



**STATE OF VERMONT**  
SERGEANT AT ARMS

**MEMORANDUM**

To: House Committee on Appropriations  
From: Matthew Romei, Chief, Capitol Police Department  
Date: February 15, 2022  
Subject: Capitol Police Department budget items

I am pleased to present the attached overview of activities of The Capitol Police. Most notable is the dramatic increase in calls for service handled by CPD within the Capitol Complex. We went from handling approximately 25% of the total calls for service to handling over 95% last year. There was a large dip in calls, predominately due to most State Employees working remotely, however, the concerning calls (threat cases, suspicious events, disorderly persons etc.) continue to rise over previous years. There are three areas of concern that I must highlight, as they all have direct bearing on our fiscal picture. Those are Staff Turnover, Equipment Needs and some upcoming Grant Opportunities. I will be available to the committee on your schedule for any questions.

**Part I: Personnel and Equipment needs**

**Staff Turnover**

I expect to lose three of five full time officers within the next 18 months. Two of these departures will be retirements. Prior to this week, the first departure was expected to come in November, but will now happen in summer of 2022. The second officer was expected to retire in August 2023, and the third officer was expected to retire in July 2024. In addition to the loss of basic manpower, we will also lose all our firearms instructors, rifle instructors, and our only Defensive Tactics Instructor and Field Training Officer.

These losses will be devastating to the department, as the outlook for recruitment is dismal at best. The department is anticipating the need to offer a substantially improved recruiting package to attract qualified candidates. Ideally, we will have a replacement recruited and hired six months prior to each departure. This will not be possible for the first departure since we are in the six-month window but this is still a possibility for the other two positions. Estimated costs for replacements are included below:

- 1<sup>st</sup> replacement officer: \$40,000 salary/benefits for 4 months of overlap
- 2<sup>nd</sup> replacement officer: \$60,000 salary/benefits for 6 months of overlap
- 3<sup>rd</sup> replacement officer: \$60,000 salary/benefits for 6 months of overlap

- Training/uniforms/equip: \$15,000 per officer (this could be less)

**Total costs for replacing three officers in fiscal year 2022-23: \$205,000**

### **Equipment Needs**

We have to invest in a digital fingerprint machine. Previously, we processed arrests using ink and cards, however, that is no longer acceptable by State (VCIC) and CJIS standards. We are possibly the only agency that has not moved to the electronic “Live Scan.” We are currently exploring partnerships that may offset some of the initial cost. Estimated cost is included below:

- Fingerprint machine initial cost: \$18,600
- Fingerprint machine annual maint: \$2,995

We are currently exploring options with the various fleet organizations within State Government to acquire one or more police vehicles to facilitate law enforcement services that are either no longer being provided by partner organizations or have not previously been provided but should.

1. This year we were notified that we could no longer rely on other agencies for prisoner transport. We previously relied on Washington County Sheriff or Montpelier Police for these services.
2. Additionally, there is substantially diminished coverage from BGS Security to handle after hours alarms and other issues within Legislative Spaces, which has required us to look at placing personnel on call during off hours.
3. Finally, we are seeing a substantial increase in after-hours calls for service from Legislative Members and Staff, as well as off-site travel for investigations and case follow-up. We are still working out what a call schedule and appropriate compensation looks like, but it will probably be a pressure in coming years.

Estimated cost is included below:

- Each vehicle: \$10,000 annually for a lease

There is currently a healthy carry-forward balance in the Sgt. At Arms’ budget but the cumulative cost of replacing three officers and purchasing or leasing the new equipment would likely exceed available funding. We are requesting that the General Assembly support and provide funding for the expenditures outlined above.

### **Part II: Grant Opportunities**

We have previously been very successful for a small organization in applying and receiving grant-funded equipment. This year the State Homeland Security Grant program has two areas of focus that we have been encouraged to explore. It would involve adding two officers into intelligence and investigation roles.

One officer would be assigned to the Vermont Intelligence Center (VIC) as a Task Force Officer and would spend a significant chunk of time there in training. Once completed, that officer would return to work out of Montpelier, but would be fully integrated into the VIC, and would have full access to the intelligence streams flowing through that organization. The officer would be looking at that intelligence stream

through the lens of the Capitol Police. The officer would also be our lead intelligence analyst, watching the ether for the next threat issue coming down the pike.

The second officer, if granted would work in a similar role, but would be embedded in the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force, as a fully-credentialled Task Force Officer. This officer would work within the JTTF, and would receive a great deal of training through the FBI. They would travel and train on the FBI's dime, and we would be responsible for their base salary. The FBI would compensate us for the officer's Overtime, if any was worked, up to a sizeable limit. The officer would be available to us at any time, and would come back here and work as/if we need them, but their primary function would be in the JTTF, working cases as a TFO, and keeping us apprised of any intelligence that is relevant to our mission.

Initially, I had looked at these two positions as a "free trial" in these jobs, that would give us a year or so to prove their benefit. If the benefit was worth it, we would come back next year and ask you to fund the positions once the grant ran out. If the benefit was not worth it, we would slide those officers into the positions vacated by the two retiring officers. That timeline is somewhat modified by the earlier-than-expected retirement, but I believe that the grants should still be explored. We could go with limited-service positions, but I am not sure I can recruit an appropriate candidate for the position, without some assurances that their job will go past a year. If the grants were approved, the performance timeline would run October 2022-September 2023.

Finally, we have identified a grant to establish a K9 program at the Capitol Police Department. All of our partner organizations (including our State's Attorney) agree that we would benefit from having an Explosive-Detection K9 team at the Capitol. We have found a program that will provide the dog, and pay for the training, expenses and equipment for the first two years of the program. We would, however, have to add an officer to the department to work as the handler. This would be *potentially* up to a \$125K cost, mainly depending on the health insurance costs for the officer. I believe this would be a great addition to the department, and a priceless addition to the community.