



# Town of Amherst POLICE DEPARTMENT

## Strategic Plan FY14-18 Addendum

### *Annual Review of Goals and Initiatives*

*September 22, 2014*

In accordance with the town's strategic planning process - as implemented by the Board of Selectmen one year ago - the Amherst Police Department has completed the first annual review of its own strategic plan with the conclusion of fiscal year 2014 (FY14). Strategic initiatives that were scheduled for completion in FY14 have been evaluated, and those initiatives designated for FY15 and beyond have been reassessed in light of relevant trends or developments. This annual review also presented an opportunity to reflect on any Department initiatives which were not mentioned within the strategic plan but which were developed independently in FY14 to address specific and emerging issues.

The Amherst Police Department's FY14-18 strategic plan consists of four essential goals, with each goal comprised of two or more strategic initiatives to be implemented across various years. The following review will address each goal and set of initiatives individually:

#### **GOAL #1: Provide Improved Communication and Community Services**

► Improvement and consolidation of website (FY14-18; no cost)

In FY14, the Department completed the consolidation of its independent *amherstpolice.com* website with the town's *amherstnh.gov* website. In addition, the Department's overall site was updated to reflect current information, and several new pages were added to help showcase and provide information on the many services that the Amherst Police Department provides. Later this fall, the Department also intends to begin providing informational updates on Facebook through the Communications Center.

► Continued development and implementation of community survey (FY14-18; no cost)

The Department first implemented a community survey in FY14. The survey helped to provide a baseline for the development of strategic goals and initiatives, and will remain an important source of evaluation and feedback in the coming years. The survey interval was reconsidered and moved to a biennial basis to coincide with the start, mid-point, and end/re-start of the Department's five-year strategic planning process.

► Increase availability of community programs (FY15; no cost)

The Department was able to implement this initiative ahead of schedule in FY14 through a partnership with the Amherst Lions and Milford Rotary club. Funds were donated to cover the cost of Rape Aggression Defense (R.A.D.) training suits, and so far the Department has hosted five training sessions for the general public as well as for specific groups (e.g., female Souhegan High School students, and female staff at the Amherst Middle School). The Department also added an additional instructor to the R.A.D. staff, which is now comprised of one male officer and two female officers.



Town of Amherst  
**POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
Strategic Plan FY14-18 Addendum  
*Annual Review of Goals and Initiatives*  
*September 22, 2014*

**GOAL #2: Increase the Quality and Level of Officer Training to Maintain Professional Standards and Address Community Concerns**

► Increase in-service officer training hours (FY15; \$1,500 annually)

The Department seeks to provide quality, ongoing officer training to maintain pace with law enforcement trends and investigative techniques and to address specific community concerns (e.g., burglary and fraud investigation). Additional FY15 funding was approved for this purpose, and the continuation of that funding will be sought annually.

► Graduate all command staff from the Command Training Institute, Roger Williams University (FY15; \$3,000 on-time cost)

As mentioned in the strategic plan, the Command Training Institute is the preeminent training program in New England for police supervisors, and has traditionally been attended by all Department command staff. Formerly hosted at Babson College for many years, the program is now affiliated with Roger Williams University. The training is essential for the development of our Department's supervisors who are tasked with providing effective management and liability reduction for the Department. Additional, one-time funding in the amount of \$3,000 was approved for FY15 to address the backlog of senior staff members awaiting this important training. All remaining staff (one sergeant and two lieutenants) are currently registered and due to graduate by October 2014.

**GOAL #3: Improve Department Efficiency and Patrol Area Coverage**

► Increase full-time clerical staff (FY17; \$72,500 annually)

The single, full-time executive assistant handles payroll, secretary to the Chief, secretary to the Prosecutor, software/computer maintenance and support (*including support to Fire and Communications*), and records management. Comparably-sized NH police agencies employ an average of 2.7 full-time support personnel. The Board of Selectmen approved the hiring of an additional, part-time administrative support employee in FY15. Three months into FY15, the additional employee has helped to improve turnaround time on copies of accident and other police reports that are regularly requested by the public and has facilitated the Department's timely compliance with federal crime reporting mandates (which are tied to federal law enforcement grant eligibility). The full effectiveness of the additional part-time position will be evaluated in the coming year, and a recommendation regarding the potential need for transition to a full-time position will follow.

► Participate in Attorney General's Drug Task Force (FY18; no cost)

Developing changes in the status of this program may affect future consideration, and further



## Town of Amherst POLICE DEPARTMENT Strategic Plan FY14-18 Addendum *Annual Review of Goals and Initiatives* September 22, 2014

review will be necessary in the Department's next annual strategic plan review.

► Improve property room inventory management (FY14; no cost)

Major improvements in the management of the Department's evidence and property rooms were completed in FY14. In addition to improving overall efficiency of operation (e.g., return of lost, found, or seized property), this initiative achieved the goal of maximizing the amount of useable space in our property and evidence rooms which are undersized for the Department's overall needs.

► Increase full-time police officer staff (FY16 and FY18; \$82,500 annually)

As mentioned in the strategic plan, the Department's complement of 18 full-time officers is well below the federal and state average of 21.6 officers for comparably-sized communities. No patrol positions have been added to the roster since 1998 despite a 40% increase in service calls to the Route 101A business district alone in recent years. Department goals to restructure and improve patrol sector coverage (increasing police presence in our neighborhoods) hinge upon the Department's ability to hire additional personnel. The two positions previously outlined for FY15 and FY17 have been carried forward for proposed implementation in FY16 and FY18.

### **GOAL #4: Improve Facilities and Equipment**

► Replace undercover vehicle (FY 16; \$20,000 one-time cost)

The need for replacement has become greater over the last year amid increased awareness and concerns over distracted driving. New Hampshire's Hands-Free Electronic Device Law becomes effective July 1, 2015, and warrants diligent enforcement. Over the last four years alone, 116 fatal crashes in New Hampshire were caused by distracted drivers (while texting, a driver is 23 times more likely to crash). In addition to facilitating the effective performance of general investigative tasks, an appropriate replacement vehicle would provide an improved means to address this and other important motor vehicle statutes which are otherwise more difficult to enforce.

► Expand and renovate building facilities (feasibility study by FY16)

The original police department was built in 1980 with renovations in 1996. The overall structure is roughly 10,000 square feet with police and EMS each occupying roughly 5,000 square feet. Police stations in comparable communities average 12,000 square feet. With time, the inadequate size of the facility becomes only more apparent. Over the last year, the addition of a much needed part-time administrative assistant has resulted in the loss of the Department's victim assistance room in order to accommodate another desk. The long suggested merger of Amherst Fire and EMS has gained new momentum with the initiation of



Town of Amherst  
**POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
 Strategic Plan FY14-18 Addendum  
*Annual Review of Goals and Initiatives*  
*September 22, 2014*

the Municipal Resources, Inc. (MRI) study which is currently examining the status of those two agencies. The results of the MRI study will help to more clearly define the likelihood of a potential merger and will impact the future path of this initiative.

**Budget Impact – FY16 Initiatives**

<u>FY15 Adopted Budget</u>		<u>Projected FY16 Starting Budget</u>	<u>% Increase</u>
\$2,255,887		\$2,341,018	3.7%
<u>Proposed Initiatives</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Adjusted FY16 Budget</u>	<u>% Increase</u>
Full Time Officer	\$82,500		
Undercover Vehicle	\$20,000		
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$102,500</b>	<b>\$2,443,518</b>	<b>8.3%</b>

**FY16-18 Police**  
**\*Projected Budget Comparison**

	<u>FY16</u>	<u>FY17</u>	<u>FY18</u>
<u>Budget:</u>	\$2,443,518	\$2,555,876	\$2,749,613
<u>% Increase:</u>	8.3%	4.6%	7.6%

*\*Figures include all assumptions and initiatives*



# Town of Amherst POLICE DEPARTMENT

## Strategic Plan FY14-18 Addendum *Annual Review of Goals and Initiatives* September 22, 2014



## Amherst Public Safety Communications Center *Dispatching Amherst Police, Fire, EMS, and Department of Public Works*

### ► Upgrade radio communications equipment (FY14)

Phases one and two of a multiyear communications infrastructure upgrade effort were completed in FY14. The improvements included upgrading to simulcast radio dispatching and the installation of state of the art microwave radio transmission equipment on existing radio tower structures in Amherst. Additionally, a memorandum of understanding was developed with the United States Air Force Tracking Station in New Boston which allowed the installation of microwave equipment on the base's 400 foot tower. That vital communication link has improved radio reception in areas of Amherst which had previously been deficient and has strengthened Amherst's interoperability with surrounding towns.

### ► Improve telephone caller satisfaction rating (FY15)

The Amherst Police Department's FY14 community survey resulted in an 81% *Very Good to Excellent* caller satisfaction rating for the dispatch center. Amherst's dispatchers are the first point of contact for emergency services, and the Communications Center places a strong focus on continual quality improvement. The upcoming FY16 survey will assess potential improvements in that overall rating.

### ► Develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) manual (FY15)

As mentioned in the strategic plan, task-oriented guidelines and protocols have always been in place in order to insure the efficient response of our emergency services. Alongside those protocols, the Communications Center is currently well underway in the development of a Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) manual for FY15. The SOP manual will establish standard administrative and personnel policies that are specific to maintaining the efficient operation of a modern public safety dispatch center.

### ► Increase and maintain yearly capital reserve fund for future Communications Center repairs and upgrades (FY14-18; \$15,000 annual warrant article)

Each year, the Communications Center seeks the addition of \$15,000 to the capital reserve



# Town of Amherst POLICE DEPARTMENT

## Strategic Plan FY14-18 Addendum *Annual Review of Goals and Initiatives* September 22, 2014

fund. The voters once again showed strong support in their approval of this warrant article for FY15. The fund helps to support major communication repairs or upgrades during the course of the year and is also drawn upon when matching funds are required for federal communications center grants. Most importantly, the fund is designed to provide financial security in the face of anticipated, future expenses (such as potential radio tower replacement in 2020, and replacement radio consoles in 2023 – combined expenses which are expected to reach \$180,000).

► Increase yearly in-service dispatcher training hours (FY15; \$2,000 annually)

Quality and continued training is important to maintaining professional standards and adapting to developing trends in the communications field. Funding was approved for FY15 which will enable our Communication Specialists to attend additional training opportunities throughout the coming year. Efforts will be made to insure the continuance of that funding in subsequent years.

### FY16-18 Communications \*Projected Budget Comparison

	<u>FY16</u>	<u>FY17</u>	<u>FY18</u>
<u>Budget:</u>	\$389,463	\$405,122	\$421,614
<u>% Increase:</u>	3.8%	4.0%	4.1%

*\*Figures include all assumptions and initiatives*

## Special Project Update

As previously mentioned, this annual review presented an opportunity to bring forward any Department initiatives which had not been considered within the strategic plan but which were developed and implemented during the past year alongside the strategic planning process.

Beginning in mid FY14, Walmart and the Amherst Police Department began discussions regarding the installation of a Police Field Office within the Walmart Superstore. The concept was rooted in accomplishing two primary goals: increasing police visibility at Walmart, and improving overall police operational efficiency. Walmart's store manager, Tony Tiner, was eager to move the concept forward and quickly gained corporate approval for the project. Manager Tiner and his Walmart team have worked closely and generously with the Amherst Police Department over the



Town of Amherst  
**POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
Strategic Plan FY14-18 Addendum  
*Annual Review of Goals and Initiatives*  
*September 22, 2014*

years, and this project was no exception. In fact, the installation of this Field Office represents the culmination of that longstanding partnership.

The random use of this office will add increased police visibility at Walmart, and is intended to help provide a measure of deterrence to criminal activity at the store which saw a substantial increase in shoplifting detentions in 2013. Officers will now book and release low-risk criminal offenders directly from the Field Office instead of the police station. From an operational standpoint, the Field Office allows officers assigned to the southern district of Amherst to address this and other administrative duties (e.g., conducting interviews, completing reports, etc.) without the need to travel back and forth from the police station in the center of town. Instead of responding from headquarters to a call for service, officers will be able to respond more efficiently from the Field Office which is located directly within their patrol sector.

Walmart Manager Tiner allocated a 300+ square foot area for the project which is situated along the storefront and within direct view of the main parking lot. Manager Tiner then provided the necessary materials and labor to enclose the area for office use and installed a door and observation window which provide direct access to the store. Additional security cameras were installed to increase 24/7 coverage of the parking lot, lobby, and store entrance points. Without Manager Tiner's enthusiasm and dedication, the installation of the Field Office would not have been possible.

The Amherst Police Department next teamed up with longtime Amherst resident, Jack Reed, of JBR Associates. JBR Associates is a construction firm based in Amherst that specializes in the construction and renovation of commercial buildings. Since the company's founding by Jack and his wife, Barbara, in 2004, JBR Associates has undertaken development projects with companies such as TD Bank, Citizens Bank, Granite State Credit Union, Public Service Company of NH, as well as several other commercial enterprises. Mr. Reed generously donated not only his time and design expertise to this project, but also the materials and labor necessary to complete the office interior, along with enough office furniture to outfit the facility.

The Amherst Police Department recognizes the generosity and community spirit put forth by Walmart and JBR Associates, and thanks these two outstanding organizations and their respective leaders for helping our agency realize the core value inherent within our Mission Statement – that of achieving goals through partnership with the community.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mark O. Reams  
Chief of Police



# Town of Amherst POLICE DEPARTMENT *Five Year Calendar*

	<i>FY 14</i>	<i>FY 15</i>	<i>FY 16</i>	<i>FY 17</i>	<i>FY 18</i>
Goals 1.1-1.3 Strengthen Services to the Community					
1.1 Continue to develop and implement community survey	X		X		X
1.2 Improve Department website	X	X	X	X	X
1.3 Increase delivery of community programs		X			
Goals 2.1-2.2 Increase Quality and Level of Officer Training					
2.1 Increase in-service officer training hours		X			
2.2 Graduate all Department command staff from Command Training Institute, Roger Williams University		X			
Goals 3.1-3.4 Improve Internal Department Operations					
3.1 Increase full-time clerical staff ( <i>part-time position in place</i> )		X		X	
3.2 Improve property room inventory management	X				
3.3 Increase full-time police officer staff			X		X
3.4 Participate in New Hampshire Attorney General's Drug Task Force					X
Goals 4.1-4.2 Improve Facilities and Equipment					
4.1 Expand and renovate building facilities (i.e., complete feasibility study of emergency medical service relocation)			X		
4.2 Replace undercover vehicle			X		
Goals 5.1-5.5 Amherst Public Safety Communications Center					
5.1 Upgrade communications center equipment	X				
5.2 Improve telephone caller satisfaction rating			X		X
5.3 Develop standard operating procedures (SOP) manual		X			
5.4 Maintain CRF for long term capital improvements		X	X	X	X
5.5 Increase yearly in-service dispatcher training hours		X			

*Initiatives already completed or on track for completion in FY15*

*Initiatives moved forward to subsequent year(s) or otherwise rescheduled*