

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

WILLIAMSTOWN POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY & PROCEDURE NO. 4.23	EFFECTIVE DATE: 11/23/2022
	REVISION DATE: 01/26/2023
Updated probation information for sworn officers. Removed references to civil service, entrance exams. Clarified sworn vs. non-sworn positions.	REVIEW DATE: 01/26/2024

I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES

The selection of both sworn police officers and non-sworn police employees or interns from a field of potential candidates is a very important task affecting not only the police department, but the community as well. Sworn officer candidates who possess intelligence, physical ability and proper temperament must be identified and screened for further consideration. A poorly selected candidate, sworn or non-sworn, can prove to be a burden to the department for an entire generation. So-called “bad hires” may expose the Chief and the municipality to unnecessary civil liability, becoming a burden to both labor and management as a disciplinary problem, and negatively affect the morale of the entire agency.

It is imperative that the recruitment and selection process attract desirable candidates and that the process not only follow federal, state and local law, but be fundamentally fair.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of this police department to:

1. select the most qualified candidates for appointment as sworn police officers and nonsworn personnel;
2. maintain an efficient, effective, and fair selection process that will result in the appointment of those individuals who best possess the skills, knowledge, temperament, and abilities to police our community;

3. strive to ensure that all hiring practices will be formulated and conducted in a manner which will ensure equal access for all people and prevent discrimination;
4. base selection criteria solely on the individual eligibility and merit or fitness of applicants, without regard to race, color, creed, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, physical impairment, sex, marital status, sexual preferences or political or union affiliation.

III. DEFINITIONS:

- A. *Appointing Authority*: The Town Manager, who has the power of appointment or employment.
- B. *MPTC*: Municipal Police Training Committee or its successor.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. Recruitment

- A.1. This department shall actively participate in recruitment for qualified persons to fill sworn and non-sworn vacancies.
- A.2. If used, official job announcements and recruitment notices shall include:
 - A description of the duties and responsibilities of the position;
 - Requisite skills;
 - Minimum educational requirements;
 - Other minimum qualifications or requirements;
 - Official application filing deadlines; and
 - Equal Opportunity Employer notice.
- A.3. Recruitment activities of this department may include advertising or posting notices using any of the following:
 - In local newspapers;
 - On local radio stations;
 - On local cable television venues;
 - At colleges;
 - Via social media and websites;
 - At criminal justice training academies; and
 - In the CJIS Jobs file.
- A.4. Unofficial recruitment activities for this department are every employee's responsibility. Persons who express an interest, or are

identified as potential employees, should be referred to the Chief of Police, who is responsible for regular recruitment activities. Department-sponsored recruitment should be conducted on an on-going basis, but is particularly important when openings occur.

A.5. The Chief shall have authority and responsibility for conducting and managing the day-to-day recruitment operations and activities of the department. The Chief shall be responsible for the following:

- Apprise members of the department regarding the current need for recruitment, and request their participation by suggesting they actively seek qualified individuals and encourage them to apply for positions;
- Contact community organizations through written or verbal communication to encourage them to actively seek qualified applicants;
- Encourage students in area high schools, colleges and universities to consider law enforcement as a career and participate in school-sponsored job shadow days, ride-alongs and internships.

A.6. The process of recruitment and selection of full-time sworn personnel for the department is solely determined by the Town of Williamstown. This department may hire sworn police officers from a list of candidates, as a result of internships, from recommendations either internal or external to the department, or from any other source.

A.7. The process of recruitment and selection for non-sworn personnel for the department is solely determined by the Town of Williamstown. This department may hire non-sworn personnel from a list of candidates, as a result of internships, from recommendations either internal or external to the department, or from any other source.

B. *Application Process*

B.1. Minimum standards for all applicants for sworn positions are that applicants be 21 years of age, possess a valid Massachusetts driver's license, a high school diploma or GED, and not have any felony convictions.

Minimum standards for all applicants for non-sworn positions (including unpaid internships) are that applicants be eligible to work in the Commonwealth, and not have any felony convictions.

B.2. All candidates for employment or unpaid internship, sworn or non-sworn, must complete and submit an employment application package provided by the department. The application shall include a letter identifying:

- An explanation of all elements of the selection process;
- The expected duration of the process; and
- The department policy on reapplication in the event that the candidate is not selected.
- The applicant will also be required to produce the following documents:
 - A release form completed and signed by the applicant in order to conduct a background investigation;
 - A credit report (may be waived for internships);
 - High School and/or College transcripts;
 - A copy of the applicant's Massachusetts Driver's License;
 - Police Basic Recruit Training Certificate, if any;
 - DD 214 if any;
 - Proof of Citizenship; and
 - Fingerprints (taken at police station).

B.3. The application often provides the first impression of a candidate. It also serves as a foundation for background investigations and interviews. The application shall be screened by the Chief of Police. At a minimum, the Chief of Police should consider:

- Whether the application was submitted in a timely fashion;
- Whether the applicant meets minimum standards for training, education, age, etc.;
- The neatness and professional appearance of the application, e.g., handwritten v. typed;
- Spelling, grammar, writing skills, and proficiency in the use of the English language; and
- Whether the application is complete, with all required documents submitted or accounted for.

B.4. The content of the application should be reviewed in detail. Areas which are reasons for concern or which make the candidate more desirable should be noted.

B.5. Intentional false, misleading, or exaggerated information will be grounds for rejection.

B.6. Minor omissions or deficiencies that can be corrected prior to testing or the interview process shall not be grounds for rejection.

C. Applicant Screening

C.1. Applicants accepted for further consideration for sworn or non-sworn positions may be notified in writing, verbally, or both.

C.2. The background investigator shall review records readily available to further screen applicants.

C.3. Criminal records checks include:

- Local records check;
- Board of Probation Record;
- Interstate Identification Index (III);
- Fingerprint check;

Note: No person convicted of a felony may be appointed as a sworn police officer.ⁱ Nor shall anyone convicted of misdemeanor domestic violence, as they are permanently disqualified from possessing a firearm or ammunition.

- Driver history;
- Any social media or personal web sites; and
- Search of the candidate's name on an internet search engine.

C.4. All candidates for sworn positions shall be compared to those names held in both state and national law enforcement de-certification databases. At a minimum the databases for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the national database and the database for any other state where the candidate served as a law enforcement officer shall be queried, if such databases are available.

C.5. Applicants for sworn or non-sworn positions who are not selected for further consideration shall be informed in writing within thirty (30) days of that determination.

C.6. All documents provided to the Chief and those produced during the selection process shall be considered confidential and not circulated outside of the department. Records shall be stored in a secure area when not being used.

C.7. Selection Material

- All records of the selection process for candidates selected to be hired shall be included as part of the employee's permanent personnel file.
- All records of the selection process for candidates (sworn and non-sworn) not selected shall be stored in the Chief's files for three years after the vacancy is filled or the position cancelled and, thereafter, may be destroyed in a manner which prevents disclosure of the information within, in compliance with the department policy on **Records Management**.ⁱⁱ

D. Re-application

D.1. Candidates for sworn or non-sworn positions who withdraw during the evaluation process may be considered for future positions.

- D.2. Candidates who are screened out for failing to meet minimum qualifications or are medically disqualified may be considered for future positions provided that they meet the minimum qualifications at the time of re-application.
- D.3. Candidates for sworn police officer positions who fail to pass the PAT test may be re-tested or may reapply when another position becomes available.
- D.4. Candidates who are rejected for intentional false, misleading, or exaggerated information will not be reconsidered for future positions.

E. Background Investigation

- E.1. A background investigation shall be conducted for each applicant for a sworn or non-sworn position approved for further consideration.
- The investigation shall be conducted by a properly trained background investigator.
 - All background investigators shall be properly trained in background investigation techniques prior to conducting such investigations.
- E.2. The Chief shall report to the Town Manager the following:
- Verification of the sworn or non-sworn candidate's qualifying credentials; such as a driver's license or high school diploma.
 - Review of any criminal record or negative contacts with police. Candidates with a history of perpetrating violence (including elder abuse, child abuse, sexual assault, stalking, or domestic violence) should be screened out at this point in the hiring process. For further information, see the department policy regarding **Domestic Violence by Police Employees**;
 - Verification of at least three personal references;
 - Investigation of any areas of concern raised by the selection process;
 - Appearance of excessive use of sick time or patterns of sick time taken in conjunction with days off, or on weekends;
 - Appearance of excessive tardiness;
 - Appearance of excessive workman's compensation or injured on duty claims;
 - Excessive use of force complaints;
 - Character or integrity issues;
 - Difficulty in getting along with other employees; and

- Sexual/harassment complaints.
- E.3. Candidates for sworn or non-sworn positions who will have access to CJIS systems must be fingerprinted and conduct a national fingerprint-based records check. Such employees include:ⁱⁱⁱ
- Police Officers;
 - Dispatchers;
 - Non-sworn employees, including unpaid interns, whose tasks require such access; and
 - Computer network administrators and maintenance personnel.
- E.4. Persons convicted of a felony cannot be sworn police officers or work as non-sworn employees or unpaid interns who will access the CJIS system. The appointing authority may petition CJIS for a review of the felony record for authorization for access.^{iv}
- E.5. Candidates for sworn or non-sworn positions who are found to have intentionally submitted false information in the application package will not be considered further.
- E.6. Candidates who are screened out shall be notified in writing.

F. Interviews

- F.1. The Chief or their designee shall conduct interviews of candidates for sworn or non-sworn positions. A standardized list of questions for all candidates will provide the format for the interview. Follow-up questions and inquiries into issues raised during the background investigation should also be asked as appropriate. The process should include:
- A general question about the candidate's background to put the candidate at ease and provide him/her with an opportunity to talk about themselves;
 - A question or scenario to test the candidate's integrity;
 - An opportunity to provide the interviewers with any information that was not asked, but which the candidate deems important; and
 - An opportunity to ask questions.
 - Candidates with a history of perpetrating violence (including elder abuse, child abuse, sexual assault, stalking, or domestic violence) should be screened out at this point in the hiring process.
- F.2. Candidates shall be clearly informed of the department's position of zero tolerance concerning domestic violence by police department employees. For further information, see the department policy on ***Domestic Violence by Police Employees***.

G. Final Evaluations

- G.1. The Chief will evaluate the candidates for sworn or non-sworn positions and report to the Town Manager with recommendations for further consideration. Candidates will be made a conditional offer of employment, in writing, before further evaluation is conducted.
- G.2. It is unlawful to require a polygraph as a condition of employment or continued employment.^v
- G.3. All remaining sworn candidates shall undergo a medical evaluation conducted by a physician selected by the department to certify the general health of the candidate. The physician may have specialization in industrial medicine. The evaluation should include screening for controlled substances and the ability to physically perform tasks which have been determined to be critical job functions. This is not required for non-sworn candidates.
- G.4. All sworn candidates shall undergo an emotional stability and psychological fitness examination by a qualified psychologist or psychiatrist who specializes in criminal justice pre-employment psychological evaluation.
- The psychological screening of all viable candidates will include indicators of abusive tendencies.
 - This department will strongly consider a no-hire decision in the case of a candidate with tendencies indicative of abusive behavior.
- This is not required for non-sworn candidates.
- G.5. Reports of physical and psychological testing shall be considered confidential medical records. For candidates hired by the department, these records shall become part of the employee's permanent medical personnel records. For candidates not selected, the records will be retained with the candidates' other selection process records.

H. Sworn - Pre-Academy Screening

- H.1. All candidates selected for employment as sworn officers who have not completed a basic recruit municipal police training academy must complete the HRD physical agility test (PAT) prior to enrollment. A "waiver" may be obtained from the MPTC for those that have completed equivalent academies in other states.
- H.2. Trained candidates who were not previously civil service police officers must also pass the HRD physical agility test.

I. Training

- I.1. Sworn Officer Candidates

- Police Academy Training: Candidates selected for employment must meet training requirements as specified in M.G.L. c. 41, § 96B, and the department policy on **Training and Career Development**.
- Upon successful completion of basic recruit training, new officers must complete a six-month probationary period.^{vi}

I.2. Non-Sworn Candidates

- Candidates for non-sworn positions shall undergo orientation and training within the agency. See the department policy on **Training and Career Development**.

J. Probationary Period

- J.1. All new employees must successfully complete a minimum six-month probationary period.
- J.2. All persons hired as sworn officers must complete a probationary period that extends to six months after their successful completion of the Field Training Program.

i

M.G.L. c. 41, §96A.

ii

Administration and Personnel Disposal Schedule, DS-23-89, Series Number 23.44, 29 CFR 1602.31.

iii

4.51.b CJIS Security Policy version 4.4, April 2007.

iv

M.G.L. c. 41, §96A; 4.51.a CJIS Security Policy version 4.4, April 2007.

v

M.G.L. c. 149, §19B.

vi

M.G.L. c. 31, §34.