



Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET

SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

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**JOINT MEETING OF THE SIMSBURY BOARD OF SELECTMEN
AND POLICE COMMISSION**

**Special Meeting – January 22, 2024 – 5:00 P.M.
Main Meeting Room, Simsbury Town Hall**

CALL TO ORDER

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PRESENTATION

a) Police Commission FY 24/25 Budget Priorities

ADJOURN



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BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING AGENDA SUBMISSION FORM

1. **Title of Submission:** Police Commission FY 24/25 Budget Priorities
2. **Date of Board Meeting:** January 22, 2024
3. **Individual or Entity Making the Submission:**
Marc Nelson, Town Manager
4. **Action Requested of the Board of Selectmen:**
This presentation by the Police Commission is informational and no Board of Selectmen action is needed this evening.
5. **Summary of Submission:**
The Police Commission is presenting to the Board of Selectmen their priorities for the FY 24/25 Budget. Presenting for the Police Commission today is Jenna Caulfield, Chair of the Police Commission.
6. **Financial Impact:**
The Police Commission budget priorities will be reviewed and considered during the development of the FY 24/25 operating and capital budgets.
7. **Description of Documents Included with Submission:**
 - a) Police Commission FY 2025 Budget Priorities Memorandum
 - b) Presentation Slides (forthcoming)



Simsbury Police Commission

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COMMISSIONER TRAVIS C. SCHWEIZER (CHAIR)
COMMISSIONER JENNIFER M. CAULFIELD
COMMISSIONER TENESHA GRANT
COMMISSIONER ERIC LEMKE
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL T. LONG

It is the mission of the Simsbury Police Department (SPD) to provide quality community policing service in a professional and sensitive manner. It is the practice of the Simsbury Police Commission, in accordance with the November 2020 Memorandum of Understanding between the Board of Selectmen, Town Manager, and Police Commission, to review the policies and practices of the SPD to ensure that the citizens and taxpayers of Simsbury receive the services they need at a fair and reasonable cost. To continue to provide quality service to our community, while mindful of the costs involved and the fiscal realities of 2024-25, the SPD has identified the priorities below for the fiscal year 2025 budget. The Police Commission has reviewed and discussed these priorities with the SPD and concur that the priorities identified are necessary and reasonable to provide the citizens of Simsbury with the services they deserve.

OPERATING BUDGET PRIORITIES

STAFFING: The SPD currently employs 39 sworn officers, 7 dispatchers, 4.5 professional staff, and 1 animal control officer. It is authorized for 42 sworn officers. It is actively recruiting to fill the three current vacancies for sworn officers. The current climate makes filling these positions with exemplary individuals challenging and time consuming. Even when the SPD has filled all of its available positions, officers are asked to work past their scheduled shifts to ensure appropriate coverage. Furthermore, when at full staff, Simsbury still falls below the comparable towns, state, regional, and national rates of 1.8-2.1 officers per 1,000 residents. Simsbury is at 1.68 officers per 1,000 residents.

In December 2022, the town retained CERTUS Public Safety Solutions to perform a staffing study of the SPD. In July 2023, CERTUS submitted its completed *Police Department Staffing and Workload Study*. CERTUS concluded:

The Simsbury Police Department is an excellent organization. The quality of the management, and the dedication to public safety by its employees is outstanding. The structure and organization of the department are sound. The patrol schedule is well-designed and personnel deployment and staffing are consistent with the workload demands. However, additional resources are required (CERTUS Public Safety Solutions, *Police Department Staffing and Workload Study, Simsbury CT*, page 88).

It specifically recommended that the SPD add five staff members: two sworn officers (CERTUS at p. 52); two civilian records clerks (CERTUS at p. 81); and, a civilian police clerk to cover various administrative duties (CERTUS at p.11).



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The SPD needs additional sworn officers. Again, the current climate is such that the SPD has not filled three sworn officer vacancies, therefore it is not seeking authorization for additional sworn officers at this time. Should the SPD fill these vacancies in a timely manner, it will seek authorization for the recommended, additional, sworn personnel. In the interim, the SPD staffing priority is:

- **Two Civilian Police Clerks:** One SPD part-time police clerk position has not been filled since it was vacated in 2015. Reinstating this position at a full-time capacity, as well as adding one more full-time clerk position will create workload and office space efficiencies, lessen the workload of current sworn officers covering some of these duties, and modernize procedures. It would also allow the SPD to resolve backlogs in records, some of which are several years old (CERTUS at p.11).
 - Scanning Project and Management: Various documentation, like pistol permits, can be digitized and the data management process can be digitalized. This would free up physical space and create efficiencies in access to these records.
 - Assistance with current tasks such as fingerprinting, data entry, and administrative support for the training sergeant may be provided by a police clerk.

OVERTIME: The SPD overtime budget should be increased to \$325,000.00. The overtime expenditure for FY23 was \$384,837 (\$109,837 over budget). The expected overtime expenditure for FY24 is \$400,000 (\$100,000 over budget). Overtime continues to increase due to low staffing levels from vacancies, leave (i.e., vacation, sick), and extended leave due to injury, illness, etc. It cannot be lowered without sacrificing services which we cannot condone.

- SPD overtime usage is NOT solely a function of staffing.
- Overtime is used in holdover situations where an officer is involved in a case and must work past their assigned hours to complete necessary duties.
- Overtime is used to backfill critical positions, such as the School Resource Officers, due to vacation, medical leave, etc.
- Overtime is used to suppress and investigate spikes in criminal activity, support community events, and manage large-scale, complex, or lengthy investigations.
- It is used to support programs such as the Police Cadet Program and the Citizens Police Academy.

VEHICLES:

- Three Hybrid Police Cruisers
- One Administrative Vehicle



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CAPITAL NON-RECURRING

STATE MANDATED:

- Body Worn Cameras and Dash Cameras: SPD is still within the contract time period with for these cameras and services (renewal is in FY26). The expense for FY25 will be \$47,424.
- Interview Room Recording System: The current contract for these services expires in December 2024. SPD can renew it in FY25 for \$4,700.

RENOVATION/CONSTRUCTION: The town's facility study, as well as the CERTUS study, support the need for a new police facility. In the interim, the SPD, Town Manager, Town Engineer, and Police Commission have collectively looked at ways to meet some of the immediate short term (five year) needs through renovations or construction.

- Renovations of the current records office space to create workspace for two additional police clerks.
- Renovation of the records storage location near the existing gym.
- Renovated space will be standard, non-specialized office space, that could be used by any town department when the SPD has its own facility.

BALLISTIC VESTS: Ballistic vests have a 5-year expiration date. Two officers will require ballistic vest replacement in FY25. In addition, filling of the three vacant positions will require new vests. The estimated cost is \$5,000, though the SPD will seek opportunities for a grant reimbursement (of up to 50%) through the Bureau of Justice Assistance Bulletproof Vest Grant Partnership to defer some of this cost.

TASERS: The tasers were replaced this year with the most current model and are contracted with the manufacturer for service and warranty. FY25 is year two of the contract and the cost is \$37,261.