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Annual Town Report 2010

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve the residents of Abington in 2010. Once again, over the past twelve months, members of this department have served the residents with dedication and compassion.

In preparing for this year's annual report to the townspeople, I thought it important to review the reports from previous years. I believe that this historical perspective was an important first step in the review process and clearly revealed a pattern of concerns and issues that have plagued the police department for the last decade. For this report, I have chosen what I believe are the two most important issues concerning the police department.

The first issue is substance abuse. While this certainly is not an issue that is unique to Abington, upon close review, it becomes glaringly clear that drugs have negatively affected the quality of life in our town.

To further bolster my assertion, I submit a 122% increase in Home Burglaries, a 330% increase in larcenies from buildings, a 353% increase in assaults, a 1300% increase in fraud, a 65% increase in shoplifting and a 133% increase in bad checks over the past decade as evidence.

I am greatly concerned that the elimination of the Detective Division two years ago is further multiplying this issue by not effectively identifying and addressing it through proactive police enforcement. I also believe that this lack of enforcement will have long lasting negative residual effects on our community for many years to come.

The second issue is the need to address our staffing reductions over the past decade. Currently, the department is budgeted for 23 full time officers. This is seven less than we had in the 80's and late 1990's. Furthermore because of today's litigious society, the issue is compounded as officers are spending more time than ever conducting follow up investigations and writing detailed reports on issues that were once nothing more than a line in a police log report. The result is that officers are spending more time than ever in the police station writing detailed reports instead of proactively patrolling our streets to deter crime.

In the past year alone, there has been a 40% increase in the need for officers to utilize defensive tactic techniques when dealing with suspects and perpetrators of crimes. While our dedication and commitment to training in this area may help, it is no substitute for adequate staffing. This is affecting the moral of officers and officers continue to show signs of fatigue and burnout.

The town also needs to address staffing in police dispatch. It is unrealistic to believe that one officer can continue to answer all business phone calls, 911 police and fire calls, maintain radio contact with officers on the streets, service the public at the counter, check and distribute critical teletype information from outside agencies to our personnel, input and retrieve critical information for officers on the street, monitor prisoners, and provide the public with pre-arrival medical information.

This year, I once again attached the statistical chart from last year's report. I believe that this information clearly reveals a steady increase and is important for residents to possess and analyze.

Year	Calls for Service	Arrests/Complaints	Incident Reports	Accidents
1998	9,278	638	545	413
1999	11,147	1,009	533	441
2000	12,094	987	457	420
2001	16,140	969	556	465
2002	23,292	1,019	671	481
2003	21,121	782	694	446
2004	23,459	790	806	530
2005	25,645	972	792	465
2006	26,123	967	959	456
2007	23,695	1,074	978	457
2008	29,931	1,111	1,089	498

While I believe that the police department is at a critical crossroad, I am optimistic that the town will develop effective strategies and solutions to address these issues. As we continue to move forward during these difficult times, please be assured that, as always, members of the

Abington Police Department will continue to serve the townspeople to the best of their ability. Collectively, all members of the department truly care about the community they serve and 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 police department and look forward to serving the townspeople for many years to come.

Sincerely

David G. Majenski

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