



Christopher J. Soffayer
Chief of Police

Millis Police Department

Town of Millis
Commonwealth of Massachusetts



1003 Main Street
Millis, Massachusetts 02054
Phone: 508-376-5112
Fax: 508-376-6220

April 8, 2019

Greetings,

I wanted to thank the Finance Committee for allowing me the time to explain our various needs as a department. Specifically, the staffing and financial needs that impact our budget every year. During my presentation, I gave a brief tutorial discussing the operational needs of the department and showed how it runs daily. In addition, I discussed the various factors behind the overtime issues over the years. Some of the issues for fiscal year 2020 include;

1. One officer enlisted in the US Air Force Reserves. In February he took a leave of absence for boot camp and is scheduled to return in August of this year.
2. We have a second officer who is in the Marine Reserves, he will be activated and deployed to Korea for a year (July 19-July 20).
3. Data has shown us that we are usually short one officer a year due to injury, illness, or unforeseen circumstance.

In addition to our department losing these officers, we must handle the increasing number of incidents and calls for service that we respond to. The incidents vary dramatically, they range from routine calls for service to life-threatening situations. Our department receives dozens of traffic requests weekly. The officers have done a great job fulfilling those requests by the residents. In addition to routine calls for service, the officers respond to incidents involving a crime committed, they include misdemeanors and felonies. We have also seen a significant increase in mental health calls over the last two years. All the serious mental health calls we have responded to have involved a firearm or knife.

As I mentioned in our meeting, half of the shifts are staffed at the minimum. The shifts I identified were all the overnight shifts, and two of our evening shifts. Anytime an officer takes the night off it's an automatic fill for overtime. I understand the budget is extremely important, however the safety of the officers and residents is more important. The days of running two officer shifts are obsolete. We have been successful with the serious incidents we have had due to well-trained officers, and fantastic equipment. Our town will be growing at a rapid rate in the next two years. My fear is we are behind in terms of staffing right now. If some action is not taken, we will be playing catch up in two years.



Christopher J. Soffayer
Chief of Police

Millis Police Department

Town of Millis
Commonwealth of Massachusetts



1003 Main Street
Millis, Massachusetts 02054
Phone: 508-376-5112
Fax: 508-376-6220

I am into my third year as Chief of Police. I have done everything within my power to manage the budget to reduce overtime without compromising the safety of the officers. The 160,000.00-overtime figure I had for this year is attainable with two additional officers.

A new officer will cost approximately 50,000 a year plus loadings. Unfortunately, if we were able to hire two officers today, it takes approximately a year to get them through the academy and operational. We will still be shorthanded while they are at training, however the town will see the benefits next fiscal year when they are on the street operational. This is an investment in the future of the department as well as the safety of the residents.

We operate a lean police department in Millis. Other comparable communities have 18 to 20 patrol officers. Again, by running lean we do not have the ability to just leave a shift unfilled. From my standpoint, I believe the offset between overtime and the new officers are a great benefit to both the department and town. I would urge you to consider the possibility of hiring two patrol officers. The town will ultimately have to pay for the shortfall in overtime. That said, the two new officers will not eliminate overtime, however it will make the overtime budget of 160,000.00 attainable.

I have attached a spreadsheet reflecting the addition of two officers. You will notice I put FY2021, that is not a typo. Realistically, the recruitment process takes approximately four months, then you have to consider the availability of an academy. For example, if you awarded me 2 new officers, they wouldn't be entering an academy until late fall or early winter. The 2 new positions do not begin receiving their salary until they enter the academy. Best case scenario, the new officers would enter into an academy in December, graduate in June 2020, complete our field training program and begin their own shift in September.

Respectfully,

Chris Soffayer
Chief of Police