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EXETER POLICE DEPARTMENT SPATIAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

Municipal Resources, Incorporated, (MRI) of Plymouth, New Hampshire was engaged by Lavallee | Brensinger Architects to conduct an independent assessment of the current and anticipated spatial needs of the Town of Exeter Public Safety Complex facility located at 20 Court Street, Exeter, New Hampshire.

METHODOLOGY

MRI Director of Police Services Sean Kelly met with Lavallee | Brensinger Architect Robert C. Robicsek, Exeter Police Chief Steve Poulin, Deputy Chief Michael Munck, and Lieutenant Steven Bolduc at the Exeter Public Safety Complex to gather an overview of practical uses of existing space needed for the assessment. Though the physical structure was assessed by an MRI team in the broader sense of a combined public safety services complex, Mr. Kelly's study was limited to the practical space use of those areas occupied and used by the Exeter Police Department.

Mr. Robicsek described planning and design challenges to the structure due to original construction, property lines, the potential of nearby historic buildings, and other limiting factors. Chief Poulin explained that the original structure had been renovated several times since the original 1978 construction to meet the needs of the department. During a tour of the facility, Chief Poulin pointed out spaces that had been adapted for use by closing otherwise publicly accessible areas, the installation of space sharing furniture, construction of flooring where an atrium previously existed, repurposing of hallways and storage closets et al.

Additional data was collected during a comprehensive tour of every police department space within the existing structure and of the town owned footprint immediately surrounding the building. Outbuildings at off-sight locations were briefly described but not toured. But for noting the desirable and recommended call for centralized services in one building/facility, these outbuilding spaces are not considered in this assessment.

The current Exeter Police Department facility provides workspace for forty-eight full and part-time police officers and non-sworn employees. Chief Poulin and his staff led a tour of the two-story police facility and those areas shared with the Exeter Fire Department. Senior police department staff comments were augmented by those of employees occupying/working in the spaces being toured, as applicable.

Common uses of rooms by commanders, supervisors, patrol officers, detectives, administrative support staff, records clerks, prosecutors, victim/witness services, and other practical users of the facilities were described and observed. MRI observations, and narrative by staff, provided insight to the current state of space usage, frequency of use, storage, public access to needed services within the facility, safety/security, privacy, workflow, and other commonly experienced uses of the structure. Externally, MRI noted accessibility, parking, and physical security features of the structure, as well as externally positioned critical communications infrastructure.

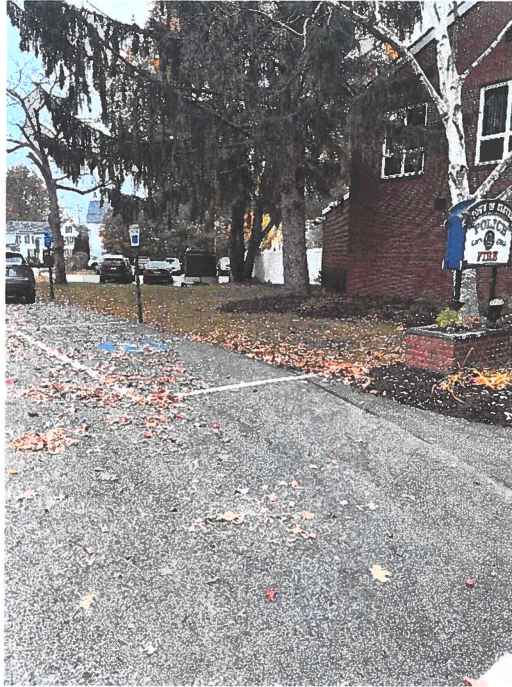
A description of the organization and operations of the Police Department by the leadership staff identified the departments' immediate needs, what programs are currently provided to the community, what staffing levels exist and are anticipated, what special needs each "division" within the department organizational structure may have, and what activities or other work-by-type classifications are important to be adjacent (or readily accessible) during day-to-day operations of the department. The impact of community expansion outside the historic "downtown" to areas along Routes 27, 108, and 101 was discussed relative to the ability of the department to deliver swift and effective police services.

Current and future needs for practical police operations, support services workspace, workflow, evidence retention/storage, records retention/storage, employee locker space, crime victim and witness privacy issues, conference/meeting space, training needs, agency owned property storage space, and safety/security are critical issues.

This report concludes with a summary of recommendations found within the content of the report for resolving immediate space needs while projecting anticipated needs of the police department for the efficient and effective delivery of law enforcement and police services to the Town for the reasonably foreseeable future.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Current Structure Described



Bow Street Public Safety Building Public Access

Exeter Police Department

The Exeter Police Department is located at 20 Court Street in downtown Exeter, New Hampshire. The building is a multi-story brick façade structure with off and on-street parking on two sides of the building; property lines and fire department truck access bays on the front side of the building prohibit parking on the south and Court Street sides of the building. The exterior of the building, the grounds, and parking areas appear to be well maintained and in serviceable condition, particularly when considering the nearly 45-year age of the structure.

Limited green space and landscaping lends to a professional appearance from the street; however, parked vehicles, fencing, and narrow walkways all but hide the main entrance to the public safety building. Future approaches to the building from traditional ingress ways as well as unplanned approaches should be assessed from the perspective of crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED); if allowable under local ordinance or any restrictions associated with proximity to the Front Street historic district, the addition of secure/monitored employee parking near to the facility is recommended; and, installation of fencing and protective bollards to enable 360-degree safety/security for employees and the structure is recommended.

Though immediately apparent to MRI, building/police services accessibility limitations associated with the Towns' Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance at the public safety complex is not commented on further within this assessment report. Any remarks thereto are left to the discretion of Lavallee|Brensinger Architects.

Spaces within the building that are adjacent to exterior walls have natural light from ordinary weather-tight windows that may be opened for ventilation. Except for a single fixed interior window at reception, no windows on the exterior of the structure are secure from assault; none are safe from firearms use. Interior workspaces have no natural light nor natural ventilation. Corridors, either by choice, age, or design are narrow and, in some places dimly lit. Originally designed spacious areas have been re-purposed for current workspace needs thereby reducing the possibility of further expansion within the existing facility. Again, considering the age of the facility and crowding, the interior spaces appear to be reasonably-maintained and in serviceable condition.

Certain publicly/quasi-publicly accessible interior spaces are monitored by video camera. Additions to the monitoring system with current technology is recommended and should include an increase in the number of cameras needed to monitor interior and exterior spaces associated with re-purposing and new construction, at a minimum. Reconfiguring workspace layout within the existing facility may inform the need for additional video surveillance cameras. An increase in the number of surveillance cameras internally and externally to adequately cover 100% of those spaces associated with publicly accessible areas, secure evidence storage spaces, all spaces within which interviews are conducted, and those spaces associated with movement and booking of prisoners is recommended.

Parking and access to the main entry are convenient though limited. The main entrance of the structure faces Bow Street; single lane ingress/egress ways to the department property intersect with Court Street. The property on which the structure is situated does not limit public access to one well-managed entry; access to the building can be gained from multiple places.

Tested during the site visit, MRI discovered multiple points of entry to the public safety building through which those with malicious intent would be able to access interior spaces without difficulty or detection. It is intended that the building interior may be publicly accessed by a single door from the Bow Street side only; however, intent and reality are different. Interior access from the remaining two sides is somewhat limited to authorized staff or those persons being escorted by agency personnel.

Critical to continuity of communications in emergency situations, the public safety complex antenna, alternate power source (generator), and fuel supply (gas) were found with limited protection from tampering. Seen below, the generator and fuel source are immediately visible with little protection from the road. The antenna is behind a fence, but an overgrowth of vegetation from the surrounding grounds affords concealment to those interested in tampering with the antenna and transmission lines.



Generator and fuel source (L), and the radio antenna/transmission lines (R) are accessible to tampering.

Access controlled fencing to limit vehicle and pedestrian traffic, and for the protection of communications antenna(s), alternate power source, and transmission lines is recommended. Secure doorways and policy governing access to the public safety building interior by way of the fire department truck bays, an equipment room, and a maintenance bay is recommended.

Access to the building via the above-described equipment room was described as being necessary by an unspecified “code” not familiar to the police or fire officials, nor to MRI. MRI recommends research to find such code; in the absence of such, MRI recommends immediate change of policy and practice to shore up physical security of the public safety complex.

Access to the interior spaces of the Exeter Police Department is limited by a key fob operated electronic security system installed early in 2021; staff describes that the system is not yet fully operational. It is recommended that this system be made fully operational as soon as possible. Consideration of expanded access control for the public safety complex to include protection of the multiple access ways penetrated by MRI without challenge during the site visit of October 29, 2021.

MRI noted that the interior spaces were not well ventilated; heating and airflow was inconsistent between workspaces, largely due to re-purposing spaces that were previously unoccupied. Some spaces that have been re-purposed were described by staff as being subject to leaking roofs with mold/mildew resulting to a degree that may have a negative impact on the health and wellness of some personnel.

Current fleet storage does not include protection from public access or inclement weather. Safety of agency owned property (fleet vehicles) and response time during winter may be improved by the installation of a carport and/or expansion of space used as a “sally port”. The

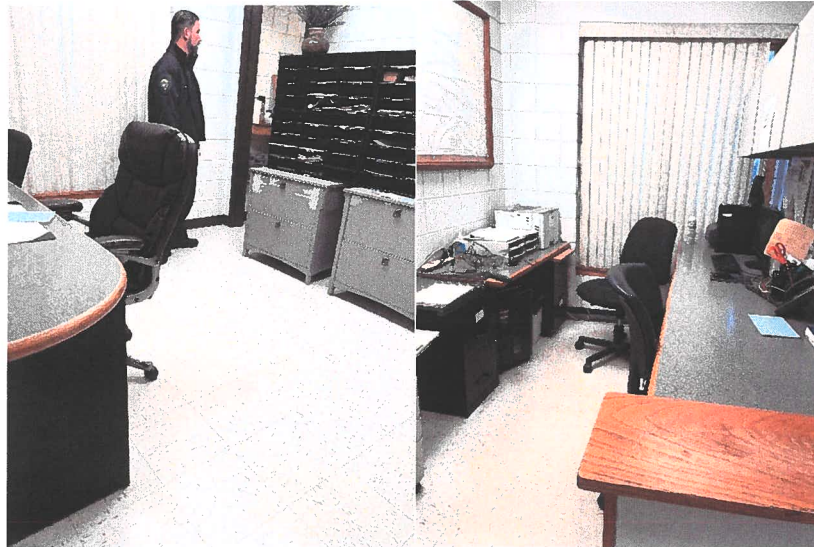
provision of a carport also reduces the chance for injured-on-duty claims due to slips and falls that can occur clearing off, entering, or exiting fleet vehicles in winter and inclement weather conditions. Operational readiness of the fleet is paramount to community safety; installation of a carport or similar weather protection structure is recommended.

FACILITY NEEDS

Described in part below, factors imposed by external authority that impact the future facility needs of the Exeter Police Department include those that are already somewhat problematic in the current state of the facility.

Patrol

Patrol is the largest “division” within the Exeter Police Department organizational chart. Officers and staff assigned to patrol make up the majority of staff in any work component. Predominantly, the nature of the work performed by patrol has them outside of the building using police vehicles for their day-to-day functions rather than continuous/prolonged occupation of a significant amount of space within the structure. However, key functions of patrol are performed within the building; the size of the patrol division suggests that space be expanded to accommodate immediate and forecasted functionality.



Patrol Workspace



Sergeant's workspace, doubles as roll call, this space is a repurposed hallway.

Space limitations have officers in multiple locations during shift and at shift change for report preparation and passing of information. Current practice has shifts “passing” each other at certain times of day; it is not uncommon to have up to ten police officers sharing space at shift change. Staff express frustration that the necessary briefings and report preparation are often disrupted by the routine exchanges necessitated by the shared space. Conversely, these same personnel describe the advantage of shifts passing through the same space at the same time: informal/undocumented information is often exchanged between officers that would not necessarily be part of the formal roll call briefing. Larger and contiguous space allocated for roll call to accommodate the immediate needs of staff using or passing through this space simultaneously as part of shift change/information exchange; or the re-purposing of other space for centrally located patrol operations, equipment exchange (i.e., portable radios, mail call, and replenishable materials) is desirable.

Prisoner Handling/Detention Spaces

When transported to the Exeter Police Department for processing, industry standards and best practices recommends that “The length of time a detainee is held in temporary detention is measured in hours, not days and does not involve overnight housing or the provision of meals except in extenuating circumstances. Detainees should be kept in temporary detention areas no longer than necessary and should be monitored closely, particularly when they have not been through an intake and medical screening process as required in jails and holding facilities”.



Sally Port, Prisoner Cell, and Booking/Processing Spaces

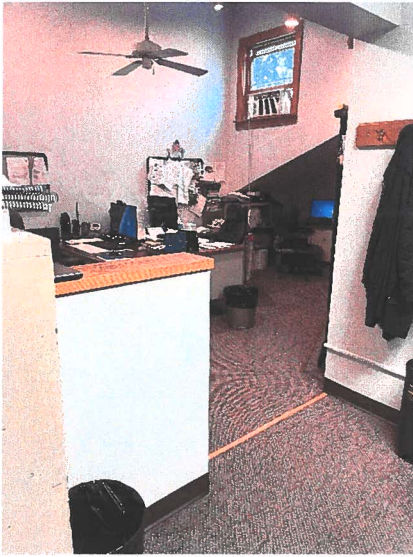
Seen above on the left, the so-called “sally port” entrance to the police department booking area is multi-purposed. The photo at the far right shows the first space within the structure that a prisoner is detained for booking and processing. The middle photo is one of three cells utilized for described temporary detention. In the current configuration, access to unconventional weapons and/or implements of escape gained from within the sally port, the potential of freedom of movement within the booking area (right photo, no fixed object to “cuff” a prisoner to securely), and absent modification to mitigate the risk of self-harm (such as installation of Lexan sheeting to prevent prisoners from hanging themselves from the bars) in the cells represent significant liability to the Exeter Police Department. The nearness of the Rockingham County Department of Corrections (jail) to the Exeter Police Department, with attendant equipment and specifically trained jail officials suggests that the liability to the Town of Exeter by maintaining the cells is un-necessary. Policy and practice changes to eliminate the use of the cells is recommended. Installation of an immovable object designed and intended specifically for use during the temporary detention of prisoners in lieu of cells is recommended.

The addition of agency owned property storage for items found loose in the sally port is recommended.

Additional parking space within the sally port is recommended.

Detectives

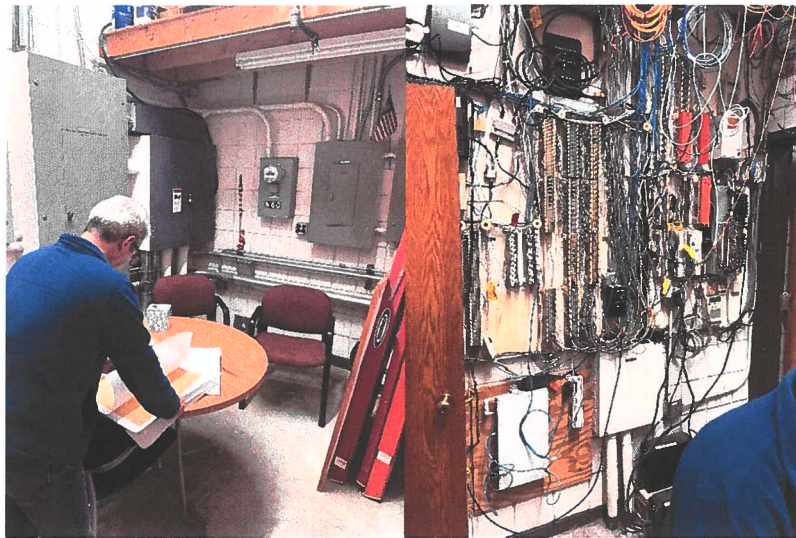
Unlike patrol, officers assigned as detectives often actively use space within the police facility for prolonged periods to further criminal investigations. Currently, space designed for use as desk space often doubles as storage of equipment and materials needed on a day-to-day basis.



Detective Workspace
Re-purposed from lobby atrium
Floors uneven Roof leaks



Interview Room Near to Detectives



So-called Interview Room Adjacent to Front Lobby
Access to exposed wiring presents several hazard/risk factors.

Observations and inquiry suggest that limitations of the currently available space will likely find victims and witnesses in uncomfortable situations when inadequate interview space results in victims and witnesses being co-located in semi-public surroundings waiting to be interviewed. Similarly, though detectives take extraordinary measures to ensure that victims and witnesses are not exposed to persons accused of crime, due to the limitation of space, such assurances require continuous space and people management, which are not guaranteed. Accessibility to this area by any person when not occupied by a detective necessitates very careful case file management and security. The inclusion of security walls/doors, immediately accessible secure active case file storage, multiple interview rooms, interrogation rooms and a private waiting room that could double as a “soft” interview room within the detective division is desirable.

Supervisors expressed frustration with having substantially limited space needed to conduct case briefings and daily meetings that are out of the public eye. Dedicated meeting space for that purpose, so that strategy, case priority, and other notes can be discussed and white boarded without concern for public disclosure would be ideal. For the purpose of this section, “public disclosure” also includes agency employees without the express right to know of detective case activity.

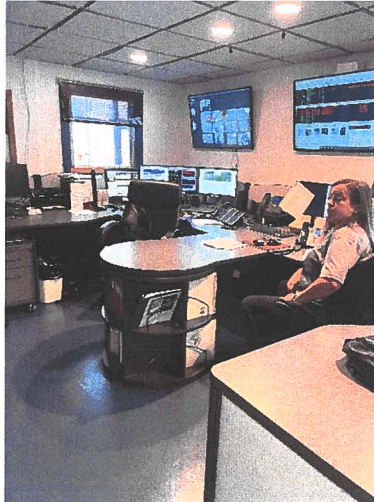
There is inadequate space for evidence processing. Due to the limitations of existing space, officers find themselves using space that is not separate or secure from semi-public disclosure to process evidence, and that which makes the contamination of evidence possible. Installation of evidence processing space and pass-through lockers to the evidence room is recommended.

Though uncommonly performed by the Exeter Police Department as a primary function, the sensitive work performed by detectives assigned to investigate vice, drug, and organized crimes (VDOC) often exposes them to increased risk associated with these violence ridden crimes by type. Though not an externally imposed necessity, separate and secure facilities within the detective offices to support confidential investigation activities is desirable. The inclusion of built-in secure storage for confidential files, including a safe for buy money is desirable. Ingress and egress (can be co-located for use by detectives, generally) separate from routine use by other agency members to facilitate privacy of undercover police officers/special agents from mutual aid agencies, as well as confidential informants and cooperating individuals is also desirable. Co-location of additional interview rooms, interrogation rooms, and a waiting room within the overarching detective division is recommended. If technologically possible, having access to audio/video images from the interview/interrogation rooms in the general detective area and the VDOC detective area is desirable.

By the nature of their work, detectives often (mostly) work out of uniform and in plain clothes. They are not immune from danger nor exempt from accepting dangerous assignments. Therefore, having secure storage space within the detective area that enables immediate access to body armor, other protective equipment, additional firearms, and articles of clothing (raid jackets/hats and weather specific garments) is desirable.

Dispatch

Dispatching operations are performed within a well-lit, clean, and comfortable appearing space. Though a thorough assessment was not performed, casual observation of electronics suggests that the radio and computer-based systems are modern and capable. Dispatchers do not have easily accessible secure space for the storage of personally owned property while on duty.



Two of Three Dispatch Workstations

Limitations of job tasks prohibits the dispatchers from taking restorative breaks away from their workspace. Gender-neutral rest facilities only feet away from the workspace substantially limits privacy. The addition of separate/private rest areas, personally owned property storage area, and equipped meal break room near the communications center is recommended.

Administration

The current organizational chart of the Exeter Police Department has been described as likely to experience little growth through CY 2040 with calls for service and crime rates to increase at a proportionately low rate; therefore, it is likely that the Exeter Police Department will experience little need for additional commanders. Despite the absence of growth at the command level, addition to the current office space allocated for the Chief of Police and command staff should include space for confidential executive support staff, secure records storage (limited), conference/meeting space for at least eight personnel, and several more offices or space for cubicles needed for projected growth of support staff.

As a general statement, the Chief and leadership staff across the department expressed frustration with the inadequacy of available meeting space. Though the conference room that doubles as a break room has seating enough for the Chief and commanders to caucus with subordinate staff, it is inadequate for anything greater than intimate sized meetings and affords no privacy needed for command staff to discuss any sensitive subject matter; the space will not support anticipated growth of command/supervisory staffing numbers. Consideration of additional meeting space for at least eight personnel is recommended.

Support administrative staff occupies re-purposed hallways and closets. Access to these spaces is substantially limited due to the restrictions put on the space by the placement of desks and records cabinets.



**Example of Administrative Staff Workspace
in Re-purposed Hallway**

Records Retention

There are certain documents/records that are required by state law, industry standards, and best practices to be retained indefinitely, others that must be retained for 50 years, and vast numbers of records that must be retained for shorter periods. In the current facility, there is no centrally or commonly located space for records retention. Though records retention is disjointed by circumstance (cabinets are placed where there is room), MRI also noted that the Exeter Police Department records do not appear to be well-secured (cabinets stored in open and accessible spaces is exacerbated by the unsecure exterior of the public safety building). Expansion of space allocated for centrally and commonly located secure records retention is recommended. MRI recommends that vital records (at least) be secured in fire resistant cabinets or protected by a fire suppression system designed for use with paper records. At present, “archived” records are stored off-site in a space shared by multiple town departments. MRI did not tour the external storage facility; we cannot comment as to the safety and security of records stored off-site. However, Exeter Police Department should ensure that records retained offsite in a shared facility are held/secured in compliance with juvenile and other privacy laws, as applicable; and any archives that may be retained or communicated electronically are compliant with CJIS regulations, as applicable.



Electronic records for multiple departments in town government are retained within this server room (L).
Some hard copy records for the police are retained in this secure room which is near or at capacity (R).

Having a centrally/commonly located records room central to department functions for convenient access by the most frequent authorized users of the records clerk services is desirable; for instance, ready access to the records by those persons assigned to the front desk, detectives, and prosecutors, as applicable.

Evidence and Property Retention

Industry standards and best practices establish that, “The property and evidence control function should provide for the security and control of seized, recovered, evidentiary, abandoned, lost, or found property in the custody of the agency”. The current state of the Exeter Police Department evidence processing, and storage facility is dis-jointed and inadequate for department uses. In its current state, the evidence storage facility and/or agency practice do not appear to meet industry standards and best practices. The evidence storage function is not likely to meet the needs of the community over the projected timeline without policy enforcement, substantial renovation, and addition of space.

Evidence processing, packaging and storage needs imposed by law, judicial review, regulatory authority, and recommended best practices require certain evidence to be retained compliant with the statute of limitations or longer, while the bulk of evidence is retained for substantially shorter periods. Secure storage needs are exacerbated by the statutory requirement that seized non-evidentiary property that has no known owner must be retained for minimum of 180 days.



General Evidence Room and Adjacent Firearms Evidence Storage

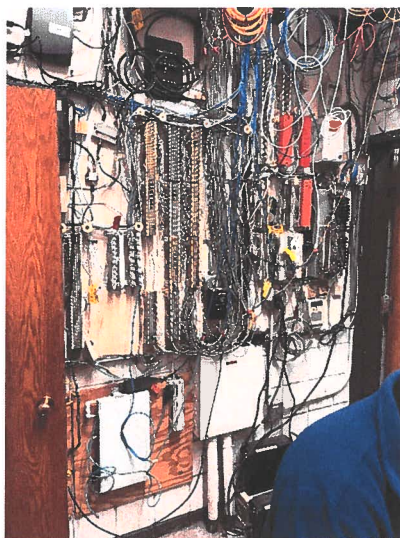
Though the Exeter Police Department staff describes engaging in aggressive compliance with statutory requirements and best practices by purging unneeded evidence and “abandoned” property in a timely way, the increase of population, calls for service, and crimes by type with the attendant receipt of new evidence and property has stressed the existing space. Without additional space, projections for the reasonably foreseeable future suggest the existing space will be overwhelmed, resulting in reduced efficiency and effectiveness of this critical police function.

Temporary secure storage of evidence and seized property is made difficult by the absence of pass-through style temporary evidence/property storage lockers. Existing temporary storage is incapable of receiving evidence or property as large as a breadbox. Space for smaller items is very limited requiring substantial intervention and management by police department evidence officers. When evidence and property cannot be securely stored, best practice and regulatory authority suggest that a qualified police officer remain in physical presence of the to-be-stored article to maintain a clear chain of custody until such time that the article can be properly stored. This step has the potential to be overly burdensome to the operations of the Exeter Police Department.

Currently, instead of a single centralized storage facility, due to the pressing storage space needs, Exeter Police Department has resorted to outplacing certain evidence and property outside of the designed evidence storage room. Specifically, bulky items, evidentiary vehicles, and those large articles being held for safekeeping are kept in off-site storage (MRI has not viewed the off-site evidence/property storage facility; we have not assessed the efficacy/security of those facilities). Outplacement of evidence and property storage may

impose sometimes difficult security maintenance and administrative tracking of such articles. Centralized secure storage rooms (long- and short-term storage) for all evidence and property that is supported by a robust software tracking system, alarms (as applicable), and video surveillance is recommended. Additional levels of security for those items of high value, cash, drugs, firearms, and other items representative of substantial liability if mis-handled or improperly stored, should be included.

Victim and Witness Privacy Rights



Doors (hardly seen on L and R sides of the picture) of this “interview room” are accessible to the outside of the public safety complex.

Established in law, victims of crime are afforded privacy rights and are to be protected from the accused throughout any pending legal matters. The substantially limited space presently assigned for victim interviews and services does not give easy access to investigators, prosecutors, and advocates. The result is the risk of victim exposure to the accused, family/friends of the accused, or other parties associated with a case being investigated by the Exeter Police Department. Noted above, access to the public safety complex by those with nefarious intent is possible; security of victims/witnesses in criminal cases is not assured within the present structure. Appropriate alignment of space needed for victim accessibility to privacy and services is recommended. The addition of separate secure spaces for interrogation, interviews, and polygraph are recommended.

Though uncommonly performed exclusively by the Exeter Police Department, the sensitive nature of criminal investigations of vice, drugs, and organized criminal enterprises suggests that extraordinary measures be taken by the department to safely secure certain records separately from the central records room (confidential informant files), small quantities of cash (controlled buys/flash money), as well as the safety/security of cooperating individuals and witnesses from

discovery. Additional security measures needed by the detective division for these purposes, though comparatively uncommon, is recommended.

Juvenile Privacy Rights

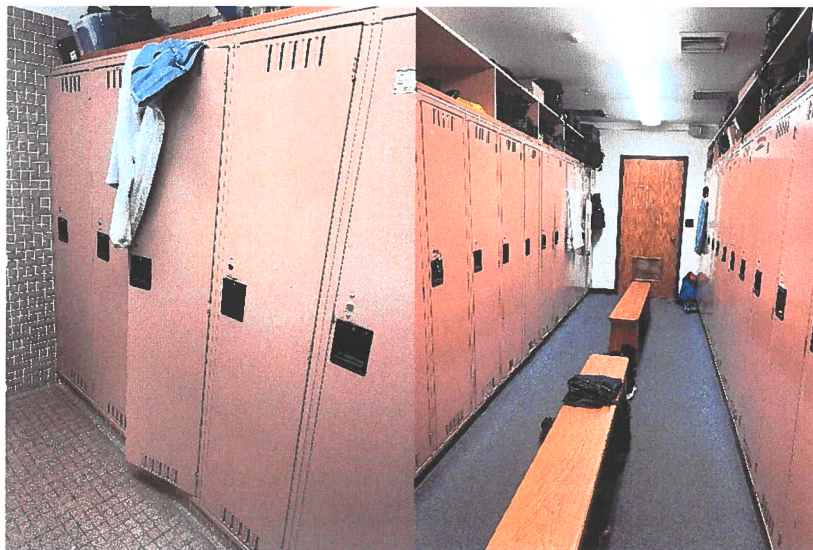
Juveniles have substantially guaranteed privacy rights found in state law and in regulations imposed by the United States Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJDDP). Industry standards and best practices include provisions that ensure that juveniles detained temporarily prior to court appearances (as applicable) are held separately and removed from all contact, both sight and sound, from adults. Best practices suggest that temporary pre-court detention facilities for juveniles allow for separation of juveniles by gender; the criticality of such best practice recommendations is found in law where mandatory separation of juveniles by gender is found in post-court detention requirements. Though national arrest rates for juveniles have been down-trending for more than twenty years, the imposition of law and liability risk for non-compliance suggests an operational imperative is placed on the Exeter Police Department to ensure that separate/private temporary juvenile detention within the facility is made possible by design for co-location/use in the absence of adults. Currently designed/used sight/sound separation space makes the best use of the space available to Exeter police; however, additional space with better separation is recommended.



**Temporary Juvenile Detention.
Re-Purposed Adult Prisoner Cell.
This space is immediately adjacent
to booking/processing space.**

Locker Room and Rest Facilities

NH RSA 354-A:7, Unlawful Discriminatory Practices, makes it unlawful for an employer to engage in any discriminatory practice. This statute includes provisions for ensuring that all employees enjoy freedom from discrimination in "...conditions or privileges of employment..." The current locker room facilities at the Exeter Police Department are inadequate for projected operations, gender equity, and forecasted growth of the department/community. The current space is at risk for being discriminatory in practice when considering the number of lockers available and the number of females employed by the agency while similar crowding conditions are not experienced by male employees. Consideration of hiring practices likely to yield employment by gender equity against forecasted growth of the community suggests that future locker space needs by gender/sex identity must be considered.



Female lockers in total (L); space includes rest facilities and showers (indicated by tile surfaces).
Representative male lockers (R); though attached,
rest facilities and showers are separate (indicated by a rug surface and painted walls).

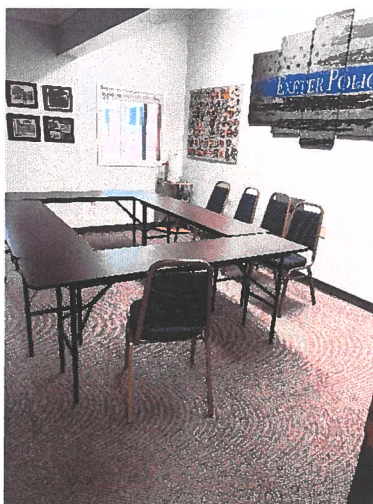
The locker space allocated for male employees has space needed for current full-time officer staffing levels. The locker space allocated for female employees also has only that number of lockers needed for the current number of sworn female officers despite the gender-based demographics of the service area. There is no locker space anywhere within the facility for non-sworn female employees. Proximity of rest facilities in the female locker room disallows privacy. Locker space assigned to each sworn officer, regardless of gender, was observed by MRI and has been described by staff as inadequate for the storage of issued uniforms, equipment, and foul/seasonal weather gear.

Consideration to the space needs for the number of lockers needed for the current staff plus a forecasted number of lockers equivalent to gender equitable hiring for the life expectancy of

the structure as well as specialty equipment storage; and affording privacy to rest facilities while enabling storage space and additional locker space is recommended. Regardless of legal considerations, social convention suggests that the Exeter Police Department take the steps necessary to ensure equal right to access and privacy of all employees.

Replacing all locker room lockers with a model sized for secure storage of all agency issued and personally owned articles, and equipped with electrical outlets and USB ports to support flashlights, radios, cell phones and other technologies stored by officers; or renovate current lockers to include wiring lockers with electrical circuits and USB ports is desirable. This would allow certain equipment to be charged in the security of an owner/operator-managed locker between shifts.

Break Room



Break Room doubles as conference room.

The Exeter Police Department has a unique and highly desirable opportunity to take an effective step toward reducing the toll that the physical and emotional stressors of police work have on employees. Current best practices found in the Presidents’ Task Force Report on 21st Century Policing comments, “...on the irony of law enforcement’s lack of services and practices to support wellness and safety, Dr. Laurence Miller observed in his testimony that supervisors would not allow an officer to go on patrol with a deficiently maintained vehicle, an un-serviced duty weapon, or a malfunctioning radio—but pay little attention to the maintenance of what is all officers’ most valuable resource: their brains.” By designing and equipping a break room with health, wellness, decompression, recovery, and restorative rest in mind, the Exeter Police Department can help to reduce the risk associated with vicarious, acute, and cumulative trauma. Though certainly not the cure-all, the provision of a thoughtfully designed break room is a piece of a much larger puzzle. “As (21st Century) task force member Tracey Meares observed, ‘Hurt people can hurt people’; addressing this need is highly desirable.

Inclusion of space in the break room that is designed for stimulation-free quiet meditation would enable officers and staff to regroup, refocus and improve concentration and mindfulness.

The addition of a washer and dryer to the “normal” complement of recommended appliances (fridge, stove, dishwasher) enables officers to wash soiled garments before they end up tracking contaminants, dirt, and grime of work to shared spaces in the building and/or to their homes. By reducing the risk of bringing home toxins or biologics, Exeter Police Department can further support health and wellness among staff and their families.

“...cops are not given the time they need to fully recharge and unwind...the stress will just continue to pile on.” The recommendation of a break room is to encourage health and wellness by enabling officers and staff to unwind and get away from job stressors long enough to reset and recharge.

Training/Community Room

The President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing describes that police officer training and education is an operational imperative. “Though today’s law enforcement professionals are highly trained and highly skilled operationally, they must develop specialized knowledge and understanding that enable fair and procedurally just policing and allow them to meet a wide variety of new challenges and expectations. Tactical skills are important, but attitude, tolerance, and interpersonal skills are equally so. And to be effective in an ever-changing world, training must continue throughout an officer’s career.”

The introduction of a substantial room dedicated for use by the department for training that can also be used by the community for meetings and events is recommended. If adopted, this recommendation calls for such a space to have ingress/egress to the exterior of the building. Interior access only is an un-necessary burden on staff and establishes additional risk.

CONCLUSION

Generally, despite the publicly facing professional appearance of external areas of the Exeter police facility, observation of the current state of the facility at 20 Court Street reveals that nearly every workspace is overcrowded, whether by personnel or storage of agency owned property.

Security and safety of employees and visitors to the Exeter Police Department is not assured within the current structure. Compliance with imposed regulations and best practices associated with victim/witness privacy, juvenile operations, evidence and property storage, records maintenance, and prisoner handling in the current structure is not assured.

Storage of needed equipment and materials that support mission effectiveness is exceeded or non-existent. Employee satisfaction needs associated with lighting, HVAC, privacy, and other quality of life matters may be negatively impacted within the current facility.

Respectfully submitted,



Municipal Resources, Inc.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Municipal Resources, Incorporated has compiled the recommendations found within this report for easy reference. This list does not imply priority by the order in which it is presented.

Parking/External Security Features

1. The addition of secure/monitored employee parking near the facility is recommended.
2. Installation of fencing and protective bollards to enable 360-degree safety/security is recommended.
3. Additions to the monitoring system with current technology is recommended.
4. An increase in the number of surveillance cameras internally and externally to adequately cover 100% of those spaces associated with publicly accessible areas, secure evidence storage spaces, all spaces which interviews are conducted, and those spaces associated with movement and booking of prisoners is recommended.
5. Access controlled fencing to limit vehicle and pedestrian traffic, and for the protection of communications antenna(s) and alternate power source is recommended. Secure doorways and policy governing access to the public safety building interior by way of the fire department truck bays, an equipment room, and a maintenance bay is recommended.
6. In the absence of code requirements, MRI recommends immediate change of policy and practice to shore up physical security of the public safety complex by securing an external equipment room door (to the right of the main entrance but before reaching the fire department truck bays/ramp).
7. Consideration of expanded access control for the public safety complex is recommended to overcome the multiple access ways penetrated by MRI without challenge during the site visit of October 29, 2021.
8. Installation of a carport or similar weather protection structure is recommended.

Patrol

9. Larger and contiguous space allocated for roll call to accommodate the immediate needs of staff using or passing through this space simultaneously as part of shift change/information exchange; or the re-purposing of other space for centrally located patrol operations, equipment exchange (i.e., portable radios, mail call, and replenishable materials) is desirable.

Prisoner Handling/Detention Spaces

10. The addition of agency owned property storage for items found loose in the sally port is recommended.
11. Additional parking space within the sally port is recommended.
12. Policy and practice changes to eliminate the use of the cells is recommended. Installation of an immovable object designed and intended specifically for use during the temporary

detention of prisoners in lieu of cells is recommended. Alternatively, installation of Lexan sheeting to prevent self-harm by prisoners hanging themselves from the bars, is recommended.

Detectives

13. The inclusion of security walls/doors, immediately accessible secure active case file storage, multiple interview rooms, interrogation rooms and a private waiting room that could double as a “soft” interview room within the detective division is desirable.
14. Installation of evidence processing space and pass-through lockers to the evidence room is recommended.
15. The inclusion of built-in secure storage for confidential files, including a safe for buy money is desirable. Ingress and egress (can be co-located for use by detectives, generally) separate from routine use by other agency members to facilitate privacy of undercover police officers/special agents from mutual aid agencies, as well as confidential informants and cooperating individuals is also desirable. Co-location of additional interview rooms, interrogation rooms, and a waiting room within the overarching detective division is recommended.
16. Secure storage space within the detective area that enables immediate access to body armor, other protective equipment, additional firearms, investigative equipment, and articles of clothing (raid jackets/hats and weather specific garments) is desirable.
17. MRI recommends that the detective division be placed near to records due to the frequency of interaction and need.

Dispatch

18. The addition of separate/private rest areas, personally owned property storage area, and equipped meal break room near to the communications center is recommended.

Administration

19. Addition to the current office space allocated for the Chief of Police and command staff should include space for support staff, secure records storage (limited), conference/meeting space for at least eight personnel, and several more offices or space for cubicles needed for projected growth of support staff.

Records Retention

20. Expansion of space allocated for centrally/commonly located secure records retention is recommended. MRI recommends that vital records (at least) be secured in fire resistant cabinets or protected by a fire suppression system designed for use with paper records. At present, “archived” records are stored off-site in a space shared by multiple town departments (MRI did not tour this facility; we cannot comment as to the safety/security of

records stored off-site. However, Exeter Police Department should ensure that records retained offsite in a shared facility are held/secured in compliance with juvenile and other privacy laws, as applicable; and any archives that may be retained or communicated electronically are compliant with CJIS, as applicable).

Evidence and Property Retention

21. Centralized secure storage rooms (long- and short-term storage) for all evidence and property that is supported by a robust software tracking system, alarms (as applicable), and video surveillance is recommended. Additional levels of security for those items of high value, cash, drugs, firearms, and other items representative of substantial liability if mis-handled or improperly stored should be included.

Victim and Witness Privacy Rights

22. Appropriate alignment of space needed for victim accessibility to privacy and services is recommended. The addition of separate secure spaces for interrogation, interviews, and polygraph are recommended.

Juvenile Privacy Rights

23. The imposition of law and liability risk for non-compliance suggests an operational imperative is placed on the Exeter Police Department to ensure that separate/private temporary juvenile detention within the facility is made possible by design for co-location/use in the absence of adults. Currently designed/used sight/sound separation space makes the best use of the space available to Exeter police; however, additional space with better separation is recommended.

Locker Room and Rest Facilities

24. Future locker space needs by gender/sex identity must be considered. Consideration to the space needs for the number of lockers needed for the current staff plus a forecasted number of lockers equivalent to gender equitable hiring for the life expectancy of the structure as well as specialty equipment storage; and affording privacy to rest facilities while enabling storage space and additional locker space is recommended.
25. Replacing all locker room lockers with a model equipped with electrical outlets and USB ports to support flashlights, radios, cell phones and other technologies stored by officers; or renovate current lockers to include wiring lockers with electrical circuits and USB ports is desirable.

Break Room

26. The recommendation of a specifically designed and equipped break room is to encourage health and wellness by enabling officers and staff to unwind and get away from job stressors long enough to reset and recharge. Noted above in dispatch, a co-located breakroom and rest facilities that would serve all personnel equally is desirable and economical.

Training/Community Room

27. The introduction of a substantial room dedicated for use by the department for training that can also be used by the community for meetings and events is recommended.