:

- Redding- visit, he thinks they recently went independent.
- New Fairfield- visit, they are just about ready to go independent.
- Talk to Tony Salvatore, the Chief of Police in Cromwell. He spoke very highly of Chief Salvatore and said he would be a good person to get to know.
- Bob DiBella (Glastonbury)- talk to about radio frequencies.

Ed spoke more about their Pension plan. He gave us a copy. They used USI Consulting to develop their defined benefits plan. At the onset of the Pension Plan they used 25 years or 55 years of age. Ed said we could talk to their financial person if we want more information.

We asked Lt. Milardo to prioritize what he considers important issues for a Police Department. He listed the following:

1. Pay, Pension, Benefits Package.
2. Aggressive Hiring Process.

He feels the money and benefits should be comparable with departments in the area, including some of the larger departments. He said Colchester needs a proposed plan that is realistic and gives the officers something to look forward to. It is important that the officers feel that the Police Commission/Town is not blowing smoke. It is also important to be generous with training opportunities and perks. This shows the officers on board that you care about keeping them.

Lt. Milardo gave us a tour of their new (moved in about a year ago) Police Station. It is in the original Town Hall, which has been modified to provide a modern Police Station. It is a great facility. One of the tools Portland uses is the CrimeStar Records Management System. They think it is a great tool. One of the officers showed us some of its reporting, tracking and retrieval capabilities. Colchester has been looking at a Records Management System that is an offshoot of CrimeStar. It is called Global Records. Groton Long Point uses Global and thinks it is a great system.

The Lieutenant offered to help at any time. Ed Kalinowski offered to come speak at any public meeting that we would like him to attend.

### Trip Report to Montville (1/27/04)

Montville is a State Trooper town. It has a population of about 18,500, compared to Colchester's 14,500. Montville has slightly more road miles (114 to 106) and less area (42 to 48 square miles) than Colchester.

We met with Montville's new mayor, Joe Jaskiewicz, on January 27, 2004. Police Lieutenant Bunnell was invited but was not able to make the meeting. The Mayor was very direct and to the point. He listed his priorities for the Police Department as follows:

- Stabilize the department at 21 officers. Has funding for 21; presently have 15 officers.
- Get a building for the police (possibly renovate the old Town Hall).
- Think about going independent.

He said the attempt by the Public Safety Commission to go with an independent Police Department was defeated by a 2/1 margin. He feels it was defeated because they didn't present the costs fairly. He thinks the town wants to know all the costs, including a best estimate of those down the road.

These are some of the points he made:

- The Police department is presently in an old toll booth building which they rent from the state for \$33,000 per year. The maintenance cost of the building is getting too high.
- Their Police budget is approximately \$1.4 million without the fringes and trooper cost.
- Officers that live in town get to take home a car. He feels the officers don't keep up with the maintenance schedule for their car. They presently have 18 cruisers. They may be willing to sell one.
- If a State Trooper town goes independent, by law the town can use the State Police barracks for lockup.
- State Police Troopers cost too much. When Montville reaches 21 officers he doesn't think they will need to have a trooper (?).
- The State Police Sergeant assigned to Montville does their administrative work.
- They have their own Rules and Regs (based on the State Police A&O Manual).
- He said a judge ruled that East Lyme could use their own Rules and Regs because it is in their union contract.
- He is looking into considering cross deputization with the Mohegan Sun tribal police.
- He suggested that we look into hiring part time certified officers to fill in time gaps.
- They have a lieutenant and 3 sergeants, one per shift (had 5 when they were at 21 officers).
- They have had 16 resident troopers in 15 years. There is a lack of continuity.
- They have a minimum of 2 officers on duty at all times.
- In their last hiring attempt they sent out letters to 90 LEC applicants. They received 16 or 18 replies. They did not get any candidates for the Academy.
- He wanted to know the make up of Colchester's Police Commission. He liked our diversity.

### Trip Report to Essex (2/26/04)

Essex is a Resident State Trooper town covered by Troop F in Westbrook. It is a small town (12 square miles) with a population of 6500. It has 178 roads that are a total of 40 miles long.

We met with Essex's new First Selectman, Phil Miller on February 26, 2004. Phil was very knowledgeable, probably because he had been a Selectman in Essex for several years. At the present time Essex has one State Trooper and 4 full time constables (Police Officers). In the past they have used part time officers and have had as many as 18. The last part time officer left in 1998. Also, in the past they have had many resident troopers who Phil says has been both good and bad. The resident trooper they now have has been with Essex for 5 years. Their four officers have been with Essex for 18, 10, 6 and 4 years respectively. The officer with 6 years had 10 years in New Haven prior to coming to Essex. The First Selectman is the "Chief of Police".

The salaries of the 4 officers total \$240,000, which includes benefits and over time. They have a defined benefits retirement plan for their officers (20 years at 60%). The plan has been in effect for 10 years. The officers work a 5/3 schedule. The cost of the trooper is \$79,000 per year. Essex has 4 cruisers. They get a new one every couple of years and sell the one they are getting rid of to the public. Phil did not think using the older car for town use was a prudent use of funds. They buy their cars from the Connecticut State buying pool.

Phil feels having a combination of local officers and troopers is the best of both worlds. He feels that Resident State Trooper towns have less public problems than towns with their own Police Departments. Essex also uses the State Police for planning purposes for such events as festivals and parades. They cover 2 shifts (7:00 AM to 11:00 PM). The rest of the time they count on Troop F to provide coverage. They also have a boat for harbor patrol. They are helped with this task by the use of part time help (we didn't ask who they are). The police are requesting more over time money for the coming fiscal year to help cover this operation.

Essex does not seem to have much in the way of "crime". They had 250 criminal investigations in 2002 and 196 in 2003. As a comparison Colchester had 806 criminal investigations in 2003. Essex's biggest problem is speeding. They use a SMART trailer to help with this (it was purchased along with 2 other towns). The speeders they catch are local people. They have upped the fine of a ticket to try to curb speeding. Phil says he has good communications with the State Trooper. He does not seem to have to spend much time with the police. The officers will join a union this year. He hopes the contract will cover some of the gray areas they presently have. He has appointed a 3-person panel to negotiate a contract with the union.

Essex has a regional high school with Deep River and Chester. They share a State Trooper as a School Resource Officer with several other schools. They have used a drug-sniffing dog twice at the middle and high schools.

### Trip Report to Mansfield (2/26/04)

Mansfield is a Resident State Trooper town covered by Troop C in Tolland. It has a large area (46 square miles) with a population of about 11,500. It has 103 road miles. It is different from most towns in that it has Storrs (the University of Connecticut) in the middle of its area. Storrs has its own Police Department.

I met with Mansfield's Town Manager, Marty Berliner on March 9, 2004. Marty has been the Town Manager of Mansfield for more than 25 years. At the present time Mansfield has five Resident State Troopers (one of which is a Sergeant), four full time constables (Police Officers) and three part time officers. The part time officers work about two shifts a week. Marty is cutting each part time officers back to one shift per week as a cost cutting measure. Mansfield has been a Resident Trooper Town for more than 30 years. They were the first town to have a State Police Sergeant (1995) assigned to the town. The present Sergeant will have 5 years with Mansfield this June. The prior Sergeant was in Mansfield for 4 years. The barracks commanders use to be rotated rather frequently but even that has slowed down. The trooper's average stay is about 3 years. The four full time officers have been with Mansfield for 28 years, 27 years, 25 years and 8 years (previously had 10 years in Manchester). They provide police coverage from 7:00 AM to the following morning at 2:00 AM. Troop C covers the remaining time (2:00 AM to 7:00 AM).

The Sergeant handles the administrative duties and is essentially the Chief of Police. He also attends the Traffic Authority meetings and the Department Head meetings (once a month). He completes a performance review for the officers and the secretary once a year. Every three months Marty Berliner has a meeting with the Sergeant and any of the officers and troopers that can make it. It was started when there were problems between local officers and the resident trooper supervisor. That is no longer the case (that resident trooper left) and it is now essentially a staff meeting that is run by the Sergeant. The officers have had a union since 1971. The A & O Manual is used for their Rules and Regs. He can not think of any incident when it has not applied. There is not any rank structure. All town employees, including the officers, have a MERS pension (with the State). The only recent grievances he has had are because the officers from the University of Connecticut over stepped their authority. The part time officers do traffic control (radar, laser). They usually do not take numbers. Over the years they have averaged between 100 and 150 speeding tickets and warnings per month. In July, 2003 they cut back on running radar and are now down to 30 to 40 speeding tickets and warnings per month. Marty Berliner said the number of complaints he gets about speeding has not gone up because of this.

Marty says that Mansfield is growing very slowly. They average around 25 to 30 new housing starts per year. They are very satisfied with the Resident State Trooper program and would not think of forming their own Police Department until their number on the force gets to 16 to 18 or their population reaches 15,000 to 16,000. They do not expect any rapid development in the future as they have large wet lands and rocky areas and not much good building land left. Much of their growth has come from spill over housing from UConn. His biggest concern about Mansfield having its own department is the high cost of hiring a highly qualified Police Chief and paying for dispatch.

I also met with Mike Darcy, the current State Police Sergeant that supervises the Mansfield police contingent. Mike indicated that Mansfield is a very, very busy town. It borders on Willimantic and has the University of Connecticut within its borders. One of their biggest problems is traffic, especially on the main roads. This is mostly because of UConn students and employees. Another large problem is the drinking and partying problems with UConn students at their off campus housing and in bars located in Mansfield. Mike looked in the 2001 edition of Crimes in Connecticut to compare Colchester and Mansfield. The data showed that the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Crime Index numbers in 2001 for Colchester were 249 and for Mansfield 288. He thinks the towns are somewhat similar. The UCR Crime Index was legislated by the United States Congress for the FBI to gage overall crime rates for the entire country. The offenses selected to make up the Crime Index are: murder/non negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft and arson.

He also indicated that the Mansfield Town Council decided not to let the school apply for any more DARE grants. The school came up with a substitute program called the "Good Decision Program," which has core DARE tenants. The school's faculty teaches the program and an officer/trooper comes in to teach a few of the segments.

### Trip Report to Coventry (6/28/04)

Coventry has its own municipal Police Department. It covers 38 square miles with a population of about 12,000 (which balloons up to 14,000 during the summer months). It has 120 road miles. It has a crime index of 16.9 per 1000 population (compared to 17.0 for Colchester).

I met with Coventry's Police Chief, Beau Thurnauer on June 28, 2004. The Chief spent 22 years in the Manchester PD, retiring as a Captain. He has been the Chief of Police of Coventry for 5 years. The Chief is one of 13 full time police positions. There are 2 Lieutenants (1 female, 1 male) and 3 Sergeants. They are on a 5/2 schedule. They cover the town 24/7. They have their own dispatch center, which has 3 full time and 10 part time dispatchers. They also have a full time Administrative Assistant and an Animal Control person.

Their biggest problem is providing more coverage with a stagnant budget. It is not always cost effective to cover holes in the schedule with overtime. He also finds that there are times that officers really balk at putting in more overtime. He also compensates for a low budget by applying for and getting grants. Most of the equipment in the department has at least partially been paid by grants. He has a \$30,000 finger print machine that was entirely paid for by a grant. He also has a \$500,000 grant to be used toward a new police station. They have architectural plans for a new station estimated to cost \$1,300,000. The money to purchase the land for the new police station, next to the town hall, was in the last budget that was defeated.

Chief Thurnauer feels strongly that effective policing needs good strategic planning (his mission/vision is on the wall and he uses it constantly with his officers), good benefits, a career ladder and a developing credibility with everyone in the community.

Chief Thurnauer is Chairman of the Connecticut Chief's Public Affairs Committee and is a member of the International Association of Chiefs of Police and is very active in providing design guidelines, services, support and technical assistance to smaller police departments. He is a member of the Municipal Police Support Committee of the Connecticut Chiefs that provides towns like Colchester an assessment of their feasibility to establish an autonomous police department in their town. The committee looks at legislative issues, the present physical plant and equipment and the budget.

## Trip Report to East Lyme (8/31/05)

East Lyme is a Resident State Trooper town covered by Troop E, which is located in Montville. East Lyme covers xx square miles with a population of 20,000. Three thousand of the total population are housed in the two prisons in East Lyme. The town has xx road miles.

We met with Mike Collins, the Resident State Trooper Sergeant, and Terry Saffioti, the first East Lyme officer to obtain the rank of sergeant. East Lyme has 20 officers, 5 part time officers and 2 troopers (including the sergeant). One of the municipal officers and one of the troopers is female. The following points were made:

- The Town dispatches EMS (Fire and Ambulance) 7/24. The Troop dispatches the police.
- Town radios are on 33.02 Mhz frequency. They are looking into getting the Town, Emergency Services and the Police on one radio network.
- The Town purchases 2 cruisers every year. They have set up criteria on when to replace a cruiser. This has cut down on their repair costs. They have 10 cruisers (each has a Mobile Data Terminal) for use by the officers and 2 old cruisers for use on road jobs.
- The Police provide officers to teach DARE. The schools have also hired a private School Security Officer (an ex trooper).
- The East Lyme Sergeant can notarize reports and warrants so that the officers don't have to go to the State Police barracks.
- They are actively looking at sites for a public safety complex. The site will be 4 acres minimum with a 10,000 square foot building. It will house the Fire Marshall, Emergency Management, Dispatch and Police. They will probably add a large community room as a selling point.
- They are presently in an old building that has many rooms but is totally inadequate. They are planning to lease an 8800 square foot building until the new station is built.
- They are planning to add a Detective position, which will be a sergeant grade.
- Their budget is about \$ 1.5 Million and does not include dispatch or animal control.
- The casinos have greatly increased the police activity level. The prisons also result in increased patrols and periodically cause problems.
- The East Lyme Police actually patrol the highways and handle all their own cases.
- East Lyme is in the process of negotiating a clause in the contract with the union that will address officers that leave before 3 years on the job. These officers will have to pay back some of the hiring and uniform costs (probably between \$2000 and \$4000).
- They have a minimum of 3 officers on a shift. The shifts are basically 8 AM to 4 PM, 4 PM to 12 Midnight and 12 Midnight to 8 AM.
- The State Police Sergeant actively works with the East Lyme Police Department to help them obtain their independent status.

## Trip Report to East Hampton (9/1/05)

East Hampton established its own Police Department in 1963. Today it has 16 officers, including the chief. It has a population of 12,500, covers 36 square miles and has 80 road miles.

We met with Alan Bergren, the Town Manager, and Matt Reimondo, the Chief of Police. They made the following points:

- The officers work a 4 days on, 2 days off schedule. Each shift is 8 ½ hours so there is a ½ hour overlap of shifts.
- They have a minimum staffing level of 2 officers.
- The day shift runs 4 officers and the supervisor. The evening shift averages 3 officers. The Midnight shift has 2 officers.
- They have 3 sergeants.
- Everyone handles every kind of case.
- They have 2 holding cells. They use Middletown for overnight stays because East Hampton does not have 24-hour surveillance for the cells.
- They use Colchester KX to dispatch Fire, Ambulance and Police.
- They put out a questionnaire 3 years ago and received a 74% approval rating from the Town.
- Their budget is about \$ 1.1 Million. Salaries are \$900,000. \$110,000 for training, holidays, O/T, etc. Administrative costs are \$80,000. Health Insurance, etc ?????
- They purchase 2 cars per year. They usually get up to 4 years per car (80,000 to 100,000 miles) before they replace it.
- They recently discovered two Meth Labs in town, the first in Connecticut. They were part of a joint clean up with Federal personnel. Other towns came to observe. It was a learning experience for all including the State of Connecticut.
- They use Hunt Computer Design to put together a Records Management System for them. It cost approximately \$6,000 upfront and \$4,500 per year maintenance fee.
- They strongly recommended that Colchester Police have defibrillators in their cars and become certified as a co first responder. They also recommended getting emergency bags with Oxygen bottles.

### **9/9/04 Task Force Visit by Redding Chief of Police**

- Redding's Chief of Police visited the 9/9/04 Colchester Police Task Force meeting as a member of the Municipal Police Support Committee, which is part of the Connecticut Police Chief's Association. This visit was in response to a letter by chairman Erik Hansen requesting an evaluation of Colchester's needs should it decide to create an independent police department.
- The Chief, Douglas Fuchs, had been a member of the Ridgefield Police Department for 10 years, reaching the rank of Lieutenant prior to coming to Redding. His starting Chief's salary 2 years ago was \$78,000.
- Redding has 13 officers including the chief. Their plan is to reach 17 officers over the next several years. Redding has a population of 9000, with plans to increase to 10,000 over the next year. The department presently works a 5/3, 5/3, 5/2 schedule.
- Redding's police department has approximately 2000 square feet. They have a single lockup cell with visual and audio. They use their civilian dispatchers to watch a detainee. The Chief estimates that they have overnight detainees approximately 14 nights a year.
- When Redding went municipal their budget actually decreased slightly. This was mostly due to salaries and overtime. The department no longer had to pay Resident Trooper(s) salaries. Also the department was able to promote an executive officer from within the ranks to help with administrative duties.
- Chief Fuchs felt going municipal provided:
  - A long-term commitment (starting with a chief),
  - Better administrative services (a State Police Sergeant is a road supervisor and is not good for administration),
  - A condition where they didn't lose continuity (frequent changes of State Troopers),
  - A better opportunity for the growth of local officers (professionally and personally), including promotions and
  - More ownership of the department by the officers.
- State Police service is faster to a municipality than to a Resident Trooper town, which has to go up the chain of command.
- Chief Fuchs also felt that municipalities have better access to grants.
- Redding was able to use a Town Meeting to leave the Resident Trooper Program and become a municipal police department.

## **Colchester Police Task Force**

### **Executive Summary- Comparison Chart with other Towns**

The purpose of the "Comparison of Colchester with other Towns" chart was to gather pertinent information on policing to enable a comparison between Colchester and surrounding towns. The data was obtained from the CPEC (Connecticut Policy and Economic Council), the website [www.ct.gov](http://www.ct.gov), the publication "Crime in Connecticut" and telephone calls to the various police departments.

The data can vary over time and the item "per capita police spending" is difficult to compare because of the different ways each town presents its budget. Costs, such as those for defined benefit packages, show up in many different places in other town's budgets.

In general the towns in the chart with higher populations have more officers than does Colchester. Colchester is also well below the published Federal Bureau of Investigation data that indicates New England towns between 10,000 and 24,999 population average 1.8 officers per 1000 people. Using this guideline Colchester should have approximately 27 officers.

## Comparison of Colchester with other Towns (5/16/06)

Town	Population (2003)	Square Road Miles	Police Authority	Number of Troopers and Officers (2005)	Per Capita Police Spending (2003)	Crimes per 1000 Population (2003)
Colchester	14,885	49	111 State Trooper Program	2 T, 9 Off	62.4	6.0
Coventry	11,765	38	100 Municipal Department	13 Off	124.6	13.7
East Haddam	8,525	54	117 State Trooper Program	2T, 8 PT	60.8	4.9
East Hampton	13,660	36	84 Municipal Department	16 Off	84.6	8.4
East Lyme	18,530	34	xx State Trooper Program	2T, 19 Off, 5PT	80.9	8.7
Essex	6,655	10	41 State Trooper Program	1T, 4 Off	80.0	5.6
Haddam	7,320	44	93 State Trooper Program	2T	N/A	4.8
Hebron	8,805	37	74 State Trooper Program	1T, 6 PT	70.8	6.5
Lebanon	7,065	54	91 State Trooper Program	1T, 3 PT	N/A	7.4
Ledyard	15,025	38	108 State Trooper Program	1T, 22 Off	93.2	7.3
Mansfield	11,500	45	104 State Trooper Program	5T, 4 Off, 4 PT	64.7	9.4
Marlborough	5,840	23	59 State Trooper Program	2T, 3 PT	30.4	7.7
Montville	18,970	42	116 State Trooper Program	1T, 21 Off, 1 PT	75.9	8.5
Portland	8,930	23	62 Municipal Department	10 Off	114.2	15.1
Salem	3,950	29	39 State Trooper Program	2T	86.8	4.6

Note: FBI data for New England towns/cities (2002) indicate that:

- Towns/Cities under 10,000 population average 2.5 officers per 1000 people.
- Towns/Cities between 10,000 and 24,999 population average 1.8 officers per 1000 people.
- This data is from "Crime in the United States, 2002" by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (pg. 325)

## **Colchester Police Task Force**

### **Connecticut Police Chief's Association Report on Colchester Police Services**

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

As part of the evaluation process the Task Force enlisted the assistance of the Connecticut Police Chief's Association. We asked that group to evaluate the Colchester Police and provide their insight regarding the feasibility of creating an independent police department. The group consisted of Police Chief Douglas Fuchs of Redding, Police Chief James Strillacci of West Hartford and Chief William Knapp, Retired. Their feedback is summarized below.

#### **Police Department Building**

The building has adequate space for report writing, records management, and office space at this time. Any planned expansion should include improved locker facilities, a training room, and prisoner holding facilities.

#### **Dispatch and Civilian Support Staff**

The current outsourcing of dispatch services (emergency calls) to a regional dispatch center (K-X) is cost effective. The Town of Colchester is not responsible for certifying the dispatchers or maintaining their certifications. A recommendation was made to investigate the possibility of moving the dispatch center in with the Colchester Police for further savings and benefits.

#### **Staffing, Levels, Investigations and Prisoner Detention**

Staffing levels should be of overriding concern. There should be at least two Colchester Police Officers on duty at all times, from the stand point of officer safety and service to the community. The four-hour block of time between 3:00 am and 7:00 am also leaves a large communication gap between officers going off duty and officers coming on duty.

Should the Colchester Police Force become independent it will need an agreement with another police department to house persons in custody. Any further building expansion should include prisoner detention facilities.

#### **Supervision and Professional Development**

Current supervision is provided by the Connecticut State Police. When there is no State Trooper on duty the Colchester officers have no direct supervision, as there is no rank structure. The lack of upward mobility may not have an immediate impact on the young officer, but as one progresses in the law enforcement profession this lack of rank structure can have a demoralizing effect on a more senior patrol officer. The flat rank structure not only negatively impacts department morale but also officer retention.

#### **Schedule**

Currently, the Colchester Police Force has an authorized strength of ten Colchester Officers and one State Trooper or eleven officers. By hiring one additional officer, inclusive of the State Trooper, thus increasing the department's strength to twelve it is possible to maintain shift coverage twenty-four hours per day.

The authorized strength of the Colchester Police Force should also be reviewed. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) maintains a record of what is considered an acceptable staffing level for police departments based on population and geographic location. For the northeast, statistics are found to be between 1.7 – 2.1 officers per 1,000 residents.

Currently the Colchester Police Force does not meet a level of 1.0 officer per 1,000 residents. The recommended ratio should be taken into consideration when planning to become an independent department.

### **Contract**

If the Town of Colchester makes the decision to organize their own police department, the entire Collective Bargaining Agreement needs to be renegotiated. Completing this process after the reorganization is difficult to accomplish.

### **Budget**

#### **Cruisers**

The Colchester Police Force maintains a fleet of six patrol cruisers, half of which have Mobile Data Computers installed in them. This number of cruisers is adequate to form an organized police department.

The hiring of a Chief of Police would most likely necessitate increasing the fleet by one cruiser.

#### **Overtime**

The town needs to review the overtime and training budgets. If the Town of Colchester is interested in maintaining two officer coverage, the overtime budget will need to be increased to fill shifts that are created by paid leave and training.

### **Radio/Communications**

The Colchester Police Force does not have independent radio communications capabilities as they rely on the State Police communications equipment. In order to organize, the Colchester Police will need to secure communications equipment (both mobile and portable radios).

The Colchester Police Force should have radio communication that is separate and independent of the State Police. The decision to install a Colchester Police radio system should be made independently of the decision to "organize"

### **CAD/RMS (Incident Reporting)**

The Colchester Police Force has the computer workstations necessary to allow officers to complete incident reports. Currently, the department does not maintain department records independent of the State Police. The department will need to obtain a small server and CAD/RMS (Computer Aided Dispatch/Records Management System) to operate independently.

It is suggested that the Colchester Police procure a CAD/RMS system as soon as possible and maintain a separate database from the Connecticut State Police records. Not only will this allow a smoother

transition to an organized department, but will allow Colchester Police Officers to have their own database.

### **Chief of Police**

Having a police department that is run and managed by a police chief has numerous benefits.

A chief of police is a part of the First Selectman's management team.

A police chief additionally adds stability and consistency to the organization. Under the "Resident Trooper" program, it is possible that the "Resident Trooper" will not be in that position for any extended period of time.

Police chiefs are eligible to join numerous organizations, which afford them the opportunity to develop professionally and bring their education and experiences back to their respective departments. Every police chief in Connecticut is also a member of the Connecticut Police Chief's Association.

## **Colchester Police Task Force**

### **Executive Summary- Survey Results**

The Task Force realized that it was important to obtain public opinion on policing issues in Colchester. They designed a questionnaire that provided some background information on policing in Colchester and included eleven questions to be answered. These questions were designed to determine what people in Colchester think of the present police services, what their main public safety concerns are and what form of future police services they would support. The questionnaire was made available to the public in June 2005 for about three months. It was accessible on-line on the town web page and as a hard copy in five locations around town.

The Task Force received approximately 155 replies to the questionnaire, the majority of them from the on-line location. Approximately sixty percent of the respondents felt that present police services are good or excellent and that the response time and results are satisfactory. The respondents also clearly identified the three most serious public safety concerns in Colchester. These concerns are: 1) children being exposed to drugs or alcohol, 2) speeding cars and 3) drunk driving. In addition the results showed that most respondents favored hiring more police but were fairly even on whether to go independent or remain in the Resident State Trooper program. And many respondents indicated in various places in the questionnaire that they would like more information to help them make a final decision.

**POLICE TASK FORCE  
PUBLIC QUESTIONNAIRE  
RESULTS SUMMARY (11/15/05)**

1. Please describe your impression of the quality of police services provided by the Town.

	<u>On-line number</u>	<u>Written Number</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<i>Excellent</i>	24	8	32	20.6
<i>Good</i>	43	20	63	40.7
<i>Fair</i>	20	7	27	17.4
<i>Poor</i>	12	2	14	9.0
<i>I don't really know</i>	15	4	19	12.3

2. If you have had any need for Police services over the past year, please describe the nature of your need and please describe the result.

	<u>On-line Number</u>	<u>Written Number</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percent</u>
The service you needed:				
<i>Motor vehicle assistance</i>	5	4	9	10.5
<i>Response to house alarm</i>	9	3	12	13.9
<i>Investigation of criminal act</i>	16	6	22	25.6
<i>Controlling a disturbance</i>	9	4	13	15.1
<i>Traffic control (including accidents)</i>	8	3	11	12.8
<i>Other: _____</i>	16	3	19	22.1

	<u>On-line Number</u>	<u>Written Number</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Was the response time satisfactory?				
<i>Yes</i>	43	7	50	70.4
<i>No</i>	15	6	21	29.6
Your satisfaction with the result:				
<i>Completely satisfied</i>	29	3	32	45.1
<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	14	6	20	28.2
<i>Not satisfied</i>	15	3	18	25.4
<i>Matter not yet complete</i>	1	0	1	1.3

3. Please describe your impression of the community policing initiatives that are provided in Colchester (i.e. DARE, car seat clinics, community block watches, etc.).

	<u>On-line Number</u>	<u>Written Number</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<i>Excellent</i>	23	9	32	21.6
<i>Good</i>	37	14	51	34.5
<i>Fair</i>	15	5	20	13.5
<i>Poor</i>	5	1	6	4.0
<i>We need more community policing</i>	11	2	13	8.8
<i>I'm not sure</i>	22	4	26	17.6

4. How concerned are you with each of the following public safety concerns:

	Not concerned at all	Concerned	Very Concerned
Having your home burglarized	<input type="checkbox"/> 25+7=32	<input type="checkbox"/> 59+25=84	<input type="checkbox"/> 29+9=38
Walking safely within Colchester	<input type="checkbox"/> 67+11=78	<input type="checkbox"/> 25+19=44	<input type="checkbox"/> 21+7=28
Speeding cars	<input type="checkbox"/> 15+0=15	<input type="checkbox"/> 38+16=54	<input type="checkbox"/> 60+24=84
Children being exposed to drugs or alcohol	<input type="checkbox"/> 7+1=8	<input type="checkbox"/> 36+14=50	<input type="checkbox"/> 70+25=95
Strangers loitering near your home	<input type="checkbox"/> 52+15=67	<input type="checkbox"/> 38+13=51	<input type="checkbox"/> 22+9=31
Parking problems	<input type="checkbox"/> 72+19=91	<input type="checkbox"/> 31+17=48	<input type="checkbox"/> 8+1=9
Traffic problems	<input type="checkbox"/> 36+3=39	<input type="checkbox"/> 55+21=76	<input type="checkbox"/> 20+18=38
Drunk Driving	<input type="checkbox"/> 13+1=14	<input type="checkbox"/> 45+15=60	<input type="checkbox"/> 54+22=76
Other (please specify):	<input type="checkbox"/> 0+0=0	<input type="checkbox"/> 5+1=6	<input type="checkbox"/> 16+5=21

5. How much of a problem do you think crime is in Colchester?

	<u>On-line Number</u>	<u>Written Number</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<i>Seems to be a growing problem</i>	50	19	69	46.9
<i>Level of crime seems to be pretty stable</i>	32	11	43	29.3
<i>Crime is everywhere, and Colchester is no different</i>	26	5	31	21.1
<i>Level of crime seems to be going down</i>	3	1	4	2.7

6. Currently Colchester has one police officer (a state trooper) assigned to our schools, and he rotates from school to school over the course of a day. With Colchester's growing school population, please describe your opinion about whether the Town should have additional officers assigned to the schools.

	<u>On-line Number</u>	<u>Written Number</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<i>I would support the idea without reservation</i>	42	21	63	41.5
<i>I think it's a good idea, but I worry about the cost</i>	22	8	30	19.7
<i>I'm not convinced additional officers in the schools are needed</i>	33	8	41	27.0
<i>I do not support the idea</i>	15	3	18	11.8

7. Overall, what should the Town of Colchester do to improve the quality of its police services, if anything? **All comments.**

PLEASE NOTE: The following questions assume you are familiar with the structure and operation of police services in Colchester. If you are not, before answering these questions, please [click here](#) to read about our current situation.

8. On the basis of your knowledge and your experience with police services in Town, how would you assess the current structure?

	<u>On-line Number</u>	<u>Written Number</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<i>Seems to be working well</i>	29	10	39	26.9
<i>Has some problems, but overall it's working</i>	40	14	54	37.2
<i>Needs an overhaul</i>	22	8	30	20.7
<i>Not enough information to have an opinion</i>	18	4	22	15.2

9. On the basis of your knowledge and your experience with police services in Town, how would you react if the Town, instead of continuing under the resident state trooper program, proposed establishing its own independent police department to replace the resident state trooper program?

	<u>On-line Number</u>	<u>Written Number</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<i>I would support the idea without reservation</i>	34	17	51	34.9
<i>I think it's a good idea, but I worry about the cost</i>	16	5	21	14.4
<i>I'm not yet convinced an independent department is needed</i>	42	6	48	32.9
<i>I do not support the idea</i>	18	8	26	17.8

10. On the basis of your knowledge and your experience with police services in Town, how would you react if the Town proposed to continue participation in the Resident State Trooper program and hired more town officers?

	<u>On-line Number</u>	<u>Written Number</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<i>I would support the idea without reservation</i>	36	18	54	37.3
<i>I think it's a good idea, but I worry about the cost</i>	28	8	36	24.8
<i>I'm not yet convinced that additional Town officers are needed</i>	22	3	25	17.2
<i>I do not support the idea</i>	22	8	30	20.7

11. On the basis of your knowledge and your experience with police services in Town, how would you react if, instead of developing an independent police department, the Town proposed expanding the resident state trooper program and hired more resident state troopers?

	<u>On-line Number</u>	<u>Written Number</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<i>I would support the idea without reservation</i>	19	7	26	18.2
<i>I think it's a good idea, but I worry about the cost</i>	22	8	30	20.9
<i>I'm not yet convinced that additional state troopers are needed</i>	34	8	42	29.4
<i>I do not support the idea</i>	32	13	45	31.5

**COLCHESTER POLICE TASK FORCE  
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
INTERVIEWS WITH COLCHESTER OFFICERS**

The Police Task Force interviewed numerous Colchester police officers; Officers Edwards, Farrior, McNeill, Owens and Suchecki. One of the officers has since left Colchester. The purpose of these interviews was to seek input regarding areas that could be improved upon to be able to recruit qualified individuals and retain them once they are hired. We also sought their opinions on the future of the Colchester Police Force and what impact our long-term plan would have on growth and expansion to better serve our Town.

The police officers' comments were consistent. They all felt strongly that the new union contract that included a defined benefit plan was a very important draw for new officers and would also assist in retaining existing staff.

Hiring additional police officers was a top priority and also critical in providing 24/7 police coverage and support for existing officers. Appropriate staffing levels also make a rank structure a viable option.

A rank structure would also provide officers an incentive to stay because there would be advancement opportunities. In order to have a rank structure, staffing levels must be adequate. You cannot have a rank structure with 5 officers.

The officers all supported the town moving forward to an independent police department.

One officer commented that a permanent School Resource Officer should be included in our long-term planning.

Specialized training was also mentioned as an issue we should focus on.

A public safety complex would give the police force a home and space to expand as we plan for the future.

The officers all work well-together and enjoy the camaraderie that exists between them.

In assessing all the interviews, the issues are prioritized as follows:

1. Retirement Plan
2. Increased Staff
3. Rank Structure
4. Independent Police Department.

**COLCHESTER POLICE TASK FORCE  
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - INTERVIEW WITH LT. L.J. FUSARO, CT. STATE POLICE**

So as to provide as complete an analysis as possible of the Town's policing services and the future policing needs of the Town, the members of the Task Force had a lengthy and informative discussion with Lieutenant Louis J. Fusaro, Jr., the current Commander of Troop K.

Lieutenant Fusaro is very supportive of the Task Force's efforts. He is of the opinion that the residents of Colchester would be best served if the Town remained in the Resident State Trooper Program, rather than establishing an independent police department. In addition to the costs the Town would incur if an independent department was established, Lieutenant Fusaro discussed the range of State resources and expertise that are available to the Town as a participant in the Program.

Lieutenant Fusaro acknowledged that the Program, and Colchester's satisfaction with the Program, could be enhanced. In particular, he commented about the need to improve opportunities for career advancement and professional development. The Lieutenant also commented that police visibility could be enhanced. He acknowledged that most residents, and even some Task Force members, do not see "24/7" police coverage in Town. Lieutenant Fusaro hopes to work with the Task Force and others to combat that false perception. He stressed to the members of the Task Force that due to our involvement in the Program and the presence of the Troop K barracks in Town, the Town indeed does have "24/7" police coverage.

The members of the Task Force and Lieutenant Fusaro also discussed the issue of officer retention. Several Colchester officers have recently left the Colchester force for either other municipalities with independent police departments, or the State Police. This poses several problems for the Town, including the loss of valuable experience and the financial drain of sending multiple officers through training. Lieutenant Fusaro is confident we can address this problem by adopting better incentive plans (both monetary and non-monetary) and by providing enhanced opportunities for career advancement.

# **COLCHESTER POLICE TASK FORCE**

## **Law Enforcement Council Report for Colchester Police Department**

### **Administrative and Operational Recommendations for Growth and Development**

#### **Executive Summary**

Prior to the establishment of the Task Force the Town of Colchester requested that the Law Enforcement Council (LEC) provide recommendations for the future growth and development of the Colchester Police Force. The following is a summary of background information that was given to members of the Task Force prior to it beginning its charge. This information is taken from a report by the LEC in May 2002 and includes the following recommendations.

#### **Patrol Coverage**

Assuming sole responsibility for the delivery of police services to the citizens of Colchester will require the town to recruit, hire and train a sufficient number of qualified personnel to insure patrol coverage of the town on a 24/7 basis. The minimum number of officers needed is two per shift. The L.E.C. recommends, to achieve twenty-four hour coverage, two officers per shift, the town would need a total of twelve officers.

#### **Career Ladder (Promotions)**

As the department grows in the number of officers, the need for supervisory personnel and specialized functions also increases. There is also a need within the organization for professional growth and development of its employees.

The current Collective Bargaining Agreement provides for the ranks of Officer First Class, Corporal and Sergeant. Presently, the only promotion above entry level officer is Officer First Class. The L.E.C. suggests two corporal positions be created, Administrative Corporal and Patrol Corporal. Once the department reaches twelve officers, L.E.C. suggests an Administrative Sergeant position and a Detective position be created.

#### **Department Rules and Regulations Manual**

Officers are employees of the town of Colchester, subject to the policies and procedures adopted by the town. The officers are also required to function in accordance with the provisions of the State Police Administrative and Operations Manual.

As an independent police department Colchester would need to develop a detailed administrative and operations manual. The town could adopt sections of the State Police Administrative and Operations Manual and further define specific provisions should they wish.

#### **Unity of Command**

There is presently a dual system of management within the police department. The Police Commission provides general administrative management while the State Police manage law enforcement operations. The Resident State Trooper is recognized as the first step in the grievance process. The Resident Trooper Sergeant and the police Commission act together on all labor issues.

#### **Police Commission Role**

The task of the police commissions is to supervise and manage the police function. The L.E.C. report recommends the commission prioritize the L.E.C.'s recommendations and work with other town committees and boards to insure the systematic development of the police department.

