



Town Meeting Police Budget Fact Sheet



In this year's budget, the Police Department is requesting three (3) additional Police Officers.

***History:** Last year residents approved a staffing study in order to review a request for additional personnel for the Police Department. The \$25K study conducted by Municipal Resource Inc. (MRI) of Police, Fire, and Dispatch concluded in August of 2024. The staffing study was an extensive analysis of many areas involved with staffing at the SPD (ex. analyzing call volume; contractual time off; retention issues; breakdown of proactive and reactive patrols; environmental & national policing issues; call assignments per officer; and many other job tasks and responsibilities due to State, Accreditation, and POST requirements).

*The study noted: *"There is ample information within the staffing study's calculations that should provide the Chief and governing officials of Southborough with abundant evidence that staffing levels at the SPD are below those necessary to provide adequate, and possibly minimal staffing levels on a 24/7 basis."*

*Prior to 2020, patrol shifts had optional coverage provided by Reserve Police Officers, which came to an end with the Police Reform Bill. There was also a statewide Community Policing grant that allowed officers to come in and patrol on paid overtime through the grant, which no longer exists.

*Throughout the staffing study, MRI provided statistics and data used to recommend the following additional staff, with an emphasis on them being an *immediate need*:

1 Lieutenant (*approved at the Fall ATM*); **1 additional Detective** (*bringing the detective division to 2 FT Detectives*); **1 School Resource Officer** (*solely assigned to the schools and handling all juvenile issues*); and **6 additional Patrol Officers**.
Total: **Nine (9) additional staff**.

*The study recognized the retention problem at the department- salary discrepancies with area Police Departments, lack of department divisions (Detective, SRO, etc.), and lack of specialty assignments due to low staffing. All factors in an officer's decision to remain with or leave a police agency.

*Other area police departments are offering higher salaries, more safety when responding to calls (additional officers on scene), and less workload (paperwork per officer after calls).

*Residents deserve more than overworked, fatigued Police Officers. We need fresh, proactive officers responding to calls for service. Fatigued/Over-worked Officers seek alternative work situations (which is what we are seeing).

*Our Detective and School Resource Officers have been pulled into patrol to handle minimum manpower requirements and calls for service.

*From the study: *"...the effectiveness of the Southborough Police staff in providing services to the community may have become a detriment, as their success allows the governing body to conclude that the agency is sufficiently staffed."*

*From the study: *"There is clear evidence that at this moment the Southborough Police Department is evolving into a reactive agency where police reports are seemingly completed for insurance purposes as opposed to a pro-active, problem-solving, and engaged strategy the community has enjoyed. Southborough Police is unfortunately a one-dimensional law enforcement agency left to complete reports for insurance companies and not having a proactive strategy that keeps criminal elements from targeting Southborough community."*

*Town surveys have shown that residents expect high visibility, more traffic enforcement, and expect effectiveness in preventing crime in Southborough.

*Under the current FY26 budget request in front of Town Meeting members tonight, the cost for three officers (with benefits) who start on October 1st, January 1st, and April 1st, would be approx. \$221,120; with the impact on the average household being \$55.66 and an impact on the tax rate of .06 cents.