

Exeter Police Stakeholders Committee Presentation to the
Exeter Select Board

May 24, 2021

To: Chair Papakonstantis and Members of the Exeter Select Board

From: Anne L. Surman, Chair, Exeter Police Stakeholders Committee ("EPSC") on behalf of Chief Stephan Poulin, Exeter Police Department and the EPSC Members.

I would like to start this presentation by thanking the Exeter Select Board and Chief Stephan Poulin for creating this Stakeholders committee: An opportunity for community members to participate in working closely with our Exeter Police Department.

We are pleased to present the results of the Exeter Police Stakeholders Committee. The Committee was formed and tasked with a charge of evaluating 5 specific goals of the Exeter Police Department in preparedness for a strategic plan. Since December 2020, this committee has been meeting every other week with each topic and goal building upon the next to a culmination: A sample of what you will see and hear this evening. The committee began immediately to work on Goal #1- Strengthening partnerships and engaging the community in participation. This goal was to give our citizens a voice, a forum: a report card on the job performance of the Exeter Police Department. The Committee spent several meetings painstakingly creating a Citizen Survey. Each question was scrutinized before being placed on the survey. The goal being to create the most comprehensive survey questions for the public to answer on a multitude of items for their police department. Questions ranged from commenting on the amount of police presence in their community, scope of services provided and the knowledge of them, their personal experience with officers and how they were treated/affected, and how the Exeter Police could improve and make each citizen feel safer in the community. The survey was available in paper and electronic format for just over a month and we received a total of 347 responses. We will go over a short slide presentation of the survey tonight as well.

We had five Goals to explore. As we go through them, various members of the committee will speak to certain topics that individually they were impressed by and/or made aware of for the first time, which has compelled them to present them to you tonight.

At the core of the discussions was unabashed honesty. That is what came through to me from all the presenters/speakers. From Dennis Walker, Director of Seacoast Mental Health, to Dr. Nicole Sawyer, a trained Psychologist, dedicated to working with police departments, to Ashly Gioia, a dispatcher with ten years working in the mental health field prior to joining the Exeter Police Department: Each week, the committee heard a different voice describing their role in working in public safety.

So, tonight, I want to express my sincere appreciation for all the committee members, the guest presenters and Exeter Police Department Officers and Staff who dedicated these past six months engaging in robust discussions that educated and enlightened us.

For Goal #2: Provide Effective Police Services, the group heard presentations from:

Seacoast Mental Health Director Dennis Walker, who spoke about resources available to the EPD and our collaboration, and heard from Sgt. Devin West discussing the Exeter Police's One Mind Pledge and Certification-the only Police department in NH to do so to date.

In addition to Goal #2 we spoke about recruitment and retention. We discussed the current workforce crisis in Policing across the nation and here in NH. Lt. Steve Bolduc presented the group with a discussion on our hiring process for Officers and Dispatch Supervisor Jessy Shupe spoke about the process for Dispatchers. The Committee also got to hear from the Exeter Police Union President Officer Matthew Oppenlaender on these topics.

I would like to open the floor to Committee member, Katie Adams who wishes to speak more to Goal #2.

For Goal #3: Development of Personnel:

The Committee heard from Field Training Officer Tadd Sierad who gave a synopsis of Field Training a new Officer. They also heard from Ofc. Ben Clouthier who discussed his transition from civilian to officer, and Dispatcher Ashley Gioia who discussed her experiences going through the dispatcher training.

In addition we had a great presentation on police employee mental health from Dr. Nicole L. Sawyer.

I would like to open the floor to Committee member, Alexis Simpson who wishes to speak more to Goal #3.

For Goal #4 Preventing Crime, the Committee heard from Sgt. Brian Hanna who discussed traffic and accident statistics for 2019 and data driven approaches to crime and traffic safety. Community Resource Officer Bruce Page also discussed National Night Out and urged everyone's participation on August 3rd.

Lastly for Goal #5, the Committee was able to hear from Town Planner Dave Sharples who gave an update on working with the Facilities Advisory Committee and the Budget Recommendations Committee with regards to a new Public Safety Complex- warrant article #13.

Now we will show a brief slide presentation on the internal and external survey results.