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www.townofblandford.com

Overview

- Background
- You did what?
- How did you that?
- What We Learned



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Background



- June, 2018 – Police Chief of 10 years moves on.
- Opportune moment to explore.
- Interim Police Chief appointed.
- July, 2018 – 4 member part-time police force resign:
 - **New York Times:** “Massachusetts Town Loses Its Entire Police Force as All 4 Members Quit”
 - **USA Today:** “This Massachusetts town’s entire police department resigned, four officers in all”
 - **ABC News:** “Entire police department resigns, saying town ‘seemingly cares so little about us’
 - **CNN:** “Entire police force resigns in small Massachusetts town”
 - **The Republican:** “Former Blandford Police officer said entire department quit to make bold statement”
 - **The Republican:** “Entire four-member Blandford Police Department resigns, blaming town for creating unsafe working conditions”
- September, 2018 – New Interim Police Chief appointed.
- Town leverages state resources to explore several options to meet policing needs including feasibility of sharing police services with bordering community.
- Inter-municipal Agreement between the Town of Blandford and Chester established creating the Chester/Blandford Shared Police Services Partnership.

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You did what?



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How did you do that?

- District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA):
 - Administered by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), secured contract with NOVAK Consulting to review the inter-operability of both police departments and assess potential benefits or obstacles associated with consolidation or sharing of personnel, facilities, or equipment.
- What We Learned:
 - Both Town's agreed creating a separate district was not of any interest and that cross-jurisdictional sharing on a contract 'fee-for-service' basis was the way to go.
 - Many of the obstacles that often complicate consolidation efforts, such as the potential elimination of supervisory positions, do not exist.
 - Both have part-time police departments that work limited schedules, generally providing less than 25 hours of patrol per week, with coverage provided during other hours by the Massachusetts State Police, a situation that allows for considerable flexibility in structuring a combined department.
 - Both employ the same part-time Chief of Police, who is familiar with the characteristics of each town.
 - Blandford's Police Department currently has no other employees, leaving it in a position to rebuild from the ground up.
 - Chester officers have been periodically patrolling Blandford during recent months in the absence of regularly scheduled Blandford patrols, and have begun to develop mutual familiarity with the Town and its residents.
- Obstacles to Mitigate:
 - Identify Host Community.
 - Identify the most appropriate arrangement through an Inter-Municipal Agreement for shared services.
 - Design a command/supervisory structure and work plan for the shared police department and hire police officers as appropriate to provide coverage.
 - Design of uniforms, patches, and vehicle markings.
 - Standardize weapons and related equipment.
 - Adjustment of pay scales.
 - Merge files and records management system.
 - Standardize/upgrade hardware and software.
 - Standardize rules/policies and procedures.
 - Transfer of Blandford dispatch services from Berkshire Control to Northampton Control.
 - Revise dispatch protocols with Northampton Control and Massachusetts State Police.
 - Set standards of services for each community.
 - Determine the financial contribution, if any, expected of each town toward any necessary facility and equipment enhancements.
 - Determine operating costs to be borne by each municipality, future cost escalators, and payment processes.



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How did you do that?

- Efficiency & Regionalization (E&R) Grant:



Activity/Task	Estimated Cost
Purchase of dual band portable radios	\$13,000
Purchase of Digital Vehicle Repeater Systems	\$20,000
Crime Star Records Management System license	\$300
Standardization of software	\$1,000
Standardization of uniforms, patches, etc.	\$1,000
Re-marking of cruisers	\$2,500
Legal	\$3,600
Consultants/Misc.	\$2,000
TOTAL:	\$43,400

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What We Learned



- Program Related Benefits:
 - Double the services for roughly the same cost.
 - Greater coordination of coverage, perspective, and services for the towns under the supervision and direction of one skilled and qualified police chief.
 - Sustainability, improved retention.
 - Increase in service response.
- What we learned overall:
 - No 'one-size-fits-all' solution.
 - Anything is possible.
 - You get what you plan for.

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