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**Tisbury Police Department  
Assessment Report  
January, 2017**

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## Introduction

On August 5, 2016, the Town of Tisbury retained Strategic Policy Partnership, LLC to undertake a review of policing issues involving the Tisbury Police Department toward the development of a strategic plan that would set forth a series of recommendations to be undertaken by the Department to address employee satisfaction, development of officer skills, and thereby promote the overall professional development of police department.

To achieve this objective, there were three components in conducting this initial assessment of the Department as it relates to its current practices and internal climate, including the following:

- Conduct one-one-one interviews/discussions with each of the members of the Tisbury Police Department, to include the Chief of Police, Executive Officer, Administrative Personnel, all supervisory personnel, all full-time sworn officers, Special Police Officers, and Traffic Safety Personnel.
- Administer an Employee Survey (see attached) that was designed to assess from each employee their perceptions of the following topics: understanding of the Police Department's overall mission; perception of operational issues; perception of leadership and supervision within the Police Department; job satisfaction; qualifications; training; and general demographic information. The Employee Survey was designed to preserve the Identity of the respondents. All the respondents were requested to answer the surveys honestly without concern of the results of any single respondent being disclosed.
- In addition to one-on-one interviews with the Town Administrator and Human Resources Manager, conduct an interview/discussion with each of the Selectmen to better understand their perceptions of the Police Department and their anticipated outcomes of this study.
- Finally, in addition to one-on-one interviews and the administration of the Employee Survey, make a series of observations as to the overall operation of the Police Department and, where possible, identify opportunities for structural and operational efficiencies.

In preparation for the commencement of this assessment, a meeting was held with the Chief of Police (August 28, 2016) for purposes of general acquaintance and to describe in greater detail the scope of this study and the desired outcomes. A meeting was also held with the Police Department's union leadership (August 30, 2016) to accomplish the following objectives:

- Describe in greater detail as to the scope of work;
- Describe the intended goals and objectives of this project;
- Describe and reassure the members of the Police Department that the identities of those participating in the study would remain in the strictest of confidence and no one employee's identity would be disclosed during the project;<sup>1</sup>
- Offer to share the Employee Survey with the association prior to its distribution to members of the Department for comment and modifications;
- Describe the end-project of this study and how the information obtained from the study will be utilized; and
- Finally, answer any questions or address any lingering concerns that the association might have.

In addition to the assessment, the scope of work also allowed for Strategic Policy Partnership to work with the Chief and staff in moving forward with those recommendations that were mutually agreed upon. This follow up work would come in the form of periodic meetings that would take place for an unspecified period, but generally monthly. It should also be noted this process of making recommendations has already begun during this initial assessment phase. Those discussions will also be reflected in this report.

From preparatory meetings, it was agreed that the survey instrument would be shared with the Town Administrator, the Police Chief, and members of the Association for the opportunity of making any modifications as to the content and to ensure that all respondents' identities could not be disclosed. The first of what turned out to be a series of on-site visits to Tisbury began on October 3<sup>rd</sup>. The final draft of the survey was not resolved until October 11<sup>th</sup>.

## Background on the Tisbury Police Department

In conversation with Departmental personnel, it was clear that the Tisbury Police Department has had a history of internal conflict that can be traced back at least to the early 1990's. There seems to have been ongoing tensions between the administration of the Department and its union. The number of grievances that have been filed over the years over issues that could have likely been

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<sup>1</sup> The one exception would be to referencing some comments made by Chief Hanavan.

reconciled internally is evidence of these ongoing tensions, as does the number of officers who have left the Department over the years, which has forced the Town to continually hire and train new personnel.

The Town has selected external candidates to serve as Chief of Police in the past; however, these Chiefs were not able to resolve the Department's various communication breakdowns or its atmosphere of mistrust. Many believe that this culture has been fostered by a breakdown in collaboration between the administration and the employees of the Department. Although this view is not universal, a significant number of Tisbury Police personnel still seem to retain this view.

In 2010, when Chief Hanavan became Acting Chief, the Town commissioned Strategic Policy Partnership, LLC to study the feasibility of merging with the Oak Bluffs Police Department.<sup>2</sup> In that study, part of the scope of work also included identifying the status of policing reforms taking place within the Police Department and assessing whether merging with the Oak Bluffs Police Department would not only be advisable from a fiscal standpoint, but also address the Tisbury Police Department's various internal issues.

The report resulting from this study indicated that then-Acting Chief Hanavan had seemed to have addressed several issues that had lingered from earlier administrations. The report noted that communication within the Department had improved; clearer lines of authority had been established; personnel issues and interpersonal relationships seemed to have improved; patrol practices seemed to be better organized; and some of the issues relating to the unevenness of discipline had been addressed. Chief Hanavan began to offer more training opportunities and there seemed to be an effort made in distributing assignments on a fair and equitable basis. The report also emphasized that the Acting Chief was addressing issues around employee interpersonal issues, including an attempted to eliminate the favoritism and targeted disciplinary treatment that existed between the administration of the Department and its personnel.

The report did recommend that Chief Hanavan be made the Chief of Police, even if the Town was to pursue a merger with Oak Bluffs Police Department. The report also outlined a three-year timetable for the merger should the Board of Selectmen elect to move in that direction. It made allowances for Chief

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<sup>2</sup> Refer to report issued by Strategic Policy Partnership entitled, "Status of Policing: Merger Potential with Oak Bluffs," dated May 2010.



Hanavan to re-integrate into the new structure should the merger go forward and recognized many of the reforms that he had already put into practice.

Later, the Department was afforded the opportunity to create a Lieutenant's position to serve as the Executive Officer of the Department. Prior to this, three Sergeants reported directly to the Chief of Police. Through the creation of this position, the Lieutenant would augment the management/supervisory structure of the Department, provide greater coordination of the three supervisory officers, and carry out the administrative functions of the Police Department. When filling this position, an individual was brought in from outside of the agency who had experience in another Police Department.

Traditionally, the salary comparisons of the other Police Departments on the Island tended to be greater than the comparable salaries of the Tisbury Police Officers, and in part considered to be one of the main contributing factors for the level of turnover that was taking place within the Police Department. This contrast was particularly evident in the salary disparities between the Oak Bluff Police Department and Tisbury. To address this disparity, the present Town Administrator, with the approval of the Board of Selectmen, restructured the salary schedules, bringing officers' salaries closer in alignment with Oak Bluff Police Department. The Town Administrator reached a collective bargaining agreement for the period of July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2018.

Despite these reported advancements, it seems that many of the lingering cultural issues still seem to be prevalent within the organization. The Tisbury Police Department was still witnessing employee turnover, morale issues, and an ever-growing number of grievances principally stemming around disciplinary matters. There also seemed to be a continuance of personnel issues whereby the relationship between the administration of the Department and the rank-and-file still seemed to be somewhat strained, continued communication breakdowns, and a mutual distrust persisted between the two levels of the organization.

Considering these structural issues, the Board of Selectmen agreed to commission this study to better understand the underlying causative factors, identify opportunities to make reforms within the Department, bring the Department in alignment with the current best police practices, develop a strategic plan for a path forward, and provide ongoing technical support as the Department began to achieve the recommended reforms.

## Methodology of the Study

As previously indicated, there were three key facets comprising the method in which this study was carried out: 1) one-on-one discussions/interviews; 2) administration of an employee survey; and 3) personal observations of operations and practices of the Department.

The most important facet of this study was affording all employees within the Police Department the opportunity to speak freely, with candor, with confidence that anything they discussed would not be disclosed with attribution directly back to them, and in a comfortable setting. The interviews were not intended to be structured; rather, they were intended to identify reoccurring themes and concerns that could be matched with other observations and findings from the employee surveys.

The opportunity to speak each member of the Board of Selectmen was particularly important. Those conversations provided the consultant the opportunity to detail the approach of the study and at the same time learn from them on an individual basis their overall experiences and impressions of the Police Department. It provided the opportunity to learn how their expectations could be met relating to the reforms they would like to see with respect to the Police Department's overall achievements. Their understandings of some of the issues from their individual points of view was particularly helpful.

Among the findings of this report: 1) many of the officers interviewed perceived the Board of Selectmen too involved in the day-to-day operations of the Department; and 2) the Chief of Police was too overly reactive to the Board's criticisms of the Police Department. Each of the Selectmen on their own expressed their own displeasure in needlessly being drawn too much into the internal operations of the Police Department – much more than they wanted to be or felt comfortable in doing. This, in large part, was due to appeals being filed by the union in response to disciplinary actions concerning employee counseling letters. In the view of the Selectmen, these personnel disciplinary issues often seemed to be trivial from the standpoint of the seriousness of the alleged violations being grieved. Also, from their individual perspectives, they would much prefer to see the internal issues of the Police Department managed more effectively so that they do not present themselves to the Board.

As preparatory steps leading into this study, the Town Administrator and the Human Resources Manager were consulted, along with a separate conversation with Chief Hanavan. It was important to understand from their

individual perspectives what they saw as the main issues and what they were hoping would come out of the study. It was clear from the perspective of the Town Administrator and the Human Resources Manager there seems to be ongoing internal personnel issues lending themselves to a high level of suspicion and mistrust not only between the administration and the employees, but among the employees themselves. The Town Administrator was also frustrated despite his best efforts to address some of these issues through the collective bargaining agreement, the union seemed to be resistant in providing him with a signed agreement. The Town Administrator stated he made a good faith gesture by adjusting the officers' salaries even though the agreement had not been fully executed amid repeated representations that the agreement would be forthcoming. The Town Administrator and the Human Resources Manager also seemed concerned and frustrated that relatively minor performance issues were being elevated to formal grievances when it seemed that these issues could be resolved internally.

In conversations with Chief Hanavan, he also emphasized his desire to achieve a greater harmonious climate within the Department and despite his efforts, he had not been able to achieve that objective. He truly seemed perplexed by this situation. He also wanted to see greater cohesion within the Department and was hopeful that the Department would be able to achieve State accreditation, which was an initiative begun under his administration.

Finally, meetings with the Town Administrator and union officials prior to the commencement of the study were held to learn of their concerns and to fully explain the scope of this study and expected outcomes. The apprehension of many officers with respect to being involved in the interviews and the survey were addressed. The meetings revealed significant concern of retaliation from leadership should any of their conversations be disclosed, as well as apprehension as to whether this study would actual result in any meaningful reforms within the Department. Although no absolute guarantees could be made as to whether the work would yield the kinds of reforms they were hoping to achieve, it was made clear that the objective was to lay the pathway to such reforms and to participate in the implementation of the recommended reforms. It was explained the agreement between Strategic Policy Partnership, LLC and the Selectmen provided for my ongoing technical support once the recommendations were made.

The employee survey that was also a component of this study was discussed. The importance of the membership's full involvement in the completion of the survey was also stressed. The union was afforded the opportunity of weighing in on the content of the survey prior to its distribution to the membership. Both the



Town Administrator and the consultant impressed upon the union officials how this was an opportunity to achieve some meaningful reforms within the Tisbury Police Department. The union officials did acknowledge that they believed both the administration and the union had contributed to the current internal discord that was taking place. They also indicated they too were very desirous in seeing reforms take place. It should be noted this belief was also reiterated during the individual interviews that took place during the consultant's two site visits that took place during this study.

Once everything had been set in place, the study did commence with the first site visit taking place between October 3-5, 2016, and a subsequent one between November 18-20, 2016. Both time periods included meetings with members of the Tisbury Police Department, and the second also included meetings with members of the Board of Selectmen.

## Reoccurring Themes & Observations

In conversations/interviews with individual employees of the department, the recurrence of common themes – many supported by initial observations as to the overall operations of the Police Department – was striking. Many of the interviews lasted at least one hour for each interview/conversation, while others took much longer. During the two site visits, all employees were interviewed except for one. These interviews included the Chief of Police,<sup>3</sup> Lieutenant, Sergeants, fourteen of the Patrol Officers, five of the Special Police Officers, and to some degree, each of the two full-time Traffic Safety Officers.

First and foremost, it is imperative to mention the opportunities and strengths of the Department. It was evident the vast majority of the Officers had a true commitment to the Town of Tisbury and a commitment to their profession. This sense of loyalty was evident regardless of how they perceived their current standing within the Department. It is important to note that although not every officer considered themselves to be the target harsh disciplinary treatment, many of them saw some of the treatment to be excessive or unwarranted.

During the initial visit, nearly twenty-four hours was spent over the three-day period conducting one-on-one interviews. When returning in November, an additional sixteen hours was spent in conducting similar type interviews. Although it was the intent to solicit the opinions of every employee of the Police

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<sup>3</sup> The interview was independent from the series of updates and follow meetings with respect to some of the recommendations that have been offered after each of these visits.

Department, it was clear from the interviews conducted there was a preponderance of opinions supporting the recommendations contained within this report.<sup>4</sup>

What were the common themes that continually seemed to be inter-dispersed within the various conversations that took place?

**Communications:** Clearly one of the most significant breakdowns was the day-to-day lines of communications that existed between the administration of the Department, the supervisory staff, and the overall rank-and-file of the Police Department. This was evident not only in the structural mechanisms, but also in the comfort level that existed in the form of direct dialogue. Although certain employees felt comfortable approaching the Chief and Executive Officer, most did not share the same comfort level. Many of those who did approach them often walked away thinking their recommendations were rebuffed or ignored. They were often told that a "greater plan" exists, but they were not sure of what that plan might be. In some instances, they felt their recommendations or suggestions were interpreted as the rank-and-file telling the "administration as to what they should do."

Communication among members of the Department could be improved generally. It appeared that "communication" between the "west wing" and the rest of the Department principally relied upon written forms of communication. In witnessing shift change-overs during all three shifts, it was noted that, in some instances, Officers would never come into the station, while in other situations the hand-offs were very informal. As such, there were several examples where Officers were coming on shift and were never told about previously arranged events or situations taking place during the shift. Granted there might not be any significant issues taking place from one shift to another, but these shift exchanges do serve as a systematic way of supervisors and officers checking in with one another daily. Although the Department is small, the lack of any systematic process has lent itself to breakdown not only in the day-to-day interactions, but also in terms of the overall cohesion within the department.

There is no inherent reason why there could not be a stronger bond between the administration and the remainder of the Department. This does not need to involve individual relationships, but should involve the Department en masse. The May 2010 report noted that "bi-monthly meetings with the Sergeants" and the Patrol Officers has dissipated into semi-annual meetings at the pre- and

<sup>4</sup> The subsequent recommendations are also coupled with the results of the employee surveys.

post-season.<sup>5</sup> Given the size of the Department and the potential for true camaraderie, it is tragic that communication between the administration and the rest of the Department appears to be intermittent at best.

The prior study also revealed oftentimes, assignment changes and responsibilities would be made, but it would not be clear why such decisions were being made. Also, when these changes were being made, they would not be clearly spelled out in the form of verbal or written communication. Even the Sergeants were not included in such executive decisions, and thereby could not explain the rationale for such decisions.

Officers often lamented as to not knowing their standing within the Department and what value they bring to the overall mission of the department. They do have a desire of wanting to be contributing members to the overall mission, but this seems to be relegated to only a few Officers within the organization.

**Discipline:** There is a persistent perception that the administration has used the disciplinary system to force employees out of the Department. This perception is not only shared among those employees who have been the subject of disciplinary action, but also among those who have not been involved in any disciplinary action. Whether this is just speculative or not, it is still a persistent concern. In some respects, this might be perpetuated by the method in which disciplinary actions are carried out within the Department.

The practice, at least until recently, has been for the administration to place a "white envelope" in an employee's box notifying them of pending disciplinary action. In some cases, this would be the first indication that disciplinary action was being contemplated by the administration. More significantly, it signaled to the other members of the Department that a member of the Department was in trouble.

Regardless of whether the disciplinary action was warranted, this method seemed to violate the fundamental intent of the disciplinary system's design. Even though the Chief has indicated that this practice has been suspended, he also indicated that sometimes this action was regarding certain employees within the Department. In any event, it has been a practice that has created and contributed to the uncertainty of the "legitimacy" of the disciplinary system.

As is the case in so many police agencies, the disciplinary system has evolved into a punitive tool to punish officers for errant behaviors, as opposed to

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<sup>5</sup> Referring to meetings that take place at the beginning and ending of the summer/tourist season of each year.

correcting or instructing officers regarding an alternative approach. The disciplinary practices underway continue to prescribe to the former, and thus has contributed to the ongoing tension that currently exists within the Department. Officers seem to be fearful of those consequences that may result in any infraction deviating from the established procedures.

This approach is not entirely uncommon from those agencies that prescribe to a paramilitary view with respect to a legalistic approach to policing. In any event, officers have viewed the disciplinary process to be punitive in nature and one that is designed to drive some employees out of the department.

**Predefined Promotional Process:** Despite recommendations that came out of the 2010 report, the promotional process seems to have been applied unevenly. Each time a promotional opportunity has presented itself, the rules for qualification have changed. In some instances, officers have viewed the promotional process to being designed so narrowly that it appeared to be tailored to specific individuals within the police department. Whether these perceptions are accurate or not, it does seem that each time a vacancy does occur, the procedures/practices have changed with each promotional vacancy.

In the 2000 report, it called for a transparent process, which clearly identifies a "transparent promotional process." In that report, it called for promotions to be an open process allowing all qualified personnel, dependent upon minimum service time and educational qualifications, have been established in well in advance of the promotional process. In those recommendations, performance evaluations, to include prior disciplinary issues should be a component of the scoring process. The earlier recommendations called for, at minimum: 1) a written test on modern policing concepts, legal standards and response to complex situations; and 2) an oral board on policing problem-solving strategies and tactics before a group that includes at least the Chief of Police, another Chief from the Island, and a non-police resident of the town.

Regardless of the earlier recommendations, questions persisted as to the motivations of the administration in making its promotional choices. This practice further jeopardized the transparency of the process, further contributing to the overall suspicions by members of the rank and file. This also led to undermining the validity of the promotional decision, not to mention detracting from the confidence of the individual might be selected. It should be noted here the justification for the selection who was being promoted is not being called into question, but more importantly how the process tainted the



ultimate selection. This only serves to undermine the credibility of the selection process, and not the qualifications of the individual selected.

In any event, the promotional process for the department should be well established, providing adequate notice as to the prerequisites for participating in the process. It should be a process having multiple steps, some of which an objective in the assessment. In thinking about the promotional process, it should incorporate both knowledge and skill assessments, e.g., a written examination and some form of a practical performance assessment<sup>6</sup>. The scoring system should be described well in advance of the promotional process so that those desiring to compete for promotion fully understand how the final determination will be made in selecting who would be promoted.

Advance notice is important from the standpoint of allowing potential candidates to prepare to participate in the process, inform employees of the prerequisites of a qualified candidate, and to contribute to an employee's professional growth. The process should also inform those participating in the process how to improve or enhance their performance/qualifications for the next promotional opportunity.

**Training:** Another re-occurring theme seemed to be universal in every conversation among the officers and special police officers was the desire for more training. In many instances, some of the newer officers and the special police officers had received little or no training beyond their basic training. There was no systematic structured post-academy training that took place prior to an officer being assigned to a shift. This included special police officers being assigned to a cruiser to assume normal patrol duties, although there were tighter restrictions placed on what a special police officer could do.

Despite the lack of ongoing training within the department, the officers appeared to be competent in handling most situations. There were a couple instances observed when the officer handling a call for service seemed fairly adept in navigating somewhat complexed situations. Conversations with various officers revealed they seemed to be more reliant upon one another in asking for assistance from another officer who may have dealt with similar situations. It was also disclosed during these conversations, often the shift supervisor was on a station assignment, as opposed to serving as a "working supervisor," who supplemented patrol coverage from the standpoint of answering calls and serving as the primary backup to officers. In department of

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<sup>6</sup> Any written examination and performance based testing/assessment should be validated by an outside resource.



this size, the duties for the supervisors should be more of a "hands-on" type of involvement.

Aside from a very few officers within the department, none of the officers had received what would generally be recognized as specialized training. The department seemed to rely upon the same few officers who would get additional training, while the other officers were relegated to performing routine patrol functions.

Training accomplishes several key objectives. Aside from building the overall competency and capacity of the department, it provides greater job enrichment and satisfaction, it communicates to the employee their value to the organization, and it promotes greater confidence both internally and externally. There did not seem to be any planned progression on how officers were selected to training opportunities. It also appeared that the department relied mostly on external training opportunities, as opposed to looking for training resources that could be brought to the department at a lower cost. In many respects, the financial constraints, especially when it was necessary to send officers Off-Island, would restrict just how funding could be invested in training during any given budget cycle.

By building internal capacity, the department could carry out many of the primary training functions using their own personnel. It did appear that officers would attend the annual in-service training that was hosted on the Island; however, much of this training was geared to maintaining an officer's basic certifications. Alternative methods of providing additional training personnel, which were discussed with the Chief, are detailed in the recommendations section of the report.

**Selection and Retention of Personnel:** It seems the department has had its share of turn-over within the police department with officers starting with Tisbury Police Department and moving to another police department. It has been explained if officers did leave, they would go to another police department on the Island, as opposed to leaving Martha's Vineyard. In part, it was believed that the lower salary was a major contributor to this turn-over; however, the Town had made a concerted effort to bring the salaries in line with the other Island departments, particularly with Oak Bluffs Police Department.

It is worthwhile mentioning here despite the high turnover, the Chief has done a remarkable job in attracting officers who possess the many of the key attributes in those selected for having the potential of being successful police officers. The challenge for the Chief is providing for an enriching job experience designed in

keeping this relative young force challenged, engaged and invested. A smaller agency is always faced with this challenge; however, the size of Tisbury Police Department provides opportunities of not only spreading specialty assignments across the department, but also serving in building the overall capacity and capabilities of its staff that is not often offered to officers in larger police agencies.

Some officers indicated how personnel are being selected as new employees has also been somewhat inconsistent. The background investigations have not always been an effective tool in screening out unqualified candidates who might not be suitable for the department. The department seems to have placed a greater emphasis in promoting greater diversity, but in speaking with the Chief, he like his counterparts in so many departments are finding it increasingly difficult to find people who are interested in policing. The department does not seem to employ the same screening tools from one hiring period to the next (e.g., written tests are not typically used, and psychological and physical screening do not seem to be employed). Because Tisbury Police Department is not a Civil Service agency, it is not bound by the Civil Service Rules when it comes to hiring and promoting personnel. Even though Tisbury Police Department is not bound by the Civil Process, it can create its own hiring process to achieve the same objectives of finding the most qualified candidates. There are growing number of police departments that have withdrawn from Civil Service and have created an established hiring process that employs extensive background and work history checks. In fact, there is a distinct advantage for Tisbury Police Department to create its own hiring and screening process, having a far greater reach in the pool of candidates than what is normally allowed under Civil Service rules.

It does appear that the Chief is using the special police officer's position as an opportunity in screening potential police officer candidates. Until recently, special police officers were considered seasonal help. The Chief persuaded the Town Administrator and Board of Selectmen to retain a specific number of special police officers through the off-season so that he could use them for backfill, and in, one instance, fill a vacancy on the midnight shift. The Chief believes he has been successful in significantly reducing his overtime budget and at the same time created more flexibility allowing officers to take time off. With this staffing adjustment, the Chief should develop a formal staffing matrix for the budget cycle that considers the staffing requirements throughout the fiscal year, and the anticipated costs associated with the desired staffing allocations. This would help the Chief in mapping out his anticipated budget expenditures, recognizing there is always going to be anticipated costs along the way. By taking this approach, it will give both the Board of Selectmen and

Town Administrator a better understanding of the staffing needs, to include backfilling for training, leaves, injuries, etc.

As part of that staffing plan, keeping special police officers beyond the summer season, the Chief has used this as an opportunity to assess whether they would be viable and eligible to become full-time police officers whenever vacancies arise. Although this seems like it could be a more systematic approach in his hiring process, time should be invested in their training if they are to be used in patrol-related capacities. An effective field training program would be particularly useful and help reduce the potential liability that might be associated with minimal training standards.

**Internal & External Cohesion:** Differing opinions were very apparent between the administration of the department (Chief and Lieutenant), the supervisory staff, and among the sworn and non-sworn members of the department on this topic. Officers did speak about having the opportunity to make suggestions, but their suggestions seemed to be rebuffed or ignored. As previously indicated, many officers would report to the station, and in some instances, get into their cruisers and assume their patrol duties. At the end of the shift, officers may or may not go into the station.

Officers often mentioned that they would like to see greater cohesion among the members of the department. They would describe this cohesion in terms of being more like "a family," similarly to have they seen or experienced with other police departments on the Island. They talked about how officers in other departments would support one another, and there did not appear to be a division the administration and the remainder of the department.

Officers also talked about their relationship on the Island as being strained or excluded. Officers spoke about other training opportunities, apart from in-service training, when they had been excluded or not even invited. Although it was not possible to explore this issue further, it does appear a consistent, historical issue with this police department and others. Officers did indicate whenever they call for backup from another department, officers would always respond to assist.

In part, some officers attributed this sense of alienation between Tisbury Police Department and the other police departments on the Island, to the longstanding reputation of the department as not wanting to be inclusive. The department does contribute members to the two task forces that exist on the Island, but do not seem to be engaged at the same level of commitment of the

other police departments. Another reason for attributed to this lack of cohesion is what they describe as "drama that takes place within the department."

When asked if there were close working relationships with other social service agencies or providers, the officers interviewed were either not sure or indicated that such relationships were evident. Apart from the Island task forces that exist on the Island, there seems to be several opportunities when the department could initiate and foster stronger collaborations. This might be done through hosting training or planning events or establishing partnerships with the social service providers.

As previously indicated, the department does participate in the Island-wide in-service training program, and the Chief does attend the Chiefs' meetings that take place on the Island. Without probing any further, it is a perception that does exist within the department, and for all intents and purposes impacts the overall pride officers feel or do not feel about their own agency and themselves as Tisbury Police Officers.

**Pending Issues Relevant to the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA):** There seemed to be some reoccurring themes throughout the conversations with Tisbury Police Department personnel apart from the topics already discussed relevant to the CBA.

- **Disciplinary Issues:** Although covered in more depth in another section of this report, the issue was not over whether discipline was necessary as much as to how it was being employed. Many of the officers, whether they had been previously disciplined felt that discipline was used as a means of punishment. Also, many of the officers felt that the level of discipline was overly harsh with little distinction being made as to a mistake versus a deliberate or negligent act that warranted disciplinary action. Discipline seemed to come in form of an official sanction with few instances of employee counseling either as an alternative approach, or more importantly following the imposition of a disciplinary sanction. It appears that the disciplinary system within the department has been now met with a grievance, shifting the focus from performance-based issues to one that has created a deeper divide between the administration of the department and the union. Because many of these "disciplinary issues" have spilled over to the Town Administrator and Board of Selectmen, it has pulled the Town officials into the internal operations of the department.



- **Work Schedule:** There has been some conversation between the administration and union relative to changing the work schedule from an eight-hour schedule to a ten-hour schedule. It appears these discussions have stalled, and yet there appears to be an interest on the part of the union to pursue this alternative schedule. The Chief did task the union with putting together a proposal and presenting it to him. Obviously, the Chief is concerned about having adequate coverage that will not present additional overtime costs. The Chief has indicated he is willing to continue to have this discussion. The one concern is that the change of the work schedule as a matter of collective bargaining and because the current CBA addresses the schedule, it might not be achievable during this contract period.<sup>7</sup>
- **Field Training Officers:** Although the CBA permits the Chief of Police to appoint Field Training Officers to train and supervise new permanent employees,<sup>8</sup> it allows for a stipend to be paid to the field training officers who serve in this capacity. The CBA does not specifically set out when officers would be eligible to receive this stipend and for how long. There are officers who are interested in serving in this capacity; the department is just beginning to create this internal training capacity. The CBA does not address the training of special police officers under this program, it would seem they could greatly benefit by participating in this training especially considering the fact they are being used in patrol-related capacities that are not directly supervised.
- **Labor/Management Meetings:** Clearly, the one area seeming to be root cause for the division between the administration of the department and the supervisory and line officers is the lack or breakdown of regular and ongoing dialogue. Most communications seem to be done in the form of writing, and apart from occasional one-on-one dialogue between members of the administration and individual employees, it is not done on a consistent basis. Most disagreements arising between the administration and the union seem to be aired before the Town Administrator and/or the Board of Selectmen. The CBA contemplates the creation of a "Labor Management Committee,"<sup>9</sup> which is to meet

<sup>7</sup> Refer to Article 8 of the current Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Town of Tisbury and the Tisbury Police Union, dated July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2018.

<sup>8</sup> Refer to Article 30 of the current Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Town of Tisbury and the Tisbury Police Union, dated July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2018.

<sup>9</sup> Refer to Article 28 of the current Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Town of Tisbury and the Tisbury Police Union, dated July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2018.



regularly on a quarterly basis. If these meetings could take place on a more regular basis, it would provide an opportunity for both the administration and union to address operational issues and attempt to resolve matters that would forego the need for the Town Administrator to have to intervene. Given the size of the department, there is no reason why there couldn't be more regular discussions to talk about issues of mutual concern and/or interest. It would also be a forum in which the administration can talk about contemplated changes in policy and/or practice, discuss strategic objectives, solicit recommendations/suggestions, and discuss upcoming issues that could be resolved in this forum.

**Results of the Employee Survey:** Every employee within the Tisbury Police Department was invited to complete a survey that was designed to investigate eight areas, which are outlined within this section of the report.<sup>10</sup> The blank surveys were left with the Human Resources Manager who then arranged to have the surveys distributed to each member of the department. The survey package included an instructional page, which emphasized the confidentiality of the employees' responses, how to return the completed surveys in an accompanying sealable envelope, and encouraged the respondent employee to provide honest feedback.

There were twenty-three surveys distributed to the employees of the police department, and all but four surveys were completed and returned. In some instances, certain portions of the survey were not completed. In part, it appeared that the section may not have applied to the responding employee, and why the questions may not have been answered.

Once the surveys were returned, the envelopes were inspected to ensure none of them had been tampered with. A member of the Strategic Policy Partnership compiled the responses of the surveys and created a spreadsheet of all nineteen completed surveys. The following sections provide an overview of the average responses to the each of the individual questions. Granted greater analysis could be conducted, but at this stage of the project the results are being used to validate or refute the results coming out the individual interviews.

- *Section I. Mission of the Tisbury Police Department:* Overall the rank order of what personnel viewed as the top three priorities of the department were widely dispersed. There was no clear ordering of the priorities from

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<sup>10</sup> Copy of the Tisbury Police Department Employee Survey is attached.

the responses. The top three responses from the nine choices in order of responses, but not necessarily ranked similarly were as follows:

- Providing a highly visible policing presence throughout the town (n = 12)
- Building strong, working relationships with residents of the town (n = 9)
- Overall crime prevention (n = 8)

It should be noted that "Building strong, working relationships with residents of the town" received the most frequent number 1 priority. This is further evidence of the commitment that exists among the employees of the department to the community.

- *Section II. Operational Issues on the Job:* Here the department's personnel were asked to gauge how strong they identified with each of the statements. The two statements that received the highest rates in the order of importance were the following:
  - When police officers stop people on the street, the officers should explain the reasons for their action.
  - The prevention of crime and other social issues is the joint responsibility of the community and the police.
  - Police work can be more effective if it is done in partnership with other agencies.
  - Police can make a difference in the lives of young people to prevent or reduce the likelihood of them engaging in future criminal activity.
  - Showing disrespect for people being questioned or arrested causes unnecessary escalation of force.
  - It is a priority for police to listen to the concerns of people who live in my community.
- *Section III. Leadership and Supervision:* In this section, the respondent was asked to rate how strongly they felt regarding each of the statements on leadership and supervision of the department. I reflected the answers

where they had the strongest level of agreement and the strongest level of disagreement. The top positive responses in order the highest ranking were as follows:

- Most patrol officers have the necessary experience to make critical decisions during field operations.
- Patrol supervisors have enough confidence to take control of situations on the street.
- Patrol supervisors have enough knowledge of the law that they can answer the questions of the officers they supervise.
- Sergeants most of their time doing paperwork rather than supervising subordinates.

The highest level of disagreement among the respondents to the following statements are ranked with the highest level of disagreement:

- The Town administration is supportive of the department and its employees.
  - I trust the Tisbury Police Department's disciplinary process.
  - Tisbury PD officers/employees who do outstanding work usually receive appropriate recognition.
  - If something goes wrong in the field, I am confident I will be supported by my next-level supervisor.
- *Section IV. Job satisfaction:* This section of the survey was designed to gauge the respondents' level of job satisfaction. Once again, the respondent was to rank the statements he/she agreed with versus those statements he/she most disagrees with. In this section, identified below are those statements where there was the strongest response, then followed by those statements where there was the strongest disagreement. It should be noted there were very mixed responses with respect to the rank order, however not much spread existed between those statements that attracted the most positive versus the most negative responses:
    - Most of my peers work very hard.

- I play a key role in the overall mission of the Tisbury Police Department
- I have enough discretion in my job to make effective decisions.
- Negative feelings I Have about being a Tisbury officer comes from my supervisors and commanders.

The top responses that received the highest level of disagreement were as follows:

- Negative feelings I have about being a Tisbury PD officer/employee mostly come from how police department employees are viewed by the public.
  - The leadership of Tisbury PD regularly solicit and listen to the opinion of subordinates about their work.
  - Discipline is administered fairly and consistently throughout the department.
  - Negative feelings I have about being a Tisbury PD officer/employee mostly come from my peers.
  - Tisbury PD officers/employees who do outstanding work usually receive appropriate recognition.
- *Section V. Qualifications:* This set of statements attempted to gauge how strongly the respondent agrees or disagrees with the statements as it relates to his/her qualifications in doing specific tasks. The following two statements received the highest level of agreement:
    - Work with other officers and those in special assignments to solve problems.
    - Develop solutions to community problems.
  - *Section VI. Training:* Here the respondent was asked to rate his/her level of training with respect to specific training topics. It should be noted that most of the training topics received the lowest levels in rating ("poor" or "having not received"). In fact, the only two topics that scored between "good" and "average" with a greater tendency to "average" were

"officer safety" and "domestic violence." Listed below are those statements that received the lowest ratings:

- Promotional examination.
  - Defensive driving.
  - Civil enforcement.
  - Social media use.
  - Public speaking.
  - Crisis intervention.
  - Stop-question-and-frisk.
- *Section VII.* This section asked the respondent to indicate the number of hours of training he/she received in specific topics such as de-escalation techniques, crisis intervention training, engaging with the youth, domestic violence, addiction issues, etc. over the last twelve months. Most of the respondents indicated that they received 0 hours in these areas, followed by those who indicated that they received between 1-6 hours of training.

As a follow up question, each of the respondents were asked how much training they did receive during their recruit/entry level training. For the most part, many of them received most their training in the areas of social/behavioral sciences, police science, and law.

Finally, the respondents were asked by what means did they receive information about department news, including policies, procedures, and programs. The most frequent response was through written directives, followed by through supervisory officers.

- *Section VIII. General Information:* This section of the survey was mostly getting at the demographic information of the respondent, without disclosing too much information that would reveal the identity of the respondent. The respondents were also provided space to offer three opinions as to what changes would be needed to improve the overall effectiveness of the Tisbury Police Department. One other question in this section, which appeared to get an even response was whether, in their opinion, "Does the Tisbury PD leadership treat their subordinates in in a fair



and respectful manner? (yes or no)." Ten respondents replied in the negative, and nine respondents replied in positive.

## Recommendations:

As stated in the beginning of this report, despite some of the labor/management and daily operational issues identified in this report, there are a great many opportunities for the Tisbury Police Department to move away from its long-standing cultural issues that have only served to hamper the department overall. One of its strongest assets is the caliber of personnel who are presently working within the Tisbury Police Department. It was evident all the employees encountered were competent in their jobs. More importantly, many of them have a fierce loyalty to the Town of Tisbury, the community and its residents, and a professional pride in being Tisbury Police Officers.

There seems to be a sincere desire among many of the members of the Tisbury Police Department, including the Chief, to promote greater harmony and cohesion within the department. Most employees do not enjoy a working in an environment that is fraught with conflict and mistrust. There is an acknowledgment from both the administration and union that one party or another does not deserve all the blame, and both parties share some responsibility in breaking down the tension that has existed for years.

There is an evident desire among the officers and employees of the department for a greater purpose in the roles they play within the department, a sense of future, and job enrichment. The size of the Tisbury Police Department in some ways makes this more challenging, and in other ways presents some unique opportunities. It is a challenge from the standpoint that it has fewer resources and opportunities for lateral and horizontal mobility, but it makes enacting the necessary changes easier in the sense that the department and employees can individually have such a positive impact to the overall quality of life within the community. The Tisbury Police Department has all the potential of being the premier police department on Martha's Vineyard. The talent is already there, and making change is a matter of properly channeling the desire, talent, and capabilities on a pathway that gets beyond the mundane and drudgery of daily policing. To that end, the following are recommendations for action, many of which may already be underway.

- *Internal Communication:* The advantage of a police department like Tisbury with respect to connecting with all members of the agency is its size. There is often something that gets lost when a department that must rely upon written communication or channeling directives through several layers of organization. Invariably something gets lost in translation and it loses interpersonal touch. Also, it hampers two-way communication that can easily be achieved through an interpersonal conversation. The value of each individual employee within a smaller organization is magnified due the fact that a smaller must rely so heavily upon each member of the organization to perform at a higher level.
- *One-on-One Dialogue with the Chief:* What the Chief of Police has to say has the potential to be extremely impactful on every employee. Given the size of Tisbury Police Department, the Chief should be meeting with every employee on a regular basis. These conversations serve a variety purposes, to include: 1) routinely checking in with the employee; 2) demonstrating the value that the employee brings to the department; 3) soliciting suggestions and recommendations regarding various operational aspects of the department; 4) informing the employee directly as to the direction of the organization; 5) discussing overall performance issues; 6) gauging the interest of an employee in any new initiative that might be underway or contemplated; 7) identifying professional development interests and opportunities; and 8) maintaining real-time situational awareness from the perspective of every employee.
- *Change of Shift Roll Calls:* The structure of the roll call is less important than the content of the roll call. Roll calls are important from the standpoint they are a systematic way in which communications flow vertically and horizontally through the department from one shift to the next. It is a method for members of the department to feel connected and to be made aware of any pending issues, assignment changes, activities, or events taking place during the shift; ensuring that all providing ongoing training and updates on current situations; informing members of the department of any operational changes or introduction of new policies and/or directives; and, finally, maintaining connectivity between shifts. The roll call should be facilitated by the designated officer-in-charge of the shift. Prior to the roll call, the supervisors from one shift to the other should be exchanging information that could be provided to the oncoming shift.
- *Supervisory Operational Assignments:* The supervisory staff should be taking a more active role in the day-to-day patrol operations by spending

the clear majority of their shift performing patrol duties along with the officers assigned to the shift. The department is not large enough to have its supervisory staff on station assignment and relying on responding to calls only when a supervisor is needed. This is particularly true when the department is relying on a combination of full-time staff and special police officers. It is the responsibility of the sergeant not only to monitor the activities taking place during the shift, but to be fully engaged in supplementing police coverage in answering calls for service when appropriate and serving as the principle backup unit on calls requiring a multiple police unit response.

- *Supervisory Administrative Assignments:* Although this had not been a normal practice, every officer should be assigned to one supervisory officer within the department. Given the scheduling issues, it is not realistic for every officer to always work with the same supervisor, but each supervisor can have administrative oversight over every employee within the department. It becomes the responsibility of the supervisor to meet with those officers assigned under his/her administrative oversight regularly. It would also make sense to have the special police officers assigned to a supervisor. This is particularly important from the standpoint ensuring they feel part of the organization and have that direct supervisory contact. As part of the administrative duties, the supervisor should handle all the administrative requests, e.g., vacation requests, shift swaps, equipment needs, personnel matters, and so on.
- *Labor/Management Meetings:* In accordance with the CBA,<sup>11</sup> management should be meeting with union representatives on a regular basis to discuss "matters of mutual concluding, the administration of the Agreement, personnel policies and practices and safety issues." Although the Agreement calls for quarterly meetings, it might be more beneficial to meet more frequently, especially in the beginning to establish ground rules for these meetings and address some of the pending issues identified within the report.

**Developing Internal Capacity:** It should be noted here that the Chief has assembled some very good people who have a commitment to the community, the department, and their chosen profession. In light of current strengths of the Tisbury Police Department does not have the luxury of creating specialty units, it must build those capacities within individual officers to achieve

<sup>11</sup> Article 28 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Town of Tisbury and Tisbury Police Union, dated July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2018.

certain capabilities needed within the community. To begin with, each officer must be able to carry investigations further than what might be expected in most larger agencies. The work that an officer does at the beginning stages of an investigation are crucial from the standpoint that one detective does have the capacity to re-investigate a criminal matter to the depth that a multi-person would be able to do. This means that every investigative officer should have the sufficient training in investigative procedures to bring a criminal investigation as far as he/she can prior to referring off for a follow up investigation.

There are a good number of social specialties that every officer can master; therefore, it makes sense for each officer to be equipped their own secondary specialty. This would accomplish: 1) greater job enrichment for the employee; 2) better overall capacity of the department to be less reliant on outside law enforcement resources; 3) the basis for a training path for every employee; 4) a natural conduit to building networks with other social service providers, advocacy agencies, and other non-governmental organizations; and 5) a better delivery capacity of the department to members of the community who are need of such outreach. There are much greater demands being placed upon police generally today than there was in the past. Many of these demands expand into social services, where the police are best positioned to initiate other follow on services, such as: 1) addressing the needs of those suffering from mental illness; 2) follow up to victims who have suffered from traumatic events, like domestic violence; 3) addressing the needs of youth and families that might be in need of additional services; 4) addressing the needs of those suffering various forms of addiction; and 5) addressing the needs of other vulnerable populations within the community.

This is a continually process evolving over time. In order to achieve specific objectives, the administration should be taking the following steps:

- *Assess the Current Capabilities Personnel:* This a process whereby the administration has a thorough understanding of the current capabilities of every member of the department. In part, this will take into consideration time in service, the functional responsibilities of each employee, an understanding of each employee's strengths and where they might enhance his/her knowledge, skills, and abilities, as well as an understanding of their future aspirations.
- *Development of a Personnel Career Plan:* From the aforementioned assessment, the administration should be gauging its assessment of each employee, and then reviewing that assessment with each individual employee. This stage allows the administration to communicate its



assessments and discuss the opportunities for the employee to expand upon his/her current skill, knowledge, and ability levels over a specified period of time. Also, this phase of the assessment allows the administration to match the needs of the department with areas of interest an employee has in specific aspects of policing. This then predisposes a finite set of trainings that each employee may channel his/her own area of expertise, thereby building the overall capacity of the organization through a coordinated and collaborative approach.

- *Repeating the Cycle:* These planning sessions with each employee should be taking place at specified intervals of time, e.g., semi-annually or annually. From those sessions, the administration should then be modifying and updating each employee's career plan.

**Addressing Ongoing Training Needs:** The department cannot possibly achieve what is expected as full-service police through the annual in-service training. The training needs among all members of the department, including the special police officers, exceed the capacities of both the budget of the department and its own internal capacity. As already discussed and now being put into practice is a structured field training officers' program that builds upon the training a new officer or special police officer may have received through their basic recruit training. It is also a mechanism whereby the department is able to build upon its own internal capacity, specifically by identifying train-the-trainer programs. As officers grow through training opportunities, those new skills should be shared with other members of the department. Given the geographic locality of Tisbury, the logistical costs are going to fast outpace the available training dollars.

The department should be looking for opportunities of bring instructors on to the Island to provide additional instructional blocks for its own personnel. Depending upon the cost of the instructor, it should be much more cost effective to have an instructor come to the Island for a couple days and train officers and special police officers on those core courses that every officer should have. This will mean developing a long-term training strategy to be achieved over time. In many agencies, departments have developed training schedules that are used to guide departments in what blocks of training an officer should have based upon their assignment and years of experience. This would necessitate the Chief developing a professional career plan for each member of the department in consultation with each of them. The department should develop a multi-year plan with respect to establishing annual training objectives, which is built upon from year to the next. As part of this planning



process the Chief should prepare an anticipated budgetary plan that forecasts the training expenditures for each fiscal budgetary cycle.

In order to achieve a structured and organized method of developing an overall training plan for the organization, the following phases should be considered:

- *Development of a Training Inventory:* The administration should be developing a base-line level of training to be accomplished on an annual basis. The demands and levels of knowledge that officers are required to perform their duties at certain levels of proficiency are constantly changing. Police work is much more than the preservation of the peace, promotion of safety, and enforcement of the laws. Officers in this day and age are expected to master any number of skills and abilities designed to promote a higher quality of life, greater degrees of confidence in competencies, and ongoing collaborative interaction with other organizations, agencies, and service providers. Much of this additional training cannot possibly be accomplished during the 32-40 annual in-service training. It is up to the administration to identify those additional training needs, develop a plan for achievement, and maintain an ongoing environment of learning.
- *Development of a Training Schedule:* Beyond the training inventory, the administration should have a schedule of training that takes into account an officer's time in service and assignment, and have a plan as to what training each officer should be achieving during the course of his/her career. For example, a new officer is required to have full basic-recruit academy training, and then an orientation training once the recruit officer has completed training. The department has begun to develop a Field Training Officer's program that can now provide the additional training during an officer's introduction to the department. Beyond the initial training that takes place in the first year, what are the next increments of training taking place during the course of the officer's career? After two years, what level of training should an officer have received, or from two to five years, or five to ten years, and so on? If an officer is given a special assignment, what trainings should be associated with that specialty? All of these trainings should be spelled out in a training inventory.
- *Forecasting for Budgetary Needs:* Through the use of this Training Inventory, it accomplishes a number of specific objectives:

- o It promotes ongoing training and development of an employee during the course of that employee's career.
- o It clearly communicates to an employee his/her value to the organization by virtue of the fact that department is making a continuous investment.

It allows the administration in a very methodical manner to plan for the department's budgeting needs over the next fiscal year so that these costs can not only be planned for, but it allows the Town to understand those costs associated with training and employee development.

**Revamping the Disciplinary Process:** Given the fact that most police departments describe themselves as paramilitary organizations, many of them have embraced a punitive disciplinary system that has only served to undermine the overall effectiveness of agency. The stated objective of any disciplinary system is to alter and correct errant behavior, and in certain instances, redress training deficiencies. A disciplinary system does have a punitive aspect from the standpoint of rooting out employees who have committed serious transgressions that warrant punitive sanctions. Often, these behaviors are not a mistake of the heart or judgment, but intentional violations or omissions of the most important rules and/or values of the organization. The preferred method for correcting typical, errant behaviors or mistakes is through a systematic method of counseling and retraining. A disciplinary system should be progressive unless the violation is so serious it warrants immediate corrective action. Many departments are now identifying alternatives to punitive measures in building the capacity of personnel and truly correcting behavior, as opposed to punishing errant employees to the point where they are terminated or voluntarily leave the organization. Examples of this are processes known as "alternative resolutions" or mediation. If a department is interested in preventative and early interventions, ongoing dialogue and constructive counseling have proven to be best approaches. The objective here is not to alienate an employee, but assist the employee in meeting the performance goals of the department. The personnel are organizations' most important investment, and it is counterproductive if an agency loses an employee either through lack of productivity or leaving the agency.

If the disciplinary process is truly designed to enhance employee performance and provide constructive corrective actions, the following measures should be put into place:

- *Revamping the Disciplinary Policy & Procedures:* The administration should completely revamp the current policies, procedures, and practices that are currently in place. The administration should use these directives to reset the expectations of the department designed to promote compliance with the department's performance standards with measures in place that are designed to coach and mentor employees toward achieving those established standards.
- *Use of Alternative Measures:* Traditional disciplinary systems are rule and punishment driven. Under this traditional approach, employees are expected adhere to the rules and any deviation from those results in some form of penalty. Under a system that is designed promote greater compliance with the established practices, the department has to be sure that its employees are adequately trained and well-versed in those practices. The administration should be continually advising and correcting deviations from the established practices by maintaining ongoing dialogue and direction. If there is disciplinary action taken, part of that process must include verbal counseling and discussion to be sure that the employee not only understands why the administration felt formal disciplinary sanctions were warranted, but understand what steps or measures need to be taken to be sure there is not a reoccurrence of the errant behavior.
- *Progressive Disciplinary Principles:* In most instances, an initial error and omission, provided that it is not serious in nature, should begin with verbal counseling. Verbal counseling is not considered a form of discipline, but a method designed to create mutual understanding of as to why something was done incorrectly. This provides both the administration and the errant employee an opportunity to fully understand the underlying reasons for the error or omission. Regardless of the level of discipline taken, this element of verbal counseling should always be part of the process.

**Embracing Internal Procedural Justice:** Related to the disciplinary process is the adoption of procedural justice within the organization. Organizations that embrace procedural justice ascribe to transparency and accountability that is designed to build upon trust and foster a sense of legitimacy.<sup>12</sup> Internal procedural justice principles should take into consideration all aspects of an organizational culture, including those surrounding internal policies and

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<sup>12</sup> "Legitimacy" used in this contexts means the mutual respect and dignity that is afforded to every member of the organization, where they believe they are a valued and contributing member to the overall mission of the organization.

interactions. Procedural justice should be reflected in the practices within an agency and the relationships officers have with their colleagues and the leaders of the organization.

Research<sup>13</sup> on internal procedural justice demonstrates that "officers who feel respected by their supervisors and peers are more likely to accept departmental policies, understand decisions, and comply with them voluntarily." It follows that officers who feel respected by their organizations are more likely to bring this respect into their interactions with the community they serve. The adoption of internal procedural justice as a guiding principle serves as the underpinning for change in culture and contributes to building an environment of trust and confidence within the organization. Internal procedural justice begins with the clear articulation of organizational core values and the transparent creation and fair application of a department's policies, protocols, and decision-making processes. If all members of the department are actively involved in policy development, they are more likely to use the same principles in their external dealings with the public. The implementation of internal procedural justice is a "top down" method, including all members of the department in reaching a shared vision and mission.

Procedural Justice encompasses four basic fundamental pillars that are designed to promote greater levels of trust, a sense of equity, and a level of mutual respect. Those pillars and how they are applied involve every aspect of the department's internal operations. It is a set of values that is driven from the top of the organization downward.

- *Fairness & Equity:* The administration of the department has an obligation to clearly demonstrate it is willing to engage with every member of the department fairly and equitably. These are hard concepts to instill, and is largely predicated upon individual perceptions. These traits or characteristics are something that must continually be demonstrated in all transactions that take place on a daily basis. How the administration treats its employees and how decisions are made are not only interpreted on an individual basis, but become the collective perception of the entire organization. How employees are recognized, assigned, rewarded, or

<sup>13</sup> Nicole Haas et al., "Explaining Officer Compliance: The Importance of Procedural Justice and Trust Inside a Police Organization," *Criminology and Criminal Justice* (January 2015), doi: 10.1177/1748895814566288; COPS Office, "Comprehensive Law Enforcement Review: Procedural Justice and Legitimacy," accessed February 28, 2015, <http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/taskforce/Procedural-Justice-and-Legitimacy-LE-Review-Summary.pdf>.



disciplined all impinge on how employees perceive their value to the organization and a sense of fairness.

- *Voice:* This pillar addresses whether everyone in the organization has the ability to express themselves and whether their opinions really matter. This is a trait that once again is fostered by the actions of the administration by the way it solicits input and opinions from all of the members of the organization, and gives due consideration for those opinions. It creates a sense of value and purpose. It is a critical component on how communication takes place within the organization, and whether all employees have a sense whether their opinions really matter.
- *Transparency:* How willing the administration is to share with the members of the organization conveys both subtle and overt messages. If the administration is generally forthcoming as to why certain actions are being taken or the underlying reasoning of decisions being made within the organization, it promotes a sense of trustworthiness and enhances a universal understanding. By not willing to provide an ongoing and open dialogue, it can often create suspicious, promote conjecture, and lead to misinterpretation or misunderstandings.
- *Impartiality:* In order to promote a greater sense of value and purpose, all employees should feel as though they are included and treated without regard for personal bias or favoritism. All decisions by the administration should be viewed as being based on the core values of the organization.

**Revamping the Performance Evaluation Process:** The objective of an effective performance evaluation system is to promote employee growth and to provide a pathway for employees to achieve performance of the department. It should be designed to strengthen employee performance and accountability, and thereby enhance agency transparency. Such a system calls for different ways of measuring an officer's performance. Most traditional systems are quotas based on simple activities (e.g., number of arrests, citations issues, self-initiated activities, and other input measures), as opposed to assessing and measuring meaningful outcome measures. What tends to make this somewhat complicated is these measures tend to be more subjective in nature; thus, outcome measurement relies heavily on the level of trustfulness within the organization. Again, in keeping with basic tenants of internal procedural justice, the process must be transparent, fairly and equitably applied, and should have buy-in from those who are being evaluated. Most successful systems involve those being evaluated in defining how and on what basis they should be

assessed. This often accomplished through a collaborative process between labor and management.

What an organization measures communicates, what really matters and what is important to the organization. In policing there has always been a pension for counting activities, i.e., motor vehicle citations, arrests, parking tickets, crimes solved, interpersonal contacts, property checks, community meetings attended etc., when what really matters are the outcomes of those input measurements. The quality of an officer's decisions, how efficiently and effectively is an officer's problem-solving capabilities, the quality of an officer's interaction, the degree an officer shows initiative, etc. are generally qualities or traits that as administrators we truly value. The fundamental question is how are those things that really matter get recognized and appraised?

- *Development of New Performance Measures:* Developing these measures really should be a joint venture between the administration and the those who are being assessed. Often most performance measure systems are quantitative, rather than being qualitative. This usually comes about because without the hard measurements, employees can't be sure that it will be done fairly and equitably. In large part this is due to the fact that they have not had the opportunity to contribute and devise a qualitative system that reflects the work they do.

**Predefined Promotional Process:** What is key to any effective promotional process is the level of transparency that exists within the process. Officers thinking about pursuing promotion within the department should clearly understand what they need to do to work toward those skills that will make them an effective and successful supervisor. This does require objective measures being applied that can fairly assess an individual's knowledge and capabilities of applying that knowledge. This is generally accomplished through a series of steps that involve a written examination testing a candidate on those materials he/she should know, such as the department's rules, regulations, policies, procedures, and practices; and knowledge of the law, local ordinances, and relevant court decisions and how to apply them correctly. It might also consider measuring an officer's understanding of the CBA and its application to administering and attending to personnel issues. It should also measure or assess whether a candidate can apply that knowledge into performance-based exercises, given in the form of some type of assessment exercises. There is usually some type of interview panel that is comprised of various members of the department's administration and other outside panelists. Generally, past performance issues and/or disciplinary matters are factored into the process,

but typically will not serve as disqualifier unless the discipline or performance issues have made the individual unfit to assume a supervisory position.

As previously discussed, a promotional process should possess certain elements and features to include:

- *Predefined:* The promotional process should be well established and have certain components that are clearly and well defined well in advance of any promotional process.
- *Objectivity:* There should be certain elements of the promotional process that are predicated upon objective measures, such as a well-designed written examination, external assessment of the candidates, and an objective appraisal of what an employee has accomplished during the course of his/her career.
- *Performance Criteria as a Component:* Factors such as performance appraisals, disciplinary history, commendations, etc. are factors that should be factored into the overall score as opposed to being the sole criteria as to whether an employee may or may not participate in the promotional process.

**Development of a Strategic Plan:** If an organization is going to remain vibrant and forward leaning, it needs to have plan that lays out a pathway forward for the organization, its personnel, and the community it serves. The plan not only communicates the direction that the organization will be heading, but informs all the key stakeholders and constituents those aspirations. An effective strategic plan describes the organization's mission, core values, and how it intends to apply those principles in achieving certain objectives that are designed to promote the growth of the organization. The strategic plan should be a collaborative process that considers all those who might be impacted by the actions of the department. The process of developing a strategic plan is just as important as the final product. If done correctly, the process is designed to build trust both within the organizational and externally. It is a transparent process that identifies how the organization defines itself and what it considers its underlying principles and beliefs.

What all of this is leading to, particularly the administration of the department, is being able to articulate a vision and pathway for the department in moving forward. The strategic plan achieves a number of key objectives that promotes continually growth and investment in the organization. As described above, it

should possess certain key elements that are the by-product of the entire organization, to include:

- *Mission Statement:* The mission statement describes what the organization values and how it chooses define itself and its purpose.
- *Core Values:* The core values speak to how all members of the organization define themselves and what they hold as being the most important attributes. The core values should be reflected in everything the organization does and how its members will conduct themselves (both internally & externally).
- *Vision:* The vision conveys the direction the organization is headed and what it hopes to achieve over a period of time. Often the vision tends to be aspirational, but is also serves as a guiding set of principles.
- *Achievements:* The plan layouts what the department intends to achieve over a period of time (3-5 years), and how it plans to meet those accomplishments. It is not something that is absolute, but it provides a direction and a deliberate purpose in advancing itself continually. It ensures that all those invested understand what lies ahead and how objectives will be accomplished. It also provides for a method of providing for planned growth over a period of time, rather than thinking about moving from one budget cycle to the next. Finally, it serves as the impetus for positive, forward moving change.



October 2016

# TISBURY POLICE DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEE SURVEY

**Section I: Mission of the Tisbury Police Department (according to the Department)**

*Instructions: Please rank the **top three** priorities for the Tisbury Police Department (according to the Department) from most important to least important by placing a "1" next to the **ONE CHOICE** that you think is **most important** to the Department, a "2" next to the **SECOND CHOICE** that you think is **second-most important** to the Department, and **LASTLY** a "3" next to the **THIRD CHOICE** that you think is the **third-most important** to the Department.*

You should be ranking only the three choices that you think are first, second and third most important.

1. Which priority do you think best describes the current mission of the Tisbury Police Department, as viewed by Department leadership? *(Please choose only 3)*

- \_\_\_\_\_ a) Overall crime prevention
- \_\_\_\_\_ b) Providing a highly visible policing presence throughout the town
- \_\_\_\_\_ c) Enforcing traffic laws, particularly speed violations in congested and high accident locations
- \_\_\_\_\_ d) Deterring young people from crime and preventing them from becoming regular offenders
- \_\_\_\_\_ e) Making every neighborhood in the town safe from violence
- \_\_\_\_\_ f) Building strong, working relationships residents in the town
- \_\_\_\_\_ g) Improving the quality of life of all town residents and visitors
- \_\_\_\_\_ h) Keeping victims of crime safe and preventing repeat victimization
- \_\_\_\_\_ i) Providing traffic direction assistance during Steamship Authority boat arrivals

**Section II: Operational Issues on the Job**

*Instructions: Listed below are a number of statements related to being a member of the service today. Please **CIRCLE** a 1, 2, 3 or 4 that best corresponds to the extent that you agree or disagree with each statement.*

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree Somewh at 2</u>	<u>Disagree Somewh at 3</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>
2. The relationship between the police and the people of this community is very good.	1	2	3	4
3. It is a priority for police to listen to the concerns of people who live in my community.	1	2	3	4
4. The drive for higher law enforcement activity is the number one concern of my supervisors & leadership of the department.	1	2	3	4
5. When police officers stop people on the street, the officers should explain the reasons for their action.	1	2	3	4
6. Members of the public do not understand the problems of police in Tisbury.	1	2	3	4
7. Honest mistakes by Tisbury officers are handled appropriately.	1	2	3	4
8. Police officers/employees have the discretion to engage in policing activities during the course of their assignments.	1	2	3	4
9. Police officers/employees should try to solve non-crime problems that they may encounter during daily assignments.	1	2	3	4

10.	Showing disrespect for people being questioned or arrested causes unnecessary escalation of force.	1	2	3	4
11.	The prevention of crime and other social issues is the joint responsibility of the community and the police.	1	2	3	4
12.	Police can make a difference in the lives young people so as to prevent or reduce the likelihood of them engaging in future criminal activity.	1	2	3	4
13.	Most Tisbury officers have the verbal and tactical skills necessary for deescalating a potentially violent encounter.	1	2	3	4
14.	I have had all the training I need to do my job right.	1	2	3	4
15.	Police work can be more effective if it is done in partnership with other agencies.	1	2	3	4
16.	I feel that I play an important part in carrying out the mission of the Tisbury Police Department.	1	2	3	4
17.	The threat of citizen complaints keeps me from being proactive on the street.	1	2	3	4
18.	Too many officers/employees are taking advantage of sick-leave availability even when they are not really sick.	1	2	3	4



19.	Tisbury PD officers/employees are confident that their decisions will be backed up by the leadership of the department.	1	2	3	4
20.	Members of the public who live in Tisbury generally trust the police.	1	2	3	4
21.	Fear of being sued keeps me from taking lawful action against criminal activity.	1	2	3	4
22.	I have all the equipment I need to do my job right.	1	2	3	4
23.	Police work can be more effective if it is done in partnership with people living in the community.	1	2	3	4
24.	I have access to the digital information I need to do my job.	1	2	3	4
25.	The local media portrays police officers accurately.	1	2	3	4
26.	During the past 12 months, I have hesitated to be proactive in my job for fear of being unfairly disciplined.	1	2	3	4

### Section III: Leadership and Supervision

*Instructions: Listed below are a number of statements relating specifically to supervisors. Please CIRCLE a 1, 2, 3 or 4 that best corresponds to the extent you agree or disagree with each statement.*

	<u>Strongly Agree</u> 1	<u>Agree Somewhat</u> 2	<u>Disagree Somewhat</u> 3	<u>Strongly Disagree</u> 4
27. Tisbury PD officers/employees, regardless of gender, ethnicity, race or background, can expect fair treatment by their supervisors.				
28. Patrol supervisors have enough confidence to take control of situations on the street.	1	2	3	4
29. My supervisors and the leadership of the department contribute useful information as I work to carry out the day-to-day mission of the department.	1	2	3	4
30. The Town administration is supportive of the department and its employees	1	2	3	4
31. My supervisor asks for my opinion on how to best to carry out our assignments.	1	2	3	4
32. Patrol supervisors have enough knowledge of the law that they can answer the questions of the officers they supervise.	1	2	3	4
33. Most patrol supervisors have the necessary experience to make critical decisions during field operations.	1	2	3	4

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34.	My supervisors let me know how well I am doing my job.	1	2	3	4
35.	I know what is expected of me at work.	1	2	3	4
36.	The Tisbury Police Department is open to suggestions for improvement.	1	2	3	4
37.	My job assignment permits me to decide, mainly on my own, how best to do my job.	1	2	3	4
38.	Tisbury Police Department personnel generally understand the duties, responsibilities and decision-making authority appropriate to their particular rank.	1	2	3	4
39.	The leadership of the department believes their careers are advanced by showing initiative rather than by just following the rules.	1	2	3	4
40.	Sergeants spend most of their time doing paperwork rather than supervising subordinates.	1	2	3	4
41.	If something goes wrong in the field, I am confident that I will be supported by my next-level supervisor.	1	2	3	4
42.	My supervisors acknowledge work that is well done.	1	2	3	4
43.	I trust the Tisbury Police Department's disciplinary process.	1	2	3	4

**Section IV: Job Satisfaction**

*Instructions: Listed below are a number of statements relating specifically to your job satisfaction. Please circle a 1, 2, 3, or 4 that best corresponds to the extent you agree or disagree with each statement.*

	<b><u>Strongly Agree</u></b>	<b><u>Agree Somewhat</u></b>	<b><u>Disagree Somewhat</u></b>	<b><u>Strongly Disagree</u></b>
44. I have enough discretion in my job to make effective decisions.	1	2	3	4
45. Tisbury PD officers/employees who do outstanding work usually receive appropriate recognition.	1	2	3	4
46. Negative feelings I have about being a Tisbury officer mostly come from my supervisors or commanders.	1	2	3	4
47. I am more satisfied with my job than I was a year ago.	1	2	3	4
48. My assignment permits me enough control over how to do my job.	1	2	3	4
49. I would leave the Department if I had the opportunity.	1	2	3	4
50. My immediate supervisor clearly communicates where the Tisbury Police Department is going and how my job fits into that mission.	1	2	3	4
51. The department career path is clear and predictable.	1	2	3	4
52. Negative feelings I have about being a Tisbury PD officer/employee mostly come from my peers.	1	2	3	4



53.	The leadership of Tisbury PD regularly solicit and listen to the opinion of subordinates about their work.	1	2	3	4
54.	Most of the time, I just go through the motions of this job.	1	2	3	4
55.	I play a key role in the overall mission of the Tisbury Police Department.	1	2	3	4
56.	I am satisfied with my current assignment and location and would like to stay there.	1	2	3	4
57.	Discipline is administered fairly and consistently throughout the department.	1	2	3	4
58.	Negative feelings I have about being a Tisbury PD officer/employee mostly come from how police department employees are viewed by the public.	1	2	3	4
59.	Tisbury PD discretionary assignments are fairly awarded based on merit.	1	2	3	4
60.	Most of my peers work very hard.	1	2	3	4

**Section V: Qualifications**

*Instructions: Please indicate how qualified you feel you are to do each of the following: Please circle a 1, 2, 3 or 4 that best describes how qualified you feel you are in performing each of the following:*

	<u>Very Qualified</u>	<u>Somewhat Qualified</u>	<u>Somewhat Unqualified</u>	<u>Very Unqualified</u>
61. Identify community problems giving rise to crime, fear and disorder.	1	2	3	4
62. Use the SARA problem-solving method in my work.	1	2	3	4
63. Work with other officers and those in special assignments to solve problems.	1	2	3	4
64. Develop solutions to community problems.	1	2	3	4
65. Refine solutions to community problems until they work.	1	2	3	4

**Section VI: Training**

Your answers in this section will help determine what changes in Tisbury PD training may be needed.

66. *Instructions: Please rate the quality of post-academy training you have received in the following areas. Please circle a 1, 2, 3, or 4 that best describes the quality of post-academy training you have received. If you did not receive post-academic training in a particular area, please circle a 5.*

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Have Not Received</u>
a) Computer applications	1	2	3	4	5
b) Officer safety	1	2	3	4	5
c) Domestic violence	1	2	3	4	5

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d)	Crime-fighting strategies	1	2	3	4	5
e)	Use of force	1	2	3	4	5
f)	Disorder/crowd control	1	2	3	4	5
g)	Evidence collection/handling/invoicing	1	2	3	4	5
h)	Investigations	1	2	3	4	5
i)	Vouchering of property	1	2	3	4	5
j)	Baton use	1	2	3	4	5
k)	Changes in the law	1	2	3	4	5
l)	Defensive driving	1	2	3	4	5
m)	Civil enforcement	1	2	3	4	5
n)	Supervision/management	1	2	3	4	5
o)	Counter-terrorism	1	2	3	4	5
p)	Firearms – basic mechanical skills	1	2	3	4	5
q)	Firearms – combat skills	1	2	3	4	5
r)	Firearms – training under stress	1	2	3	4	5
s)	Promotional exams	1	2	3	4	5
t)	Changes in department procedures/policies	1	2	3	4	5
u)	Crisis intervention	1	2	3	4	5
v)	Stop-question-and-frisk	1	2	3	4	5
w)	Cultural diversity/sensitivity	1	2	3	4	5
x)	Search and seizure	1	2	3	4	5
y)	Corruption/integrity	1	2	3	4	5
z)	Rules and procedures of evidence handling	1	2	3	4	5
aa)	Courtroom testimony	1	2	3	4	5
bb)	Crime scene integrity	1	2	3	4	5
cc)	Report writing	1	2	3	4	5

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dd) Conflict resolution/Mediation	1	2	3	4	5
ee) Community Engagement	1	2	3	4	5
ff) Problem-solving	1	2	3	4	5
gg) Public Speaking	1	2	3	4	5
hh) Social media use	1	2	3	4	5

68. Not including required training (e.g., legal updates, first aid/CPR range, etc.), how many hours of formal department training (de-escalation techniques, crisis intervention training, engaging with the youth, domestic violence, addiction issues) did you receive in the last 12 months? (Check only one)

- 1) 0 hours..... ☐
- 2) 1-6 hours.... ☐
- 3) 7-12 hours... ☐
- 4) 13-18 hours. ☐
- 5) 19-24 hours. ☐
- 6) 25+ hours.... ☐

69. Your recruit training consisted of (Check only one):

- 1) ☐ 1 instructor for each subject (social/behavioral science, police science, law)
- 2) ☐ 1 instructor for all three subjects (social/behavioral science, police science, law)
- 3) ☐ Other

70. Please order the sources of information you use as follows: "1" = **most often**, "2" = **second most often**, and "3" = **third most often**. (*Again, Please Choose Only 3*)

I get most of my information about department news, including policies, procedures, and programs from:

\_\_\_\_\_ a) Peers

\_\_\_\_\_ d) Others in the community

\_\_\_\_\_ b) Supervisors

\_\_\_\_\_ e) The Chief of Police



c) Town Hall \_\_\_\_\_  
f) Written directives \_\_\_\_\_

### Section VIII: General Information

*Instructions: This section provides general background information only.*

71. What is your present or designation? (Check only one)

1 - [ ] Sworn Officer

2 - [ ] Non-Sworn Personnel

72. In your opinion, what three changes would improve the overall effectiveness of Tisbury PD?

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

### General Information (Cont'd)

73. In your opinion, what percentage of Tisbury PD officers/employees does not treat the public in a fair and respectful manner? \_\_\_\_\_%

74. In your opinion, does the Tisbury PD leadership treat their subordinates in a fair and respectful manner? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

75. In the list below are seven goals people have for their lives. Please rank in order of importance the **Top 3** goals most important to you. Please place a 1 next to the goal that is **MOST IMPORTANT** to you, please place a 2 next to the goal that is **SECOND MOST IMPORTANT** to you, and please place a 3 next to the goal that is **THIRD MOST IMPORTANT** to you. Please choose **ONLY THREE** of your most important goals.

- \_\_\_\_\_ a) Being respected or admired by others
- \_\_\_\_\_ b) Living your life exactly the way you want
- \_\_\_\_\_ c) Making the world a better place now and in the future
- \_\_\_\_\_ d) Being financially successful and secure
- \_\_\_\_\_ e) Living your life according to high moral and ethical standards
- \_\_\_\_\_ f) Contributing new ideas to your work and the people around you
- \_\_\_\_\_ g) Feeling that you have things under control