



RYE POLICE DEPARTMENT

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To: Rye Select Board and Budget Committee
From Chief Kevin Walsh *KW*
Date October 16, 2024
Re: Police department Budget Request for 2025

Salaries and Benefits Budget Changes/Retention Dynamics:

Will you hire or add employees next year – replacements, retirements, leaves of absence, etc.?

- There are approximately 3 full-time police employees who can retire today. They are the Chief, Deputy Chief, and most senior patrol officer. The department has full-staff full-time and one part-time position is open. In 2024 Rye police welcomed 2 new babies to our police family. The Chief was out for 5 weeks on medical leave.

Succession Plan - off set

What contract obligations or changes impacted this year's budget, if any?

- One full-time officer will be moving from the start of pay grade to middle or mid pay grade. 10 full-time employees require medical insurance.
- Police are adding a wellness check program. The visits are voluntary. This is part of the general self-care strategy police administration are moving forward for retention. The visit cost \$150.00 visit. This is added in the budget request.

What employment challenges does your department face in this area – succession plans, early retirements, the ability to hire and retain employees?

- Challenges, other police departments continue to approach Rye officers to fill other police agencies vacancies. Area departments have been down 2 to 8 officers. The outside agency recruitment tactics are more money, rank. Health insurance is helpful in keeping police staffing levels full status. Rye police officers created a recruitment video, please use this link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bw-3Gxd9xnU>
- Rye officers have internal opportunities to develop law enforcement careers.
 - Advance training programs, specialized training in areas such as forensics, cybercrime, and community policing. One example is the part-time SRO position, connecting with teachers, parents, and kids at school.
 - Education opportunities, pursuing higher education such as bachelor's or master's degree, public administration. The Rye police employee contract agreement offers reimbursement to employees who have advanced education.
 - Certifications, in 2025, officers must complete 7 hours of implicit bias, de-escalation, ethics, and mental health. They must complete an additional 14 hours of professional development, totaling 24 hours. These hours are exclusive to the already mandated firearms and CPR/First Aid. State Accreditation, which Rye Police is pursuing, also requires annual recertification in

\$9k adjustment - ok

various areas, including domestic violence training and agency policies/procedures. This amounts to approximately 24 additional in-house training hours. Some of the requirements have been offset by police on-line training which can be done while the officer is on shift. To continue with the succession plan of younger officers and to meet accreditation standards set by the State of NH accreditation, I am asking you to increase this line item.

- Promotion Opportunities, the last 2 years we promoted from within the department, Sergeant and Corporal are the supervisors for the operations of the department.
- Leadership training and police administration programs focus on leadership training to advance officers skills that will prepare the officers for supervisory roles and foster effective team management.
- Mentoring, engaging in mentoring, either as a mentor or mentee, provides valuable insights and guidance for career advancement.
- Community Involvement, encouraging all officers to take part in community-related initiatives which enhance visibility and reputation, leading to more opportunities within the police department.

Personnel

Current for 2024?	Full Time	Part Time
Police Administration Chief, Deputy, Lieutenant	2	1
Police supervisors' operations Sergeant, Corporal	2	
Police officers	4	4
Police Administrative Assistant	1	
Additional for 2025?		
None		

Changes in personnel? – Retirements, promotions, new positions
Hiring challenges? – recruitment, retention?

- Staffing: Law Enforcement in New Hampshire's biggest challenge is staffing. Recruiting qualified people for a law enforcement career and retaining police employees is an ongoing process. Seacoast police departments are below average on staffing. Some seacoast departments are running 12-hour shifts to ensure the town has police coverage and contracting Rockingham County Sheriff Department. Deputy Chief Blaisdell and I have been active in retention conversations with Rye officers. Several of the officers have been approached by officers and police Chiefs from other departments trying to take them offering higher salaries and/or special assignments and medical benefits. On 10/01/2024 WMUR interviewed Nashua police chief about retention and staffing shortages. Nashua out of 162 officer capacity has 22 open positions, Manchester 271 officer Capacity has 24 open positions, Rochester 65 officer capacity has 11 openings, State police 360 officer capacity has 64 open positions, North Hampton police 13 officer capacity 6 openings for last 2 years. As of October 1, 2024, Rye police are full staffed. Nashua Chief has interviewed employees resigning the following are some of the reasons. The current climate against police officers, change in the retirement system, an employee makes more money working no nights, weekends, or holidays are the top 3 reasons police officers resign prior to completing a 25-year career.

Operational Costs – (Non-Personnel)

Catastrophic events? – Storms, accidents, equipment failures, unanticipated building maintenance?

- Body Camara Program: Rye officers started using Axon body cameras in June of 2023. Lt Cote and Deputy Chief Blaisdell provided training using department policy and Axon recommendations on how the hardware works. Oversight, Lt Cote, and Sgt. Fuglestad perform the reviews and answer right-to-know requests following best practices and department policy. The current costs for the 5-year body cam program have been covered by 2 grants. NH Homeland Security \$27,482.00 and Lt. Cote researched and applied through Congressman Papas's office. In September of 2024 the Town of Rye was awarded \$40,804.29 to cover the costs for 5-year BMC program \$68,007.15. After 5 years, in the year 2028 the Rye police will need to self-fund the BWC program.
- Highlights of the year 2024: Assisting NH AG office with search warrant at a home in Rye.
 - Burglary of jewelry 2 homes value over \$250,000.00. The investigation took 6 months.
 - Sexual assault adult vs juvenile on the beach
 - Two dog town ordinances that are currently being appealed to the NH Supreme Court based
 - Assisted NH State Police recovering body from ocean.
 - Indecent exposure investigation at the beach
 - Driving While Intoxicated arrests, driver drag by his own car, moped drove into parked car, vehicle crashed into 2 other vehicles and drove off from accident scene.
 - Fraud investigations, checks were cashed multiple times, multiple people reporting scams by phone, online bank accounts.
 - Neighbor disputes have increased.
 - Domestic disagreements, child custody issues, DCYF sending reports of child and elderly adult investigations.

What are the biggest factors driving operational cost changes?

- The biggest factors driving operational costs for Rye police include,
 - Personnel Costs, salaries, benefits, overtime, training expenses for police officers and support staff are the largest portion of the Rye police budget.
 - Equipment and fleet maintenance, costs associated with purchasing, maintaining, and fueling vehicles, as well as equipment such as firearms, technology, and protective gear.
 - Facility Maintenance, expenses related to maintaining the public safety building, utilities, repairs, general maintenance.
 - Community Programs, funding for community policing initiatives, outreach programs, and partnerships aimed at crime prevention and community relations. SRO program at both schools, ID fraud initiatives, elderly outreach, Rye driver compliance plan.
 - Legal expenses related to private attorney to perform prosecuting, attorney appears in court, answers motions, prepares officers and witnesses for trials, answers to NH Supreme Court based on complaints made after a finding of guilty.
 - Responses to Emergencies and Special Events, increased costs associated with responses to natural disasters, public events or emergency situations requiring additional personnel and resources. Wedgewood festival at Rye JR High, July 4th fireworks, Holiday Parade, Rye Lions Car Show, supporting Rye Recreation programs, January 2024 two storms and March storm.
 - Training and Development, ongoing training for officers in areas such as crisis intervention, de-escalation tactics, and legal updates.
 - Mental health and Substance Abuse Services, growing needs for officers to respond to individuals experiencing mental health crises or substance abuse issues, leading to specialized training and resource allocation. Program developed with Seacoast mental health response team.

- These factors contribute to the overall budgetary needs and financial challenges faced by the Rye police department/officers.

Are there any anomalies that occurred this year or will occur next year?

- Addressing anomalies requires a multifaceted approach involving policy reform, community engagement, accountability measures, and enhanced training for Rye police personnel.
 - Use of Force, documenting and reviews of officers' use of force to ensure accountability and transparency.
 - Data Reporting and ensuring reports are documented. Rye police have been using the same police reporting system for 23 years. The current system in the next 5 to 10 years will become obsolete due to the system being DOS-based. In 5 to 10 years, the software company will stop providing security and update support. Currently, we are negotiating with the Rockingham County Sheriff Department. The Sheriff administration has claimed if Rye does not use the new reporting system the Sheriff will either charge Rye police for dispatch service or last the administration said they will stop dispatch services to the police department. There is no more negotiating either we do what the Sheriff department says, or our dispatch service will be discontinued. I estimate \$50,000.00 to \$100,000.00 annually if Rye police request another town or city for police dispatch services. This is not an option. Therefore, the cost and efficiency are questionable in police reports in the future. Articles 06/16/2023 and 07/07/2013.
 - Technology, public safety building video and recording system were updated in 2024. All marked police cruisers have automatic vehicle locators giving reports on vehicle locations, and when emergency equipment is used. Other video surveillance is borrowed based upon the call for service and type of investigation.
 - Training and policies, continued review of best practices and applying the updated standards to current Rye police officers, and then training after policy review.
 - Response times and resources allocated, based on type of investigation and what local resources are available, example a complaint use of force that occurred 15 years ago, outside resources used to document policy, training, equipment was all used within best practices. This was an unintended cost within the budget for 2020. This was done to ensure public perception of trust. Outside the agency used private outside reports to conclude the complaints were not supported by any facts.

Are there plans to manage growing costs or to drive reductions?

- The following are some strategies that are helping to manage growing costs,
 - Police administration creates a detailed budget that tracks all expenses to monitor where funds are being spent.
 - Cost analysis, regularly analyze costs to identify areas where expenses can be reduced or eliminated.
 - Police administration negotiates with suppliers for better prices, payment terms, and bulk discounts.
 - Inventory Management, Police administration optimizes inventory levels to reduce carrying costs.
 - Technology Investments, Rye police have invested in technology that automates processes and enhances productivity. Example tablets in cruiser, reporting software.
 - Employee Training, trained employees improve efficiency and reduce errors that can lead to additional costs.

- Regular Review, monthly reviews of financial transactions and budgets to stay on top of expenses.
- Using these strategies has helped with cost savings over time.

Capital Expenditures

Capital outlay – include explanatory narratives and quotes

- When making decisions for police equipment, police cruisers Police administration look at the communities needs, budget and the latest technological advancements in emergency services. Reliability and versatility are some of the other considerations.
 - Patrol vehicles are SUV, officer and customer storage.
 - Equipped with communications systems, radar, tablet to tele communicate and run driver licenses, license plates.
 - High-performance engine.
 - Versatile configurations for different emergency responses, equipped with tools, equipment storage.
 - Custom built to vehicle manufacture specs as well as equipment police staff require for job performance.
 - Automatic vehicle locator in each vehicle for transparency and accountability.

Warrant articles – include now for informational purposes

- Police officers have requested a police motorcycle to add to the Rye police fleet
 - Number one complaint, poor driving behavior. Traffic Enforcement, a motorcycle is used by officers to enforce traffic laws, control speed, and issue traffic violations to drivers.
 - Emergency Responses, officers can cover more ground in crowded areas, for example Ocean Blvd on crowded summer/beach days. This allows motorcycle officers to reach emergencies faster.
 - Community Engagement, officers on a motorcycle will participate in events and parades, enhancing community relations.
 - Visibility, motorcycles can go in areas a police cruiser can't due to size of vehicles. A violator will not see the motorcycle and officer until after they pass at an unreasonable speed.

Other than CIP submissions what are the possible warrant articles and why they will be needed?

- Currently Rye police and fire are dispatched by the Rockingham County Dispatch Center. The oversight is the Sheriff of Rockingham County. The Sheriff's administrative staff made it clear if Rye police do not sign on with the police reporting system the Sheriff department is going to, they will end dispatch services. Average costs for dispatching services from another agency are \$50,000.00 to \$100,000.00 a year.

Why are these included in the budget as capital expenditures and not as operational costs?

- Police cruises have always been part of CIP. Body worn cameras will be added to the CIP.

How are these part of a strategy/plan to maintain/support/update capital equipment?

- The integration of police vehicles and technology into strategic planning is crucial for modern law enforcement to operate effectively and meet the needs of the Rye community. Utilizing modern

technology such as body worn cameras, automatic vehicle locators, can enhance accountability and transparency, building public trust.

- Police administration evaluates police performance by reviewing crime statistics, meeting with focus groups, developing partnership programs, reviewing body camera footage attend public meetings and forums, using NH accreditation process to evaluate accountability metrics. Police administration has developed a report, 3-year graphs of staffing, calls for service, motor vehicle stops, actions warning or tickets, accident reports, provide a comprehensive evaluation of police performance and its impact on community relations.

DEPARTMENT GOALS & OBJECTIVES:

Past Year:

What has your department accomplished this year?

- State Accreditation: The Select Board has set a goal for the police department to achieve state accreditation standards. Accreditation is a self-initiated process where police operate within a specific set of state and nationally recognized standards and best practices. By providing transparency and accountability, accreditation improves community relations and increases law enforcement professionalism. We are completing an in-house review and revision of guidelines to meet accreditation standards and preparing for a mock on-site assessment. Lieutenant Cote is reviewing and planning the administrative requirements for the reviews. There are some annual costs, membership fees, and dues to be part of the state accreditation process.
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Were you able to meet the department's expectations and/or the needs of the community last year?

- Each year the Rye police administration reviews the following expectations, transparency, accountability, engagement, responsiveness, trustworthiness, communication, reliability, collaboration, integrity, feedback, service-orientation, proactivity, accessibility.
 - Community engagement, after school programs, Rye SRO program. Officers participate in community events throughout the year.
 - Crime reduction, report of thefts from parked vehicles down, burglary reports down and solved with person charged with offense, Sexual assault reports person charged with offense.
 - Enhancing training programs, goals improved for individual officer development, reduced use-of-force incidents reported.
 - Recued traffic crash reports last 6 years. Continue to participate with communities outside Rye with driver compliance plans. Assisted with Portsmouth high students and 4 other communities that make up student body with lawn signs for 5 communities for awareness campaign.
 - Challenged with developing programs designed to keep a fully staffed roster, preventing another police agency or officer leaving for private industry.
 - Challenged with keeping technology and best equipment for officers to use during job performance based on costs.
 - Challenged with developing new programs to keep community and officers engaged due to high costs.
- The police department continues to evaluate progress and success of police and community programs. The officers are motivated to develop more effective police programs and build from the current programs based on community needs and the community expectations.

Were there any key successes you would like to share?

- Lt Cote has an accreditation walk through the Rye police department scheduled for November 1, 2024. This is the first step towards achieving NH accreditation.
- Body Worn camera program, active and entire 5 years paid by State of NH grant and federal grant through Congressman Papas office.
- Purchased 2 new cruisers to remove 1 cruiser with over 140,000 miles from fleet, updated 2 tablets in cruisers so police reporting system can be supported.

Moving Forward:

What are your department goals for next year?

- Goals for the Rye police department
 - Achieving NH Accreditation status.
 - Enhance Community relations, build trust and cooperation between police and community members through outreach programs and participation in local events.
 - Reduce Crime rates, implement more strategies and initiatives aimed at decreasing crime in Rye focusing on prevention and quick responses to incidents.
 - Increase transparency, foster decision-making process to improve public trust and accountability
 - Improve training, provide ongoing training for officers in areas such as de-escalation, cultural competency, and mental health awareness to ensure well-rounded policing.
 - Promote officer wellness, support the mental and physical health of officers through wellness programs, counseling, and fitness initiatives.
 - Utilize technology, influence technology and data information to improve efficiency, prevent crimes, and enhance investigative capabilities.
 - Collaborate with other agencies, work with local, state, and federal partners to come up with steps to solve issues that require a coordinated approach, such as poor driving behavior, theft, burglaries, domestic violence, sexual assault, assaults.
 - Traffic safety, implement initiatives aimed at reducing traffic accidents and promoting safe driving behavior.
 - Diversity and inclusion strive for a diverse police force that reflects the community.
 - Address mental health issues, develop strategies to manage incidents involving individuals with mental health problems, including training officers and partnering with mental health professionals at Seacoast Mental Health.
- These goals give a direction that will help create a safer and more engaged community while improving the effectiveness of the Rye police department.

Create efficiencies?

- Using technology integration, automatic vehicle locator, Body worn camera, using GEO Teamz computer software, crime mapping using report software, using data from traffic counters. Community policing programs, training and employee development programs for police officers and civilian employees. Resource allocation by analyzing crime and traffic data to identify hotspots and assign resources strategically. Team collaboration, encouraging department members to collaborate to share resources and ideas to solve problems. Performance continues to develop and evaluate individual and departmental efficiencies. Regular reviews also identify areas for improvements. Public engagement and transparency, social media and community forums to improve public communication to enhance trust and cooperation. Mental health programs that address community mental health issues, with the goal of reducing calls for service. Policy reviews regular reviews and update policies to ensure they meet current needs and best practices. Funding and Grants, seek out grants and alternative funding sources to support innovative programs and technology to improve service and efficiency.

- By implementing the above strategies, Rye police have improved efficiency in serving the people of Rye.

Solve hiring/retention issues?

- The current Rye police administration has developed strategies, improved mental health, and developed a volunteer wellness program for mental health support. Physical health program with medical insurance providing diet and exercise programs an employee can get from town current health insurance provider. Better recruitment practices by making a recruitment video and proving a healthy work environment using the best practices. Police administration encourages creating employee development opportunities, for example teaching at the police academy.

IT initiatives to streamline operations?

- Body worn camera, enhances transparency and accountability for officers. Reduced complaints and streamlined the process for court trails.
- Geaoteamz software system, connected to dispatch and Rye fore. Ability to see calls real time, all building and Town of Rye infrastructure available at touch of screen, example both school floor plans and emergency operation plans.
- Cruiser automatic vehicle locator program.
- The police reporting system needs to be updated and working efficiently.
- Firearms program, rifles and side arms replaced 3 years ago in good working order.
- Rye driver compliance plan, Jamar traffic counter still working outdated, digital speed sign.
- Tasers, (6) need to be replaced every (5) years. (3) one year (2) the other year. This is for (14) officers.
- (5) radar units for (6) cruisers, radar units are outdated. Handheld radar outdated does not work.
- (6) cruisers (2) unmarked, Chief driving cruiser no police radio, (5) have police radios (10) years old, light bars (12) years old, cages replaced due to Ford model change over last (3) years. (4) computer tablets, (2) new (2) (3) years old.
- (3) cell phones for 4 marked cruisers. Cell phones are (5) years old.
- Portable radios (9) (9) are 4 years old (4) 20 years old. Total portable radios (13) for (15) full and part-time officers.

If you fell short this year, what needs to happen to close the gap?

- Purchasing equipment for efficiency and keeping equipment up to date. Some equipment so old vendors cannot find parts for.
 - Digital evidence management system, scanning, needs to be purchased.
 - Finger printing system, old school ink, need to update to digital finger printing machine.
 - Unable to ensure marked police units responding to emergencies are not under 100,000 miles. Cruisers have outdated equipment on them.
 - Purchase 1 police radio for the 6th cruiser with no radio.
 - Radio reception is poor along the coast.

- Update TASER model so they are compatible with Body Worn Cameras. Increase the number of TASERS one for each police officer.
- Replace (5) radar units with up-to-date equipment and purchase a (6th) one so all police cruisers marked and unmarked have radar units.
- ID marker not working due to out dated software.

Do you see the needs/expectations of the community changing over the next three or so years?

- Types of calls police officers are responding to. Benchmark and Webster at Rye are not educating and retaining staff and calling town emergency services to control patients. New businesses developing and creating quality of life calls for service for police and fire as the business expands business footprint.
- Financial plan to fund the Body Worn Camera program.
- Fund dispatch should Rockingham Sheriff department decide not to provide service or funding available if the Sheriff decides to charge dispatch services. That has been brought to me twice by the Sheriff administration.
- Replace police, fire, EMD radios that are 18 years old inside Public Safety Building.
- Replace the 6 police computers inside the Public Safety Building with updated computers.
- Review full-time staffing levels based on community expectations.

What must happen in this department to keep up with those changes?

- Budget Committee support to fund the programs listed above.

What are the largest risks or threats to the department - market/environmental/demographic changes?

- Community relations, strained relations between Rye police officers and community, often due to national / media attention involving police misconduct or use of excessive force. Negative media portrayal can lead to a lack of public trust and support for law enforcement.
- Funding and resources, budget restrictions or cuts or reallocations can limit resources for training, staffing, equipment, and community programs.
- Social Unrest, protests and movements advocating for police reform can impact departmental operations and community interactions.
- Cybersecurity threats and increasing reliance on technology exposes departments to cyber-attacks, potentially compromising sensitive data.
- Recruitment and retention, challenges in attracting and retaining qualified personnel due to public perception, or competitive job markets. Basically, other police chiefs are offering more.
- Changing crime trends, the rise in cybercrime, drug-related issues, and domestic terrorism requires Rye police and law enforcement to adapt strategies continually.
- Legislative changes, new laws regarding policing practices, use of force, and accountability can significantly affect how department operates.
- Demographic shifts, changes in community demographics may alter the dynamics of policing, requiring departments to adapt to new cultural situations.
- Mental health, increasing encounters with individuals experiencing mental health issues pose challenges for Rye police officers responses to calls for help and training.