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Abington Police Department

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Annual Town Report 2011

Abington Police Department

Once again it has been an honor and privilege to serve the residents of Abington in 2011. Over the past twelve months, it has been the continued goal of the police department to serve our residents and visitors with both compassion and dedication to duty.

I am happy to report that through the diligent efforts of Deputy Chief Christopher Cutter, Sergeant Roderick Ambrose and the entire organization, it is anticipated that the Abington Police Department will become fully accredited in 2012.

Accreditation is a self-initiated evaluation process by which police departments strive to meet and maintain standards that have been established for the profession, by the profession. These carefully selected standards reflect critical areas of police management, operations, and technical support activities. They cover areas such as policy development, emergency response planning, training, communications, property and evidence handling, use of force, vehicular pursuit, prisoner transportation and holding facilities. The program not only sets standards for the law enforcement profession, but also for the delivery of police services to citizens of the commonwealth.

The Commission offers two program awards: Certification and Accreditation, with Accreditation being the higher of the two. The Department has already met the standards and has been granted Certification by the Commission in 2009

The Commission consists of an eleven member Board of Directors. Six members are appointed by the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association, two by the Coalition of Accreditation Managers of Massachusetts, one by the Massachusetts Municipal Association and one by the Massachusetts Police Association. The eleventh member is left for the Board to elect; that member must be affiliated with an academic institution.

The standards for accreditation impact officer and public safety, address high liability/risk management issues, and generally promote operational efficiency throughout the agency. The benefits are therefore many and will vary among participating departments based on the state of the department when it enters the process. In other words, the benefits will be better known when the department quantifies the changes that it made as a direct result of achieving accreditation. Generally, these changes involve policy writing, facility improvements and equipment purchases. Listed below are some of the more common benefits.

Accreditation:

- provides a norm for an agency to judge its performance
- provides a basis to correct deficiencies before they become public problems
- requires agencies to commit policies and procedures to writing
- promotes accountability among agency personnel and the evenhanded application of policies
- provides a means of independent evaluation of agency operations
- minimizes an agency's exposure to liability, builds a stronger defense against lawsuits, and has the potential to reduce liability insurance costs
- enhances the reputation of the agency and increases the public's confidence in it

As always, in preparation for the submission of our annual report to the townspeople, I reviewed the town reports that were submitted in previous years. It is my belief that historical reflection helps the department focus on the most critical issues that are negatively affecting the quality of life for our residents.

One of the most obvious and important issues that the police department currently faces is lack of adequate staffing to proactively address the needs of our community. Once adequate uniformed personnel have been re-established, I believe that the second most important issue that the police department must address is the re-establishment of a full-time detective division. The detective division, at one time staffed with a sergeant, two full time detectives and a part time detective, was completely eliminated over three years ago. The intelligence that is gathered as a result of having an active full time detective division is, in my professional opinion, invaluable. Furthermore, crimes not solved on scene by a uniformed officer should become the job of a detective as the uniformed officers are responsible for responding to day to day calls for service and are often inundated by these duties. In addition, drug investigations as well as the many crimes that are a direct "spin off" of illegal narcotics are traditionally solved by a well trained and informed detective. These offenses include crimes such as assaults, rapes, robberies, house breaks, larcenies, and shopliftings. Lastly, the town needs to find a permanent solution to address staffing in police dispatch. It is my belief that our citizens will be best

served by moving our trained police personnel back out onto the streets and replacing them with professional civilian dispatchers.

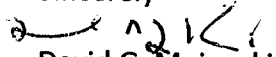
The police department continues to enhance and embrace our "Community Partners" motto. Officers routinely share information with members of the public to help address current issues and solve crimes by utilizing local cable through programs such as Police Update, email and phone technology through Nixle, and posting information on both the department's website and Massachusetts's Most Wanted.

Additionally, members of the police department have continued to assist its townspeople by volunteering their personal time with issues that go above and beyond their typical scope of services. For example, over the past twelve months the members of the department, among other things, have conducted a road race to raise money for a youth basketball court, assisted in charitable fundraisers for our citizens, held a free-youth fishing derby, partnered with Abington Bank to hold a free family movie night, and conducted a food drive for our local pantry.

I would like to assure residents that we will continue to move forward during these challenging times. As always, members of the Abington Police Department will continue to serve the townspeople to the best of their ability. All the members of the police department are truly dedicated to the citizens that live, work and travel within its borders.

In closing, I would like to once again thank the officers of the department, the various boards, and the residents of the town for their continued support. I am extremely proud of the members of the police department and look forward to serving the townspeople for many years to come.

Sincerely


David G. Majenski

Chief of Police