



Amherst NH Town Government



***Amherst Police Department
and
Communications Center***
*Strategic Plan Review
September 12, 2022*



MISSION

Protect the lawful rights, freedoms, and safety of all in our community
with compassion, fairness, and respect

VISION

Further enhance accountability, transparency, and effectiveness
in the delivery of services





Strategic Agency Goals

- Initiatives tied to four goals aimed at improving public safety and maintaining overall level of service to the community:
 - *Reduce neighborhood property crime*
 - *Increase traffic safety along town roads and through residential areas*
 - *Reduce the use and availability of illicit drugs*
 - *Maintain professional policing standards and level of service*





S.W.O.T Analysis: *Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats*

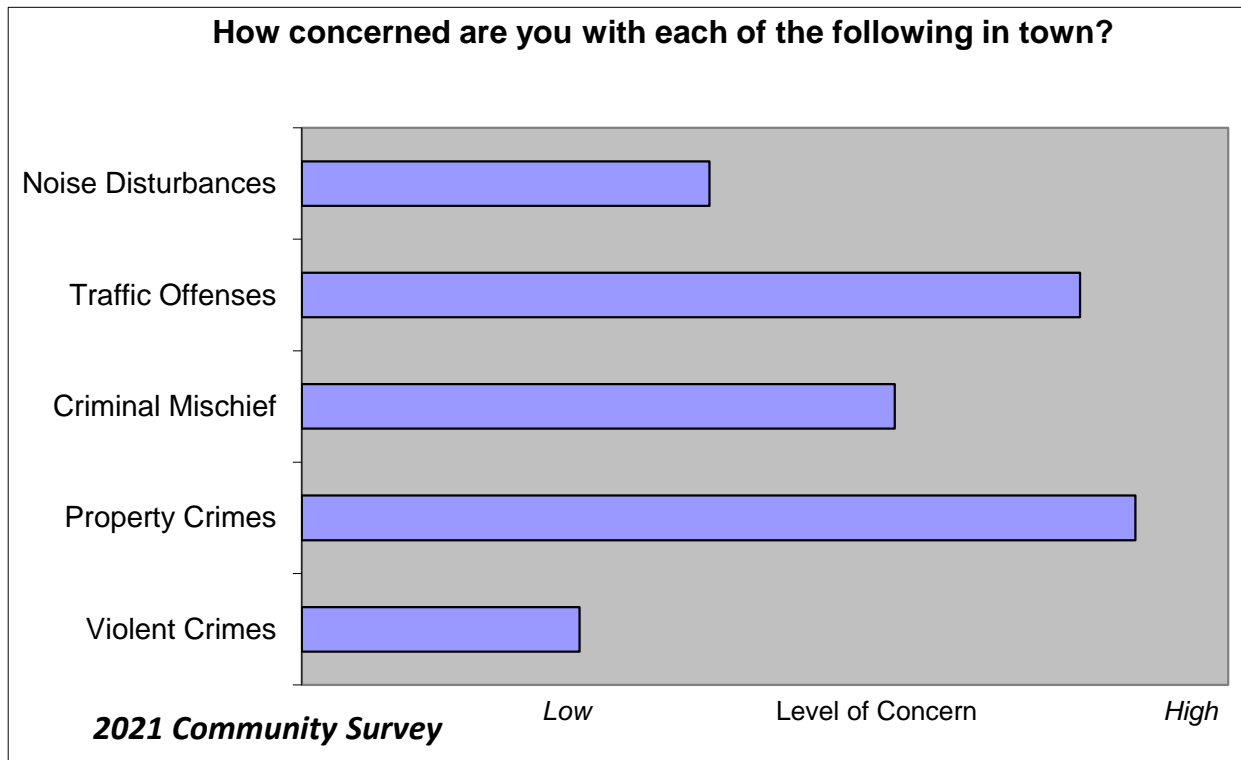
- Strengths
 - Employee screening/hiring process, neighborhood safety, services to schools, infrastructure longevity, community survey practices, accident and criminal investigations
- Weaknesses
 - District Court prosecutor role succession
- Opportunities
 - Enhancing transparency and accountability
- Threats
 - Budget funding challenges, staying abreast of the technology curve





Goal #1: *Maintain reduction in neighborhood property crime*

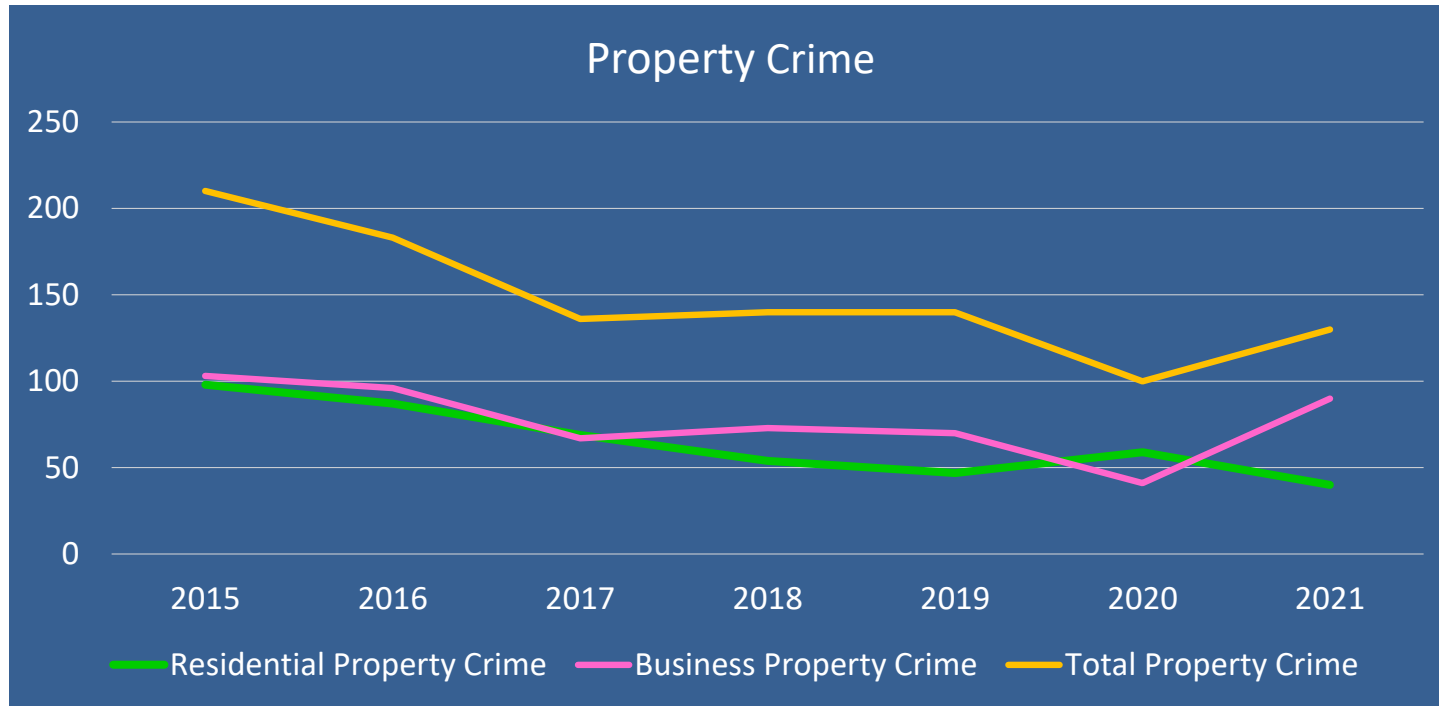
- Five community surveys since 2013 consistently list property crime as one of the top two citizen public safety concerns alongside traffic offenses





Goal #1: continued...

- Original goal aimed at reducing residential property crime by 15% over the course of 4-5 years
- Residential property crime has dropped every year since 2015 (with the exception of an uptick in 2020 attributed solely to theft or vandalism of political signs during contentious election year)



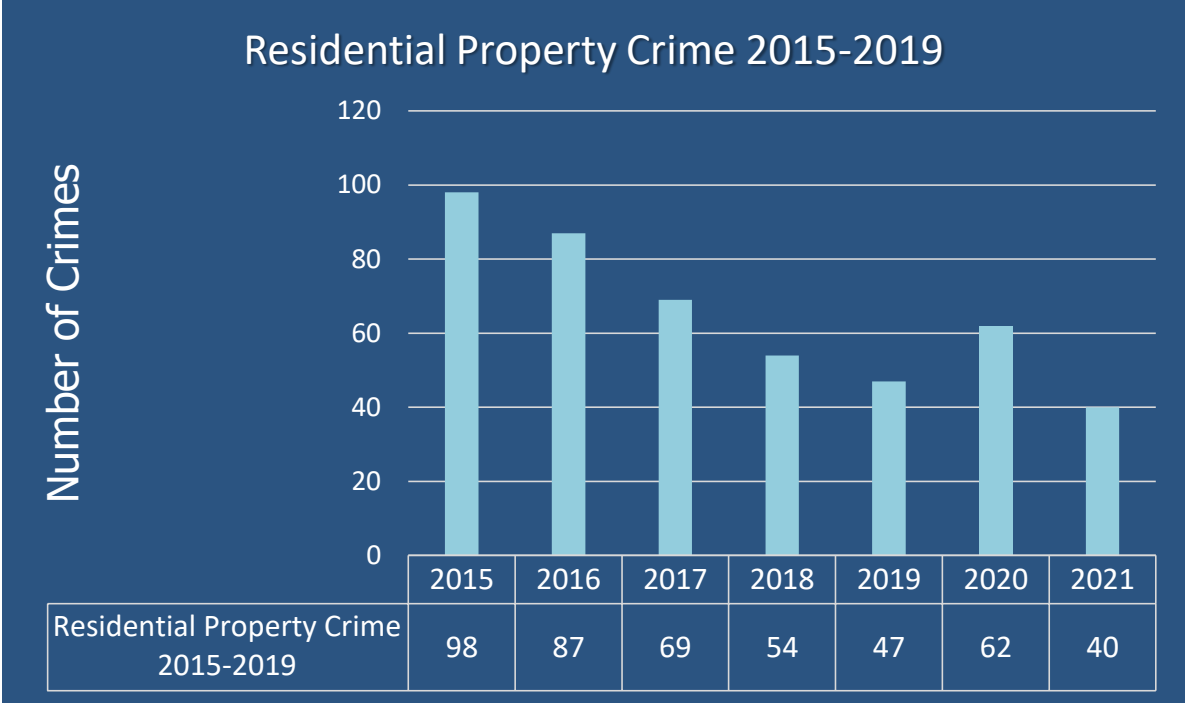
***2021 business property crime rise attributed to increased shoplifting reports at Walmart*





Goal #1: continued...

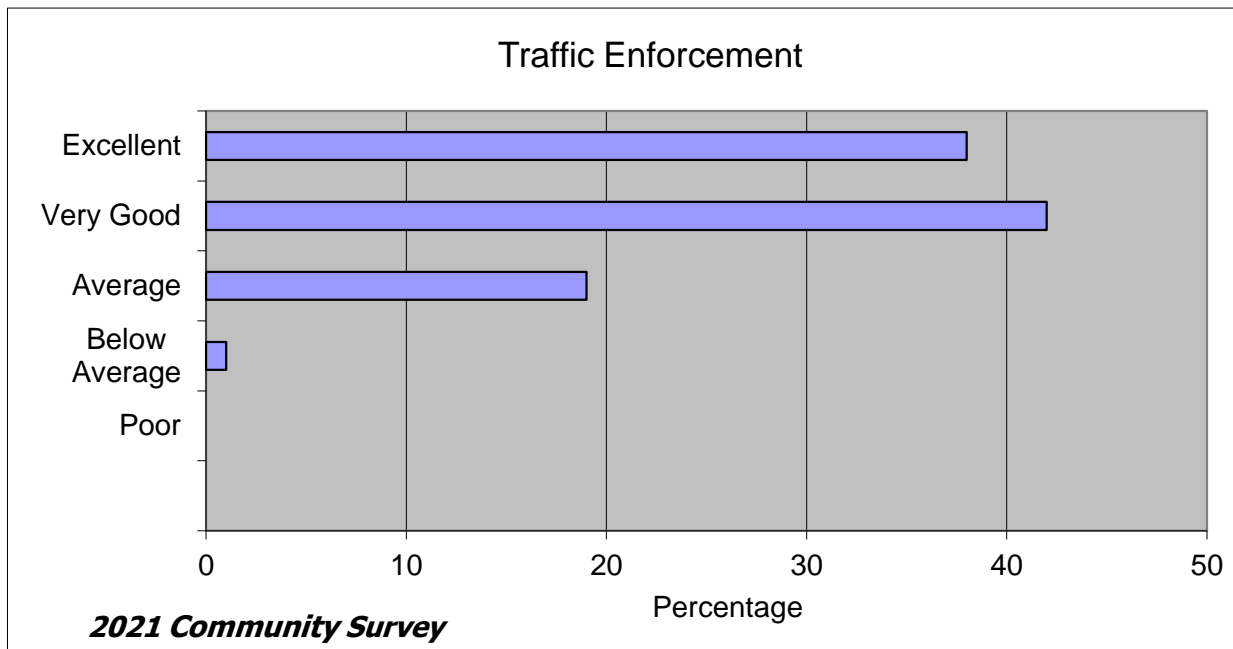
- Continued reduction noted for 2021
- Residential property crime (i.e., burglary, arson, theft, vandalism, trespassing) has decreased a total of 59% from 2015 through 2021





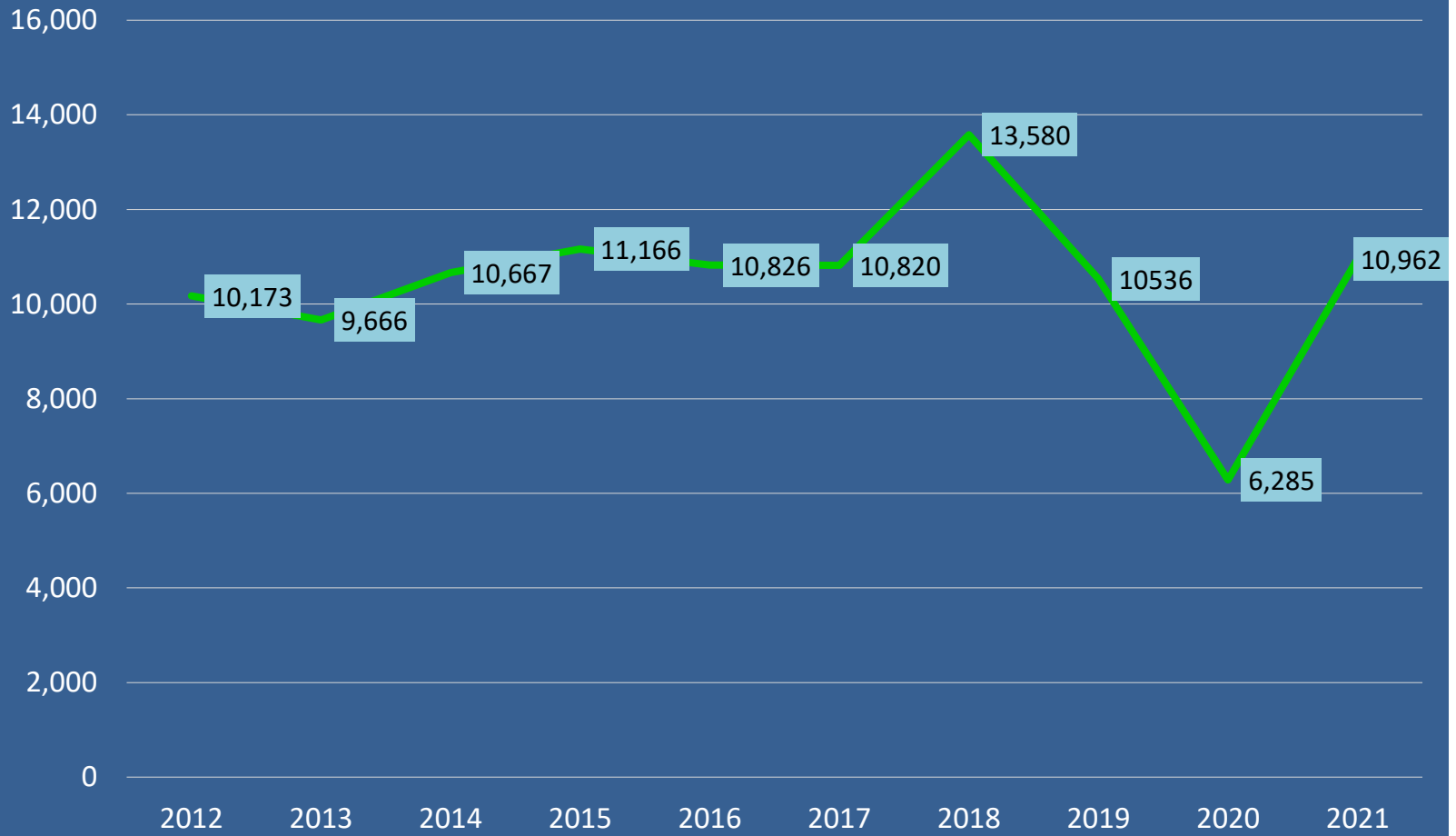
Goal #2: *Increase traffic safety along town road and through residential areas*

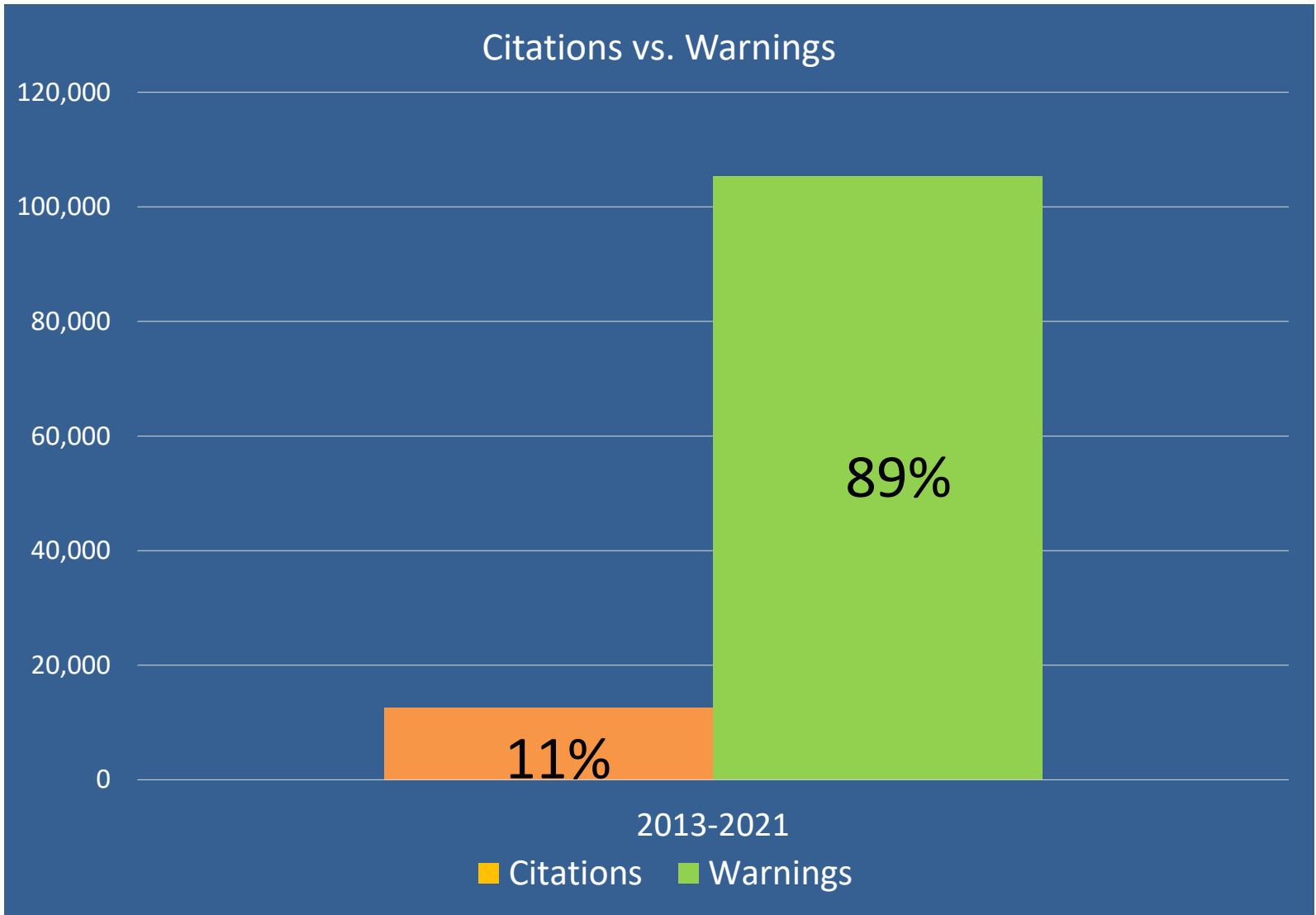
- 2021 survey showed an increase from 75% to 80% approval rating for traffic enforcement since previous 2019 survey





Total Annual Motor Vehicle Stops







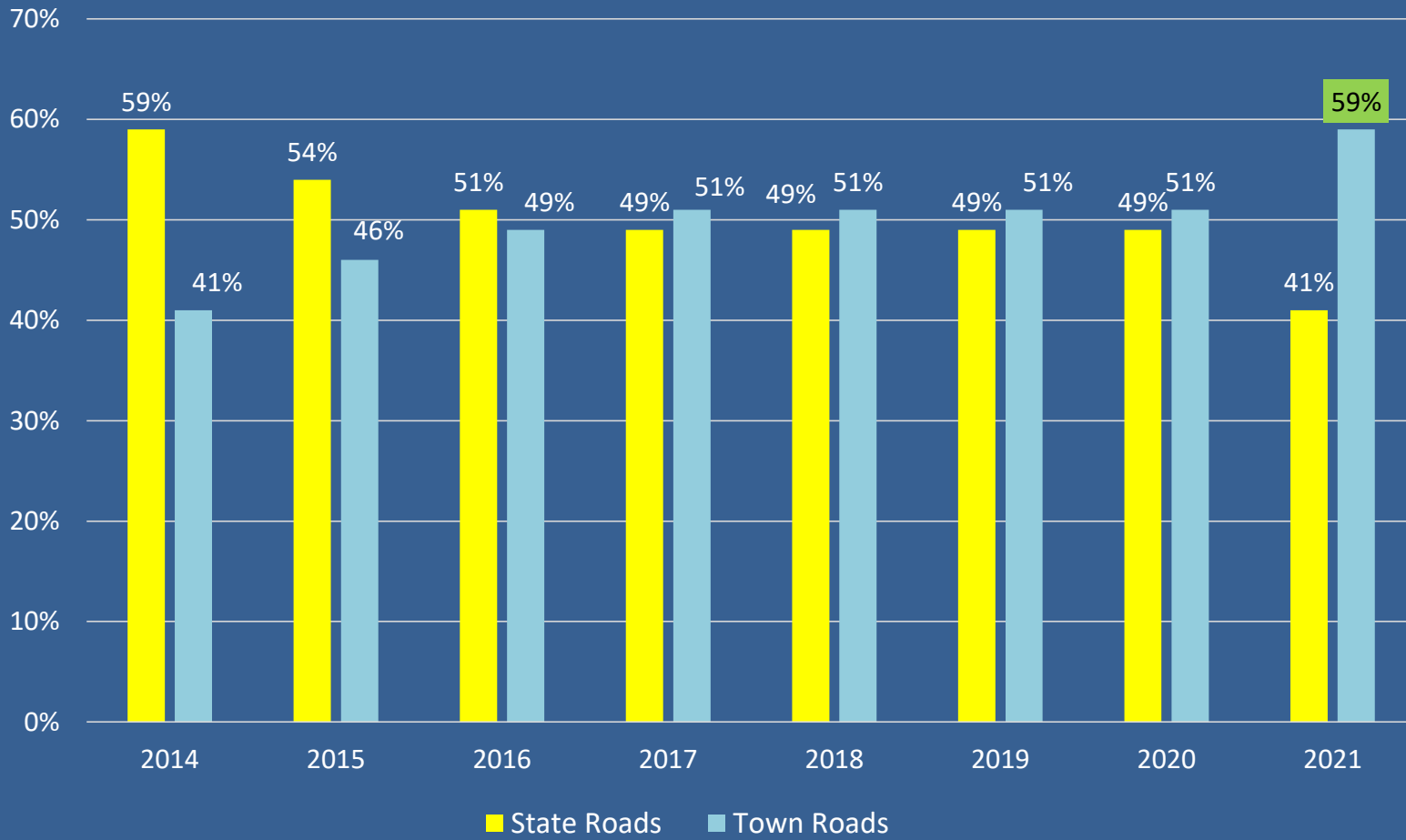
Goal #2: continued...

- Steady officer presence is still required along our two major state roads due to enormous traffic volume
 - Routes 101 and 101A alone account for roughly 66% of total yearly motor vehicle accidents
 - Routes 101 and 101A also account for approximately 60% of total DWI and drug-related arrests
- Agency efforts aimed at improving traffic safety along town roads with an initial increase in enforcement presence of 10-15% by 2021
- Efforts have increased focus on town roads since 2014
- Changes in overall agency operations changed dramatically throughout onset of Covid-19 pandemic
 - Agency was unsuccessful in reaching goal of at least 52% town road enforcement for 2020
- Return to more routine operations in 2021 allowed for increased engagement in roadside enforcement presence along town roads and neighborhoods, exceeding desired goal with 59% of traffic stops occurring on town roads (41% on state roads)





Percentage of Warnings/Citations Issued on State vs. Town Roads

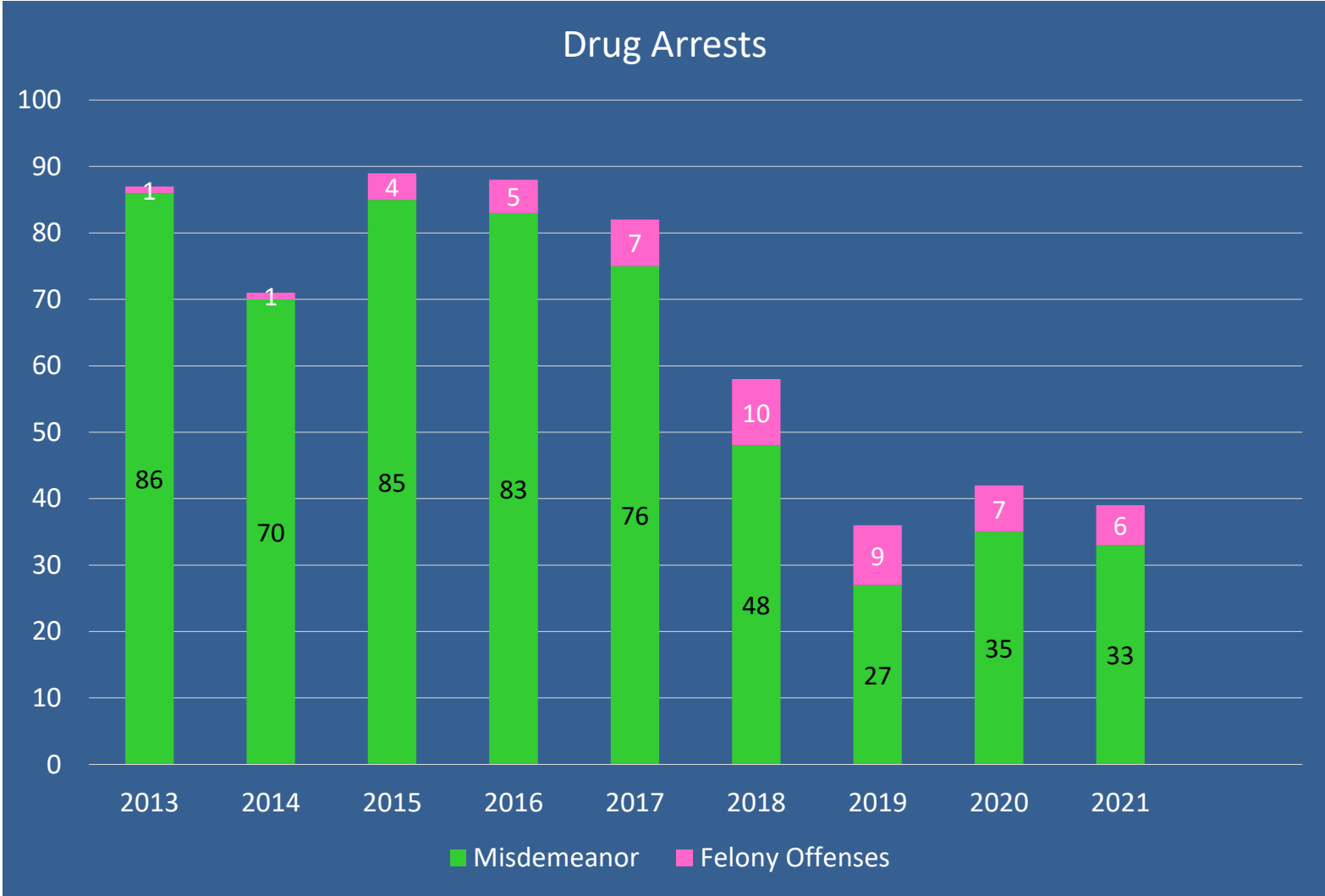




Goal #3: Reduce the availability of illicit drugs

- Department's drug enforcement efforts have always focused on drug resistance education and aggressive investigation/arrest of drug offenders
 - Drug awareness and education (D.A.R.E., School SRO education, etc.)
 - Investigation and arrest of drug offenders
 - Department's drug enforcement efforts have historically centered around traffic enforcement and motor vehicle-related drug interdiction (i.e., arrests and drug seizures during the course of traffic stops)
 - Enforcement efforts beginning in 2015 were augmented with creation of Hillsborough County Street Crimes Task Force and resulting undercover investigatory operations
- Continued impact on drug distribution at its source is necessary alongside drug resistance education and other drug enforcement and treatment efforts
- Department goal to increase major drug arrests by an average of roughly 15% each year through 2020 now shifted forward to at least 2022
 - County task force went unfunded for 2020 and operations were suspended
 - Department's individual drug interdiction efforts still resulted in continued arrests despite protocol changes due to Covid-19 and lack of County funding
 - Task force operations resumed in October 2021 and are currently ongoing







Goal #4: *Maintain professional policing standards and level of service*

- Biennial community survey implemented as part of strategic planning in the summer of 2013, and again conducted in 2015, 2017, 2019, and 2021





Goal #4: *continued...*

- Agency standing and perception tied in large part to maintaining recognized professional policing practices
- Current police station renovation plan is central to maintaining and building upon professional policing level of service
- Phase I of building renovation finished January 2021
- Phase II currently underway with project completion slated for by the end of next month, October 2022
- Renovated facility anticipated to meet the needs of the police department and community for the next 30 years.
- Facility now meets current and anticipated demands for space and community services





Goal #4: continued...

- Alongside infrastructure improvements, Department's strategic plan over the last two years has addressed ongoing Body-Worn Camera (BWC) discussions
- BWC implementation is integral to the Department's vision statement commitment to further enhance transparency and accountability
- State grant funding for BWC programs was made available in February 2022
- The Town's grant application for up to \$50,000 reimbursement was filed in February, and the maximum amount of \$50,000 has since been awarded to the Town (public hearing held on August 22, 2022 to formally accept those funds)
- Current five-year, all-inclusive BWC contract cost is \$161,010
 - 40% (or \$64,404) payment in 2023
 - Remaining payments of \$24,151 in 2024-27
 - Followed by multi-year contract renewal, or continuation on yearly basis





Goal #4: continued...

- Department vision also focused upon maintaining effectiveness in delivery of police services
- Primary focus is continued and future effectiveness of district court case prosecution
- New Hampshire statute allows for police officers to act as prosecutors in district court, not requiring that they be NH BAR certified attorneys
- Amherst has always utilized police-prosecutors since the agency's inception
- In recent years, departments across the state have increasingly shifted away from police-prosecutors and toward attorney-prosecutors
- 80% of departments in Hillsborough County and other comparable towns statewide employ either full or part-time attorney-prosecutors





Towns <i>with</i> Attorney-Prosecutors (32)			Towns <i>without</i> Attorney-Prosecutors (8)
Antrim	Hillsborough	New Ipswich	Amherst
Bedford	Hooksett	Pelham	Exeter
Bennington	Hollis	Peterborough	Gilford
Brookline	Hudson	Plaistow	Greenfield
Bow	Lebanon	Raymond	Lyndeborough
Deering	Litchfield	Sharon	Mason
Fracestown	Manchester	Temple	New Boston
Goffstown	Merrimack	Wilton	Weare
Greenville	Milford	Windsor	
Hancock	Mont Vernon	Windham	
Hanover	Nashua		





Goal #4: continued...

- Attorney-Prosecutor is a part time, independent contractor position with anticipated workload of 25-30 hours weekly and a salary of \$65K-\$80K commensurate with training and experience (see appendix A for sample municipal prosecutor agreement).
- Prosecution duties are currently performed by Support Division Captain.
- Captain to remain in charge of Detectives, School Resource Officers, and Juvenile Court Prosecution, with Attorney-Prosecutor assuming all other District Court obligations and reporting directly to Support Captain
- Support Captain to then assume alternate, added responsibilities of complete Body Worn Camera system and records management, along with Department's new, multi-year initiative to achieve CALEA certification by 2026





Goal #4: continued...

- CALEA (Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies) is the nationally recognized policing standard for law enforcement
- Policy development, implementation, and agency operations are guided by strict accreditation (and yearly re-accreditation) standards to insure compliance with nationwide law enforcement best practices
- CALEA certification represents the next step in the professional development of the Department, and stands as evidence of the Department's commitment to excellence
[Home | CALEA® | The Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc.](#)
- Process of certification takes up to 26 months
- Agency certification (and continuing compliance) requires significant new duties which the Department was previously not staffed to manage
- CALEA certification for all NH agencies recommended in New Hampshire Governor's Council for Law Enforcement Accountability, Community and Transparency (LEACT) in 2021 state LEACT report [Commission on Law Enforcement Accountability, Community and Transparency | Governor Christopher T. Sununu \(nh.gov\)](#)





Towns with CALEA Accredited Police Departments:

Claremont

Dover

Durham

Goffstown

Hollis

Hudson

Keene

Laconia

Lebanon

Londonderry

Manchester

Nashua

Newington

Portsmouth

Stratham

Strafford County Sheriff's Office

Univ. of New Hampshire PD

Bedford*

Hanover*

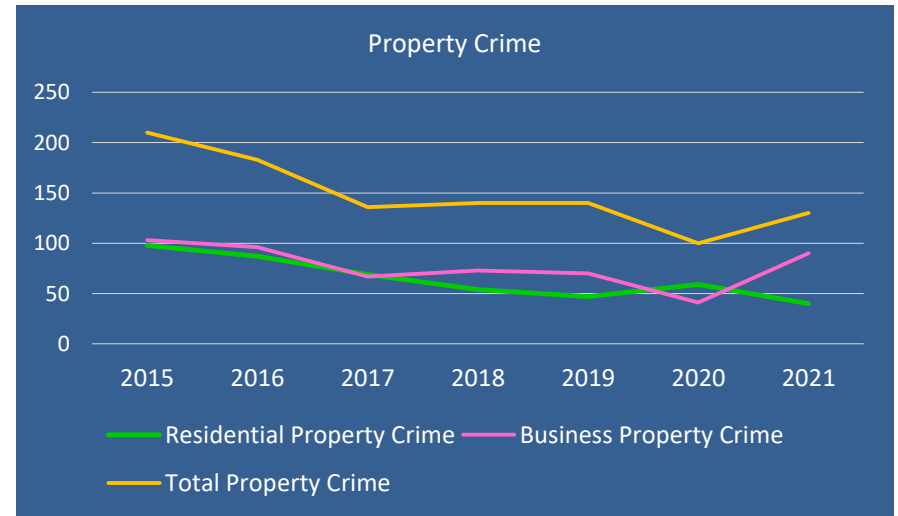
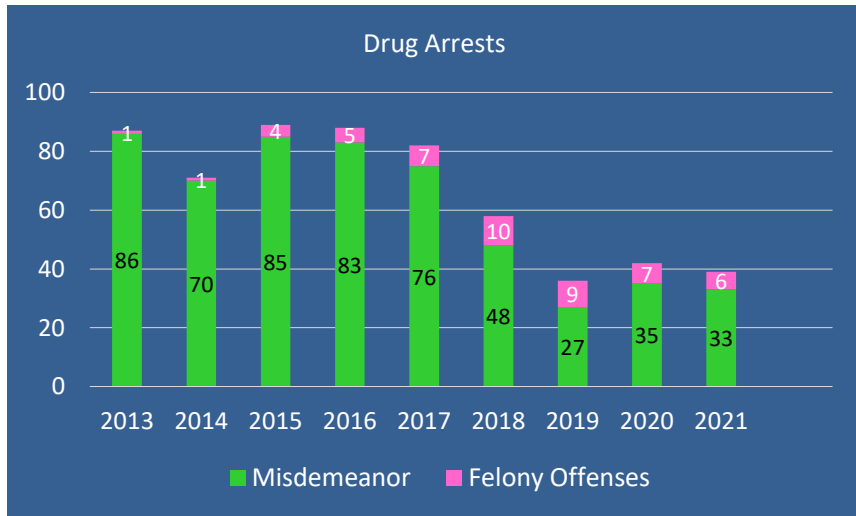
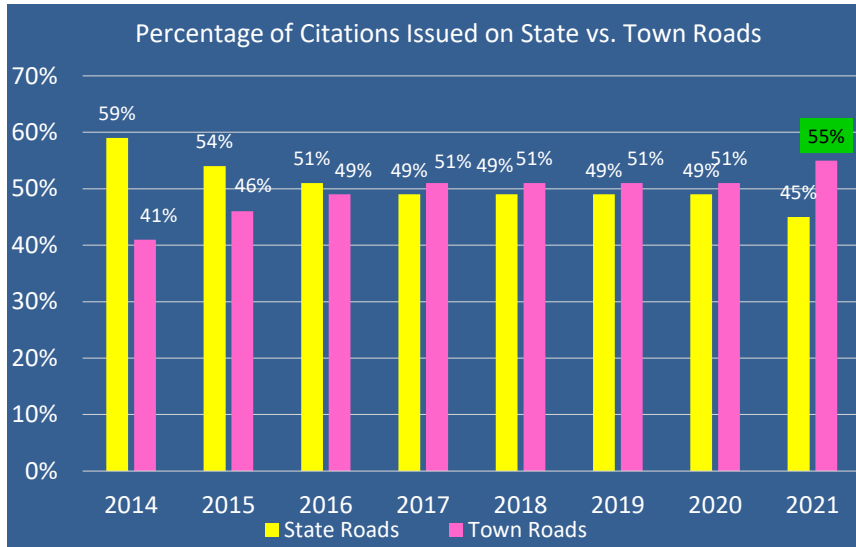
Newton*

Salem*

**currently in process of becoming accredited*



Vision Dashboard





Amherst Public Safety Communications Center





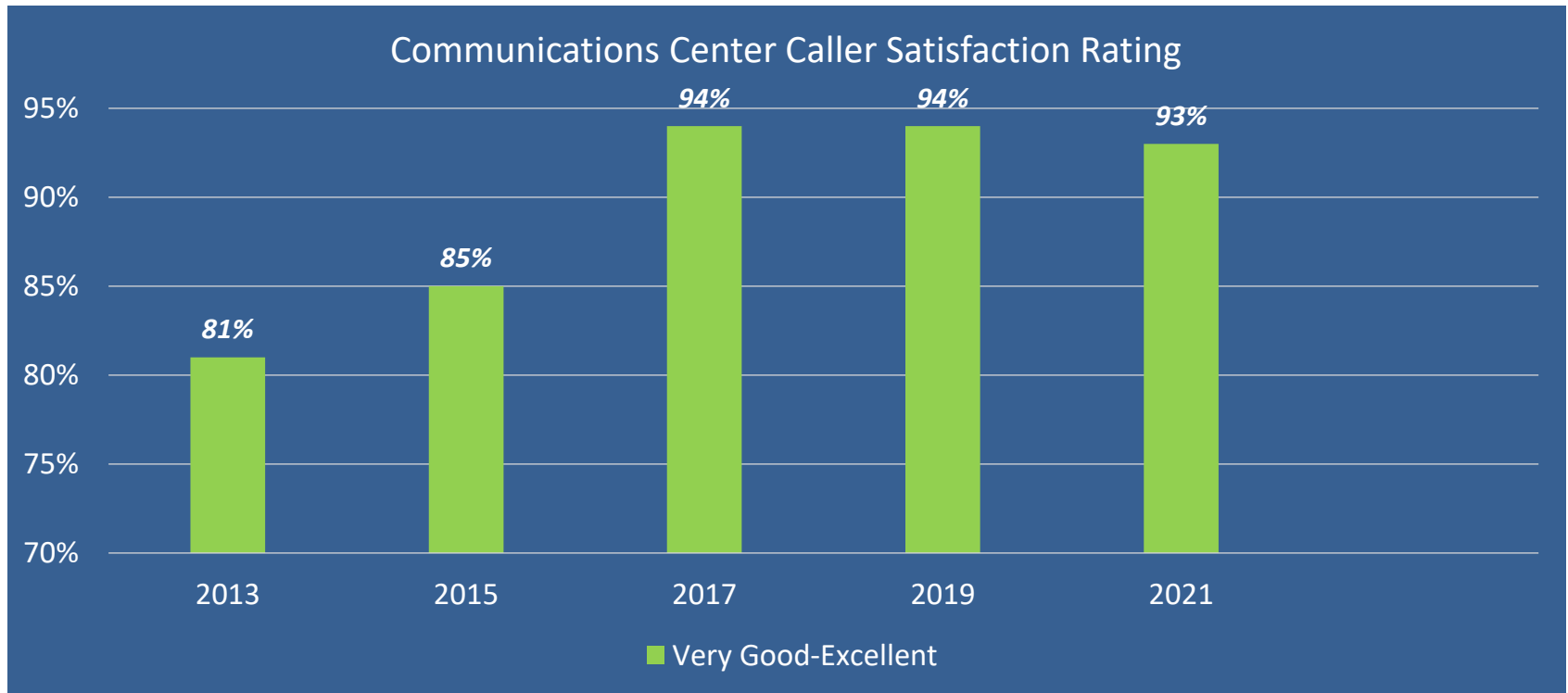
Strategic Agency Goals

- Goal #1: Maintain caller satisfaction rating of 90% or better
 - *In-service training and professional development, management and supervision, employee recruitment and retention*
- Goal #2: Maintain communications infrastructure to provide continued quality public safety services to the community
 - *Continued voter support for yearly Communications Center Capital Reserve Fund warrant articles, prioritized schedule for equipment replacement/upgrade, and regular systems maintenance*



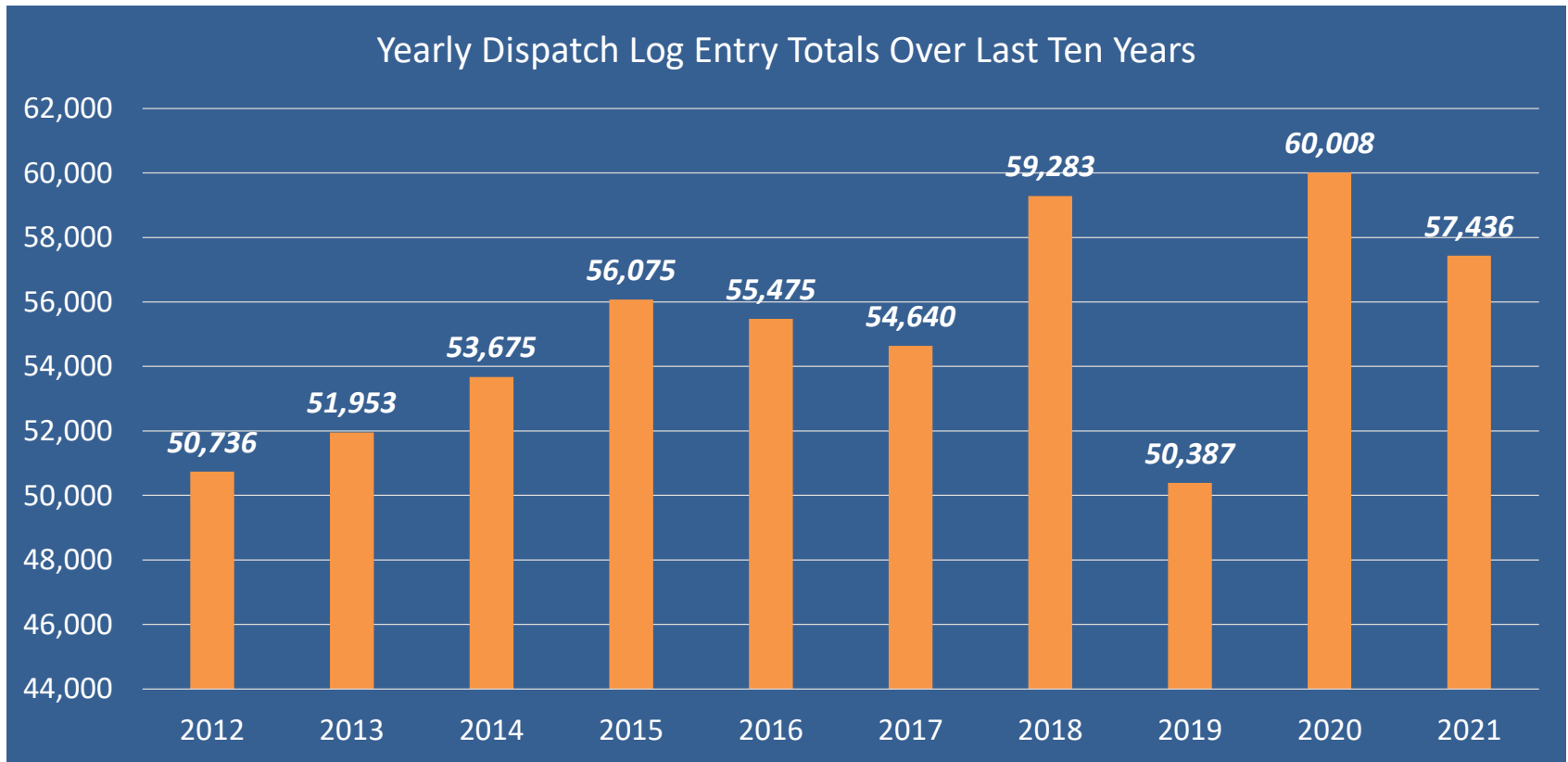
Goal #1: Maintain Caller Satisfaction Rating $\geq 90\%$

- Continued performance evaluation via community survey feedback and public input aimed at maintaining a satisfaction rating of no less than 90%
- Steady increase and maintenance of caller satisfaction rating reflected in four biennial surveys beginning in 2013 (81%) through most recent 2021 survey (93%)





Goal #1: continued





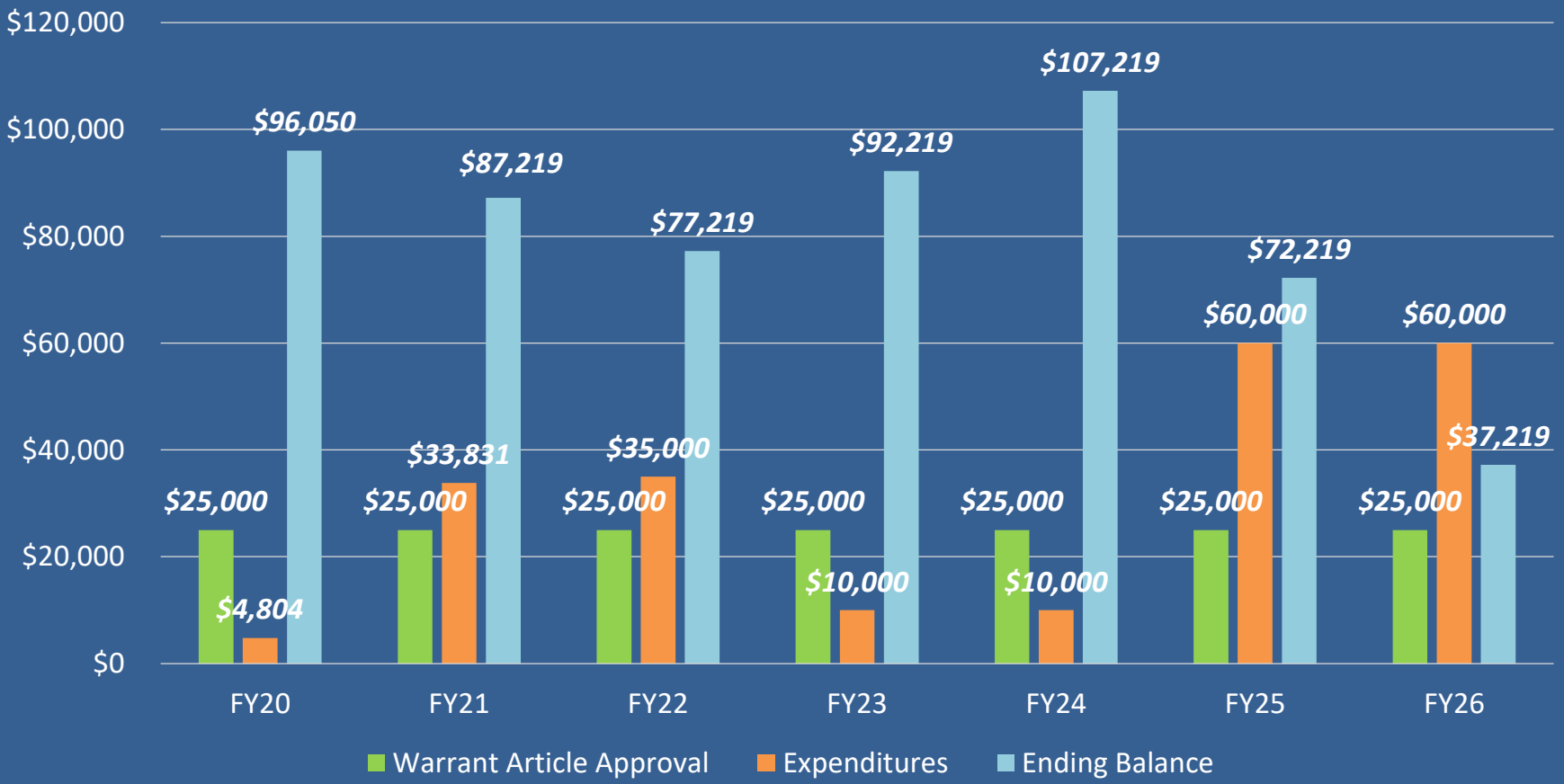
Goal #2: *Maintain communications infrastructure to provide continued quality public safety services to the community*

- Communications Capital Reserve Fund (CRF) established to address major repairs and long term equipment replacement
- Approximately \$95,000 expended on major repairs over the last four years
 - Most recently, \$30,000 allocated for premature microwave radio equipment failure on agency’s north radio tower in August of 2020
- Annual Communications CRF contributions maintained for emergency repairs and anticipated major equipment upgrades and replacement
 - Radio Repeater system grant process resumed for 2023 (cost yet TBD)
 - Radio tower replacement in 2025 (approximate grant match of \$60,000)
 - Radio console replacement in 2026 (approximate grant match of \$60,000)
- *Voters again supported continued annual capital reserve fund contribution of \$25,000 for FY23*





Communications Center Capital Reserve Fund





MUNICIPAL PROSECUTOR AGREEMENT

Appendix

The Town of Amherst Police Department desires to appoint a municipal prosecutor to represent the Town and the State of New Hampshire in cases involving, without limitation, civil causes, violations, misdemeanors, and felonies within the jurisdiction of the 9th Circuit Court – Milford. In some cases, prosecutorial jurisdiction may be preempted by the Hillsborough County Attorney or the New Hampshire Attorney General. Minor traffic violations, grand jury presentations, and juvenile prosecution will continue to be handled by the Bureau Support Captain, the direct supervisor of the prosecutor's office.

Duties

Legal Services: Attorney shall perform the services required of him by the Town as a police prosecutor. Attorney shall perform the full range of prosecutorial tasks with the assistance of the Town, including, but without limitation:

Providing consultation and legal advice to Amherst Police Officers and personnel related to criminal law and proper procedures for enforcing the law;

Evaluating information and reports, reviewing search warrants, questioning witnesses, considering evidence, and giving opinions on merits of cases;

Drafting and filing complaints at the Milford District Court;


Appearing at court proceedings, including: arraignments, pre-trial hearings, administrative license suspension hearings and motion hearings;

Drafting motions, memorandums of law, and pleadings;

Attending to discovery and disclosure matters with defense counsel;

Participating in settlements discussions and plea negotiations;





Working with victims of crimes and ensuring proper adherence to the victim's bill of rights;

Preparation and submission of all felony cases to the Hillsborough County Superior Court "Felonies First" program;

Handlings all phases of trial, including, but without limitation: compelling attendance of witnesses and production of evidence at trial, arguing cases before the Milford District Court, examining and cross-examining witnesses, preparing for defense arguments and all other tasks necessary for the fair prosecution of cases;

Appearing at sentencing and review hearings; and

Arrangement for conflict counsel as needed.

Working Hours and Availability:

The position is a part time and is expected to be between 25-30 hours weekly, although there may be instances that the Attorney and the Town agree that additional hours are necessary to complete the tasks described herein.


Other Employment Allowed:

Attorney shall not be prevented from other employment, provided that such other employment(s) do not create any conflicts of interests, ethical considerations, or otherwise compromise the ability of the Attorney to continue and carry out his duties as the police prosecutor for the Town of Amherst and the State of New Hampshire.

Records:

Attorney is required to keep and maintain records relating to all professional services rendered in the form and manner as required by the Town. All records generated by Attorney, Town, and related materials shall be the exclusive property of the Town, and shall continue to remain the exclusive property of the Town upon termination of this agreement, with or without cause.





Licensing:

The position is subject to and conditional upon Attorney at all times being NH Bar certified and licensed to practice law in the State of New Hampshire.

Continuing Education:

Attorney shall devote a reasonable amount of time and at least the minimum required Continuing Legal Education credits hours, attending professional conventions and otherwise participating in continuing education in order to improve and maintain his professional skills. Attorney shall be responsible for paying the cost of tuition and registration for such activities.


Attorney Reports to Chief of Police or His/Her Designee

Attorney shall be under the direct supervision and shall report to the Chief of Police, or his/her designee. Attorney shall keep the Chief of Police, or his/her designee advised of the status of all legal proceedings in which Attorney is involved on behalf of the Town and the State of New Hampshire. Subject to applicable law and the professional and ethical rules governing the practice of law, Attorney understands and acknowledges that the final decision to file a criminal complaint or enter into a plea bargain agreement is subject to review and approval by the Chief of Police, or his/her designee.

Compensation and Benefits

Compensation and Benefits: Attorney is a professional person and the relationship created by this agreement is that of an **independent contractor**. Attorney is not an employee of the Town, and is not entitled to benefits provided by the Town to its employees, including, without limitation: sick leave, holidays, paid vacations, nor participation in insurance or retirement plans. This part time position will have a yearly salary range of \$65,000-\$80,000 commensurate with training and experience





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